

GOVERNOR EVERS' 2023-25 BIENNIAL BUDGET

Protecting Wisconsin's Children from Lead Poisoning

Lead poisoning poses a significant health risk, especially to children, but with the right amount of investment and commitment, Wisconsin could eliminate this public health threat. Governor Evers' 2023-25 budget makes strategic investments in addressing the crisis of childhood lead poisoning in Wisconsin, which builds off the foundation laid by the two previous budgets.

LEAD POISONING PREVENTION AND RESPONSE (\$17.1 MILLION)

Childhood lead poisoning can be challenging to address because it is hard to detect and there may be no visible symptoms until delays show up later in a child's life. The Governor recommends lowering the definition of lead poisoning to a blood lead level of 3.5 micrograms per deciliter and requiring a public health investigation for every lead poisoned child under age 6. Annually, an additional 4,000 children would be provided critical public health services to prevent further exposure to lead hazards and address any health issues. To meet this increased demand, the Governor also recommends providing more state assistance to local health departments, and position and expenditure authority to the Wisconsin Department of Health Services' Division of Public Health.

BIRTH TO 3 PROGRAM (\$9.2 MILLION)

To provide timely and appropriate response for all lead poisoned children, the Governor recommends making all children who have a confirmed blood lead level of 3.5 micrograms per deciliter or more eligible for the Birth to 3 Program. Participation in Birth to 3 improves child developmental outcomes, helping families avoid the need for long-term supports for their child later in life, and reduces Medicaid costs for long-term supports. The Governor's budget provides funding to counties to ensure they can meet the increased demand to screen, evaluate, and treat children who enroll in the program.

REPLACEMENT OF LEAD SERVICE LINES (\$200 MILLION)

The budget invests in safe drinking water by targeting a serious threat of lead contamination in water, lead service lines. This dedicated source of funding would allow the Department of Natural Resources to replace lead service lines in communities throughout the state. Potential contamination from lead service lines affects an estimated 170,000 households in the state.

WORKFORCE HOUSING REHABILITATION LOAN PROGRAM (\$100 MILLION)

Wisconsin's aging housing stock provides a great value for homebuyers, but many require reinvestment and rehabilitation to modernize and fix health hazards, such as deteriorating lead-based paint. The Governor recommends investing an additional \$100 million in fiscal year 2023-24 to support a revised and more robust Workforce Housing Rehabilitation Loan Program at the Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority. The revised program would provide low-interest and forgivable loans to low- to moderate-income households to renovate or repair their current home, including lead remediation.

For more information on all of Governor Evers' proposed investments in Wisconsin's health, visit www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/budget