



A Roadmap to Eliminating Childhood Lead Exposure *2020 Progress Report*



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Introduction

The number of children with elevated blood lead levels in New York City is at a historic low and continues to decline. Since 2005 we have seen a nearly 90% decrease in the number of children under 18 years with blood lead levels of 5 mcg/dL or greater. And in January 2019 the City adopted a new goal: reduce child lead exposure to zero by 2029.

To achieve that goal, we released *LeadFreeNYC: A Roadmap to Eliminating Childhood Lead Exposure*. Since its launch, City agencies and partner organizations have worked together to ensure the successful implementation of the 45 initiatives within the LeadFreeNYC plan. This report details progress on the implementation of those initiatives. Data on the number of children with elevated blood lead levels, updated by the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) on a quarterly basis, also reflects continued progress toward the goal in 2019:



- From January to March 2019, there were 1,135 children under age 18 with blood lead levels of 5 mcg/dL or greater, a 12% reduction compared to 1,289 children during the same time period in 2018.
- From April to June 2019, there were 934 children under age 18 with blood lead levels of 5 mcg/dL or greater, a 19% reduction compared to 1,152 children during the same time period in 2018.
- From July to September, there were 1,028 children under 18 with blood lead levels of 5 mcg/dL or greater, a 21% reduction compared to 1,294 children during the same time period in 2018.

Protect Our Kids: Screen and Support Our Children

1: Deepen support when kids are exposed to lead hazards

[ID] Initiative	Status
[1.1] Expand staffing for follow-up care and environmental investigations to serve 6x as many children	Completed and ongoing
[1.2] Expand coordinated nursing care to every kid with EBLLs	Completed and ongoing

In March of last year, the City passed legislation lowering the blood lead level in children that triggers an environmental investigation to identify the source. DOHMH hired 35 new inspectors and 12 new nurses to provide coordinated care for children with elevated blood lead levels.

It is now standard procedure for DOHMH to assign a care coordination nurse to any child found to have a blood lead level at or above 5mcg/dL. As a result, more NYC children are getting the services they need such as nutritional counseling, early intervention, and any other services that might be required. Currently, nearly 3,000 children are receiving care coordination services from DOHMH's qualified nurses.

2: Increase the number of children screened for elevated blood lead levels

[ID] Initiative	Status
[2.1] Improve the Citywide Immunization Registry (CIR)	In progress
[2.2] Expand outreach to parents	Completed and ongoing
[2.3] Reach more communities through targeted campaigns	Completed and ongoing
[2.4] Enhance coordination and resources for families during peeling paint complaints	Completed and ongoing
[2.5] Offer free blood lead testing for children under 6 who do not have health care providers	Completed and ongoing
[2.6] Continue to enforce the blood lead testing requirement for child care admission	Completed and ongoing
[2.7] Strengthen testing protocols at NYC Health + Hospitals	Completed and ongoing

Beginning in early 2019, DOHMH initiated cross-referencing of birth records and blood lead test results to identify children who have not been tested for lead. If a child has not been tested, DOHMH contacts the family by mail to encourage testing. Outreach efforts yielded an uptick in testing of roughly three percentage points per month compared to 2018. In addition, DOHMH leveraged HPD's inspections of children's apartments, by coordinating a real time call from the tenant to DOHMH on lead testing.

A “warm handoff” protocol was put in place between the Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) and DOHMH in April 2019. Under this protocol, HPD inspectors who confirm the presence of lead-based paint in a unit offer to put families in direct contact with DOHMH to check if their child has been tested for elevated blood lead level and to receive information about how to protect their families from lead-based paint. This option has proven very popular with tenants and effective at disseminating information directly to families affected by lead-based paint. 95% of referrals attempted by HPD are accepted by tenants, and 90% of those referrals result in successful contact with DOHMH staff.

