



**GREAT LAKES AND
ST. LAWRENCE**
CITIES INITIATIVE



PRESS RELEASE
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Cities Initiative Applauds New U.S. Federal Effort to Get the Lead Out

This new initiative will provide vital technical assistance to 200 underserved communities seeking to expedite lead service line replacement

Chicago – November 8, 2023 – The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative applauds the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for announcing yesterday the Get the Lead Out Initiative in partnership with the U.S. Department of Labor. This new initiative will provide vital technical assistance to 200 underserved communities seeking to expedite lead service line replacement by helping them complete inventories, develop community engagement and replacement plans and apply for federal funding through State Revolving Funds.

There is no safe level of exposure to lead, a neurotoxin that has been scientifically linked to developmental delays, cardiovascular diseases and other serious health problems. There are also known socioeconomic costs to lead exposure, including elevated risk levels in underserved communities and substantial financial costs for the U.S. health system.

“The Cities Initiative’s Mayors Commission on Water Equity applauds the Biden Administration for once again demonstrating strong federal leadership to get any potential lead exposure out of our drinking water,” said Mayor Cavalier Johnson of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, a Commission Co-Chair. “The Biden Administration’s continued emphasis on equity closely aligns with the goals of the City of Milwaukee’s Equity Prioritization Plan, through which we are working closely with our local community to remove lead service lines in underserved neighborhoods and safeguard the health of all Milwaukee residents.”

EPA’s Get the Lead Out Initiative builds on a series of unprecedented actions by the Biden Administration to speed lead service line replacement in the United States. These include the provision of \$15 billion for lead service line replacement over five years via the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act in November 2021, the selection of 29 Environmental Finance Centers to expand technical assistance for underserved communities in November 2022 and the launch of the Biden-Harris Get the Lead Out Partnership and the Lead Service Line Replacement Accelerators in January 2023.

The Cities Initiative’s most recent annual survey of communities across the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Basin found a staggering 45 percent of U.S. respondents lack the capacity to apply for federal funding for lead service line replacement. In response, the Cities Initiative established the Richard M. Daley Water Equity Community Award in June 2023. The inaugural recipients of the Daley Award are receiving tailored technical assistance on lead service line replacement and other water-infrastructure needs from the Cities Initiative and its partners.

About the Cities Initiative

The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative is a binational, mayor-led coalition of U.S. and Canadian cities dedicated to the environmental and socioeconomic health of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Basin. With more than 250 member cities, the Cities Initiative is the largest municipally-driven organization in the basin focused on these issues.

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