

American Rescue Plan State Fiscal Recovery Fund Recommendation Cover Sheet

Please submit this document with any recommendations for funding from Rhode Island's allocation of federal fiscal recovery funds available through the American Rescue Plan Act. This information will be made available to the public along with any detailed documents submitted that describe the proposal. It is encouraged that such documents identify clear goals and objectives and quantifiable metrics.

This is not a formal request for funds, and submission of recommendations does not guarantee a response, public hearing, or appropriation from the General Assembly.

Name of Lead Agency: Childhood Lead Action Project - Lead-Free Water RI Coalition

Additional agencies making recommendation (if applicable): Various - see attached letter

Contact Person / Title: Devra Levy, Community Organizer Phone: (401) 785-1310 ext. 214

Address: 1192 Westminster St., Providence, RI 02909

Email Address (if available) devra@leadsafekids.org

Brief Project Description (attachments should contain details)

Full, free lead service line replacement for safer, healthier, lead-free drinking water

Total request: \$ 60-500 million

One-time or Recurring Expense? One-time

ARPA Eligibility Category (check all that apply) – See link for further information

<https://www.rilegislature.gov/commissions/arpa/commdocs/Treasury%20-%20Quick-Reference-Guide.pdf>

- Respond to the public health emergency and its economic impacts X
- Premium pay to eligible workers _____
- Government services/state revenue replacement _____
- Water/sewer/broadband infrastructure X



1192 WESTMINSTER STREET • PROVIDENCE, RI 02909 • 401-785-1310

www.LEADSAFEKIDS.org

Lead-Free Water for All Rhode Islanders: Invest ARPA funds to begin replacing all remaining lead service lines statewide.

Background: Lead and Water 101

How does lead get into drinking water?

- For most Rhode Islanders, our water is filtered and contamination is removed at a water treatment plant. However, many RI homes were built before the mid-20th century, when lead was still commonly used in **service lines**, the pipes that take our drinking water from the water main in the street to each individual property. When water sits in lead service lines, it can become contaminated.

Why is lead in drinking water dangerous?

- Lead is a heavy metal and a neurotoxin, and any level of exposure is dangerous to children and adults. Lead poisoning can cause irreversible damage to the brains and body systems of anyone, but especially children under 6 years old. A recent study showed that contaminated drinking water could account for between 10 and 60% of elevated blood lead levels in kids under 6 nationwide, and that formula-fed infants are at particularly high risk.

Lead Poisoning & Lead Pipes in RI

In 2020, **631 children** (3.2% of children screened) statewide had an elevated blood lead level above the state's intervention level. This is entirely **preventable**.

- In addition to the well-known threat of lead paint in older homes and contaminated soil, contaminated drinking water contributes to these levels.

Rhode Island still has an estimated **over 100,000 remaining lead service lines** statewide.

While Providence Water is only one of many water authorities in the state, we have the most data about their service area, which includes Providence, Cranston, Johnston, and North Providence. We know that:

- According to The RI Department of Health, Providence was recently **ranked second in the nation on a national priority watch list** for lead in water.
- The ProvWater service area has tested **above the Environmental Protection Agency federal action level** for lead in water for 14 of the last 15 years.
- Lead levels in drinking water provided by ProvWater have **increased from 2019 to 2020**, according to Annual Water Quality Report data.

Environmental Justice

Lead poisoning disproportionately affects BIPOC, low-income, and renter households, due to past and present racist and classist housing discrimination.

- Providence neighborhoods with higher percentages of people of color were more likely to have higher numbers of lead service lines, according to a US Government Accountability Office report from 2020.
- Renters and low-income households are often unable to afford to pay or even take out a loan to replace their lead service lines.
- Our state has the opportunity and responsibility to step up to protect all RI kids and families, not just those in nicer houses, with the wealth and privilege to address persistent environmental hazards themselves. It's time to invest in safer infrastructure for all.

