

Lead Poisoning Prevention Partners - FAQ

1. I understand that lead is an issue and I support Isles working to eliminate it, but what does it have to do with my community organization and my constituents?

The issue of lead cuts across so many sectors. To name a few:

- **Housing:**

In New Jersey, up to 80% of lead exposure comes from lead-based paint dust in homes and buildings built before 1978. **Lead poisoning happens primarily in the home** through chipping lead paint and water. Because children spend roughly 70% of their time indoors, for those living in substandard housing with issues like lead paint, the home can be the most dangerous place for them. Housing affordability and accessibility are vital, but we can take it a step further by making sure these homes are lead-safe and healthy.

- **Health:**

Lead is especially dangerous to children under the age of six. Children can swallow lead dust or paint chips in the home as they eat, play, and do other normal hand-to-mouth activities. It is important to know that even exposure to low levels of lead can severely harm children. **Lead affects the body in many ways, and there is no cure for a child who has been poisoned by lead.** In children, exposure to lead can cause:

- Nervous system and kidney damage
- Learning disabilities, attention deficit disorder, and decreased intelligence
- Speech, language, and behavior problems
- Poor muscle coordination
- Decreased muscle and bone growth
- Hearing damage
- While low-lead exposure is most common, exposure to high amounts of lead can have devastating effects on children, including seizures, unconsciousness, and, in some cases, death.

Although children are especially susceptible to lead exposure, lead can be dangerous for adults, too. In adults exposure to lead can cause:

- Harm to a developing fetus
- Increased chance of high blood pressure during pregnancy
- Fertility problems (in men and women)
- High blood pressure
- Digestive problems
- Nerve disorders
- Memory and concentration problems
- Muscle and joint pain

Your Regional EPA Office can provide further information regarding lead safety and lead protection programs at epa.gov/lead. Region 2 (New Jersey, New York, Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands) (732) 321-6671.

- **Education:**

Lead negatively affects academic performance, increases the chances of all types of learning disabilities, and can cause speech and language problems for children. Over time, the effects will increase the [disparity in educational outcomes](#) between children who have been poisoned by lead and those who have not. Of more than 11,000 students in Trenton Public School District, 51% have enough lead in their blood to impact developmental and educational outcomes. Children with blood lead levels at the national lead reference level of 5 mg/dl of lead in their blood are 30% more likely to fail 3rd grade reading and math tests, and lead-poisoned children are seven times more likely to drop out of school.

In November, Isles and the Woodrow Wilson School of Public & International Affairs held a first-of-its-kind conference on Lead and Education. Speakers explored the impact of lead exposure on a child's developing brain, including lead's relationship to behavior problems and test scores. They also explored what schools, families, and communities could do to mitigate these impacts. Watch conference videos below:

- [The Impact of Lead Exposure on our Students - What Schools Can Do \(Public Education\)](#)
- [The Impact of Lead Exposure to Students' Brain and School Performance \(Neuroscience and Public Affairs\)](#)
- [What Schools and Parents can do to Mitigate the Impact of Lead Exposure \(Public Health and Developmental Disabilities\)](#)
- [On the Ground from Flint - How Educators are Responding \(Public Health\)](#)
- [Lead Related Education Law and Policy \(Advocacy and Law\)](#)

- **Violence Reduction:**

Lead also impairs the part of the brain that regulates behavior and mood. **It is associated with impulsiveness, aggression, and higher rates of criminal behavior.** If you consider these effects, lead is a serious but hidden contributing factor to increased violence in inner cities with older housing stock.

