












An Overview of the NYC Mayor's Roadmap to Eliminating Childhood Lead Exposure



What is the Mayor's Roadmap? In January 2019, NYC Mayor Bill de Blasio issued a [Roadmap to Eliminating Childhood Lead Exposure](#). The roadmap was the culmination of a 90-day review of the City's lead poisoning prevention program, including NYC's primary prevention law known as Local Law 1. The review followed a September 2018 NYC council oversight hearing of the program. The roadmap sets forth the goal of eliminating childhood lead exposure by 2029, and describes various policy initiatives to reach that goal.

Where do we align? Prior to the launch of the Mayor's roadmap, the Children's Defense Fund-New York (CDF-NY) presented testimony at the September 2018 city council oversight hearing, and advocated for numerous improvements to NYC's lead poisoning prevention program. The table below identifies core policy proposals advanced by CDF-NY and its coalition partners, and whether they were adopted in the Mayor's roadmap.

CDF-NY Recommendation 	Mayor's Roadmap Initiative 	Adopted in Roadmap
Improve enforcement of Local Law 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Audit landlords and issue violations for failure to conduct annual inspections ■ Audit landlords and issue violations for failure to abate lead hazards 	While the Mayor's roadmap indicates that it will add resources to increase proactive audits and inspections, and issue more violations, nothing in the roadmap indicates that the City will target landlords for failing to conduct annual inspections of units occupied by young children or abate lead hazards upon turnover of the unit.	
Adopt health-based standards Lower the lead dust thresholds to 5 µg/ft ² for floors, 40 µg/ft ² for window sills and 100 µg/ft ² for window wells, to reduce the likelihood a child develops elevated blood lead levels	The Mayor's roadmap proposes lowering the lead dust thresholds to already outdated, non-health based standards of 10 µg/ft ² for floors and 100 µg/ft ² for window sills and wells. While the roadmap proposes an improvement, it ignores research which indicates improved outcomes for children when dust levels remain below the levels advocated by CDF-NY.	
Modify the annual inspection process to identify and eliminate hazards before children reach them <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Current process exposes some infants to lead hazards before landlords conduct their annual inspections ■ Modifying the process so that pregnant women can request an inspection at any time during the year would protect all young children 	The Mayor's roadmap expands the landlord initiated annual inspections required under Local Law 1 to include 1- and 2-family homes where children under 6 reside. However, the Mayor's roadmap fails to broaden the annual inspection process to allow pregnant women to request inspections. The annual inspection process requires landlords to issue a notice to all tenants regarding inspections for lead hazards, and inquire whether any child under age 6 resides in the unit. Tenants are required to return the notice by February 15. This means any child born after February 15 who begins crawling before an inspection can be completed the following year is at increased risk if there are unaddressed lead paint hazards in the home.	
Notify families and the public about existing hazards <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Use predictive modeling to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ facilitate proactive abatement of lead hazards in select, high-risk buildings ○ notify OB-GYNs of high-risk zip codes so they can counsel pregnant women from those zip codes ■ Map and publicly report lead service line locations 	While the Mayor's roadmap will not adopt predictive modeling to initiate proactive abatement or counseling pregnant women living in high-risk neighborhoods, it makes several improvements that will notify families and the public about existing lead hazards: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Use data to prioritize proactive inspections ■ Certify buildings as Lead Paint Free or Lead Paint Safe ■ Map and publicly report lead service line locations ■ Require landlords to publicly post and disclose to tenants when lead levels in water exceed EPA guidelines 	
Improve Screening Efforts Ensure all 1- and 2-year-old children served by H+H have blood tests for lead exposure	H+H will strengthen systemwide efforts, including real-time monitoring and notifications for providers serving young children. Improve Citywide Immunization Registry (CIR) so that health providers can track blood lead tests. Expand outreach to families. Enhanced efforts to get all New York children tested twice for lead exposure before age three	

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Ensure Impacted Children Are Supported Provide warm handoffs for children impacted by lead exposure to early intervention services and high-quality early learning programs	The roadmap expands care coordination nursing services to provide impacted children individual care and referrals to support services, including early intervention and nutritional counseling.	
Improve Data Transparency Identify, track and report the annual number of newly identified children with elevated blood lead levels, disaggregating the data by age, race and ethnicity.	The Mayor's roadmap announced the launch of the LeadFreeNYC website which contains maps, data and details on progress on lead poisoning prevention initiatives. Data available on the website continues to be aggregated into age ranges, rather than disaggregated by age. This makes it difficult for policymakers and advocates to better understand trends and root causes of exposure. The LeadFreeNYC website also often fails to disaggregate data by race and ethnicity, which obscures any existing disparities. This inhibits the ability of policymakers, researchers and advocates to address disparities.	

Other policy initiatives announced in the roadmap include:

- Expanding the definition of lead paint to include paint with a lead content of 0.5 µg/cm² (a reduction from 1 µg/cm²)
- Investing an additional \$5M per year to expand funding available for landlords to abate lead hazards in low-income housing
- Testing for and removing lead hazards from 135,000 NYCHA apartments where the possibility of lead hazards remain
- Testing for and removing lead hazards from all family shelter units
- Launching a pilot project to help low-income, single-family home owners replace lead service lines
- Expanding the use of stop work orders when unsafe work practices place children and families at risk
- Covering bare soil at NYCHA playgrounds with wood chips, gravel or rubberized mats
- Provide clean topsoil to community gardens
- Publishing a lead products index of consumer goods that contain lead
- Increase resources available for the inspection and testing of consumer goods sold in NYC

What's next? The Mayor's Office will begin implementation of many of the policy initiatives announced in the roadmap. For any initiatives that require legislation, the NYC Council will first have to introduce and adopt the necessary legislation. The Mayor's Office will also launch a LeadFreeNYC Advisory Committee to advise the City on implementation of the roadmap.

The NYC Council has already introduced nearly two dozen bills related to lead poisoning prevention over the past year, and has the opportunity to introduce new legislation or amend existing legislation prior to adoption. Accordingly, opportunity for improvements to the roadmap and NYC's lead poisoning prevention programs persist.

In addition to the recommendations identified in the table above, CDF-NY recommends that the Mayor and City Council prioritize the following:

- **Developing metrics to evaluate the enforcement of Local Law 1.** These metrics may include the rate of lead hazards abated in units turned over each year, or the rate of compliance with the annual inspection requirements. The metrics will help the City evaluate progress on fully implementing Local Law 1. The metrics could be established using existing data sources and new data that will be collected as part of the Mayor's roadmap.
- **Pursuing additional funding for abatement efforts.** The investment of an additional \$5M per year for abatement of low-income housing is not likely to address more than 500 housing units. Resources for abatement of lead hazards in the city and across the state remain extraordinarily scarce. Accordingly, the City on its own or in collaboration with the State should work to identify new funding sources for abatement of lead hazards.

Conclusion

The Mayor's roadmap takes many important steps toward eliminating childhood lead exposure in NYC. However, additional opportunities exist to protect more children from the irreversible harm inflicted by lead exposure.