

Wisconsin Biennial Budget 2021-2023
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY of Requests from COLE (Coalition on Lead Emergency) *

Whereas lead poisoning at or above 5 micrograms of lead per deciliter (5µg/dL) of blood can cause permanent cognitive damage, behavioral problems, higher school suspension rates, health issues, and increased incarceration for violent crimes;

Whereas lead poisoning in children costs WI taxpayers \$7 billion in costs for medical treatments, special education, and crime and juvenile delinquency;ⁱ

Whereas lead exposure to children ages 1-6 is mainly due to interior and exterior dust from deteriorating lead-based paint (in homes built before 1978 or earlier), while lead exposure to children under age 1 can have especially high contributions from lead pipes (“service lines”) and other lead-containing plumbing that carries drinking water; and

Whereas lead-poisoned children are found in every Wisconsin countyⁱⁱ

Therefore, the Coalition on Lead Emergency (COLE) requests the following items be included in the Wisconsin Biennial Budget for 2021–2023:

1) \$20.3 million over the biennium for LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENTS - to increase current interventions for children and families:

- *\$9.5 million to increase testing Wisconsin children at risk for lead poisoning;*ⁱⁱⁱ
- *\$900,000 additional to educate parents about lead hazards and lead poisoning prevention;*
- *\$9.9 million increase over the biennium to expand services in the Birth to 3 Program to support education and development of children affected by lead poisoning.*

2) \$23.8 million over the biennium to REDUCE LEAD POISONING BY PAINT – and add \$20 million in federal matching funds:

- *\$11.8 million additional funding for local health departments to conduct lead hazard investigations and issue lead abatement orders for homes endangering children;*
- *At least \$8 million as a state revenue match to leverage an additional \$20 million in federal dollars (CHIP) for the Lead-Safe Homes program, to fund remediation of deteriorating lead-based paint hazards and increase associated workforce development;*
- *\$4 million plus 1 position in ongoing funding for the Windows Plus Program, to fund remediation of friction surfaces that grind lead paint into dust (like windows).*

3) At least \$40 million over the biennium to REPLACE LEAD SERVICE LINES - to reduce the risk to children and especially to formula-fed newborns and infants. ^{iv}

Sincerely,



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**COLE member organizations include Milwaukee Water Commons, Wisconsin Conservation Voters, Interfaith Earth Network, Hephatha Lutheran Church, Clean Wisconsin, MICAH, Dominican Center, League of Women Voters of Milwaukee County, Community Advocates, Wisconsin Green Muslims, African American Breastfeeding Network, Midwest Environmental Advocates, and MacCanon Brown Homeless Sanctuary.*



Coalition on Lead Emergency

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ⁱ 2014 *Report on Childhood Lead Poisoning in Wisconsin*. Wisconsin Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program, 2014, www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/publications/p01202-14.pdf, p.6

ⁱⁱ 2016 *Report on Childhood Lead Poisoning in Wisconsin*. Wisconsin Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program, 2016, www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/publications/p01202-16.pdf, p.12

ⁱⁱⁱ Wisconsin Public Health Association estimates that as many as 35% of all WI children meet the criteria for lead testing (they are on Medicaid or WIC [qualify if under 133%-185% of the federal poverty level], living in a home built before 1950 (or before 1978 with recent renovations), living in Milwaukee or Racine, or having a sibling with elevated blood lead). The State of Wisconsin criteria for testing children for elevated blood lead are at <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/lead/test-your-child.htm>

^{iv} The EPA estimates that drinking water can provide up to 20 percent or more of a person's total exposure to lead. However, for newborns who consume mixed formula as their only source of nutrition, lead service lines can be especially harmful. Infants in their primary stage of brain development receive 40 to 60 percent of their lead exposure from drinking/formula water as described at <https://www.epa.gov/ground-water-and-drinking-water/basic-information-about-lead-drinking-water>