



Strategies for Continuing Healthy Homes Activities While Social Distancing

Within the healthy housing field, there is an intense interest in learning about innovative adaptations and new ways to continue healthy homes activities during this time of social distancing (also called “physical distancing”). In response to this interest, requests for information and tools, and ongoing conversations between the National Center for Healthy Housing (NCHH) and multiple stakeholders across several of our key initiatives, we’ve published this peer-sharing series entitled Strategies for Continuing Healthy Homes Activities While Social Distancing. The examples highlighted in this series provide not only a firsthand perspective of the exciting work undertaken by this and other change leaders around the country to develop new strategies or layer additional components into larger systems but also a way to contact them for additional information. Use these real-world strategies as a resource to maintain, improve, and expand healthy housing activities or when considering your own local possibilities during this difficult time.

City of Buffalo, NY: Good Neighbors Network

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Strategy Goal

At the beginning of the pandemic and Buffalo’s stay-at-home order, the City of Buffalo started the Good Neighbors Network as a way to connect people with services and allow others to check on them. The goals were to ensure that people would make use of the city’s services and to reach those who may otherwise be isolated.

Description

The Good Neighbors Network tasked volunteers with dropping off door hangers on properties located in the most at-risk (for COVID-19) neighborhoods in the city. Each hanger had information about city services and suggested that people call 311 with non-urgent needs. Recipients could flip the door hanger over to signal that a wellness check was needed. Volunteers checked the doors 24 hours after drop-off to see if any door hangers had been flipped over.

As a result of this intervention, there was an observed uptick in 311 calls but not an overwhelming response otherwise.

The Good Neighbors Network was started quickly as a first response to the pandemic. In the following weeks and months, the City of Buffalo also ordered materials for and assembled 2,500 cleaning kits. The city also created new fliers and outreach materials outlining several simple steps to *4 Steps to a Healthy Home* and reduce risks of both lead hazards and COVID-19; a copy of the English version of the flier is attached. The fliers were also translated into six languages (Arabic, Burmese, Karen, Nepali, Somali, and Spanish); all are available on the program website at <https://www.buffalony.gov/629/Lead-Information>. Distribution of the cleaning kits was accomplished by city staff who were unable to carry out their typical functions, including two interior rental inspectors and a lead community education specialist. The city also partnered with other organizations for distribution. Like the initial door hangers, the fliers directed people to the city’s 311 program.

Materials, Supplies, and Capacity Needed

- Printed door hangers, fliers, and other informational materials.
- Cleaning kits.
- Volunteers to deliver door hangers and kits and to check on status of door hangers.
- Existing 311 system or other system that can handle an increase in calls.

Resources

- City of Buffalo COVID-19 Resources: <https://covid19.buffalony.gov/>.
- City of Buffalo Lead Information: <https://www.buffalony.gov/629/Lead-Information>.
- Example Informational Flier: *4 Steps to a Healthy Home* (attached).

For additional examples and resources related to the COVID-19 pandemic, visit ...

https://bit.ly/NCHH_Pandemics

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The National Center for Healthy Housing makes no claims of medical or legal expertise and cannot claim that these protections are adequate. For medical questions, consult a qualified healthcare worker; for legal issues, seek proper legal advice.

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4 Steps to a Healthy Home

Did you know homes built in Buffalo before 1978 likely have lead paint?

Paint chips and dust with lead may be harmful.

Follow these simple steps to make your home lead-safe today.

1

Clean windows

Lead dust likes to collect here. Use a wet towel to wipe up dust around your window sill.



2

Wipe down toys and objects

Spend 5 minutes each day wiping down toys, pacifiers, and household objects that may be dusty.



Wash hands

Children and adults should wash their hands regularly, especially before eating or making food.

3

4

Leave your shoes at the door

Shoes can track in outside lead dust or soil from nearby building work.