Benefits of Lead Service Line Replacement

Children's health: Tap water contains many healthy minerals, and is the most affordable option for making infant formula and keeping children hydrated. Replacing lead pipes will allow parents to use tap water for drinking and cooking without worrying about long-lasting effects of lead exposure on their infants and young children.

Infrastructure: Replacing lead service lines is a one-time investment that will help to bring RI's water infrastructure into the 21st century.

Job creation: Funding lead service line replacement will create jobs for the plumbers and contractors who will perform these 100,000 pipe replacements.

Environmental justice: Full, free lead service line replacement for all Rhode Islanders will reduce race and class disparities by enabling utilities to replace lead service lines regardless of the property owner's ability or willingness to pay.

American Rescue Plan Funding Potential

According to the EPA's "Economic Analysis Appendices for the Final Lead and Copper Rule Revisions" in 2020, the average cost of a full lead service line replacement is around \$5000. While this would place the total cost of full LSL replacement around \$500 million, ARPA funds could be used to fund a significant chunk of replacements in vulnerable communities, and jumpstart a statewide initiative.

Using this average price, a **\$20 million investment per year** could be used to replace around 4000 lead service lines. Over the course of the **3-year spending period**, this investment could lead to the replacement of 12,000 service lines. Each service line serves one property, which may contain multiple units. If replacements were offered to a subset of properties with an average of at least 2 units, **24,000 households** could be permanently protected from contaminated drinking water.

If you have any further questions, please contact Devra Levy (devra@leadsafekids.org) or Karen Pace (karen@leadsafekids.org), community organizers at the Childhood Lead Action Project.



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www.LEADSAFEKIDS.org

Rhode Island General Assembly
Rhode Island State House
Providence, RI 02903

Dear Speaker Shekarchi, Senate President Ruggiero, and members of the RI General Assembly,

We write to urge you, and other Rhode Island leaders, to fund and complete full replacements of all lead service lines (LSLs) in RI, at no cost to residents and property owners, using \$500 million from the American Rescue Plan funding, other federal stimulus funding, and other possible state funding sources, i.e. current and future environmental bonds. We further urge the State, and local water utilities to incorporate community input to prioritize and complete these replacements in an efficient and equitable manner.

Lead poisoning is a serious and preventable children's environmental health issue with lifelong consequences that affects hundreds of Rhode Island children every year. Lead exposure can harm children's brain development, leading to lifelong learning and behavioral challenges and put adults at higher risk for hypertension and heart disease. In 2020, **631 children** (3.2% of children screened) statewide had an elevated blood lead level above the state's intervention level.¹ In addition to the well-known threat of lead paint in older homes and contaminated soil, **contamination of drinking water** from an estimated 100,000 remaining lead service lines statewide contributes to these levels.

Rhode Island is poised to receive \$1.1 billion in federal stimulus money from the American Rescue Plan to spend over the next few years and is likely to receive over \$2 billion in funding from the infrastructure package currently being negotiated by the US House of Representatives.² You have the responsibility to step up and use this excellent opportunity to protect RI kids and families and invest in safer infrastructure for all by **replacing all RI's lead service lines**.

The U.S. Treasury Department encourages American Rescue Plan funding recipients to consider projects to replace LSLs. Replacement of LSLs is an eligible project under the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund given their widespread nature, and the lifelong impacts on children³. According to the Environmental Defense Fund (EDF), fully funding LSL replacement will not only permanently upgrade infrastructure and reduce exposure from lead contaminated drinking water, but also reduce disparities by enabling utilities to replace LSLs regardless of the owner's ability to pay, and create jobs for the plumbers and contractors who will perform these replacements⁴.

¹ RI Department of Health.

² "Reed & Whitehouse Outline Funds for RI in Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill". August 5, 2021.

<https://www.reed.senate.gov/news/releases/reed-and-whitehouse-outline-funds-for-ri-in-bipartisan-infrastructure-bi>

³ "Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds: Frequently Asked Questions". July 19, 2021.