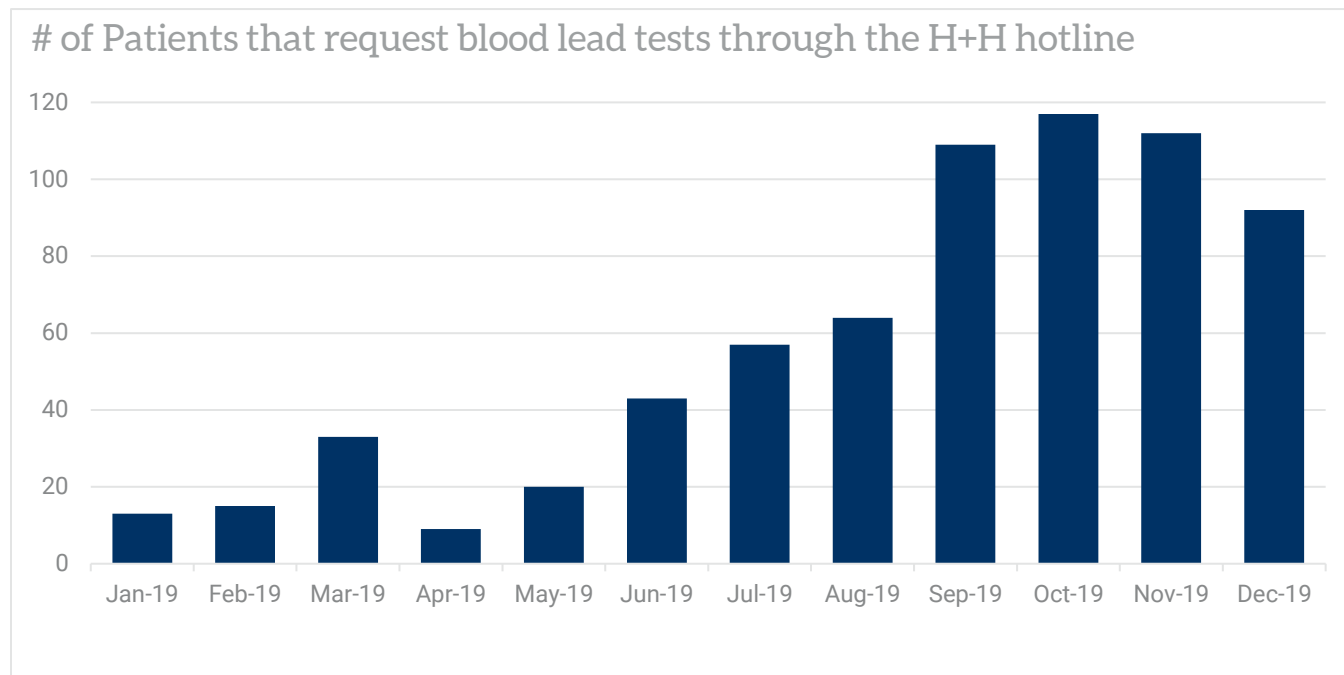
DOHMH also conducted two lead-related media campaigns in 2019. One focused on the importance of screening young children for lead exposure and the second on lead-based product hazards, including cosmetics, religious powders, Ayurvedic remedies and spices, typically utilized by the South Asian community.

In evaluating the effectiveness of these campaigns, DOHMH analyzed web traffic to DOHMH’s lead web pages before and during the campaigns. In the pre-campaign period, there were between 600 and 1,000 web page views per month, compared to between 50,000 and nearly 75,000 views per month during the campaign periods. In addition, an independent evaluation of the citywide lead testing campaign further demonstrated its reach. Over half of respondents said they had been seen or heard DOHMH’s LeadFreeNYC ads and 30% of those that had seen the ads reporting they had sought further information online and spoken about the ads with friends and family.

Health and Hospitals continued to offer free blood testing to any child in New York City, regardless of their family’s ability to pay. Anyone seeking a lead test can call H+H’s 24/7 call center and make a pediatric appointment at any of the 50+ primary care sites across the city. In 2019, H+H received nearly seven times more requests for lead testing via the call center. In addition, H+H updated its guidelines and materials for newborn baby visits to ensure that all families visiting an H+H facility would receive information on childhood lead testing requirements



and strategies to prevent exposure to lead hazards. To further encourage families to get their children tested for lead exposure, pediatricians will now be prompted by H+H's updated electronic medical record system to ask about children's lead testing history.



