

# Alabama Healthy Housing Fact Sheet

## The Need in Alabama:

Alabama has the sixth highest percentage of housing units with low income in the country (17 percent) and the eighth highest ratio of children under five living in poverty (32 percent). Over one-third of Alabama children live in households with high housing cost burden.<sup>i</sup> Out of 45 metropolitan areas in the U.S., Birmingham ranks 42nd for the greatest percentage of homes with moderate or severe housing hazards, based on American Housing Survey data. Compared to the national average, the Birmingham metro area has more homes with signs of rats and mice, flush toilet and sewage disposal breakdown, lack of complete kitchen facilities, and roofing, siding, and window problems. Half of all homes in Birmingham were built prior to 1980 and are likely to contain lead-based paint. These factors make Alabama a high housing hazard state. Unhealthy housing conditions can lead to lead poisoning, injuries, and asthma and other respiratory problems. These health problems in turn result in missed school days and poor school performance, and missed work days for parents.

## Funding for Healthy Housing in Alabama:

- Alabama has received a total of \$9,156,716<sup>ii</sup> in funding for four grants from HUD's Office of Healthy Homes and Lead Hazard Control since the inception of the grants program in 1999. All of the grantees were either the City of Birmingham or Jefferson County.

## Childhood Lead Poisoning<sup>iii</sup>:

- According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, in 2010, approximately 40,000 Alabama children were tested for lead and over 2,000 had high blood lead levels (above 5 micrograms/deciliter).

## Asthma<sup>iv</sup>:

- In 2007, an estimated 137,091 children in Alabama had asthma. Child asthma prevalence was 12.3 percent compared with the U.S. rate of 9.0 percent.<sup>v</sup>
- Asthma prevalence rates in Alabama are increasing, and the state's rates for both lifetime and current asthma now exceed those for the U.S. as a whole.
- Asthma is a costly disease for Alabama. Of the 93,437 children enrolled in the Alabama Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) in 2007, 5,340 (or 5.7 percent of the total membership) received medical services for asthma. The total cost to CHIP for asthma-related treatment services in 2007 was approximately \$2.2 million, or 2.7 percent of total service expenditures for the program.

If full funding is not made available for the Office of Healthy Housing and Lead Control program at HUD in FY 2013 and beyond, the health of Alabamians will continue to be at risk and the associated health care costs will continue to increase. Allocating \$25 million in funding for HUD's healthy homes program out of the \$120 million total for that office will enable the State of Alabama to address the healthy housing issues described above.

<sup>i</sup> The Annie E. Casey Foundation, *2012 Kids Count Data Book*, <http://datacenter.kidscount.org/DataBook/2012/OnlineBooks/ForMedia/StateProfiles/2012KCstateprofileAL.pdf>

<sup>ii</sup> U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Healthy Homes and Lead Hazard Control, Grants provided to the State of Alabama, Personal communication, May 6, 2013.

<sup>iii</sup> Alabama Department of Public Health, *2012 Annual Report*, 2012. <http://adph.org/publications/assets/2012annrpt.pdf>

<sup>iv</sup> Alabama Department of Public Health, Alabama Asthma Burden Document. <http://www.adph.org/asthma/assets/OriginalAsthmaBurdenDocument.pdf>

<sup>v</sup> [http://www.cdc.gov/asthma/stateprofiles/Asthma\\_in\\_AL.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/asthma/stateprofiles/Asthma_in_AL.pdf)