

NEWS RELEASE

Ilene Shapiro – Summit County Executive
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



ILENE SHAPIRO
COUNTY EXECUTIVE



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Contact: Greta Johnson
Assistant Chief of Staff
Office of Executive Shapiro
ExecutivePress@summitoh.net
330-643-2510

Marlene Martin
Administrative Coordinator/PIO
Summit County Public Health
mmartin@schd.org
330-926-5774

Summit County residents encouraged to apply for lead removal program

SUMMIT COUNTY, OHIO—Summit County Executive Ilene Shapiro and Summit County Public Health (SCPH) are encouraging residents to apply for new funding to remove lead, a serious health hazard, from homes. The program is available to income-qualified homeowners with children living in any Summit County community. The Executive's Department of Community Development and SCPH recently received a four-year, \$6 million federal grant to fund the program. In the last cycle of grant funding, the two agencies collaborated to remove lead from 91 homes throughout Summit County.

Summit County estimates nearly one-third of residential housing in the county was built before 1940, and more than 75% before 1978, the year lead-based paint was banned for residential use. Many of these homes have had lead removed or mitigated, but more than 33,000 may still contain lead-based paint or other lead contaminants.

"Through our partnership with Summit County Public Health, we are working hard to reduce the risk of lead exposure in our youngest residents, and to remove the financial barriers that impede the ability of homeowners to make safety improvements," said County Executive Shapiro. "Families should not have to wonder if the home their children play in, sleep in and grow in is a hazard to long-term development and health."

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, exposure to lead can have long-lasting and damaging effects on the health of a child. Well-documented effects of lead poisoning include damage to the brain and nervous system, slowed growth and development, learning and behavior problems and hearing and speech issues. These effects can cause additional long-term issues for children. Research has also shown lead exposure can cause harm during pregnancy.

"Lead exposure can have devastating effects on children that last a lifetime. Working with the Executive's Office and local contractors, we are able to use these federal funds to make homes safe for all members of a family," said Health Commissioner Christopher Barker. "No family should have to worry that their home is making a child sick."

The Executive's Office and SCPH work with local contractors to remedy lead in homes. Most often, this involves replacing or repairing windows and doors, removing and replacing components with lead-based paint on walls and other surfaces, removing or replacing flooring and carpet, and repairing exterior components such as siding and porches. Depending on the size of the home and the severity of the problem, lead remediation is a costly process that low-income families could not afford without the assistance of this program.

To be eligible for the Lead Hazard Control Grant, applicants must have income at or below 80% Area Median Income (AMI), have children under the age of 6 residing or visiting the home more than 6 hours per week, have current homeowner's insurance and be current on property taxes. Rental units are eligible for assistance. Additional information and the application are available at <https://co.summitoh.net/pages/Lead-Abatement-Program.html>.

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