



Department of Health  
 2021-23 First Supplemental Budget Session  
 Policy Level - QA - Prevent Child Lead Exposure

### Agency Recommendation Summary

The Department of Health (DOH) requests state funds to maximize impact of a grant from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to promote, educate and test for lead in childcare facilities’ drinking water. Infants and young children are at greatest risk of lead poisoning, which can have severe and permanent health impacts. Many of these youth spend a substantial time at early learning or childcare center (childcare facilities). Testing for and removing lead from these environments is an important step in reducing lead exposure. The state funds will also support staff to research, identify and connect facilities to financial resources available for remediation costs.

### Fiscal Summary

<b>Fiscal Summary</b> <i>Dollars in Thousands</i>	<b>Fiscal Years</b>		<b>Biennial</b>	<b>Fiscal Years</b>		<b>Biennial</b>
	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2021-23</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2023-25</b>
<b>Staffing</b>						
FTEs	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.7	0.7	0.7
<b>Operating Expenditures</b>						
Fund 001 - 1	\$223	\$186	\$409	\$186	\$186	\$372
Total Expenditures	<b>\$223</b>	<b>\$186</b>	<b>\$409</b>	<b>\$186</b>	<b>\$186</b>	<b>\$372</b>

## Decision Package Description

Even at low levels, lead in children's blood can negatively and permanently affect their IQ, ability to pay attention, and overall educational achievement. Infants and young children, who are at greatest risk of lead poisoning and suffering the most severe health impacts, may spend a substantial portion of time at early learning and childcare facilities. Therefore, testing for and remediating lead in these facilities' drinking water, is an important step to reducing lead exposure for the most vulnerable people in the state.

Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) licenses over 5,500 childcare facilities which serve approximately 178,000 children in Washington state. WAC 110-300-0235 requires childcare facilities to test for lead every 6 years and remediate if results exceed federal action level of 15ppb. Currently, childcare facilities are responsible for paying for the cost of testing as well as any remediation work required. Facilities are not required to report results unless they exceed 15ppb, when they must notify DCYF, facility staff and families of children. They must also contact DOH for technical assistance.

The department received \$723,000 from the Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation Act (WIIN2107) grant from the EPA to implement a voluntary testing for lead in childcare facilities drinking water program. While the grant funding covers outreach, testing and education, it cannot be used for remediation, which is a key part of reducing lead exposure, and an important reason for requesting additional funding so that DOH staff can research funding options and share that information with childcare facilities. The department expects ongoing program funding from EPA.

This is an opportune time to request administrative funding to support the implementation of this grant so that implementation is similar to that of the K-12 lead in school drinking water program enacted by Engrossed Second Substitute House Bill (ESSHB) 1139 (Chapter 154, Laws of 2021) addressing lead in school drinking water. Running the two very similar program efforts in parallel will allow for a more robust program, increase efficiencies and assure that the youngest and most at-risk children are better protected from lead exposure.

Not only will the requested state dollars allow DOH to leverage and implement the federal grant dollars, the funds requested will help support a position that will to research, identify and connect childcare facilities to financial or other resources available for remediation when elevated lead levels are detected. In addition to covering the cost for testing, this will further assist facilities that are already facing economic challenges due to the pandemic.

State and federal dollars support program implementation that includes:

- Program promotion and outreach to recruit facilities to participate;
- Communication and education about risks of lead;
- Training for proper water sample collection;
- Testing water and providing results;
- Prevention and remediation assistance.

Testing and remediating childcare facilities drinking water for lead will reduce or eliminate a source of lead exposure for children. As required by the EPA grant, DOH will make the results available on its website. Much of the work, including culturally and linguistically appropriate communication materials, technical assistance and guidance, data systems and reporting mechanisms, will mirror those of the K-12 lead in school drinking water program.

Using the Washington Tracking Network (WTN) lead exposure risk map as well as environmental health disparities map, DOH will focus its program promotion and testing activities to reach facilities located in high-risk exposure areas. The lead exposure risk map combines the variables of percent of people living below the 125% of federal poverty level and percentage of homes built before 1980. The impacts of lead are cumulative. Testing and remediating for lead in drinking water will be especially beneficial for children already living in high-risk exposure areas by eliminating an additional source of lead exposure.

Engagement with key partners such as DCYF and childcare facilities will be essential for the successful promotion and success of this voluntary program. The department will work to identify and eliminate barriers to implementation as well as ensure the program is easy to access and efficiently integrated with the lead in school drinking water program whenever appropriate.

If DOH does not receive the additional funding in this request, the ability to effectively implement a streamlined and cohesive lead in childcare facilities water testing and prevention program would be reduced. Additionally, DOH would not apply for additional funds from the EPA because the DOH would not have the administrative funding to cover these costs in the future.

Moreover, the childcare facilities will not be connected to remediation assistance or receive technical assistance, making it more challenging for these facilities to address their lead risks.

Implementing this program in parallel with the lead in school drinking water program will allow efficiencies in a number of areas: data collection and reporting, testing materials, staff time, informational materials developed. It will also allow the DOH to be the point of contact and resource to childcare facilities and schools for this subject.

## Assumptions and Calculations

### ***Expansion, Reduction, Elimination or Alteration of a current program or service:***

This proposal is for a new program to test for lead in drinking water at childcare facilities.

### ***Detailed Assumptions and Calculations:***

This request for ongoing funding includes 0.50 FTE Health Services Consultant 4 (HSC4) and 0.10 FTE Washington Management Service (WMS) that support the Remediation Resources Coordinator.

