



NEWS RELEASE
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Lead Safe Cleveland Coalition Launches Search for Lead Screening and Testing Administrator

CLEVELAND – Today, the Lead Safe Cleveland Coalition (LSCC) released a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) seeking one or more Administrators for a critical new program to increase the blood lead testing rates in the City of Cleveland. The selected Administrator(s) will spearhead efforts to expand and strengthen lead screening, testing, and early intervention services for residents of the City of Cleveland, focusing on the city’s most at-risk populations.

In 2023, Cleveland saw childhood blood lead testing in Cleveland fall to a five-year low. Of the population of children ages one to five, only 32% were tested for lead, and there were approximately 3,500 fewer children tested compared to 2019. Recent data highlight a concerning disparity with testing rates in the eastern neighborhoods of Cleveland significantly lower than those in western neighborhoods. Some neighborhoods on the east side have only reached about half of the 2019 testing rates.

The 2023 data also reveal that 18% of children tested in Cleveland are at, or above, a blood lead level of 3.5 µg/dL, a rate far higher than national averages. LSCC is committed to reversing this trend by increasing lead screening and testing, particularly in these high-risk areas.

Through this RFQ process, the Administrator(s) will oversee three core programs:

1. **Improving Community-Based Lead Screening and Testing** – Focused on increasing testing rates by establishing pediatric medical homes and other community-based health partnerships, this initiative aims to ensure more City of Cleveland residents have easy access to testing and screening services.
2. **Streamlining Lead Safe Education Training** – This program will disseminate a consistent training curriculum for all community-facing workers, ensuring workers and service providers are equipped with the latest lead safety education, knowledge, and practices.
3. **Collaborating with Public Health Authorities** – The Administrator(s) will serve as a centralized coordination point, working closely with the City of Cleveland Department of Health and the Cuyahoga County Board of Health to investigate positive lead tests and ensure timely interventions.

This initiative is part of the LSCC’s broader commitment to addressing Cleveland’s lead poisoning crisis. The introduction of this new program and increased capacity comes in response to the expansion of the Lead Safe Home Fund using ARPA funds. As a pioneering public-private partnership, the Lead Safe Home Fund equips families, property owners, and child care providers with vital resources to create lead safe environments.

Dr. David Margolius, Director of the City of Cleveland Department of Public Health and Chair of the City’s Lead Screening and Testing Commission, emphasized the urgent need for enhancing lead screening and testing efforts in the city. “We must improve our ability to identify and screen for elevated

blood lead levels so we can intervene earlier and advance better outcomes for our youngest residents,” said Dr. Margolius. “The Lead Screening and Testing Administrator will play a significant role in driving these improvements, ensuring that Cleveland’s children are protected from the harmful long-term effects of lead exposure.”

Ayonna Blue Donald, Lead Safe Cleveland Coalition Steering Committee Member and Vice President and Ohio Market Leader for Enterprise Community Partners, underscored the Coalition’s commitment:

“The Lead Safe Cleveland Coalition is fully committed to preventing lead exposure in every child. With the support of the City of Cleveland, we’re excited to introduce this new RFQ to build our lead screening and testing capacity. This program moves us closer to improving the health of our children and families and making our communities safer,” said Blue Donald.

The RFQ is available at www.lead safecle.org/rfq. All mission-driven organizations are encouraged to apply. Ideal respondents should have a proven history of authentic community engagement, collaboration with health care providers, and experience managing citywide services or programs. The deadline for submission is November 13, 2024.

LSCC will host a virtual pre-response conference for those interested in learning more about the RFQ. The session will be held on October 31, 2024, from 1:00-2:00 pm.

For additional questions or to register for the pre-response conference, please email lead safecleveland@gmail.com.

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About the Lead Safe Cleveland Coalition

The Lead Safe Cleveland Coalition is a public-private partnership formed in 2019 to address the public health crisis of lead poisoning in our community. The cornerstone of the Coalition’s work is supporting the City of Cleveland’s Lead Safe Certification law which requires residential rental properties built before 1978 to be proactively certified as lead safe. Lead is an environmental toxin that affects the brain, heart, bones, kidneys, and nervous system, and there are no safe levels once it is in the bloodstream. The Coalition is implementing an alternative, preventative approach that saves money and protects Cleveland’s children from lead poisoning. LSCC is open to everyone and comprises more than 500 members and 150 organizations, state and local governments, and families impacted by lead. To learn more, go to <https://lead safecle.org/>. Email: info@lead safecle.org. Social Media: @LeadSafeCLE.