Paint is the Problem: Eliminate Lead Paint Hazards

3: Expand the reach of Local Law 1

[ID] Initiative	Status
[3.1] Lower the definitions of lead paint and lead dust	Completed and ongoing
[3.2] Expand Local Law 1 to include 1- and 2-family homes with children under 6	Completed and ongoing

Data compiled from the additional environmental investigations completed by DOHMH in 2019 showed that paint is still by far the leading exposure pathway for lead. Because lead paint and the dust created by disturbing it can pose such a hazard to children, the Administration worked with City Council to pass legislation in March 2019 creating a stricter definition for what constitutes lead-based paint and dust. The City now defines lead paint as having lead content of 0.5 milligrams per square centimeter (mg/cm^2) or greater, down from $1 \text{ mg}/\text{cm}^2$. Full implementation of the lead-based paint standard is pending federal approval of the necessary technology. When fully implemented, this new standard will be the most stringent of any big city. The lead dust definition was also reduced from 40 micrograms per square foot (mcg/f^2) to $10 \text{ mcg}/\text{f}^2$ for floors, and from $250 \text{ mcg}/\text{f}^2$ to $50 \text{ mcg}/\text{f}^2$ for windowsills. The new dust standard was implemented by both DOHMH and HPD. Both agencies have begun enforcing at this more protective dust standard, helping to keep children safer than ever before.

And starting in February 2021, Local Law 1 powers will also be extended to cover 1- and 2-family homes. This means that private dwellings that are not owner-occupied will be subject to the same requirements as multiple dwelling rental units for annual notice and inspection for lead-based paint hazards and become subject to HPD inspection and emergency repair provisions. HPD will begin conducting outreach to 1- and 2-family homeowners before the new provisions go into effect, to help them understand their responsibilities for keeping children safe.



4: Strengthen enforcement of Local Law 1

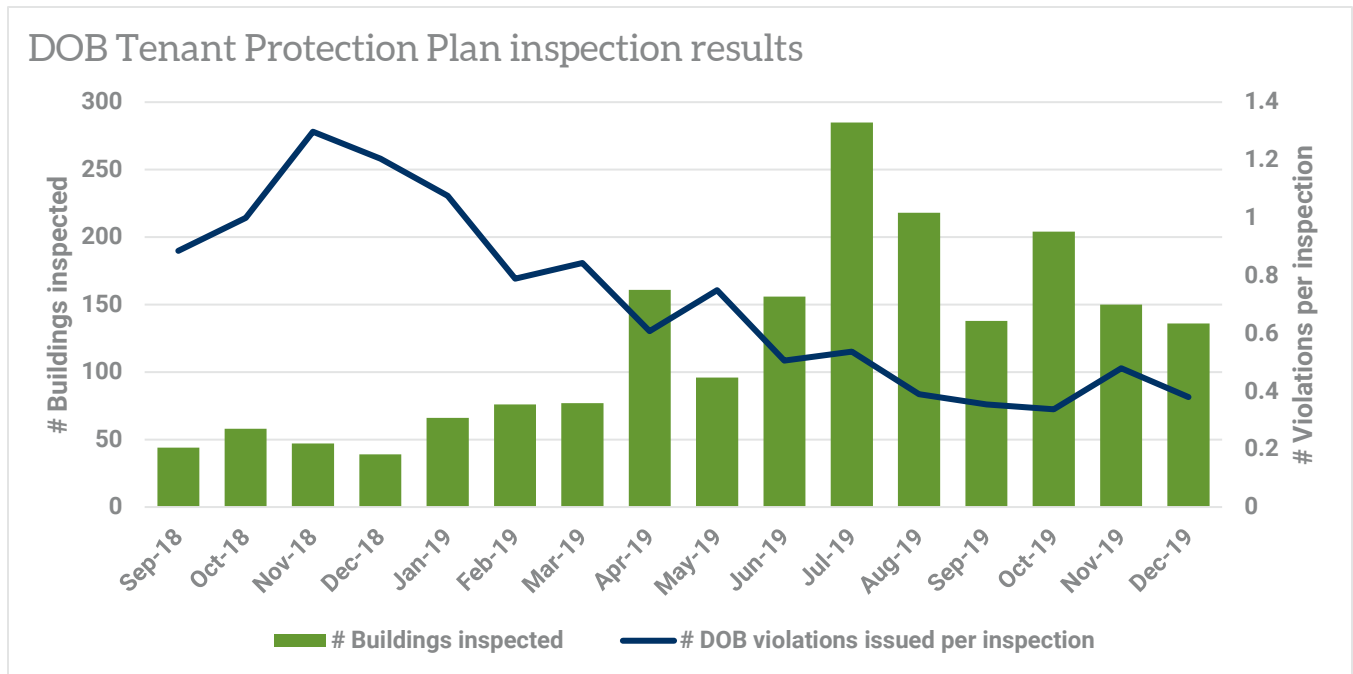
[ID] Initiative	Status
[4.1] Create a "Building Lead Index" to better target proactive inspections	Completed and ongoing
[4.2] Proactively audit lead-related records kept by landlords	Completed and ongoing
[4.3] Require proof of EPA-certification for home improvement contractors	Completed and ongoing
[4.4] Update construction code to require proof of EPA-certification for firms performing renovation, repair, and painting	Completed and ongoing
[4.5] Monthly interagency inspections by DOB and DOHMH in high-risk areas	Completed and ongoing
[4.6] DOHMH stop work order will now trigger DOB stop work order	Completed and ongoing
[4.7] Expanded public outreach encouraging New Yorkers to report unsafe work practices or lead paint hazards	In progress