<https://home.treasury.gov/system/files/136/SLFRPFAQ.pdf>

⁴ "A Critical Opportunity to Protect Americans: Funding Lead Service Line Replacement".

<http://blogs.edf.org/health/files/2021/02/Lead-Pipe-Replacement-Funding-Fact-Sheet.pdf>

In RI, we have a demonstrated, urgent need for LSL replacement. While there are many water utilities across the the state, all of which likely provide water through a number of lead service lines, Providence Water is the largest, directly serving almost one third of the state’s population, and the area for which we have the most robust data:

- According to The RI Department of Health, Providence was recently ranked second in the nation on a national priority watch list for lead in water⁵.
- The Providence Water (ProvWater) service area has tested above the Environmental Protection Agency federal action level for lead in water for 14 of the last 15 years⁶.
- Lead levels in drinking water provided by ProvWater have increased from 2019 to 2020, according to Annual Water Quality Report data⁷.

Based on estimates calculated using data from the federal Safe Drinking Water Information System & US Government Accountability Office (GAO), RI has an estimated 100,000 LSLs statewide.⁸ This is a serious issue that is not going away without major action by our state.

ProvWater has conducted partial LSL replacements for years, but this still often leaves the portion of the service line closest to the house intact, unless the property owner is able to take out a loan offered by ProvWater. The lack of free, full LSL replacement raises issues of equity and access, as many homeowners/landlords cannot or are unwilling to take out a loan. A study by American University and EDF revealed that a lead pipe replacement program in Washington, D.C, disproportionately benefited the wealthy, while leaving low-income and Black residents with continued lead exposure.⁹ Unfortunately, similar practices affect these members of the RI community including other Black, Indigenous, and People of Color who are most often renters without the power or the funds to replace LSLs, due to a long history of redlining and housing discrimination in RI and across the country. A GAO study confirms that in Providence and other cities, communities with higher levels of People of Color and renters and other demographics, are more likely to have LSLs despite controlling for home age.¹⁰ These same communities also bore a disproportionate burden of the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. More funding for LSL replacement removes discriminatory barriers, and increases the speed at which replacements can happen and future lead exposure can be avoided.

We urge you to take this opportunity to address the serious and entirely preventable issue of lead exposure from residential lead service lines which has plagued our communities for too long resulting in

⁵ “Providence Water Supply Board’s Lead Service Line Replacement Program for Disadvantaged Communities - Revised Application”. January 19, 2021.

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1SUWLuFclJNftt9VsSZE2-JjNff7zAOw-/view?usp=sharing>

⁶ Providence Water. https://www.provwater.com/water_quality/lead-center

⁷ See above.

⁸ “EPA Could Use Available Data to Better Identify Neighborhoods at Risk of Lead Exposure” (December 18, 2020; <https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-21-78>). Calculations using data from this report showcase that 35% of service lines in Providence are LSLs. Assuming 35% is consistent across the state, Rhode Island may have 107,000 LSLs. . Safe Drinking Water for the State of Rhode Island (https://enviro.epa.gov/enviro/sdw_form_v3.create_page?state_abbr=RI) shows RI has around 305,000 service lines. 35% of 305,000 is approximately 100,000.

⁹ EDF, “Lead Pipes and Environmental Justice: A study of lead pipe replacement in Washington, DC.” March 2020. https://www.edf.org/sites/default/files/u4296/LeadPipe_EnvironJustice_AU%20and%20EDF%20Report.pdf.

¹⁰ GAO, “Drinking Water: EPA could use available data to better identify neighborhoods at risk of lead exposure.” December 2020. <https://www.gao.gov/assets/gao-21-78.pdf>.

lead poisoning rates that disproportionately affect our core cities, communities of color, and low-income communities. Replacing LSLs will help hundreds of RI families access safe and healthy drinking water, and would only use a little over 15% of the total federal funding RI is likely to get, between the American Rescue Plan, and the Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill¹¹.

