

State Lead Testing in School and Child Care Program Drinking Water Grant



The Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation Act or “WIIN Act” of 2016 authorizes the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to award grants to states and tribes to assist local and tribal educational agencies in voluntary testing for lead in drinking water at schools and child care programs.

Description

To assist states in helping schools and child care programs address lead in drinking water, Congress appropriated \$20M for fiscal year 2018 and \$25M for fiscal year 2019. The grant program is designed to reduce exposure of children, who are most vulnerable, to lead in drinking water at schools and child care facilities, utilizing the EPA’s 3Ts for Reducing Lead in Drinking Water in Schools guidance, or equivalent state program. The grant will:

- Help states target funding toward schools unable to pay for testing;
- Foster sustainable partnerships at the state and local level to allow for more efficient use of existing resources and exchange of information among experts in various educational and health sectors;
- Improve protection of children’s health by reducing lead exposure; and
- Enhance community, parent, and teacher trust.

Additionally, in accordance with the America’s Waters Infrastructure Act (AWIA) of 2018 §2006 which amended the Water Infrastructure Improvement Act (WIIN) of 2017 §2107, states or territories will assist in voluntary testing for lead contamination in drinking water at schools and child care programs that are in low-income areas. EPA will carry out the grant program by providing technical assistance to recipients of the grant.

Eligible Entities

Grants will be awarded to states and tribes to assist local and tribal educational agencies. Local educational agencies include agencies as defined in section 8101 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965; tribal education agencies as defined in section 3 of the National Environmental Education Act; and owners or operators of child care program facilities.

Eligible Projects

Eligible projects shall expend grant funds in accordance with the EPA’s 3Ts guidance or applicable state regulations or guidance that are not less stringent than the 3T’s guidance.

As part of the testing program, local educational agencies are required to make the testing results publicly available and notify parent, teacher, and employee organizations of the availability of the results.

Approach

State Governors determine the appropriate state agency to administer grant funding to local educational agencies. Notices of Intent to Participate (NOIPs) by States and territories were due by February 22, 2019. Those agencies would be eligible to submit a grant proposal. On February 22, 2019, the Agency received NOIPs from all 50 States and the District of Columbia. The non-competitive grant is based on a funding formula that includes factors for population, disadvantaged communities, and lead exposure risk.

Tribal Guidance

6.4 percent of appropriated funding will be allocated to assist tribal educational agencies in voluntary testing for lead in drinking water at schools and child care programs. The EPA is currently exploring opportunities to implement this grant.

Outreach

EPA will collaborate with regions, and Federal and nongovernmental partners to provide outreach and training on the grant and the 3T's process. EPA will also update the www.epa.gov/safewater/3ts webpage to provide tools and materials to assist schools and child care facilities in implementing a drinking water lead testing program.