When a dwelling unit changes tenants, property owners are required under Local Law 1 to complete certain lead-based paint activities focused on removing lead-based paint from door- and window-friction surfaces and ensuring the removal of lead-based paint hazards in the rest of the unit before a new tenant takes occupancy (regardless of whether the new tenant has a child at the time of initial occupancy). HPD started issuing violations for failure to comply with this requirement as part of the process of auditing lead-based paint required recordkeeping beginning in December 2019. Enforcement of these requirements against properties which have lead-based paint hazards and violations for this failure to comply with the turnover work began in early 2020.

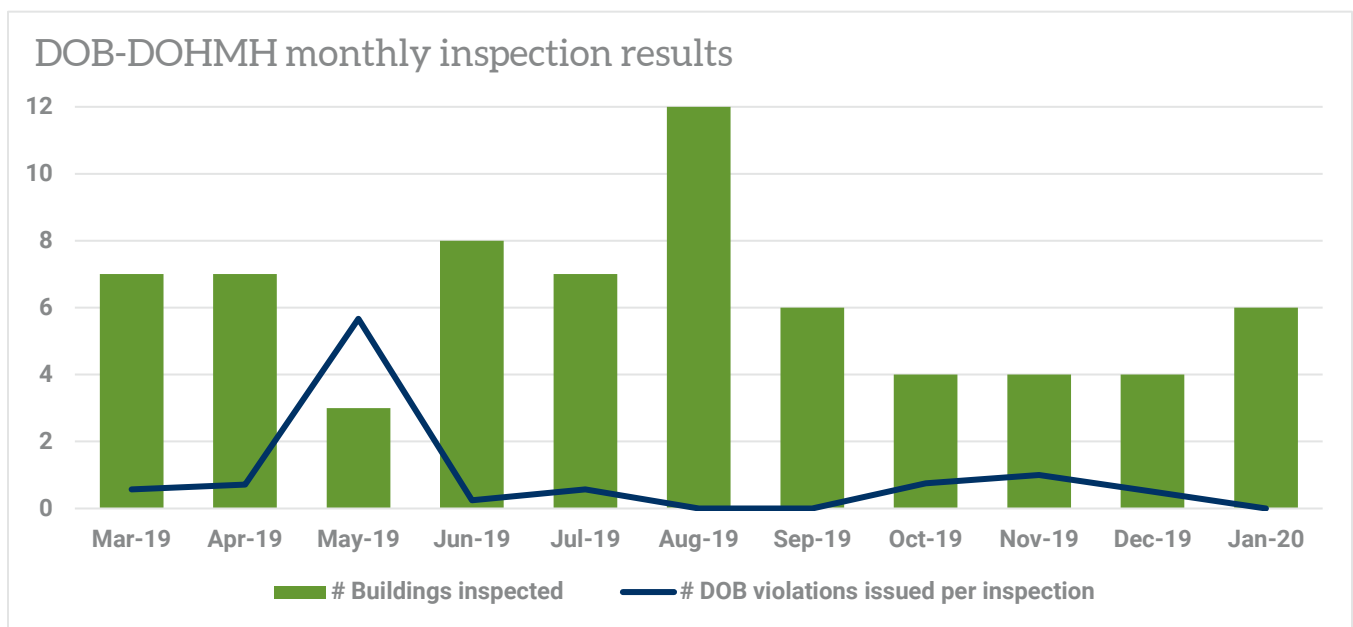
HPD and DOHMH worked together in 2019 to develop the Building Lead Index, a methodology that will help the City identify properties that pose a potential risk of lead exposure to residents. HPD has begun issuing demands for records to buildings identified by the Index to document owners' compliance with Local Law 1. If no record of compliance is produced, HPD will issue violations to these building owners and pursue stronger enforcement and penalties as necessary.