This incredible opportunity should present a clear and easy choice to you, our state leaders. Will you allow infants, children, pregnant people, and others to continue to drink water with nationally recognized unsafe levels of lead, or will you act now to replace LSLs and eliminate this source of lead poisoning once and for all?

Please contact:

Devra Levy and Karen Pace, Community Organizers at the Childhood Lead Action Project

devra@leadsafekids.org, karen@leadsafekids.org

(401) 785-1310 ext. 214

1192 Westminster St.

Providence, RI 02909

Signed:

Organizations:

- Black Lives Matter RI PAC
- Clean Water Action RI
- College Unbound
- Community Housing Land Trust of RI
- Conservation Law Foundation
- Direct Action for Rights and Equality (DARE)
- East Providence Community Development Department
- Environment Council of RI
- Environmental Defense Fund
- George Wiley Center
- Habitat for Humanity of Rhode Island-Greater Providence, Inc.
- Housing Network of RI
- Housing Opportunities for People Everywhere
- HousingWorks RI
- Newport Health Equity Zone
- Newport Partnership for Families
- Northeast Organic Farmers Association of Rhode Island
- ONE Neighborhood Builders

¹¹ \$1.13 billion from ARP + ~\$2.1 billion from Infrastructure = ~\$3.2 billion; \$500 million ÷ \$3.2 billion = 0.156, or 15.6%

- Parents Leading for Educational Equity
- The People's Port Authority
- Progreso Latino
- ProsperityForRI.com
- Providence Democratic Socialists of America
- Racial and Environmental Justice Committee
- Rebuild Woonsocket
- Refugee Dream Center
- Rhode Island AFL-CIO
- RI Center for Justice
- Rhode Island KIDS COUNT
- RI Painters Union - IUPAT DC 11
- Rhode Island Parent Information Network (RIPIN)
- RI Political Cooperative
- RIOT RI
- RI Working Families Party
- Roots 2Empower
- Sierra Club RI Chapter
- Sisters of Mercy of the Americas, Justice Team
- South Providence Neighborhood Association
- Sunrise Providence
- Tenant Network RI
- Thundermist Health Center
- United Way of RI
- UpriseRI
- The Woonsocket Alliance to Champion Hope
- Woonsocket Health Equity Zone
- YWCA Rhode Island

Elected Officials:

- City of Central Falls Mayor Maria Rivera
- Central Falls City Council President Jessica Vega
- Providence City Councilor Katherine Kerwin
- State Senator Jonathon Acosta
- State Senator Kendra Anderson
- State Senator Samuel Bell

- State Representative David Bennett
- State Representative Justine Caldwell
- State Senator Jeanine Calkin
- State Representative Lauren Carson
- State Representative Liana Cassar
- State Representative Terri Cortvriend
- State Senator Alana DiMario
- State Representative Susan Donovan
- State Senator Dawn Euer
- State Representative Arthur Handy
- State Representative Brianna Henries
- State Representative Rebecca Kislak
- State Representative John J. Lombardi
- State Senator Tiara Mack
- State Representative Michelle McGaw
- State Representative Joseph McNamara
- State Senator Cynthia Mendes
- State Senator Josh Miller
- State Representative David Morales
- State Representative Marcia Ranglin-Vassell
- State Representative Deborah Ruggiero
- State Representative June Speakman
- State Representative Teresa Tanzi
- State Senator Bridget Valverde

Individuals:

- Roberta Hazen Aaronson (Cranston, 02905)
- Steve Ahlquist (Providence, 02906)
- Stephen J Alam (Burrillville, 02830)
- Joseph Allegro (Providence, 02906)
- Eileen Allen (Saunderstown, 02874)
- Elizabeth Andersen (Cranston, 02910)
- Juliet Antonio (Rumford, 02916)
- Mikaila Arthur (Providence, 02906)

