

NEWS RELEASE

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City of San Diego awarded \$7 million federal grant to help eliminate lead-based paint hazards in housing

SAN DIEGO - The San Diego Housing Commission, on behalf of the City of San Diego, has been awarded \$7 million from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Department (HUD) to help protect residents from lead paint hazards.

The funding will enable the Housing Commission to continue to operate the City's Lead Safe San Diego Program – with the goal of eliminating lead hazards in over 516 residences built before 1978 over the next three years. Grants ranging from \$5,000 to \$10,000 per unit will be available for owner-occupied and rental housing. Eligibility for the program is based on family size and income, and targets homes in which children under the age of six reside.

“Keeping homes safe is a high priority for us, and that’s what this program is about,” said Rick Gentry, San Diego Housing Commission President & CEO.

The Lead Safe San Diego Program is an ongoing collaborative effort between the City of San Diego and other organizations all working toward the goal of eliminating lead poisoning as a major health concern. The program is administered by the San Diego Housing Commission in conjunction with the Environmental Health Coalition, the City of San Diego Environmental Services, the County of San Diego Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program and other program partners.

“Environmental Health Coalition has a long history of working with low-income families to protect children from the dangers of lead-based hazards found in older homes. As a program partner, the coalition’s role encompasses community outreach and education, as well as trainings related to lead-safe repairs and renovations. Lead poisoning is a silent disease affecting many children in San Diego. The good news is that it is completely preventable,” said Leticia Ayala, campaign director for Environmental Health Coalition.

Many homes built before 1978 have lead-based paint – which can become hazardous if it is peeling, chipping, chalking, cracking or damaged. Lead poisoning is a serious problem that threatens the health of residents, especially children. Children under the age of six are at higher risk for lead poisoning because their bodies absorb more lead, and because their hand-to-mouth activities increase exposure. Even small amounts of lead can have severe effects on a child’s nervous system – and can cause brain damage, learning disabilities, reduced muscle and bone growth and hearing loss. Higher levels of exposure can cause devastating effects including seizures, unconsciousness and even death.

By removing lead hazards and properly maintaining any remaining lead surfaces in a dwelling, lead exposure can be reduced or eliminated. The mission of Lead Safe San Diego is to reduce or eliminate exposure to lead hazards in as many residences in the City of San Diego as

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possible while focusing on target areas where there is a high concentration of older housing stock that is known to contain lead. To date, the Lead Safe San Diego Program has eliminated lead hazards in over 735 San Diego homes.

For more information about the Lead Safe San Diego Program, contact the San Diego Housing Commission, 619.578.7521.

The San Diego Housing Commission is a public agency working to expand affordable housing opportunities in the City of San Diego. Each year, the agency helps 80,000 low-income individuals with affordable housing through award-winning programs that benefit the city's economy and revitalize neighborhoods. The Housing Commission also finances affordable housing development and advises the San Diego City Council on housing policy matters.

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