

NEWS

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For Immediate Release

San Mateo County Establishes Program to Remove Lead Paint from Residential Properties

Focus on protecting children's health

Redwood City – With funding from a legal settlement with paint manufacturers, San Mateo County has entered into an agreement with local nonprofit Rebuilding Together Peninsula to establish a lead paint hazard remediation program for residential housing in the county.

The Board of Supervisors has [approved the agreement](#), the latest step in a decades-long legal effort.

“This settlement finally holds these companies accountable while providing much-needed funding to clean up the harm they have caused to generations of Californians,” said Warren Slocum, vice president of the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors.

“I’m proud to see San Mateo County moving forward in a partnership that will reduce the dangers of lead paint,” Slocum said. “This is really about equity. We know that children from low-income households are far more likely to be exposed to the dangers of lead paint because their housing is likely to be older.”

In 2000, the County of San Mateo joined a lawsuit led by Santa Clara County against former lead paint manufacturers for their role in creating a public nuisance by promoting lead paint for use in homes. Although lead paint was banned for residential use in 1978, it remains present in millions of homes in California.

In 2019, 10 California jurisdictions reached a settlement requiring Sherwin-Williams, ConAgra Grocery Products, and NL Industries to provide funding to clean up the lead paint that poisons tens of thousands of children in California each year. Exposure to lead can seriously harm children’s health, including damage to the brain and nervous system, slowed growth and development, and hearing and speech issues.

The County of San Mateo's portion of the settlement is \$11.7 million, distributed in annual payments through 2025. The funds will be used to develop programs to remediate the dangers of lead paint from housing, with a focus on lower-income families and children.

The first year of the agreement with Rebuilding Together Peninsula will be dedicated to planning and program development, hiring, and establishing sub-contracts for lead testing and construction work. The pilot program will involve three to five homes, which will expand to 20 to 25 per year once the program is full established.

Participation in the inspection and abatement program is free and voluntary for property owners.

Established in 1989, [Rebuilding Together Peninsula](#) provides renovation and repair services for vulnerable homeowners, including seniors and veterans, individuals with disabilities, and families with children.

“We are excited to work with Rebuilding Together Peninsula to begin the process of inspecting and cleaning homes in our community,” said Donna Spillane, County Health's deputy director for administration and finance, who is overseeing the program. “This program will eliminate a serious threat to the health and well being of children in the county.”

San Mateo County is estimated to have more than 50,000 units of pre-1950 housing and more than 150,000 units of pre-1980 housing. Homes built before 1950 tend to have significantly higher levels of lead in paint than homes that were built after 1950.

Criteria for selecting homes for inspection and remediation have not yet been established, and more information will be available as the program develops.

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