



National Safe and Healthy
Housing Coalition

FY 2013 Labor HHS Appropriations
CDC National Center for Environmental Health
Healthy Homes and Lead Poisoning Prevention Program

| Program | Appropriation | | | President's Request | Coalition Request |
|---|---------------|----------|---------|-----------------------------------|-------------------|
| | FY 10 | FY 11 | FY 12 | FY 13 | FY 13 |
| Healthy Homes and Lead Poisoning Prevention | \$34,805 | \$29,257 | \$1,995 | \$0 | \$29,257 |
| Healthy Homes and Community Environments | | | | \$27,316 (with Asthma Program) | |

Recommendation: Provide \$29 million for the Healthy Homes and Lead Poisoning Prevention Program. Restoring the program to the FY 11 funding level will ensure protection of children at highest risk of lead poisoning.

Background: Lead poisoning remains a significant environmental public health threat. Although the prevalence of elevated blood levels has significantly declined from the 1970s, when 88% of children had excessive lead in their bodies, despite our best efforts, today nearly **450,000 children need CDC-funded services to reduce their exposures.**

Lead poisoning causes cognitive and behavioral problems, such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. Children with harmful blood lead levels will **lose 3 to 4 I.Q. points** on average, which can make the difference between a high D average and a low C. Children with a history of lead poisoning are **six times more likely to drop out of school.** Children with lead poisoning also have cardiovascular, immunological, and endocrine effects. Ultimately, lead exposure costs the nation more than **\$50 billion in lost lifetime productivity.**

African American children are nearly **three times as likely to be lead poisoned** as Caucasian children and **children in low-income households** are **twice as likely** to be lead poisoned.

Justification: During the last two decades, CDC has delivered a cost-effective program to prevent lead poisoning and help children who have already been exposed. CDC is the only agency that houses the information about where, how, and when children are poisoned. Between 1997 and 2008, CDC's lead program served **850,000 children** with dangerous blood lead levels (greater than or equal to 10 µg/dL). In the most recent year, recipients of CDC grants tested more than **four million children** for lead and conducted **case management for nearly 30,000 children.** The services provided by health department staff (nurses, social workers, and environmental health professionals), include environmental assessments of the child's home to identify the source of exposure, enforcement of local health laws to clean-up of hazardous properties, and referrals of property owners to remediation resources (such as the HUD lead grant program). The health department programs also provide ongoing education and guidance to local officials, families, and health care providers to ensure that children receive appropriate screenings and, most importantly, prevent lead poisoning cases.

CDC's epidemiologists, blood lead laboratory proficiency program, and surveillance system are collectively poised to monitor the disease. Without these resources, children exposed will not be treated. It was CDC's program that identified lead-contaminated toys as a source of exposure, and CDC was first on the scene to address lead poisoning among refugee families. Internationally, CDC has been the lead organization to provide emergency response to the lead epidemic in Nigeria, where several hundred children have died from lead poisoning.