

Healthy Housing Program

[<< Lead-Safe and Healthy Homes Main Page](#)

- [Request a lead assessment of your home](#) (for renters)

The Need for Healthy Housing

Every year in the District, thousands of children and adults suffer from serious health problems caused or worsened by environmental health hazards. Illnesses and injuries impacted or caused by an environmental hazard are far and away the number one reason why children are hospitalized in the District. **What many parents do not know is that the number one place a child is likely to be harmed by an environmental health hazard is in his or her own home.** Asthma, lead poisoning, unintentional injuries and other harmful health effects can all be linked to problems within the home. The most common culprits include peeling and/or deteriorating paint, mold, insect and rodent infestation, overuse of pesticides and other chemicals, poor ventilation, water leaks, trip and fall hazards, and malfunctioning cooling and heating systems. In response to these threats, DOEE launched the DC Partnership for Healthy Homes, a District Government program aimed at identifying and ending environmental health and safety threats, while at the same time leveraging energy efficiency improvements, in the homes of families throughout the District.



How It Works

The Partnership, spearheaded by DOEE's Lead and Healthy Housing Division, consists of a broad coalition of District agencies and some of the District's most prominent medical providers, managed care organizations, non-profits, and environmental health professionals. Participating health providers and social service agencies serve as front-line responders, identifying children in distress due to lead poisoning, severe and poorly controlled asthma, and/or situations in which a pregnant woman is living in a hazardous home. The front-line responders refer these families to DOEE's Lead and Healthy Housing Division. After an intake process, participants receive a comprehensive home environmental assessment, family education, and case management coordination. Once health and safety threats have been identified and systematically documented, DOEE creates a comprehensive Technical Assistance Report that serves as a time-

sensitive roadmap for the correction of identified hazards and details the potential health issues related to those hazards.

Eliminating Hazards

The Technical Assistance Report is issued to property owners and tenants, detailing the identified hazards, its associated health risks, work that needs to be completed and the methodology that should be employed in making repairs. The case managers then steer clients and landlords through the process of making necessary home repairs and implementing behavioral changes where applicable.

For families who own their own home, case managers provide informational resources and referrals on how to pursue safe hazard remediation privately. They connect income-qualified families to funding sources and grant programs available through District Government.

For families in public housing, DOEE works closely with the DC Housing Authority, the District's public housing agency, to ensure their property managers follow through on the remediation of DOEE-identified hazards in a timely manner.

When landlords and property managers voluntarily opt to make repairs DOEE provides technical assistance. In those cases where cooperation is not readily obtained, DOEE collaborates with DC's code enforcement agency, the Department of Buildings (DOB) to ensure appropriate follow up occurs, including an assessment to identify housing code violations. This approach gives rental property owners the chance to address hazards before fines and penalties are levied, which in turn generates a climate of partnership and cooperation.

The Role of Case Managers

Case managers at DOEE are Public Health Analysts with backgrounds in nursing, public health, social work, communications and clinical care. For each client, they develop customized strategies for hazard elimination by conducting home visits and coordinating efforts with medical providers and any other agency involved with the family. All data collected by DOEE staff are made available to healthcare providers in support of the asthma management or lead poisoning prevention process.

After intake, case managers give families an educational presentation on "healthy homes" concepts, including how to maintain a healthy home, and conduct a visual property assessment, collecting data using a baseline assessment form. If the referral involves a lead poisoning case, DOEE lead risk assessors also conduct a comprehensive risk assessment that identifies any lead-based paint hazards, including lead-contaminated dust and lead-contaminated bare soil, and any lead-in-water issues. Moreover, for all referrals, plans are in place to conduct additional environmental sampling, including for allergens in household dust.

Who Can Enroll in the Program

- Children with severe and/or poorly controlled asthma;
- Children less than 6 years old with a blood lead level of concern; and
- District residents with a child less than 6 or a pregnant household member, whose home contains health and safety threats.

Typically these families live in older homes where maintenance has been deferred, and that may contain one or more of the following:

- Chipping or Peeling Paint
- Mold / Water Damage or Leaks
- Pests (Insects and/or Rodents)
- Excessive Household Clutter
- Recent Renovations to Painted Surfaces
- Structural Safety Concerns
- Cigarette Use / Environmental Tobacco Smoke
- Indoor Climate Control / Ventilation Issues

- [Healthy Homes Referral Form](#)

What Participants Receive

- A home environmental and
- Environmental health education
- Tools and/or supplies for reducing threats
- Assistance in coordinating resources
- Follow up support from DOEE staff
- Tracking through successful hazard remediation

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