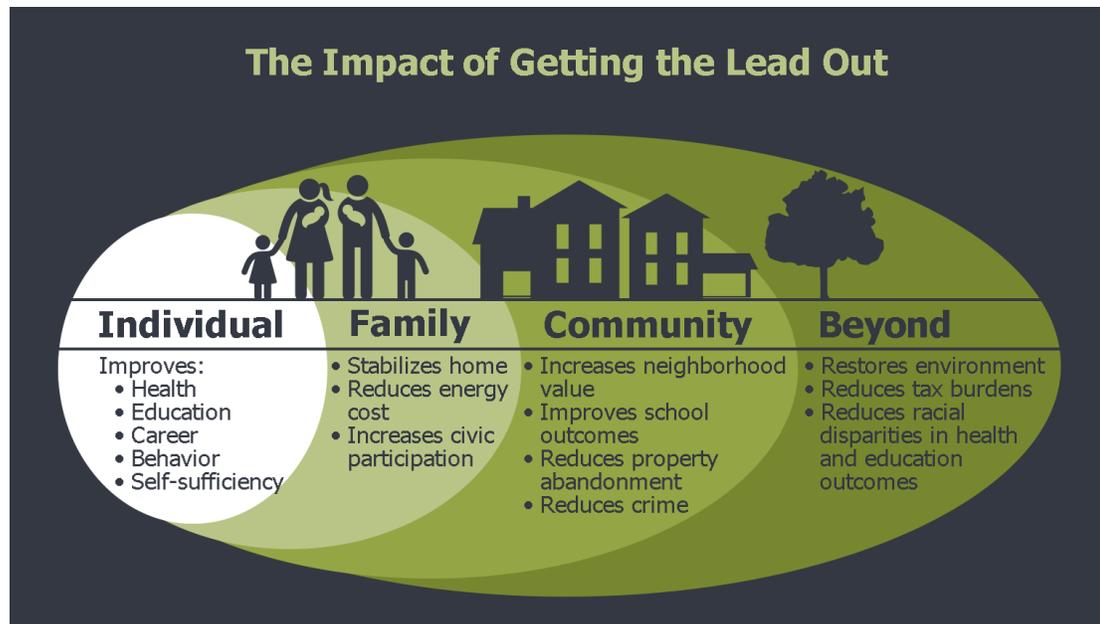
In the U.S., the removal of lead from paint in 1978 and the final phase-out of lead in gasoline by 1986, resulted in a dramatic reduction in blood lead levels of children. As lead began to leave the environment, violent crimes in the general population went down. Numerous studies link the removal of lead in paint and gasoline to up to 90% of the [reduction of violent crimes](#) in the 1990s. However, the issue of lead is still prevalent in the environment in older housing stock, plumbing, and soil.

- **City of Trenton**

Lastly, if you are invested in the community of Trenton--its improvement and success, lead is a root issue that touches so many of the elements of a healthy community: the state of housing, wellbeing of children, crime rates, and educational outcomes, which can affect career and economic opportunities.

Out of the more than 1400 homes Isles tested in Trenton, more than 60% had enough lead present to affect a child's IQ. In the 2012-13 school year, 15% of Trenton kindergarteners had levels above the national lead reference level of 5 mg/dl. Children with this amount

of lead in their blood are 30% more likely to fail 3rd grade reading and math tests. Lead-poisoned children are seven times more likely to drop out of school and six times more likely to become involved in the juvenile justice system. See the infographic below to see the ripple effect of addressing the issue of lead one Trenton child at a time.



2. What can our organization do about it? How do we help our constituents protect their children from lead poisoning?

Isles offers free lead testing as a part of our larger healthy homes assessment. This means we can come and test Trenton homes for lead for free, and we incentivize this great service by offering anyone who signs up \$5, a healthy homes gift bag. Our trained community workers will let your constituents know about the health of their home and share tips with them on how to keep their home and their family healthy. What we don't want is to find lead in the home after the child has already been poisoned. Encourage your clients to be proactive about keeping their children safe. They can sign up at www.isles.org/services/healthy-homes-lead-asthma or by calling 609-341-4756.

3. What happens if you do find lead in my client's home? Many of my clients won't have the funds to do anything about it.

Through partners like **the City of Trenton**, Isles has the funds to actually remediate these homes (make it lead safe) at no cost to the homeowner.

4. Do they have to pay any money up front for these services?

No.

5. Who is eligible for this service?

There is an income cap depending on the number of people in a household.

For a family of 1, the income limit is \$46,000

2 - \$52,600

3 - \$59,150

4 - \$65,700

5 - \$71,000

6. Do renters qualify?

Yes. We are happy to do a free healthy home assessment on a rental property. However, in order to complete the lead abatement work, the landlord will have to agree to participate, and we cannot do abatements on public housing or multiple dwelling units. It's a win-win situation for the landlord and the tenant.

7. What about timing? How long does the testing take? During what hours? Many of my clients work all day and may not be able to take time off to be at home.

The assessment takes about an hour and we work with you, so we can come during the day, evening or on weekends.

8. I work with a primarily Hispanic population, are there Spanish-speaking staff?

Yes! Hablamos espanol.

9. Who are these community workers, and do my clients need to share any personal info with you to get their home tested?

Our community health workers live or work in Trenton and are specially trained by Isles to complete healthy home assessments. When they come to your home to do an assessment they are only concerned with you and your family's health and will not be asking for personal information that doesn't deal with health. For instance, they may ask if you have any pets, as that could affect asthma and allergies, but we are there strictly concerned with health. If lead is found during the assessment, they would need to provide information to receive the lead abatement work.

10. How would my clients sign up?

They can visit www.isles.org and click on Free lead testing, or call 609-341-4726

11. How can I share this information about lead and lead testing with my clients?

Isles has flyers, postcards, pens, and we'd be happy to send over someone to speak to those you serve or table at your event. You can visit our website www.isles.org/LPPP which stands for lead poisoning prevention partners, and find all of these materials and a way to reach out to our staff. We hope you will partner with us in getting the word out about this important service to keep your clients and our community safe from the threat of lead.