In addition to applying Local Law 1 provisions to 1- and 2-family homes, the Administration worked with City Council to pass legislation to make the definition of where a child under 6 resides much more expansive, to ensure that more residences are monitored for hazards that could harm children. Under Local Law 64 of 2019 and effective January 1, 2020, in addition to the term "resides" meaning that a child lives in a pre-1960 building, a child is considered to reside in that building for the purposes of Local Law 1 if that child "routinely spends 10 or more hours per week within a dwelling unit."

Construction can be one of the prime pathways for the creation of hazardous lead dust. Starting in June 2020, any firms or contractors licensed by the City to perform home improvement activities will be required to show proof that they have been certified by the federal Environmental Protection Agency in lead-safe work practices. Ensuring contractors are working safely means that children, especially crawling children, are protected from hazardous dust.



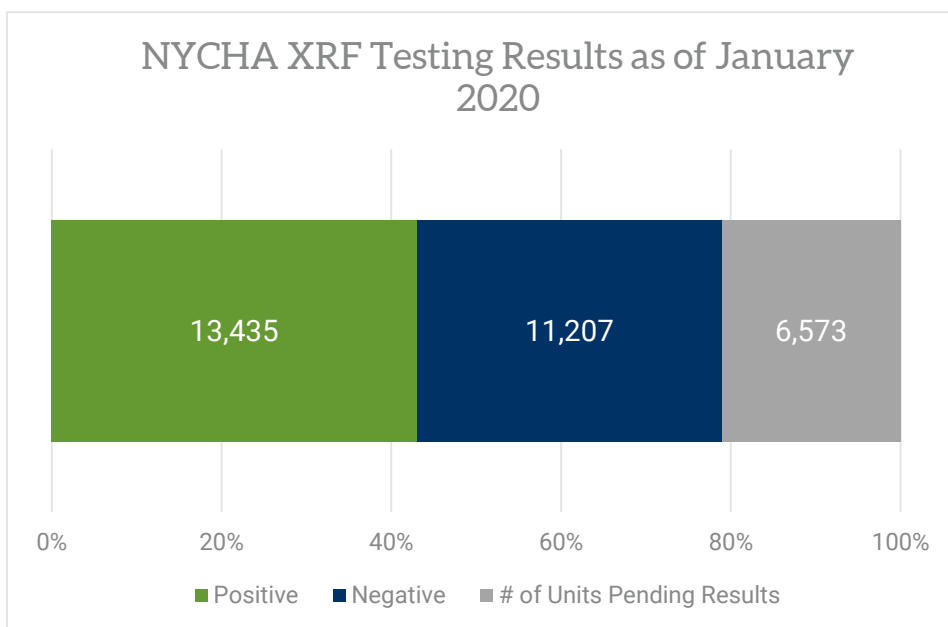
Starting in March 2019, DOB and DOHMH have conducted monthly interagency construction site sweeps in high-risk areas to ensure work is being done safely. Federal EPA inspectors have joined many of these sweeps. Since the sweeps began, DOB has seen much greater compliance with safe work practices from the city's contractor community at the sites visited. This compliance is also reflected in the results of DOB's inspections under the Tenant Protection Plan. The City is also coordinating to ensure that a stop work order from DOHMH triggers a stop work order from DOB when possible.



5: Ensure lead paint hazards are addressed in public housing and City-housing programs

[ID] Initiative	Status
[5.1] Test 135,000 NYCHA units for lead hazards by the end of 2020	In progress
[5.2] Make NYCHA lead testing results and progress on this effort available to the public	Completed and ongoing
[5.3] Ensure NYCHA staff are trained on lead safe work practices	Completed and ongoing
[5.4] Invest an initial \$7 million to test for and eliminate lead hazards from all family shelter units	In progress
[5.5] Robust lead processes for rental assistance programs	Completed and ongoing
[5.6] Lead hazard inspections in Section 8 housing	Completed and ongoing

In April 2019, NYCHA began its initiative to test 135,000 units built before 1978 for lead-based paint. NYCHA has focused the first phase of X-ray fluorescence (XRF) testing on developments where lead-based paint had been previously identified. Testing has been completed in 22% of units. As of January 2020, NYCHA has contracted two additional lead abatement vendors to complete this work, bringing the total to three. NYCHA also uses in-house lead abatement workers and supervisors.



