



# ONONDAGA COUNTY Lead Poisoning Prevention Initiatives

## Contractor Recruitment and Training

Onondaga County organizes and funds EPA trainings for individuals working in home built before 1978. Since July 2023, 215 individuals received the Renovation Repair and Painting certification. This course teaches individuals how to use lead safe work practices in homes where lead-based paint may be disturbed, or where open lead violations exist. Additionally, 30 Syracuse City School District (SCSD) students received this certification. Home Headquarters (HHQ) was given funding to cover 15 RRP scholarships.

The EPA Lead Abatement Supervisor course was provided to 25 contractors. This course is required for companies looking to receive bid opportunities for the HUD grants. The Lead Abatement Worker course was provided to 18 workers. This course provides training for those working for a certified Lead Abatement Supervisor.

Follow-up with certified individuals occurs to assess post-training needs and collaboration with community partners exists to provide wrap-around services. The County will continue to offer the RRP course monthly, and the Abatement courses quarterly.

## Testing

Testing strategies focus on removing barriers to public health services. Both mobile and on-site testing is available in neighborhood locations to ensure blood lead testing services are available where, when, and how people are most likely to engage. The use of point-of-care testing devices provides rapid, onsite results, resulting in timely identification and response to children with elevated blood lead levels.

On-site testing is available monthly at the OCHD WIC Gifford Street location, the Civic Center Immunization Clinic, Tucker Missionary Baptist Church, and the Sankofa Health and Wellness Center. Additional neighborhood-based locations are under development.

During the spring of the 2024 academic year, Onondaga County partnered with the Syracuse City School District (SCSD) to organize blood level testing events. These events were made available to all 3 and 4-year-old SCSD students enrolled in Pre-K.

## Lead Hazard Reduction (LHR) Grant

The county administers the LHR Grant from HUD. Since 2020, 163 units were remediated, and 68 additional units are in the pipeline for remediation. The county has also assisted with the production of 144 units under the City's grant with approximately 53 units more in the pipeline.

## Windows and Doors

Onondaga County partners with HHQ and the Central New York Community Foundation to sustain the existing "Windows and Doors program". Funds were allocated to **24 rental units** under this program. An expansion of this program exists to provide full remediation in homes the Health Department identifies a need based on affected children residing. **4 units have been referred as part of that program so far with more in the pipeline.**

## **Foster Home Connection**

Onondaga County has set aside funding for properties where DCFS and the Lead Poisoning Prevention team have inspected and identified lead hazards that are prohibiting foster services from being provided. Onondaga County will follow similar protocol to that of the HUD grant to remediate the hazards, free of charge, for the residents. Currently, **seven homes** have been identified and are going through this pilot program.

## **Lead Safe CNY Coalition**

Onondaga County leveraged its relationship with the National Center for Healthy Housing to facilitate a strategic planning meeting in September of 2022. This resulted in the Lead Safe CNY Coalition's re-emergence with sub-committees assigned to carry out the strategic initiatives set during the planning meeting. The resulting synergy allowed for education efforts, blood lead testing promotion, contractor training and outreach, and data research to better inform the community of efforts to address/prevent childhood lead poisoning.

In December of 2023, the group reconvened for an annual review of the coalition's progress and to establish 2024 goals. Working committees were restructured to align overlapping strategies, and a committee specifically for affected families was created.

## **Staffing**

Funding was provided to support staff carrying out crucial programming. Staff additions in 2023 are as follows: Public Health Educator, Care Coordination Supervisor, Community Health Counselor, two additional inspectors, two additional case management positions, and two additional staff to assist with community testing activity. The program is evolving to meet the identified needs of the community.

## **Lead It Go**

This will be the second program of its kind in New York State, offering supportive enrichment services to families of a child with elevated blood lead levels. The program will begin providing services to families in 2024.

