

HUD joins EPA and the City of Omaha in Landmark New Partnership to Protect Residents from Lead and other Hazards

On February 3, 2023, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) presented ceremonial checks worth \$34.3 million to Jean Stothert, Mayor of the City of Omaha, Nebraska, to protect children from lead in that city's homes.

Michelle Miller, Deputy Director of the Office of Lead Hazard Control and Healthy Homes (OLHCHH), and Ulysses Clayborn, HUD's Region 7 Administrator, participated in the event.

The ceremony and supporting agreements highlight the vital, whole-of-government approach to removing lead and other hazards from homes. Omaha was once home to a large lead smelter and lead battery recycling plant that are estimated to have released more than 200,000 tons of dangerous lead particles into the environment. Much of that ended in residential areas within the 27 square miles of downtown Omaha, where the facilities formerly operated.

EPA awarded \$29.9 million as part of a cooperative agreement that enables the City of Omaha to perform remedial activities within the Omaha Lead Superfund Site. This includes cleaning up of contaminated residential yards. HUD presented \$4.4 million to address interior lead-based paint.

HUD's Region 7 Administrator Ulysses Clayborn said, "Even though lead-based paint was in fact banned many years ago in residential housing, its harmful legacy remains. He added, "With today's funding from HUD and our continuing interagency coordination with EPA, the city of Omaha will be able to continue its ongoing work with medical and social services providers to substantially address lead and other health hazards."

Joining HUD were EPA Region 7's Deputy Administrator Edward Chu and officials from the state and county.

HUD OLHCHH's \$4.4 million combines grants through the Lead-Based Paint and Lead Hazard Reduction and Healthy Homes Program. These funds will enable the Omaha to address interior lead-based paint hazards in 160 housing units, providing healthier and safer homes for low-income families with children.

