



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

October 25, 2022

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### **Lead in and around your home is dangerous; SWIPCO can help**

*Lead poisoning affects 1 in 14 Iowa children and Iowa's rate of lead poisoning is four times the national average.*

**Atlantic, Iowa:** The Southwest Iowa Planning Council (SWIPCO) is recognizing National Lead Poisoning Prevention Week, October 23-29<sup>th</sup>, 2022, by discussing the facts, talking about getting children and your home tested, and spreading awareness about the Lead Hazard Reduction Program grant.

SWIPCO is seeking applicants for the Lead Hazard Reduction Grant with homes constructed before 1978 and have children under the age of 6 who reside or spend a significant amount of time in the home. Applicants could be eligible for exterior and/or interior improvements involving lead-based paint removal. Homeowners and rental units qualify but owners of the rental units must be financially involved. Homeowners must meet certain income guidelines specific to the county where they live and must be in Cass, Fremont, Harrison, Mills, Montgomery, Page, or Shelby counties.

Lead is highly neuro toxic. Lead poisoning is 100% preventable, but the effects of lead poisoning are irreversible. CDC reports that there is no safe lead level and a level of 3.5 micrograms/deciliter is considered a high blood level of lead. Children under 6 are more sensitive to lead and pregnant women exposed to lead can pass lead to their unborn baby. Lead gets into the body when it is inhaled or swallowed. Lead poisoning may cause long-term effects and significant effects on the child's health. Lead poisoning affects 1 in 14 Iowa children and Iowa's rate of lead poisoning is four times the national average. Nearly 60% of the homes in Iowa both in rural and urban areas were built before 1960. During 2019, 981 children under 6 had a confirmed elevated blood lead level, which is enough children to fill 13.5 school buses.

The Lead Hazard Reduction Grant will allow for lead hazard reduction in approximately 35 housing units and build a more skilled workforce in the region. "This is a wonderful opportunity to help us get some of those lead hazards removed to make southwest Iowa a safer and healthier place to live for everyone, especially kids who are particularly vulnerable. Through this grant program we have already been able to get 3 contractors in the southwest Iowa area



certified as Lead Safe Contractors, which will ensure that lead poisoning awareness and abatement will outlast this program and will continue to benefit the community for future generations,” said Lead Hazard Reduction Program Coordinator, Nicole Rhodes.

To apply or to learn more about the grant program, please contact SWIPCO Lead Hazard Reduction Program Coordinator, Nicole Rhodes, at 712-243-4196 or 866-279-4720 or by emailing [nicole.rhodes@swipco.org](mailto:nicole.rhodes@swipco.org).

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