

# LEAD IN DRINKING WATER

Internal deliberative pre-decisional - FOR USE BY 2024 PRESIDENT-ELECT TRANSITION TEAM MEMBERS ONLY

## ISSUE SUMMARY:

- Exposure to lead can cause serious health impacts including neurodevelopmental problems in children and heart disease in adults. Sources of lead exposure include soil, paint, dust, air, food, and drinking water.
- Regulating lead levels in drinking water is challenging as lead primarily contaminates drinking water when plumbing materials (service lines, pipes, faucets, and fixtures) that contain lead corrode after the water leaves the treatment plant. Where present, lead service lines are the most significant source of lead in drinking water. The EPA estimates up to 9.0 million buildings in the U.S. are still connected to water mains through legacy lead pipes.
- The EPA recently promulgated the Lead and Copper Rule Improvements (LCRI), building on the previous lead and copper rules to require water systems to proactively replace lead service lines within 10 years and locate legacy lead pipes. The LCRI also improves tap sampling, lowers the lead action level and strengthens other protections to reduce lead exposure, including public education and testing for lead at schools and childcare facilities.
- Under the LCRI, water systems are required to conduct public education and outreach activities and offer sampling for lead in drinking water at schools and childcare facilities. For example, water systems are required to provide the [\*EPA's 3Ts - Training, Testing, and Taking Action\*](#) guidance to schools and child care facilities, which provides information and recommendations to prepare schools, child care facilities, and states to build a voluntary implementation program to reduce lead levels in the drinking water provided to children.
- The Voluntary School and Child Care Lead Testing and Reduction grant program, which was authorized by the Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation Act (WIIN) Act amendments to the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA), assists local and tribal educational agencies in voluntary testing and remediation for lead contamination in drinking water at schools and child care facilities using the EPA's 3Ts guidance. Since 2020, over \$110 million have been allocated to states and territories that have funded lead testing in more than 20,000 schools and childcare facilities and positively impacted more 4 million children across the nation.

## KEY POINTS:

- Locally, the EPA is providing direct technical assistance to communities with lead exposure concerns as well as grant funding for reducing lead in drinking water for schools and childcare facilities, and for small, underserved, and disadvantaged communities.
- The EPA is developing training and guidance materials to help prepare water systems to implement the LCRI over the next three years. Water systems are currently implementing three key requirements in the 2021 Lead and Copper Rule Revisions including initial service line inventory, notification to persons served by known or potential service line containing lead, and 24-hour public notice for a lead action level exceedance, and associated reporting requirements.

- From a whole of government perspective, the EPA's [\*Memorandum of Understanding on Reducing Lead Levels in Drinking Water in Schools and Child Care Facilities\*](#) represents a partnership of 14 federal and non-federal entities to support national efforts to increase lead testing and remediate potential lead sources.

#### ONGOING/UPCOMING :

- Technical Assistance – The EPA's [\*Lead Service Line Replacement Accelerators\*](#) (Pilot), a technical assistance initiative with Connecticut, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin will accelerate lead service line replacements and support access to Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) program funding across 40 communities through 2024. The EPA's [\*Get the Lead Out \(GLO\) Initiative\*](#) expands the services provided in the Lead Service Line Replacement Accelerators pilot to provide lead service line replacement planning technical assistance to approximately 200 underserved and disadvantaged communities. The objective of the GLO Initiative is to help connect more communities to DWSRF funding and accelerate the removal of lead pipes. These initiatives further the EPA's administration of funding provided under BIL and will include the development of tools and case studies to facilitate knowledge transfer and sharing of best practices between the EPA, state and tribal programs, water system managers, and community leaders to better ensure access to this funding.
- Drinking Water Grants – The EPA released the new Notice of Funding Opportunity for \$35 million through [\*Reducing Lead in Drinking Water\*](#) grant in October 2024 with awards expected to be announced in FY25. The EPA also allocated \$26 million to states and territories for [\*the Voluntary School and Child Care Lead Testing and Reduction Grant program\*](#) in August 2024.
- [\*MOU on Reducing Lead in Drinking Water in Schools and Child Care Facilities\*](#) – The EPA convened its fifth partners' meeting on May 28, 2024, since the signing of the MOU in 2019. The EPA will continue to collaborate with MOU partners.
- Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) – EPA HQ and Regional staff will continue ongoing management and oversight of BIL Lead Service Line Replacement (LSLR) capitalization grants, which can be used for lead service line replacement and associated activities such as inventories. Staff will also continue to work with state programs and assistance recipients to communicate programmatic eligibilities, requirements, and best practices pursuant to the May 1, 2024 DWSRF memorandum [\*Implementing Lead Service Line Replacement Projects Funded by the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund\*](#). This memorandum continues the EPA's commitment to collaborate with state SRF programs to share models, communicate eligibilities, and build state capacity to assist local communities to ensure LSLR funding is effectively and equitably deployed.

#### KEY EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS:

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Congress       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Industry          | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> States | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tribes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Media | <input type="checkbox"/> Other Federal Agency |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NGO | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Local Governments | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public |  |   |   |

#### MOVING FORWARD:

- Ongoing State, Regions, and EPA workgroups meet monthly to develop associated LCRR and LCRI implementation guidance, training, and tools.