- Jo Ayuso (Providence, 02909)
- Dr. Omar Bah (Providence, 02909)
- Tarshire Battle (Pawtucket, 02860)
- John Bennetts (Providence, 02906)
- Morgan Bilodeau (Providence, 02909)
- Kyle Bostrom (Providence, 02909)
- Bruce Botelho Jr (Woonsocket, 02895)
- Jenna Branch (Providence, 02909)
- Talia Brenner
- Jenine Bressner (Johnston, 02919)
- Elizabeth Bridgham (North Kingstown, 02852)
- Kristina Brown (Cranston, 02905)
- Matt Brown (Providence, 02906)
- Tamara Burman (Johnston, 02919 - Project Manager, Woonsocket HEZ at Thundermist Health Center)
- Marco David Carrasco (02910)
- R Catania
- Tara Cimini (Providence, 02909)
- Leonardo A. Cioe Jr (North Providence, 02911)
- Lisa Clark (East Providence, 02914)
- Rev. Dr. Duane Clinker (Cranston, 02910 - Pastor, Mathewson St. Church)
- Alexandra Cokely (Warwick, 02886)
- Cinthia Colon (Providence, 02906)
- Liz Colon (Providence, 02904)
- Zachary Colón (Warwick, 02886)
- Eve Condon (Providence, 02906)
- Dylan Conley (Providence, 02909)
- Sister Donna Conroy, RSM (North Smithfield, 02896)

- Sheila D Conway (Warwick, 02888)
- Joanne Costello (East Greenwich, 02818)
- John Cronan (Providence, 02903)
- Priscilla De La Cruz (Providence, 02908)
- Kevin Descoteaux (Providence, 02908)
- Susan Donovan (Bristol, 02809)
- Sheila Dormody (Providence, 02908)
- Jennifer Douglas (Charlestown, 02813)
- Melanie Dupont (Smithfield, 02917)
- Lance Eaton (Cranston, 02905)
- Everett Epstein (Providence, 02906)
- Ruby Erickson (Providence, 02906)
- Faith (Providence, 02909)
- Melissa Fernandez (Woonsocket, 02895)
- Aryn Fine (Providence, 02906)
- Lehidy Frias (Providence, 02909)
- Lucas Fried (Providence, 02909)
- Natalia Friedlander (Lincoln, 02865)
- Liana Fontaine (Woonsocket)
- Dianne Jean Ford (Newport, 02840)
- Ryan Forman (Providence, 02906)
- Stephanie Geller (Cranston, 02905)
- Greg Gerritt (Providence, 02906)
- Zachary Gibb (Providence, 02908)
- Jackie Goldman (Providence, 02908 - City Council candidate)
- Laura Goldstein (Providence, 02909)
- Katie Gradowski (Providence, 02908)
- Gregory Greco (East Providence, 02916)

- Kate Gronner (Providence, 02905)
- Marlene Guay (Woonsocket, 02895)
- Clara Hardy (North Providence, 02904)
- Mark Hengen (Cranston, 02905)
- Anne Holland (Providence, 02906)
- Jess Huetteman (Providence, 02909)
- Catherine Ibern (Warwick, 02888)
- Nick Inglis (Providence, 02908)
- J (Providence, 02907 - Homeowner)
- Jennifer Jackson (Newport, 02840)
- Mitchell Jackson (Newport, 02840)
- Bret Jacob (Providence, 02906 - Candidate for SD-03)
- Aisha Jandosova (Providence, 02903)
- Marie Janssen (Providence, 02903)
- Jordan (Warwick, 02886)
- Jessie Justin (Providence, 02905)
- Maggie Kain (South Kingstown, 02879)
- Justin Kelley (Cranston, 02920)
- Joshua Kestin (Providence, 02906)
- Dwayne Keys (Providence, 02903)
- Alex Kithes (Woonsocket, 02895)
- Jana Knibb (Providence, 02906)
- Olivia Krommes (Pawtucket, 02860)
- Emily Koo (Providence, 02906)
- Anastasia Laurenzi (Providence, 02909)
- Laurel Leake (Providence, 02906)
- Rex LeBeau (Newport, 02840)
- Elizabeth Lee (Cranston, 02905)

