

Washington Healthy Housing Fact Sheet

The home is the most dangerous place for U.S. families.ⁱ Nearly six million families live in housing rivaling that of developing countries, with broken heating and plumbing, holes in walls and windows, roach and rodent infestation, falling plaster, crumbling foundations, and leaking roofs. Millions more in all 50 states live in housing with serious health and safety hazards, including mold, exposed wiring, radon, unvented heaters, toxic chemicals, broken stairs, missing smoke detectors, and other hazards.ⁱⁱ Home-based interventions to address health hazards improve health and have a large return on investment: Each dollar invested in lead paint hazard control results in a return of \$17–\$221ⁱⁱⁱ and each dollar invested in asthma home-based interventions that include education and remediation results in a return of \$5.30 to \$14.00.^{iv}

The need in Washington

Thirty-nine percent of children in Washington live in households with high housing cost burden and approximately one in five children in Washington live in poverty.^v The potential effect of high housing cost burden and poverty on children and families is exacerbated by the age of Washington's housing stock. Approximately 11% of Washington's homes were built before 1940 and are likely to contain lead-based paint.^{vi} Unhealthy housing conditions can lead to lead poisoning, injuries, and asthma and other respiratory problems. These health problems in turn result in missed school days and poor school performance for children, as well as missed work days for parents.

The need for funding

To protect the health of Washington families and prevent continued increases in associated healthcare costs and societal consequences, full funding in FY 2016 and beyond is needed for the following:

- ✓ **CDC's Healthy Homes and Lead Poisoning Prevention Program = \$29,257,000**
- ✓ **CDC's National Asthma Control Program = \$30,596,000**
- ✓ **HUD's Office of Lead Hazard Control and Healthy Homes = \$120,000,000**

Funding for healthy housing in Washington

- The state of Washington has received a total of \$18,188,025 in funding for nine grants from HUD's Office of Healthy Homes and Lead Hazard Control since 1999.
- The state of Washington has received a total of \$4,640,925 in funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Healthy Homes and Lead Poisoning Prevention and National Asthma Control programs from FY05 – FY14. Of this funding:
 - The Washington State Department of Health has received a total of \$780,951 from the Healthy Homes and Lead Poisoning Prevention Program.
 - The Washington State Department of Health has received a total of \$3,859,974 in funding for asthma-related activities, including \$18,000 for surveillance activities in FY14.
- Although originally funded in 2002, the Washington State Department of Health Services is not currently funded by CDC's National Asthma Control Program.^{vii}

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Lead poisoning

- In 2011, 394 of the children tested in Washington had an elevated blood lead level, which is five or more micrograms of lead per deciliter of blood ($\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$); 25 of them had blood lead levels of 10 $\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$ or more.^{viii}
- Since 2000, 759 children in Washington have been detected with blood lead levels at or above 10 $\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$.^{ix}

Asthma^x

- In 2012, nearly 120,000 children and more than a half-million adults in Washington had asthma.
- Between 8% and 11% of kids in middle and high school reported having asthma in 2012.
- Approximately 5,000 people are hospitalized due to asthma each year.

Radon

- Approximately 33% of homes tested for radon in Washington between 1990 and 2014 had results above 4 pCi/L.^{xi}

Carbon monoxide deaths

- There were 170 deaths in Washington State due to carbon monoxide exposure from 2000-2007.^{xii}

Injury-related deaths

- For every 100,000 persons in Washington, there were 29.32 unintentional injury deaths caused by dangers other than automobile-related issues.^{xiii}

National rankings

- NCHH's 2013 *State of Healthy Housing* report ranks 45 metropolitan statistical areas according to healthy housing related data in the American Housing Survey. The state of Washington has two areas included in this report. Seattle is tied for 12th and the Portland, Oregon area (partially in WA) is tied for 16th; both are categorized as having "fair" healthy housing characteristics.^{xiv}
- The Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America's listing of "Asthma Capitals" for 2014 ranks the 100 largest U.S. metro areas to identify the "most challenging places to live with asthma." The state of Washington has two cities identified in this listing: Spokane is ranked as the 97th "most challenging" place to live with asthma and Seattle is ranked 99th.^{xv}

Healthcare financing for healthy homes^{xvi, xvii}

The National Center for Healthy Housing's November 2014 [study](#) regarding state Medicaid reimbursement policies for environmental health services in the homes of people with asthma and children exposed to lead shows that in [Washington](#) no Medicaid reimbursement is in place for activities related to lead and although none are in place, efforts are underway to explore reimbursement for services related to asthma.¹

¹ Note: (a) These are self-reported results that have not been independently verified, and (b) the existence of a policy does NOT mean that services are actually being delivered on the ground.

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Opportunities for Washington to further improve reimbursement of environmental health services include:

- Effecting coverage for home-based healthy homes services addressing lead and asthma in the home environment.
- Ensuring that services and supports are included to eliminate or reduce exposure to asthma triggers or lead hazards identified in the home environment.

For additional information, please contact:

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- ^x <http://www.doh.wa.gov/DataandStatisticalReports/EnvironmentalHealth/WashingtonTrackingNetworkWTN/Asthma>
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- ^{xii} CDC Environmental Health Tracking Network (2000-2007). Carbon Monoxide Deaths (#)/Multi-Year Period. Retrieved from <http://ephracking.cdc.gov/QueryPanel/EPHTNQuery/EPHTQuery.html?c=CO&i=-1&m=-1#>
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