



Revenue & Budget

Lead abatement & remediation in the 2022-23 budget

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Policy Matters Ohio recommendation: *Eliminate lead poisoning; Increase funding for lead-free initiatives.*

Outcome: *Progress made, but funding remains inadequate relative to need.*

There's a third epidemic in Ohio, in addition to COVID and substance abuse: lead poisoning. It is a serious public health threat — especially to children — in urban and rural communities across the state. The Ohio Department of Health's 2020-22 State Health Improvement Plan prioritizes reduction of chronic diseases including lead poisoning, which comes from lead paint in older homes and from water lines that contain lead.¹ The Minority Health Strikeforce's Blueprint highlighted the need for state policy and funding to stem lead poisoning.² A recent study found that Ohio has the second highest share of children afflicted with lead poisoning among all the states. In Ohio, 5.2% of kids are lead poisoned, compared to a national average of 1.9%.³

Lawmakers added \$5 million in the 2022-23 Ohio budget to mitigate lead poisoning, bringing dedicated funding for lead abatement, assessment, and mitigation to \$25 million. They also continued a tax credit for lead abatement. Lawmakers failed to take measures that would have enabled the state to enforce better lead-safe work practices. New and preserved funding sources, as well as opportunities for further lead prevention efforts, include:

- **Lead Abatement programming:** Lawmakers increased funding for lead abatement programming to \$13. million, most of which will be used for a new, statewide Lead Safe Housing Fund to advance primary prevention strategies for lead poisoning in up to nine communities across Ohio. Other new uses for lead abatement funding include \$250,000 for non-Medicaid lead poisoning investigations, \$250,000 for lead plumbing fixture replacements, and \$535,000 for a lead media campaign.
- **Medicaid Funding:** The SCHIP Lead Program helps support the removal of lead paint hazards in homes built before 1978 with children under 6 years old or pregnant women. The Ohio Department of Medicaid preserved funding for the SCHIP Lead Program at \$10 million (\$5 million a year). Advocates previously asked lawmakers to increase SCHIP funding to \$20 million to target more homes and meet demand for program services. Any allocations above \$10 million require approval from the Controlling Board.

Local programs

- **Lead abatement pilots:** The Lead Safe Cleveland Coalition received \$2 million for their Lead Safe Home Fund program, which provides Cleveland families and property owners with the resources they

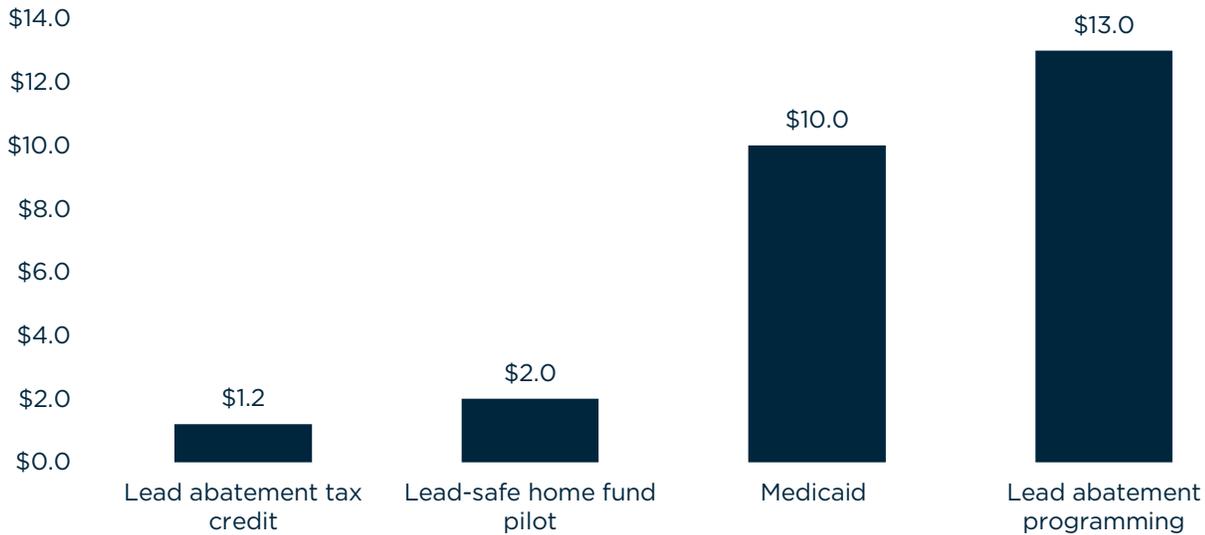
¹ State Health Improvement Plan 2020-22 at <https://odh.ohio.gov/static/SHIP/2020-2022/2020-2022-SHIP.pdf>.

² More than a mask: Minority Health Strike Force Blueprint < Ohio Department of Health at <https://bit.ly/2VFcoMK>.

³ Zuckerman, Jack, "Ohio kids show elevated lead blood levels at more than twice the national rate, study finds," Ohio Capital Journal, cited by WTOL 11, September 28, 2021 at <https://bit.ly/3AYkHmZ>.

need to make homes lead safe. The city of Toledo also received \$700,000 in new funding to continue lead prevention efforts in their historic south neighborhoods, including a required local match of up to half of annual grant funds.

Funding increases to mitigate and reduce lead poisoning in the state budget
 2022-23 state budget investments identified as pertaining to lead poisoning or abatement



Sources: Policy Matters Ohio, based on Ohio Legislative Service Commission Budget in Detail Appropriation spreadsheet (with 2021 actuals) and data provided by the Ohio Department of Medicaid on initiatives in the state budget.

Other state programs that address lead poisoning

The Early Intervention Program in the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities is a statewide system that provides coordinated services to parents of children under the age of 3 with disabilities or developmental delays. Program funding was preserved at \$46.7 million, a portion of which can be used to support children with elevated blood lead levels.

H2Ohio Funding: H2Ohio is an initiative to address water quality issues in Ohio, including the replacement of lead service lines to prevent drinking water contamination. Lawmakers increased program funding to \$20 million over the biennium, an increase of \$11.3 million. In addition, \$250 million in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding will be used by the Ohio EPA to create a water and sewer quality improvement program, including potential lead service line replacement, although the agency has no firm plans on a dollar amount to invest in lead service line replacement in 2022-23. The Ohio EPA currently makes available 0% loan funds to public water systems. The agency has also made \$20 million available as principal forgiveness loans specifically for lead service line replacement from the Drinking Water Assistance Fund. The Ohio EPA has awarded approximately \$7 million over the last nine months and is on track to award the remaining \$13 million over the next 12 months.⁴

⁴ E-mailed communication from Mary McCarron of the Ohio EPA communications Office to Wendy Patton, Policy Matters Ohio, August 30, 2021.



Advocates are asking Ohio lawmakers to dedicate \$500 million in additional ARPA funding to lead abatement and lead hazard control in pre-1978 residential units occupied by children.⁵ Making this investment now would not only protect future generations of children from the irreversible effects of lead poisoning but would also infuse the state with new jobs in home renovation, window installation, expert cleaning, and other specialties.

⁵ Ohio Lead Free Kids Coalition, "Request for \$500 Million in ARPA Funding for Lead Abatement and Lead Hazard Control in Housing," Letter to Governor Dewine and the General Assembly, July 8, 2021.