



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 22, 2024

Contact: Chris Parks, Communications Coordinator

Phone: 712-243-4196 x 228

Email: chris.parks@swipco.org

SWIPCO needs more applicants for Lead Hazard Reduction Grant

SWIPCO has funds available and is seeking more applicants for its Lead Hazard Reduction Grant. This program applies to homes constructed before 1978 and have children under the age of 6 who reside or spend a significant amount of time in the home. Rental units may qualify as well if the owner gives preference to a family with children under age 6. Vacant rentals are also eligible. Rental unit owners must match 10% of the project cost. Work that is eligible includes exterior and/or interior improvements involving lead-based paint removal and other items necessary to make the home safe and healthy. Homeowners must meet income guidelines and live in Cass, Fremont, Harrison, Mills, Montgomery, Page, or Shelby counties. Grants have averaged approximately \$30,000.

Lead is highly neuro toxic and lead poisoning is 100% preventable, but the effects of lead poisoning are irreversible. The Centers for Disease Control reports that there is no safe lead level and a level of 3.5 micrograms/deciliter is considered a high blood level of lead. Testing for elevated lead levels in children continues to be emphasized in Iowa. 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, and lead poisoning can lead to significant and long-term health effects. 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.

Lead Hazard Reduction Program Coordinator Nicole Rhodes said, "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 4 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."

Applications are needed as soon as possible to have lead issues addressed in 2024. 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 ext. 240 or by emailing nicole.rhodes@swipco.org.