

## Building Safety Keeps Kids Healthy

The City of Milwaukee Health Department (MHD) welcomes a partnership with the Cities United for Science Progress (CUSP) to assure every child has the opportunity to develop their potential free from toxic lead poisoning via untrained renovators that disturb leaded surfaces.

MHD's proposal will fund owner occupants enrolled in its Lead Abatement Program and investor owners that purchase foreclosed properties from the City's inventory. If funded this proposal would quadruple our training capacity with no additional staff. We propose to train 500 owners in a two year period with a \$100,000 budget.

Milwaukee's 27% poverty rate enables us to recruit low income participants. The breakdown by race is: 39% black, 38% white and 17% Hispanic. However, 74.3% of lead poisoned children are black. To address these disparities, MHD targets its abatement services in neighborhoods with the highest lead poisoning rates.

The goal of our partnership with CUSP is to assure every homeowner that invests in the City, not just rental property owners, receive free training to assure capacity for lead safety. Free trainings provide an incentive to homeowners to learn how to work lead safe without fear of poisoning their own children.

Neighborhoods across the city are negatively impacted by increasing numbers of foreclosures resulting in vacant and abandoned properties, including those of long term homeowners. There are currently 2,750 foreclosed properties in Milwaukee. The City of Milwaukee and a broad coalition of partners have been working to address this problem. These comprehensive efforts address the foreclosure problem through: prevention, intervention and stabilization efforts.

Rehabilitation and renovation of homes involve sweat equity. Our building safety initiative assures that low-income owners that rehabilitate their homes will be granted accredited lead safety training.

In 2009, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) was tasked with issuing rules in regard to education and training for lead safe work practices. An EPA ruling that went into effect on April 22, 2010, required rental property owners to receive EPA accredited training for 8 hours in order to repair lead-based painted surfaces on their holdings. The training is known as the Renovate, Repair and Paint (RRP) Rule. Home owners with small children are exempt from the training. Our proposal will address the regulatory gap for owner occupants.

The State of Wisconsin was the first state to have its RRP training approved on October 19, 2009. To build capacity for the law, MHD established partnerships with two local training providers to pilot a project to assure implementation before the rule went into effect. MHD offered RRP training to enrollees of its lead abatement program.

Our training provider, SA Herbst, charges \$200/person for each 8 EPA hour training in lead safety. Since October 2009, S.A. Herbst & Associates has trained 1,216 people in the Lead Safe Renovator Training Class, with 137 homeowners from MHD referrals.

15.7% of lead poisoned children in Milwaukee are Hispanic, many whose parents own single family homes and have a limited English proficiency. Our trainer has bilingual capacity to accommodate these families with EPA-accredited workbooks and exams.

This proposal will be seamlessly integrated into our Program's current efforts. The Program Manager for the Lead Program will be responsible for assuring and reporting benchmarks. MHD's Program Assistant will continue to coordinate RRP registration. RRP capacity-building is within current job description and salary commitments.

This proposal gives MHD a platform to message "Building Safety Keeps Kids Healthy". First time home buyers and owner occupants with small children will integrate biannual paint inspections into their maintenance schedules.

To date, construction and trade workers have been the beneficiaries of the EPA mandate. In Wisconsin, 14,562 people have completed the class, with 3,881 certified Companies and 6,584 certified Lead-Safe Renovators. This proposal broadens the audience to low-income owner occupants who want to protect their children from lead poisoning.

MHD efforts to eliminate lead poisoning have been enhanced with partnerships with private and public funds. In Milwaukee, since 1997, the prevalence rate has declined from 31.9% to 3.3%. During this time, public and private funding efforts have assisted the City in assuring the safe removal of lead from 16,265 homes.

Removal of the barrier for universal lead safe practices will enhance safe environments for low-income children and support lead elimination.

Upon award, promotional flyers will be included in mailings to MHD applicants and prospective buyers of City owned real estate. The City will have a press conference to announce this training partnership between the City's Real Estate Division, trainer and MHD, with respective website promotions.