

## Homeowner Access & Retention: Healthy Homes

The goal of the program is to identify and address environmental hazards in the home than affect low-income households.

### HEALTHY HOMES

Substandard housing conditions are significant contributors to poor health, and have a disproportionate impact on individuals who are unable to afford to make housing repairs or relocate. Research shows that poor environmental quality (e.g., molds, second-hand tobacco smoke, and pests such as rodents and cockroaches) can exacerbate asthma and other respiratory problems, especially in children.

In 2007, the National Center for Healthy Housing (NCHH) completed an assessment of housing conditions in Portland relative to other cities throughout the country. The findings observed the existence of more basements (resulting in moisture and radon intrusion); greater exterior and interior leakage from roofs, basements, broken windows, and pipes (resulting in moisture intrusion); and a higher percent of inadequate wiring. In general, 5.4% of Portland's homes are in severe or moderate condition (the CDC 2010 goal is 3.1%)

The high percentage of properties found to be in poor exterior condition runs corollary to an increase in substandard interior conditions. According to the American Community Survey, from 2005 to 2008, the number of occupied housing units lacking complete plumbing facilities increased by 35%, and the number lacking complete kitchen facilities increased by 38%.<sup>1</sup> On a smaller scale, the Multnomah County Health Department's Healthy Homes program has seen an increase in mold and moisture from 20% to 60% of inspected households over the last few years.

### PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

**The Healthy Homes Program has four components:**

- 1. Portland Healthy Homes Grant:** Grant resources to proactively address environmental hazards that can cause or exacerbate health problems;
- 2. Multnomah County Partnership:** Grants provided in partnership with Multnomah County Health Department to address environmental hazards for households with a documented health issue;
- 3. Portland Lead Hazard Control Program:** grants to address lead hazards in homes to reduce lead poisoning in young children; and

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<sup>1</sup> The number of occupied housing units lacking complete plumbing facilities was 1,909 in 2005 and 2,581 in 2008; and the number of occupied housing units lacking complete kitchen facilities was 2,640 in 2005 and 3,644 in 2008.

- 4. Quality Rental Housing Program:** Programs to support the maintenance of Portland’s rental housing stock to protect tenant health and housing stability.

**PROGR AM TOOLS**

**The Healthy Homes Grant Program**

- Education for community members to reduce exposure to environmental hazards in the home provided in partnership with Multnomah County Health Department
- Grants to reduce environmental hazards in the home provided in partnership REACH Community Development

**The Multnomah County Partnership**

- Medical case management for households with documented health problems provided in partnership with Multnomah County Health Department
- Grants to reduce environmental hazards in the home provided in partnership REACH Community Development

**Lead Hazard Control program**

- free blood lead testing at the Multnomah County Health Department and the Josiah Hill Clinic;
- the LeadLine information and referral;
- lead hazard education through the Growing Gardens program of the Community Energy Project, the Multnomah County Health Department, the Community Alliance of Tenants, and the Josiah Hill Clinic;
- outreach to the community around lead hazards, through public awareness campaigns and participation in community events;
- identification and remediation of lead hazards in the home;
- integration of lead-safe work practices and lead reduction into existing federally-funded rehab programs in Multnomah County.:

**Quality Rental Housing Program**

- Enhanced complaint inspections in rental housing provided in partnership with Bureau of Development Services
- Tenant Relocation assistance for rental households living in substandard housing that is causing or exacerbating a medical condition

**PROGR AM ELIGIBILITY**

This table summarizes eligibility for the four components of the Health Homes Strategy:

Healthy Homes Program component:	Income Served	Owners or Renters	There must be a child under six present in	A medical referral is required	Where is service available?
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			<b>the home</b>		
<b>Healthy Homes Grant</b>	<b>Up to 80% MFI</b>	<b>Renters</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>East Portland</b>
<b>Multnomah County Parntership</b>	<b>Up to 80% MFI</b>	<b>Owners and Renters</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>East Portland</b>
<b>Lead Grant</b>	<b>Up to 80% MFI</b>	<b>Owners and Renters o</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>County-wide</b>
<b>Inspection Program</b>	<b>Up to 80% MFI</b>	<b>Owners and Renters</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>County-wide</b>

**POTENTIAL BARRIERS**

Rental property owners may not have the capitol resources to fund necessary ongoing property maintenance, tenants may be limited in terms of housing options and many do not engage the housing enforcement system for fear of jeopardizing their housing stability. Healthy homes repairs and housing inspections compete against other City funding priorities for resources to address need.

**PARTNER AGENCIES AND ORGANIZATIONS**

- The Housing Authority of Portland provides lead hazard information to participants in its Section 8 program.
- Local community development agencies provide lead hazard information to the residents of the properties they own and/or manage.
- The Portland Water Bureau contributes matching funds annually to the HUD lead grant for lead education and outreach activities. Funds are contracted to community organizations (i.e. Community Alliance of Tenants, Growing Gardens, Josiah Hill Clinic) that conduct outreach about the availability of free lead hazard reduction through the PLHCP.
- The Multnomah County Health Department operates the LeadLine, provides free blood lead testing through its stationery clinics and its mobile immunization clinic , and evaluate the effectiveness of the Lead Program.
- Specific contractors are listed in the Action Plans.

**COMPLEMENTARY LOCAL, REGIONAL AND NATIONAL EFFORTS**

Elements of this program support the requirements of Title X regulations that require all federally funded housing programs to address lead hazards in pre-1978 housing. Funding provided by this program supplements the

costs of complying with the regulations to lessen their impact on CDBG and HOME funded rehab programs.

HUD's new Strategic Plan calls for national efforts to protect the health of low- and moderate income tenants through strategies like Healthy Homes.

**GEOGRAPHIC SERVICE AREAS (INCLUDING AREAS OF LOW-INCOME FAMILIES AND/OR RACIAL /MINORITY CONCENTRATION)**

Education and outreach efforts for the lead program focus on areas where concentrations of low-income households live in older housing stock.

**MONITORING**

A description of BHCD's Monitoring program is in Section One.