



Contact: Sue Fuller, Public Information Officer (815)720-4213

Date: Tuesday, January 21, 2014

For Immediate Release

Applications Being Accepted for Lead Mitigation for Houses in Winnebago & Boone Counties

The “Creating Lead Safe Rockford” (CLSR) program of the Winnebago County Health Department is continuing to take applications for residents interested in lead mitigation for their homes. The program has approximately 3 million dollars in grant funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) dedicated to mitigate lead hazards in Winnebago and Boone counties. CLSR program partners include the Boone County Health Department, La Voz Latina, Rockford Housing Authority, Crusader Clinic and the City of Rockford. These agencies assist with various program responsibilities such as accepting applications and providing lead poisoning prevention education to the community.

Lead poisoning is the number one environmental illness of children and the most common preventable pediatric health problem in the United States today. Lead poisoning occurs when lead builds up in the body, often over a period of months or years. Even small amounts of lead can cause serious health problems. Children under the age of 6 are especially vulnerable to lead poisoning, which can severely affect mental and physical development. Lead poisoning effects are preventable, but irreversible. At very high levels, lead poisoning can be fatal.

Children are commonly exposed to lead through breathing in or ingesting of paint chips and contaminated dust from deteriorated or disturbed lead-based paint in homes built before 1978.

Households accepted into the CLSR program will receive a full lead-based paint inspection/risk assessment of their home. Properties where lead hazards are discovered will be eligible for lead hazard reduction work which may include painting, window and door replacement, or specialized cleaning.

The CLSR program is available to families residing in both Winnebago and Boone counties. To qualify, households must meet the following requirements:

- Meet HUD income requirements (occupants must make less than 80% of the Area Median Income).
- Have a child under the age of six residing in or frequently visiting the household. Priority will be given to those qualifying households which have a child under six with an elevated blood lead level (≥ 10 micrograms of lead per deciliter of blood).
- Homes must be built prior to 1978 and be free of significant structural defects.
- Owners must be current with all applicable property taxes and mortgage payments.

For questions or to request more information on the CLSR program, contact Carmelo Porta, Winnebago County Health Department’s Application Specialist, at (815)720-4112.

###