NYCHA has developed an external dashboard on their website to share testing results at the development level with residents and the public. In addition, the unit test results are available electronically to the tenant through NYCHA's internal tenant portal.

Families in shelter are among the most vulnerable. To ensure that these children are protected from lead hazards, DHS and HRA began testing for lead-based paint at family shelter units in August 2019. Only 0.5% of the ~350 units tested so far have tested positive for lead-based paint. Any units testing positive will be abated to permanently eliminate lead from these facilities.

In order to protect families as they leave shelter along with other New Yorkers receiving rental assistance, DSS instituted an enhanced apartment review process for the city's rental assistance program, CityFHEPS. Through the standardized tools and processes put in place in April 2019, DSS identified five apartments with peeling paint conditions that prevented families from potentially moving

into an apartment. DSS tracks all units where peeling paint is observed and requires a certification from the landlord that the lead paint issues have been resolved before a future CityFHEPS household can move into the unit.

6: Help private owners become lead-free

[ID] Initiative	Status
[6.1] Expand financial assistance for landlords who abate hazards while preserving affordability	Completed and ongoing
[6.2] Expand landlord outreach and language services	Completed and ongoing
[6.3] Require landlords to maintain lead-related records and paperwork online	In progress
[6.4] Restructure the exemption process to create a Lead Paint Free certification and an online portal for the submission of these documents	In progress

As part of LeadFreeNYC, HPD is providing free lead testing, scope development, and forgivable financing to repair lead paint hazards and abate friction and impact surfaces such as door units, window molding, and baseboards, making units safer and healthier for current and future children who live in private buildings.

Property owners of residential buildings are required by law to register annually with HPD if the property is a multiple dwelling or a private dwelling where neither the owner nor the owner's immediate family resides. By the next registration cycle (May 2020), HPD will add a question to its Annual Property Registration asking building owners to certify compliance with Local Law 1. This will give HPD an additional mechanism to ensure the safety of tenants and identify building owners who are not in compliance with Local Law 1 requirements. This will prompt owners to carefully evaluate their compliance with the City's lead laws and the safety of their tenants as they complete the mandatory annual registration process.



In the past, landlords could apply for an exemption for a dwelling unit but that didn't mean it was completely lead-free. In 2019 HPD overhauled its rules to create two different exemption categories: Lead Free and Lead Safe. A Lead Safe exemption certifies that lead-based paint is encapsulated or contained, and requires ongoing monitoring by the building owner. A Lead Free exemption certifies that all surfaces in the unit have tested free of lead-based paint or have been fully abated and are permanently free of lead-based paint.

Eliminate Dangerous Consumer Products

7: Eliminate Dangerous Consumer Products

[ID] Initiative	Status
[7.1] Create a "Lead Products Index" for unsafe products	Completed and ongoing
[7.2] Require mandatory "Safe Products Awareness training" for businesses that sell unsafe products	In progress
[7.3] Require high penalties for businesses that willfully sell harmful products	Completed and ongoing
[7.4] Invest \$750,000 annually to add DOHMH inspection and testing resources	In progress
[7.5] Target education and outreach about unsafe products to high-risk communities	Completed and ongoing

Consumer products, such as spices, cosmetics, toys, are the second leading source of exposure from children. In June 2019, DOHMH created a comprehensive consumer products standard for lead. More information about these potentially harmful consumer products is available via the [LeadFreeNYC website](#). In addition, DOHMH is conducting more product testing and identifying business selling unsafe products. Businesses found to be selling lead-contaminated products will be mandated to complete the training on how to avoid unsafe lead products.



