

National Healthy Homes Month 2020

Grantee Highlights

Healthy Homes interventions are effective. Our grantees are crucial for advancing healthy housing. These facts are the foundation for National Healthy Homes Month 2020.

This year, our grantees are stepping up to help during the pandemic, in different ways. Many have already implemented work in their local communities, or towards increasing knowledge of healthy homes generally. Some examples are highlighted here.

- Keeping homes free of contaminants such as lead is one of the 8 Principles of Healthy Homes. Despite limited staffing, the City of Burlington, Vermont, goes above and beyond to ensure Burlington residents (most notably children) receive effective services of the Lead Hazard Control Program. With various partnership with local pediatricians, Health Departments, and nonprofit organizations to educate and outreach to community residents, the City of Burlington has successfully cleared over 55 lead hazardous homes over the course of their new grant. The Program Manager Margaret Williams is constantly thinking of ways to improve the program to prevent child lead poisoning, despite the COVID-19 pandemic slowing down operations.
- The State of Michigan continues to exceed benchmark goals each grant cycle on making healthy homes safe for all for current city/county jurisdictions. LSHP continues to develop and maintain strong relationships with local housing agencies, community action agencies and weatherization programs, local health departments, community- and faith-based organizations and other Michigan lead programs

OLHCHH supports research that informs and advances Healthy Housing in a cost-effective manner. The research activities below focused on several priority topics under the healthy homes umbrella.

- Falls are the leading cause of injury, long term disability, and injury-related deaths in older adults. At Washington University, St. Louis, MO, Dr. Susan (Susy) Stark and her team used a previous Healthy Homes Technical Studies Program grant to demonstrate that client-focused home interventions following individual and environmental assessments by an occupational therapist significantly reduced falls and had a positive return-on-investment. Under a follow-up grant, the team is studying the effectiveness of this intervention when provided to residents of HUD-assisted senior housing developments with the assistance of housing staff.
- When tobacco products are smoked inside a home, the smoke leaves a residue that contains nicotine, heavy metals such as lead and cadmium, and chemical carcinogens, on surfaces within the home. Dr. Georg Matt and colleagues at San Diego State University were supported by a Healthy Homes Technical Studies Program grant to study the presence of this residue (also called thirdhand smoke or THS) on surfaces in low income apartments, and to assess the efficacy of different protocols for cleaning the residue. They documented that the contaminants in THS can remain on surfaces for years after units are vacated by smokers and that it is difficult to remove from surfaces.