

# Press Release



*For business and local editors*

## **Westmoreland County Secures \$3.4 Million for Healthy Homes and Lead Hazard Reduction Grant Program**

*New County program to improve quality of life of Westmoreland County residents by addressing lead-based paint hazards, and other health and safety household threats through its Healthy Homes & Lead Hazard Control Program*

GREENSBURG, Pa., October 8, 2020 - The Westmoreland County Board of Commissioners — Sean Kertes, Douglas Chew and Gina Cerilli — announced today that the County has secured \$3 million to address lead-based paint hazards plus an additional \$400,000 for home-related health and safety hazards in 142 low-income households. The program will improve the lives of children and families through comprehensive programs to identify and control lead and health hazards in eligible privately-owned rental or owner-occupied homes. The programs will be administered by the Westmoreland County Department of Planning and Development’s Community Development Division.

Across the U.S., roughly 3.6 million families with young children live in homes contaminated with lead-based paint hazards. Children of low-income families facing the greatest risk of lead poisoning live in older (pre-1978 built) un-assisted housing. The Healthy Homes & Lead Hazard Control Program serves as a local solution to this problem.

“With roughly 70 percent of Westmoreland County’s housing stock built prior to 1978, lead-based paint is a serious threat to young children within the County,” said Commissioner Kertes. “This program serves to protect Westmoreland County children and families from the toxic effects of lead exposure in their homes. On behalf of my fellow Board Members, we are elated to support bringing this vital program to Westmoreland County.”

Congressman Guy Reschenthaler stated “I was proud to support Westmoreland County’s efforts to better protect children in our community from lead exposure, which has been linked to serious health effects. With this federal funding, the county can address the dangers of lead exposure, particularly for young children in low-income families, to improve health outcomes for some of our most vulnerable residents. I’m grateful to the Trump Administration for ensuring communities in the 14<sup>th</sup> District have the resources they need to keep our kids safe and healthy.”

Funded through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the two-fold program will use the \$3 million to address lead hazards in 142 units through the Lead Hazard Reduction Grant. The additional \$400,000 — which was provided through a Healthy Homes Supplemental Grant — will address issues such as mold and other household allergens/safety hazards in 80 units within the county over a three-year period.

Date: October 8, 2020  
**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

“This opportunity to improve and strengthen Westmoreland County’s housing stock is possible thanks to the Westmoreland County Board of Commissioners’ leadership and the vital support of our congressional partners — Senators Casey and Toomey and Congressmen Joyce and Reschenthaler — as well as HUD’s Office of Lead Hazard Control and Healthy Homes,” said Jason Rigone, Department of Planning and Community Development Director. “Not only will the programs address residential lead and health/safety hazards in eligible county homes and rental units, they will be an incredible opportunity to support state-licensed abatement contractors and to provide training opportunities for contractors to obtain the required lead credentials to enhance the contractor pool and worker availability for lead remediation and other related projects.”

The County expects to implement the new program in early Summer 2021.

***For more information please contact:***

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