

BY THE NUMBERS – REDUCING LEAD EXPOSURE TO CHILDREN IN DRINKING WATER

Protecting Children’s Health in Schools and Child Care Facilities

There is no known safe level of lead in drinking water, especially for children. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is committed to protecting children and communities across America from lead in drinking water. The EPA supports state, territory, and tribal testing and remediation for lead in drinking water in schools and child care facilities through the EPA *Voluntary School and Child Care Lead Testing and Reduction Grant* and *3Ts - Training, Testing, and Taking Action* programs. This factsheet highlights progress from 2019 through 2024.



\$180.5M

allocated to states, territories & tribes



8.8M

children have benefitted in states & territories

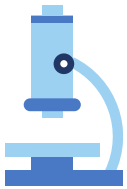


14

federal and non-federal partners coordinating through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

CHILD CARE FACILITIES in states & territories

SCHOOLS in states & territories



20,435

child care facilities tested



1,380

child care facilities completed remediation actions



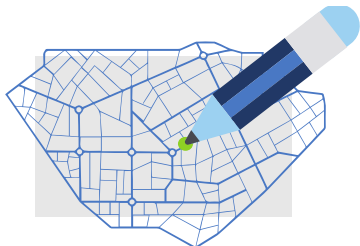
12,810

schools tested



2,506

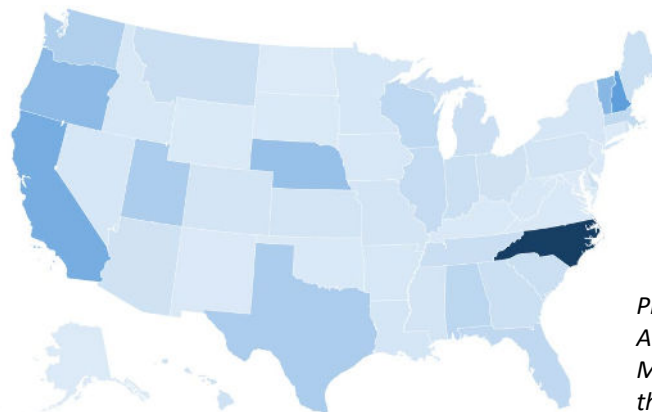
schools completed remediation actions



27

published guides, factsheets, and tools (2020-2024)

TOTAL FACILITIES TESTED in states & territories



Total Facilities Tested



Program reporting data pending: American Samoa, Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands

MASSACHUSETTS

Massachusetts’ Water-Smart program, run by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection with support from the University of Massachusetts – Amherst, uses a combination of state funding and funding from the EPA to provide **lead testing and remediation technical assistance** to public and private schools and child care facilities. Participants receive Massachusetts’ **Water-Smart Seal of Approval** to display at their school or facility acknowledging they have tested their drinking water and taken any needed actions. To-date, Massachusetts has successfully tested more than **559 child care facilities** through this **voluntary program**.

TEXAS

As of the September 2024, **Texas has sampled 97% of the approximately 1,552 school and child care facilities they planned to test**. This success is thanks to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality’s free program to conduct voluntary sampling and analysis for lead in drinking water. All Texas public schools and regulated child care programs are eligible, but priority is given to those that serve children **6 years old and younger**, and **older facilities** that are more likely to have pipes and fixtures containing lead.

COLORADO

Colorado's Test and Fix Water for Kids program **provided free training, testing, remediation, and technical assistance** to help schools and child care facilities meet state house bill HB22-1358 **requirements** during the 2022-2023 school year. As of September 2023, the program had enrolled approximately 4,500 facilities, leading to **96%** of public elementary schools and **77%** of licensed child care programs meeting compliance with sampling requirements. Their work through this program has **protected approximately 600,000 children** from lead exposure in drinking water.

NEW HAMPSHIRE

New Hampshire law (RSA 485:17-a) requires all public and nonpublic schools and licensed child care programs to sample for lead in drinking water. Facilities who enroll in the state's **Get the Lead Out of Drinking Water** program receive access to an online outlet inventory tool, reminders about upcoming sampling rounds, technical assistance, and **free lab analyses**, if eligible. **New Hampshire leads the country** with **360 schools** with replaced drinking water apparatus. Remediation actions were taken on an additional 80 child care facilities.

RECENT HIGHLIGHTS

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, also known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, enacted in November 2021, amended the Safe Drinking Water Act to allow this grant program’s funding to be used for **lead remediation** in addition to **testing**.

In 2019, the EPA re-established its [Memorandum of Understanding \(MOU\)](#) with 14 federal and non-federal entities for better coordination across the federal government, tribes, water utilities, non-profit organizations, and the public health community. There have been **seven** meetings and **six** joint outreach webinars, to date, as result of this MOU.

Additionally, several recent actions will help protect children’s health from lead exposure in drinking water, including:

- In October 2024, the **EPA finalized the [Lead and Copper Rule Improvements \(LCRI\)](#)** that will require public water systems to offer lead testing to schools and child care facilities in their customer base.
- In August 2024, **HHS finalized the [Supporting the Head Start Workforce and Consistent Quality Programming](#)** with requirements to regularly test, inspect, and remediate lead in drinking water in Head Start facilities.
- In 2023, the **EPA jointly signed the U.S. Health and Human Services (HHS) letter to the Governors - “[Dear Colleague Letter on Funding to Test for and Address Lead in Water in Early Care and Education Settings.](#)”**

Visit EPA’s websites for the [Voluntary School and Child Care Lead Testing and Reduction Grant](#) and [3Ts for Reducing Lead in Drinking Water](#) programs to learn more and to access tools and resources that help reduce lead in drinking water in schools and child care facilities.