Manage Other Potential Hazards

8: New York City's Water is Virtually Lead-Free

[ID] Initiative	Status
[8.1] Take action when lead levels in water exceed EPA guidelines	In progress
[8.2] Expand efforts to replace lead service lines	In progress
[8.3] Publish a map of all lead service lines	Completed and ongoing
[8.4] Continue efforts to survey and replace any City-owned water infrastructure containing lead	Completed and ongoing
[8.5] Promote free water testing kits	Completed and ongoing
[8.6] Actively participate in ongoing water research	Completed and ongoing

NYC water is delivered lead free to our homes, but across the city many homeowners must manage the legacy of lead service lines – the pipe that connects your home to the main. This can be a costly replacement for many homeowners. To ease the financial burden, DEP developed a program for low-income homeowners to replace these pipes at no cost. In 2019, DEP received applications from approximately 300 homeowners and will begin replacements in early 2020. If you are concerned about the pipe to your building, the LeadFreeNYC website hosts a map of all private buildings and the type of metal used to connect to their building. In addition, DEP offers free water quality testing.

The lead service line map can be found [here](#).

During summer 2019, the Parks Department tested its 3,461 public water fountains in parks and playgrounds across the city of New York. Testing progress and results were posted publicly on the DPR [website](#). If any fixtures were found to have lead exceedances, they were immediately taken offline to prevent the public from using them and were remediated by the Parks Department to the extent possible. As of the end of 2019, DPR had completed 98% of outstanding remediation work. The remaining 2% of fountains will not be returned to service until they have been remediated and passed a subsequent test for acceptable lead levels. Moving forward, DPR will test all of its water fountains every five years to ensure that they remain lead-free.

In fall 2019, DEP launched a social media campaign to ensure New Yorkers are aware that the City offers free water testing kits for any residents who call 311 or request one online.



9: Educate the public about lead in soil

[ID] Initiative	Status
[9.1] Educate the public on safe soil practices	Completed and ongoing
[9.2] Provide clean soil to communities impacted by high levels of lead in soil	Completed and ongoing
[9.3] Survey NYCHA playgrounds to identify and address bare soil risks	Completed and ongoing

Soil can contain lead, working with the Lead Legacy Coalition the city created over 300 signs for community gardens to ensure that our urban gardeners are utilizing best practices to protect their children from lead exposure.



In 2019, the NYC Clean Soil Bank delivered more than 900 cubic yards of clean soil to nine community gardens. At the Wortman Community Garden, East New York Farms! mixed clean soil with compost and distributed the topsoil to seven additional gardens, two of which had high levels of lead in garden soil. The topsoil was used to reduce exposures to the elevated lead. East New York Farms! also held two topsoil giveaways for area residents. In addition, the Clean Soil Bank delivered soil to two City parks and a community garden on private property.

NYCHA completed inspections at all of its 733 playgrounds in order to identify areas of bare soil that could pose a risk of lead exposure to children. Any areas of bare soil were covered with mulch to prevent against the risk of lead exposure. Fences will be installed around larger areas of bare soil as an additional safety precaution.

Make LeadFreeNYC a Reality

10: Communicate clearly about lead hazards and prevention strategies

[ID] Initiative	Status
[10.1] Ensure public-facing communications use simple infographics and plain language	Completed and ongoing
[10.2] Launch the LeadFreeNYC website to show maps, data, and progress on lead prevention initiatives	Completed and ongoing

The LeadFreeNYC website was launched in February 2019. nyc.gov/leadfree is the city's central repository for lead-related information, providing helpful guidance to parents, tenants, landlords, or any New Yorker seeking to learn more about lead. The site also provides updates on implementation of the LeadFreeNYC roadmap.

11: Continuously strengthen lead prevention efforts

[ID] Initiative	Status
[11.1] Hire a Citywide Lead Compliance Officer	In progress
[11.2] Partner with external advisors	Completed and ongoing

The Mayor's Office is in the process of appointing the Citywide Lead Compliance Officer. A candidate is expected to be in place by early 2020, within the Mayor's Office of Operations. The Lead Compliance Officer will manage interagency data sharing efforts and agency coordination; ensure compliance with all City, State, and federal regulations related to lead; and work across City agencies to deepen the City's progress in reducing and eliminating lead hazards in New York City.

The LeadFreeNYC Advisory Board meets multiple times per year, bringing together government agencies, advocates, and other interested members of the community to review and discuss the implementation of the LeadFreeNYC roadmap and other efforts to eliminate childhood lead exposure in New York City.

Bill de Blasio
Mayor

