

## START A CONVERSATION

# Ask the right questions to make key program decisions

## Ask your water utility

### Understanding the water utility's role:

- Is the water utility municipally or privately owned?
- What is the water utility's jurisdiction / the geographical boundaries of the utility?
- Are there other water utilities that serve the community? (If multiple water utilities serve your community, be sure to communicate with them all.)

### Learning about the scope of the problem:

- What type of information does the water utility have in its service line inventory, which was required to be submitted to the state by October 2024?
- Are there many service lines of unknown material? What is the plan to resolve unknowns?
- Are there neighborhoods with high concentrations of lead pipes?
- Are there lead pipes at locations where many children will be present (e.g., child care facilities)?

### Gathering information on current efforts:

- Does the water utility have an existing lead pipe replacement program?
- If so, what are the key elements, how do they prioritize replacements, and how is it currently funded?
- Are there currently any resource gaps (e.g., funding, staffing, data availability)?
- What questions have you received from the community?
- What partners are you already working with on this effort?

Also see our [Financial Plan Checklist](#) for additional questions to ask your water utility.

## Ask your municipality

- What has the municipality's involvement been on the issue of lead pipe replacement so far?
- What barriers have been encountered (e.g., permitting, ordinances, etc.)?
- What are the funding mechanisms available? (See also our [Financial Plan Checklist](#).)
- Have you considered addressing lead pipes in public schools and child care facilities?
- Is there any pushback experienced or expected from the community or specific community interests?

## Ask your public health department

- Do you have ongoing efforts to address lead in water? What department or program is responsible for these efforts, and do they presently collaborate with the water utility?
- Do you have data on vulnerable populations (e.g., children at high risk of lead poisoning) that could be shared to inform prioritization efforts of lead pipe replacement?
- Does the health department have a childhood lead poisoning prevention program?
  - What services do you provide to children identified with elevated blood lead levels?
  - Do you test for lead in water when doing home investigations? If so, what do you communicate to families and what do you do if a lead service line is found?

## Ask local community-based organizations

- Who are the trusted messengers in your community, particularly areas with a high prevalence of lead pipes?
- What is the best way to convey information to non-English speaking populations in the community so that it is understood and acted upon?
- Have you been able to connect with or partner with the water utility, the municipality, or other local agencies?
- What questions do you hear most from the community about lead in water? What are people most concerned about or interested in?
- What other organizations do you partner with that could help improve the effectiveness of our effort, including potential collaboration with our water utility?

## Ask residents

- What is your level of awareness about lead in drinking water, and particularly lead pipes?
- What questions do you have about lead pipes? What questions do you have about any information you've received from the water utility or the municipality on lead pipes or on water quality overall?
- Do you know about our community's replacement program? (If relevant)
- What information would you need to participate in a lead pipe replacement program?