



# Cook County Lead Hazard Reduction and Healthy Homes for Healthy Families Programs

## Frequently Asked Questions

### What is the Healthy Homes for Healthy Families Program?

The Cook County Healthy Homes for Healthy Families program provides a variety of home upgrades at no cost to owners or renters of residential buildings in suburban Cook County at homes where children under the age of six live and play. It is available to anyone who is enrolled in the Cook County Lead Hazard Reduction Grant Program as an added service and benefit. The goal of the program is to make comprehensive upgrades – in addition to lead remediation - that make homes energy efficient, healthy, and safe for children.

### What are the benefits of participating in the Cook County Healthy Homes for Healthy Families and Lead Hazard Reduction Programs?

- **Free Home Upgrades:** The programs provide all services for free, at no cost to the homeowner. This includes lead abatement, healthy homes, water efficiency, and energy efficiency upgrades.
- **Experienced Program Staff:** Cook County and its partners Elevate and Urban Efficiency have decades of experience working on home health and efficiency projects, and will be able to answer your questions throughout the process.
- **Streamlined Contractor Scheduling:** The program has a pool of qualified, licensed contractors to work on your home. Program staff will handle vetting and scheduling the right contractor for your work.
- **A Healthier Home:** The work done through this program will remove health hazards and make it more energy efficient.

### Why is addressing home health hazards important?

While home health hazards affect everyone, the impacts are especially concerning among infants and children under age six. Lead exposure can harm children's brain development and make it difficult for them to learn, pay attention, and succeed in school. Addressing lead, radon, and mold at home can help keep both children and adults safe and healthy.

### Who is eligible for the program?

To be eligible for the Cook County Lead Hazard Reduction and Healthy Homes for Healthy Families Programs, you must:

- Own or rent a single-family home or a 2–4-unit multi-family building
  - must be in suburban Cook County
  - must be built before 1978
- Live with a child under six years old or expecting mother, care for a child under six, or have a child under six that visits often



- Meet income eligibility requirements. For example, in 2023, a family of four must have an income below \$132,360 a year to be eligible.
- Full income eligibility requirements can be found here:  
<https://cookcountypublichealth.org/environmental-health/lead-poisoning/hud-grant/>

### **Can I apply if I'm a renter?**

Yes, renters are eligible for the program. However, renters will need written approval and documentation from the owner of the building.

### **I don't have children that live at home, but they visit me a lot. Can I apply for the program?**

Yes, you qualify for the program even if children don't live with you as long as a child under the age of six spends time in your home. This means many home childcare providers, grandparents, aunts, and neighbors who take care of young children can qualify.

### **How much will I have to pay?**

All work completed through the program is free and is offered at no cost to you. The Cook County Department of Public Health has federal funding to cover the costs of all work that happens at your home through the program. If relocation is required during construction, the cost will be covered by the program.

### **How do I apply?**

Go to <https://cookcountypublichealth.org/environmental-health/lead-poisoning/grant-application/> to fill out an application. If you need assistance, please reach out to: Vanessa Mendoza at [vanessa.mendoza@cookcountyhealth.org](mailto:vanessa.mendoza@cookcountyhealth.org) or 312-515-0366.

### **Is there a deadline to apply?**

Applications are accepted on a rolling basis until December 2025.

### **What does participation in the program look like?**

1. **Application:** After you apply, staff will review your application and follow up with additional questions. Staff will let you know if you qualify by phone and/or letter.
2. **Lead Paint Inspection:** All participants start by scheduling an initial lead paint inspection with Cook County's Lead Hazard Reduction Grant Program. The County will reach out to you to schedule.
3. **Lead Abatement:** If lead hazards are found during the inspection, the program will hire a licensed lead abatement contractor to address all lead hazards identified. During lead abatement work, you may have to leave your home. All relocation costs will be covered through the program.
4. **Healthy Homes, Water, and Energy Assessment:** After lead abatement is completed, participants will begin working with our partners (Elevate and/or Urban Efficiency) to receive a free assessment to identify other opportunities for home upgrades.



5. **Home Upgrades:** Depending on the recommendations from the home assessment, you will work with program staff to decide what upgrades to make at your home.
6. **Ongoing Monitoring:** After all the work is completed, program staff may continue to stay in touch to see how the changes have affected your health, lifestyle, or energy bills.

### **What kind of work will happen at my home?**

The type of work completed at each home depends on the lead inspection and home assessment. All work is provided at no cost, and may include:

- Lead abatement work such as window replacement, repainting or sealing surfaces of walls, ceilings, or porches
- Remediation of health hazards such as mold, pests, unsafe electrical, or radon
- Structural repairs such as renovation to roofs, porches, or foundations
- Water conservation upgrades such as plumbing repairs and water saving toilets and showerheads
- Weatherization such as insulation and air sealing
- Installation of new high-efficiency appliances such as heating and cooling systems, water heaters, stoves, ovens, dryers

### **Can I be at home when the work is happening?**

While lead abatement work is being completed you may need to leave the home for your safety. The length of work varies based on the scope of work. On average, lead abatement work takes between 4-6 days. If it's an option, you can stay with friends or family during the work. If that is not an option, you can stay in a hotel during the work. The program will cover all relocation costs.

For other home upgrades, you will be able to remain in the home and our contractors will work with you to minimize disruption as much as possible.