

NYCCELP • LEAD ROUNDTABLE



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Advocacy Groups Unveil “A Roadmap to Eliminating Lead Poisoning in New York City”

The 2022 Lead Agenda details multi-agency, legislative, budgetary, and replacement action necessary to eliminate childhood toxic lead exposure

NEW YORK, NY — Today, the New York City Coalition to End Lead Poisoning (NYCCELP), a coalition of advocates, doctors, lawyers, and the Lead Roundtable, which is convened by the coalition, released the “[2022 Lead Agenda: A Roadmap to Eliminating Lead Poisoning in New York City](#).” Our city’s children continue to needlessly suffer permanent neurological damage from exposure to lead in old paint, dust, and drinking water in their homes. Moreover, nearly 70% of these lead-poisoned children come from underserved neighborhoods; Black, Latino and Asian children account for more than 80% of newly identified cases of lead poisoning in children under six years old.

The report finds that, despite progress made through recent legislation, New York City will not achieve its goal of eliminating lead poisoning in children without strengthening the city’s policies and programs. The recommended actions detailed in the 2022 Lead Agenda are as follows:

1. Conduct a multi-agency oversight hearing on the status of lead poisoning in New York City and actions necessary to eliminate lead exposure in children;
2. Pass local legislation to enhance early identification, prevention, and enforcement;
3. Invest in programs and interventions that protect children from lead poisoning through the city’s 2022-23 budget allocations;
4. Reduce water as a source of lead exposure by identifying and eliminating lead services lines (pipes that carry water from the water main in the street into homes and other buildings); and
5. Strengthen city, state, and federal enforcement of existing lead poisoning prevention laws

Thus far, this year, several new bills under consideration would help close loopholes and strengthen enforcement of existing lead poisoning prevention laws:

- Intro 5: Automatic Audits of Landlord Self-Inspections Upon Issuance of Peeling Lead Paint Violations.
- Intro 6: Abatement of Lead Paint on Friction Surfaces
- Intro 193: Lead-based paint hazards in Common Areas of Dwellings
- Intro 200: Reporting on Contestations of DHMH lead abatement orders

And, New York City needs to have a comprehensive plan to remove lead service lines. According to the NYC Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), there are nearly 860,000 water service lines in New York City and according to city data, at least 135,000 (16%) of water service lines are potentially lead, and at least 231,000 (27%) of water service lines are made of an “unknown” material which needs to be determined to see how many more are potentially made of lead.

Newark, NJ serves as an example as the city has [replaced nearly all its 23,000 lead service lines](#) in just under three years. Newark has sharply reduced the amount of lead in its water to below levels that the federal government says require action.

"It's been in the self-interest of various groups and industries to deny man's contribution to climate change. They say the jury is still out. The jury came in many years ago to announce that there is a direct link between lead exposure and incurable maladies suffered by our children including damage to the brain and nervous system, slowed growth and development, learning and behavior problems and hearing and speech problems," **said Edward Rudyk member of Lead Dust Free NYC.** "Lead poisoning adds up to an assault on the right to life with dignity, the right to health and the right to a clean environment. The injuries suffered by our children is the end of the world they are entitled to live in. We are all morally obligated to protect our children."

"As a former housing advocate on the Lower East Side, I have seen firsthand what exposure to lead-based paint and lead dust does to communities — our city's children deserve better," said **Council Member Carlina Rivera.** "We have a responsibility to protect New Yorkers from those who take advantage of legal loopholes and disproportionately target vulnerable tenants and families. I am grateful to Cooper Square Committee and the entire NYCCELP coalition for their advocacy and leadership on this issue and look forward to collaborating on legislation to fight lead poisoning across the five boroughs."

"Getting the lead out of our water is a major public health concern because it can adversely impact almost every organ and system in the human body -- especially for children," said **Joan Leary Matthews, Senior Attorney at NRDC (Natural Resources Defense Council).** "Right now New York City has a huge opportunity to replace all of its lead service lines by using federal funds from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. This is the necessary and right thing to do."

"New York City needs to turn its attention to lead service line removal with urgency, " said **Joshua Klainberg, Senior Vice President at New York League of Conservation Voters.** "There are at least 135,000 lead service lines in NYC right now delivering drinking water to smaller, older homes. NYC DEP has an inventory and a map. Advocates look forward to working with them on a plan."

"It is unacceptable that the City has yet to eliminate all lead poisoning and continues exposing children - the majority of whom are from communities of color - to permanent neurological damage from exposure to lead in paint, dust, and drinking in their homes," said **Jessica Bellinder, Supervising Attorney in the Bronx Neighborhood Office at The Legal Aid Society.** "We call on the City to conduct a multi-agency oversight hearing on the status of lead poisoning in New York City and create an action plan to eliminate lead exposure in children once and for all."

"There is no safe level of lead and New York City has not yet alleviated its residents' dangerous lead exposure from a variety of sources in their homes, especially in communities of color," said **Marissa Lieberman-Klein, Associate Attorney at Earthjustice.** "The City has an opportunity to strengthen enforcement of current lead laws and make a historic investment this year in getting lead out of drinking water by replacing lead service lines. We look forward to working with the City to ensure these lead lines come out of the ground and a swift path to eliminating a known source of lead poisoning is put into action."

"For years, New York City's children have been impacted by toxic lead exposure, resulting in serious health and developmental challenges," said **Jenny Veloz, Policy Associate at Citizens' Committee for Children.** "Local Law 1 of 2004 was supposed to be the first step in ending childhood lead poisoning. Yet because of loopholes and lax enforcement of the law, we are still here 18 years later continuing this fight. New York City must provide stronger enforcement of current lead laws and work to eliminate lead poisoning to ensure that all children are living safe and healthy lives."

“An average of 2,233 children test positive for elevated blood lead levels each year in New York City, with the majority being children of color,” said **Lonnie Portis, Environmental Policy and Advocacy Coordinator at WE ACT for Environmental Justice**. “It’s time for our City Council to get aggressive on childhood lead poisoning, from enforcing inspections for lead paint and the requisite remediation to identifying and replacing lead service lines. We need to stop poisoning our children.”

The New York City Coalition to End Lead Poisoning (NYCCELP) looks forward to working with NYC City leaders in executing the policy agenda steps this year in order to eliminate childhood lead poisoning.

The New York City Coalition to End Lead Poisoning (NYCCELP), members include: Citizens’ Committee for Children of New York, Clean and Healthy New York, Cooper Square Committee, Earthjustice, The Frankel Law Firm, Legal Aid Society, Lead-Free Kids New York, Lead Program at Montefiore Medical Center, Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), New York Lawyers for the Public Interest, the New York League of Conservation Voters Education Fund, the Northern Manhattan Improvement Corporation, and WE ACT for Environmental Justice.

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