



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.

Isles, Inc.: Virtual Lead and Healthy Homes Inspections and Resident Education During COVID-19

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Strategy Goal

The singular broad goal of this strategy is to provide lead and healthy homes services to the community while maintaining physical distancing.

Description

In response to the fear many residents have about allowing community health workers (CHWs) into their homes during COVID, we’ve piloted a virtual approach to performing lead and healthy homes assessments. In addition, we’ve produced and delivered hundreds of facemasks and provided food/school supplies to our healthy homes customers. For more information, see <https://isles.org/response-services/>.

Isles is still offering interior home assessments — with only one CHW instead of two, practicing social distancing, wearing masks, and utilizing other recommended personal protective equipment (PPE) — however, when residents are not comfortable with interior assessments, we offer virtual assessments through video conferencing and exterior assessments.

Assessments are performed using video phone apps (such as FaceTime, GoToMeeting, and Skype). Isles’ CHWs come to the exterior of the home and test sills and other wood surfaces for lead (our lead program allows us to remediate both interior and exterior surfaces). Residents then walk through their homes with video on and works with the CHWs to identify any issues in rooms using our visual assessment form questions (relating to musty smell, clutter, deteriorated paint, water intrusion, and signs of pests). The CHWs also surveys the residents, providing resident education concerning any issues found. Lead education is delivered based on the condition of both interior

and exterior paint and whether lead-based paint is found. If lead-based paint is detected, the resident can apply to the lead remediation program immediately. We are also using DocuSign and CamScanner to assist in customers' filling out and signing applications and providing backup documentation (such as proof of income and employment). The positive part of this is that the resident is more engaged in the process because they are an active participant in the process (by identifying hazards); however, the whole process is more difficult and time consuming for everyone.

Materials, Supplies, and Capacity Needed

- Smart phone (generally our customers do not have computers or good Wi-Fi) and ability to use different video apps.
- Software to process and sign applications, such as DocuSign and CamScanner.
- Healthy homes kit.
- Trained community health workers. Isles offers "home visitors" an online *Healthy Homes for Community Health Workers* course that is delivered through a webinar and the use of an interactive [online learning platform](#).



Healthy Homes for Community Health Workers -Online

The Healthy Homes for Community Health Workers course is intended for individuals who work as health advocates in their communities, whether they are community health workers, weatherization technicians, health educators, public health nurses, social workers or other home visitors.

Through self-paced, online learning and by exploring their own homes, students will learn to provide advice about specific healthy homes problems and be able to recommend solutions to families, landlords and community members. Participants will gain insight into how housing and health are related and actions they can take to improve the health of their clients by identifying causes of health problems in a home.

Each principle will have a slide presentation followed by a combination of supplementary videos, quizzes, readings, and discussions.

After an introductory webinar, students will continue at their own pace. Estimated time to complete the class is a minimum of 6 hours.

In order to receive a Certificate of Completion, students will attend a final live webinar and complete a home assessment of their residence as a "final project".

isles Center for Energy and
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Resources

- Example announcement: *Healthy Homes for Community Health Workers—Online* (at right).
- Example informational flier: *Virtual Home Health Assessments and Repairs* (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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Virtual Home Health Assessments and Repairs

1 **FREE Lead and Healthy Homes Assessment**

Call to schedule a **safe and remote VIRTUAL or in-person** home assessment to identify any hazards in your home that may be harmful to your family -- things such as lead, asthma and allergy triggers, mold and moisture or other dangers. Virtual assessments are done by phone with one of our community health workers.



2 **FREE Lead & Structural Repairs**

If lead or other health hazards are identified, **and** you are income qualified, Isles may be able to offer you lead & structural repairs. Typical measures include window or door replacements, roofing repairs, lead paint removal and other structural improvements. IF YOU QUALIFY, you may be eligible for \$12,000 or more in home repairs. Renters can also receive services with landlord permission. (See FAQ)



3 **FREE Weatherization Services**

Renters and home owners who qualify **may** receive \$7,000 (or more!) in energy efficiency upgrades and services such as insulation, air sealing, heating system repair or replacement, unsafe stove or refrigerator replacement. Energy efficiency measures can **save you an average of \$400/year in energy costs!** We can also give you referrals to no-cost solar programs that can save you even more!



Assessments can be done in-home or on your phone and take only 1 hour.

Home assessments are done at a time that is convenient for YOU.

FAQ



What is this project?

Isles is offering no cost lead and home health assessments, lead safe repairs and weatherization services for Mercer County **home owners and renters**. It all starts with a home assessment that takes about an hour and can be scheduled at a time convenient for you. Assessments can now be scheduled to be done "virtually" using your phone.



What services does Isles provide?

Free structural & home health assessment, lead paint and water testing

\$50 value

Free gift bag - plus information on how to keep your family safe from asthma triggers and lead

\$25 value

Replacement or repair for roofs, gutters, windows, and doors.
Free lead paint removal*

Up to \$12,000 of free repairs

Insulation and air sealing, furnace or hot water heater repair or replacement and other energy saving measures*

\$7,000 of free repairs

* Examples of potential repairs and replacements. Approved measures are determined by program funding source and inspection outcome. Not all needed home repairs may qualify or be performed.



Who qualifies for these services?

Lead and Healthy Homes Assessments: ALL Mercer County residents are eligible. Renters do not need landlord approval to receive health and safety assessments.

Lead Safe Repairs: ALL Trenton home owners or renters who meet the income guidelines below are eligible. Landlord approval is needed for any work performed, but the income of the renter is used to determine eligibility.

Weatherization: All Mercer County home owners or renter who meet income guidelines below are eligible. Landlord approval is needed for any work performed.

Lead Services income cap by household size: 1: \$54,950 2: \$62,800 3: \$70,650 4: \$78,500 5: \$84,800 6: \$91,100

Weatherization income cap by household size: 1: \$25,520 2: \$34,480 3: \$43,440 4: \$52,400 5: \$61,360 6: \$70,320



How much will it cost?

There is no cost to the renter or owners who live in their homes. Landlords may be asked for a contribution toward weatherization services, based on NJ DCA and DOE program rules.



How can I participate?

Call to schedule your home assessment at a time that is convenient for you. Assessments can be done in-home or virtually and take only 1 hour.

Contact us:
Cherie Hooks 609-341-4756
or email chooks@isles.org