- Hilary Levey Friedman (Providence, 02906 - candidate for State Senate)
- Nathan Levin-Aspenson (Providence, 02906)
- Deborah Levine (Providence, 02906)
- Damian Lima (Providence, 02908)
- Andrew Lohmeier (Cranston, 02905)
- Amber Ma (Providence, 02907)
- William Macfarlane (Providence, 02908)
- Jenna Magnuski (Little Compton, 02837)
- Becki Marcus
- Connor John Mathis (Cranston, 02920)
- Bridget Eileen Madden (Woonsocket, 02895)
- Kate McGovern (Providence, 02909)
- Denise Meza Reidpath (Providence, 02908)
- Tracy Miller (Providence, 02906)
- Vaughan Miller (Woonsocket, 02895)
- Alex Moffett (Providence, 02909)
- Alex Morash (Providence, 02903 - co-chair of ProvDSA)
- Patricia Moriarty, RSM (Johnston, 02919)
- Gregory Morse (Cranston, 02905)
- Sucely Murillo (Providence 02907)
- Margo Murphy (Providence, 02906)
- Beata Nelken, MD (Cranston, 02905 - Jenks Park Pediatrics, Central Falls)
- Lauren Niedel-Gresh (Chepachet, 02814 - DEM State Committeewoman District 40)
- Michael T Niemeyer (Westerly, 02891)
- Rachel O'Connell (Pawtucket, 02860)
- Erin Papa (Providence, 02909)
- Mary Pendergast, RSM (Pawtucket, 02860 - Sisters of Mercy)
- Zakary Pereira (Warwick, 02889)

- Geena Pham (Providence, 02906)
- Samara Pinto (Bristol, 02809)
- Benjamin Potrykus (Providence, 02907)
- Andrew Poyant (Providence, 02908)
- Tyler Jay Prescott (Providence, 02908)
- Lars Reilly (Providence, 02908)
- Zachary Remson (Cranston, 02910)
- Ray Rickman (Providence, 02906 - candidate for State Senate)
- Lucy Rios (Providence, 02909)
- Kelly Robertson (North Providence)
- Kirk S. Robinson (Providence, 02908)
- Jose Rodriguez (Providence, 02909)
- Richard Rodriguez (Providence, 02905)
- Michael Roles (Newport, 02840)
- Christian Roselund (Providence, 02906)
- Joan Rossi (Portsmouth, 02871)
- Jennifer Rourke
- Alana Sacks (Providence, 02906)
- Elaine Sandy (Providence, 02906)
- Jordan Schmolka (Providence, 02907)
- Lauri Smalls (Providence, 02907)
- Natasha Sokol (Providence, 02906)
- Sonia (Central Falls, 02863)
- Daniel Moran Sullivan (Warwick, 02888)
- Paige Therien (02909)
- Benjamin Thompson (Providence, 02905)
- Liz Tobin-Tyler (Cranston, 02905)
- Charlotte Toolan (South Kingstown, 02879)

- Ramona Santos Torres (Providence, 02909)
- Harrison Tuttle (Cranston, 02910)
- Joel VanderWeele (Providence, 02903)
- Adamaris Villar (Central Falls, 02863)
- James Vita (Providence, 02903)
- Vikki Warner (Providence, 02909)
- Jeffrey Yoo Warren (Providence, 02903)
- Charmaine Webster (Woonsocket, 02895)
- Joanna Wesley (Warwick, 02889)
- Alex West (Providence, 02906)
- Katherine L. West (Warwick, 02886)
- Halcyon Westall (North Kingstown, 02852)
- Daniel Widrew (Providence, 02909)
- Lee Wilder (Rumford, 02916)
- Tom Wojick (Cranston, 02905)
- Jennifer Wood (Providence, 02906)
- Josie Woodruff (Providence, 02906)
- Ryan M. Wright (Warwick, 02888)
- Terri Wright (Providence, 02905)
- Jesse Yedinak (North Kingstown, 02852)
- Abbey Zartman (Providence, 02908)