

Responding to the Flint Water Crisis: Federal, State, County and City Partners February 10, 2016 Update

Federal agencies continue to work with state and local officials to respond to the Flint, Michigan, water crisis. Some 70 representatives from Federal agencies are co-located with state and local partners in Flint.

All levels of government are focusing their capabilities and resources on helping Flint residents recover from the water crisis. The community has shown great resilience and fortitude as it has confronted these essentially unprecedented circumstances and carried on despite the challenges.

For Flint Residents

For your questions about safe water Email flintwater@epa.gov, or call EPA's free hotline: 800-426-4791, English, español and other languages.

To get your water tested for free Email flintwater@cityofflint.com or call the Flint Water Plant: 810-787-6537

To get your blood tested or ask about skin rashes Call your primary care provider, or call 2-1-1

Odor If you're worried about the smell of your water: Call 810-787-6537

Crisis Counseling and Support : Call (800) 985-5990 or text TalkWithUs to 66746

Business Recover Center : Call (800)659-2955 or email disastercustomerservice@sba.gov

Actions

Water Quality

To address immediate needs, government partners are working to provide safe drinking water for all Flint residents, by:

- Conducting water testing in Flint homes; more than 1,000 samples from 150 home have been collected so far

- Providing lead-removal faucet filters and replacement cartridges, to reduce lead levels in the tap water; water filters have been installed in all 2,350 privately owned homes that are overseen by HUD,
- Inspecting home drinking water systems for lead; the State of Michigan is scheduled to begin regular sampling (every two weeks) to monitor the city's water system.
- Distributing water bottles and water filters to home-delivered meal recipients,
- Showing residents how to clean accumulated debris from their home faucets, hot water heaters, and whole-house water filtration systems,
- Helping seniors and the disabled community install their water filters, and

As of today, FEMA and the State of Michigan have distributed nearly two million liters of water (1,913,982 liters) and FEMA has distributed 127,764 water filter replacement cartridges, plus 40,000 faucet and pitcher filters. Additional water contributions have come from private organizations and individuals across the country.

CDC and EPA are visiting homes with high lead levels or skin rash complaints to investigate and help ensure that Flint's water supply is as safe as possible.

EPA is working to understand the extent of lead contamination in the city's water supply by collecting drinking water samples from Flint homeowners and testing the city's water distribution system. EPA continues to post Flint sampling results by location on an interactive map at www.epa.gov/flint. The Agency has also established a hotline (800-426-4791) and an email address (flintwater@epa.gov) so that Flint residents can find results of water testing. The hotline provides immediate telephone translations into multiple languages.

Community Impact

Government partners are also looking further down the road to address the longer-term issues that are likely to arise.

A Strike Team for High Lead Homes will soon begin visiting homes with the highest lead levels to gather follow-up samples and provide information to residents.

HHS is working with the city, county, and state to ensure that children under 6 have the opportunity to have their blood sampled and analyzed for lead levels.

U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps officers assisted the county health department in clearing a backlog of blood lead level screening results. The Federal team cataloged results of almost 800 finger-prick blood tests and packaged letters to parents providing test results and educational materials.

Government partners are also helping Flint officials tap into existing government funds to help address lead contamination in water and follow-up challenges.

- **TANF:** Help low-income families with children travel to testing and water distribution sites, by using USDA's TANF funds to buy bottled water and gas cards/bus passes to reach testing sites. TANF is USDA's Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program.
- **Food:** Flint schools can use certain USDA funds to buy foods high in Vitamin C, calcium and iron; these foods help block lead from getting into the blood; these foods are also being identified as important for the Flint food bank, which then distributes them to soup kitchens and food pantries as well as to other local agencies involved in food delivery.
- **WIC:** Participants in the WIC program can use their WIC vouchers to buy ready-to-feed infant formula, which does not need to be mixed with water, WIC is USDA's Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children.
- **Food at Schools:** Flint schools can use certain USDA funds to purchase foods high in Vitamin C, calcium, and iron that help block lead from getting into the blood,
- **Mental Health:** Flint children and families who experience emotional distress can call **(800) 985-5990** or text TalkWithUs to **66746** to talk to a trained crisis counselor.
- **Small Business Loans:** Flint business owners affected by lead contamination can apply for Small Business Association (SBA) economic injury loans. SBA will open a Business Recovery Center in Flint to administer the loans on February 10.
- **Homebuyers:** Responding to concerns that homebuyers in Flint cannot secure Federal Housing Administration (FHA)-insured loans, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) posted guidance on its website reiterating that FHA-insured loans can be made to eligible borrowers in the impacted area provided that a sufficient supply of safe and potable water is available through the installation of an eligible water purification system.

Federal Partners

As this is primarily a public health crisis, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) was designated as the lead federal agency responsible for coordinating the federal response and recovery efforts.

HHS has joined together with other federal, state and local partners to mobilize and strengthen existing programs. They are working to identify the size and scope of the water problem and to identify and carry out actions that will improve health and decrease the impact of exposure to lead.

Federal partners include the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Small Business Administration (SBA), Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Department of Education (DoEd) and the Department of Agriculture (USDA).