This funding request will give the department the ability to effectively implement a streamlined and cohesive lead in childcare facilities water testing and prevention program would be reduced. Additionally, the department will be utilize additional grant funds from EPA. Without this funding, the department will forfeit any future federal funding because the department would not be able to cover the administrative requirements.

See the attached Financial Calculator.

### ***Workforce Assumptions:***

This request for ongoing funding includes 0.50 FTE Health Services Consultant 4 (HSC4) and 0.10 FTE Washington Management Service (WMS) that support the Remediation Resources Coordinator. Costs include salaries, benefits, FTE related costs and equipment.

Duties and Tasks Include:

- Research and outreach to identify state, federal and private opportunities for remediation funding.
- Coordinate with federal and state partners to identify, apply for funding opportunities and connect childcare facilities in need with such resources.
- Build relationships to create network of resources and engaged partners.
- Set up infrastructure and processes to ensure childcare facilities have simple access to remediation resources.

### ***How is your proposal impacting equity in the state?***

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion: This program will focus efforts and promotion to childcare facilities located in high-risk exposure areas. Childcare facilities participating in the program will have the lead testing requirement be available to them at no charge and will be connected to resources for remediation.

## Strategic and Performance Outcomes

### **Strategic Framework:**

#### **Results Washington:**

- World Class Education – Early learning
- Healthy & Safe Communities

Supporting early learning and childcare facilities by providing testing for no cost to them as well as low or no cost remediation resources. These efforts will assist with reducing environmental lead exposures in our communities for children, allowing them to reach their full potential.

#### **Agency Strategic Plan:**

- Diversify Funding: This request for funding will allow us to leverage federal funding on an ongoing basis. It is expected that the federal EPA dollars will be ongoing.
- Equity, Diversity and Inclusion: This program will focus efforts and promotion to childcare facilities located in high-risk exposure areas. Childcare facilities participating in the program will have the lead testing requirement be available to them at no charge and will be connected to resources for remediation.

### **Performance Outcomes:**

#### **Results Washington:**

- World Class Education – Early learning
- Healthy & Safe Communities

Supporting early learning and childcare facilities by providing testing at no cost to childcare centers as well as low or no cost remediation resources. These efforts will assist with reducing environmental lead exposures in our communities for children, allowing them to reach their full potential.

#### **Agency Strategic Plan:**

Funding: Diversify Funding: This request for funding will allow us to leverage federal funding on an ongoing basis. It is expected that the federal EPA dollars will be ongoing.

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion: This program will focus efforts and promotion to childcare facilities located in high-risk exposure areas. Childcare facilities participating in the program will have the lead testing requirement be available to them at no charge and will be connected to resources for remediation

## Other Collateral Connections

### ***Puget Sound Recovery:***

N/A

### ***State Workforce Impacts:***

N/A

### ***Intergovernmental:***

Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) is the licensing agency for early learning and childcare facilities. The current rule (WAC 110-300-0235) outlines that childcare facilities must test for lead every six (6) years. Facilities are not required to report results unless they are over the federally stated action level which is currently 15ppb. DOH will work closely with DCYF to promote and implement the program.

DOH will work with Department of Commerce (COM) to identify potential funding sources and opportunities available for remediation. If identified, DOH will work with COM to determine appropriate processes for dispersing remediation resources. DOH is aware of some the funding opportunities available but additional research is needed.

### ***Legal or Administrative Mandates:***

N/A

### ***Stakeholder Response:***

#### **Licensed Childcare Facilities:**

While childcare facilities are not required to participate in this program, licensed facilities are required to test their drinking water for lead every six (6) years. The program will be a way for them to have access to testing for lead in drinking water without cost to their facility.

Our goal is also to work to connect participating facilities with education and resources for remediation. DOH will need to identify financial resources that help cover the costs of remediation.

There is some anticipated hesitation with participation in this voluntary program because of the grant requirement that test results be made available publicly. Currently, the WAC does not require results to be reported unless at or above federal action level (15ppb). DOH hopes to overcome this challenge by working closely with DCYF on messaging, offering testing at no charge, providing technical assistance as well as connection to remediation funding.

#### **Families of children and staff at Licensed Childcare Facilities:**

This proposal would allow families of current and future students as well as staff at the facility to view the results of a facility.

### ***Changes from Current Law:***

N/A

### ***State Facilities Impacts:***

N/A

### IT Addendum

**Does this Decision Package include funding for any IT-related costs, including hardware, software, (including cloud-based services), contracts or IT staff?**

No

### Objects of Expenditure

Objects of Expenditure <i>Dollars in Thousands</i>	Fiscal Years		Biennial	Fiscal Years		Biennial
	2022	2023	2021-23	2024	2025	2023-25
Obj. A	\$63	\$53	<b>\$116</b>	\$53	\$53	<b>\$106</b>
Obj. B	\$23	\$20	<b>\$43</b>	\$20	\$20	<b>\$40</b>
Obj. C	\$125	\$104	<b>\$229</b>	\$104	\$104	<b>\$208</b>
Obj. E	\$5	\$5	<b>\$10</b>	\$5	\$5	<b>\$10</b>
Obj. J	\$2	\$0	<b>\$2</b>	\$0	\$0	<b>\$0</b>
Obj. T	\$5	\$4	<b>\$9</b>	\$4	\$4	<b>\$8</b>

### Agency Contact Information

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