

Iowa City Lead Reduction Program

The purpose of the Iowa City Lead Reduction Program is to reduce drinking water lead exposure from residential plumbing and fixtures through component replacements and public education. Sources of lead in residential plumbing systems include:

- the residence's water service line being composed entirely or in part of lead,
- leaded components contaminating galvanized iron components presently or in the past,
- leaded solder to join copper pipe and fittings, or
- faucets and fixtures composed entirely or in part of alloys containing lead.

The reduction of lead exposure is a benefit to public health, complies with the Federal Lead and Copper Rule Revisions, 40 C.F.R. Part 141, Subpart I, enacted because of the Flint, Michigan water crisis, and provides residents with confidence in their municipal infrastructure.

Please visit www.icgov.org/water and click on the "Water Service Lines" to find more information about service lines and relative risks for leaded materials based on the age of the residence. In-home drinking water sampling is available free-of-charge by contacting the Get the Lead Out Iowa program with the University of Iowa at: <https://gettheleadout.uiowa.edu/>, or by requesting lead sampling from the Iowa City Water Division by calling 319-356-5160.

NOTES:

- Annual funding is limited, and the cost-share portion may be closed until the next fiscal year if all funds are used. Fiscal years start in July and end in the following June. Some funding sources may have restrictions for who is eligible. If you have questions, please call 319-356-5160.
- Reimbursement recipients will receive a 1099-MISC from the City. Check with your tax professional to determine if the reimbursement is reportable income.

The Lead Reduction Program has three main parts:

Ban Lead Service Repairs

An amendment to the City's potable water use and service ordinance, Iowa City Code § 16-3-C, to ban the repair of lead or galvanized iron contaminated by lead service lines beginning on January 1, 2024. This ban prevents the repair, partial replacement, or reconnection of a lead service line to a distribution water main. Broken lead or lead contaminated service lines are known sources of lead exposure due to the break causing the internal lining of the lead line to be removed.

Third-Party Exterior Water Line Service Plan Marketing

Replacing a water service line will be more expensive for a property owner than a repair. Property owners should always check with their homeowners' insurance company to find out if coverage is available for a service line repair or replacement. Additionally, there are voluntary commercial service line plans available to property owners from third-party vendors that cover the cost to repair or replace a defective water service line. This type of voluntary commercial service agreement can reduce the unexpected cost of a full lead service line replacement. The City entered an agreement with Service Line Warranties of America (www.slwofa.com), who is the National League of Cities and Iowa League of Cities service provider for service line programs, to market their voluntary service line programs to Iowa City property owners.

Cost-Share

The first two items cover how to deal with a lead or lead-contaminated service line when replacement is required due to a leak or other defect. The cost-share program began on November 14, 2023 and is intended to assist with the cost of replacing lead or leaded components at 50% or a not-to-exceed threshold, whichever is less. There are three cost-share categories: replacement of a lead service line; verification of service line materials; and faucets, fountains, and filters. These categories and eligibility requirements are explained below.

Lead Reduction Cost-Share Programs

The three cost-share categories are the replacement of a lead service line, verification of service line materials, and faucets, fountains, and filters. There are eligibility requirements and not-to-exceed reimbursement thresholds for each category. University Heights customers will not be eligible to use ARPA funding, only funding provided by the utility rates.

Lead Service Line Replacement Cost-Share

Intent:

- To remove and replace all and only the lead or lead-contaminated components of a water service line to achieve a Full Lead Service Line Replacement per City Code.

Amount:

- 50% of the cost not-to-exceed \$5,000, whichever is less
- Income-qualified residents may be eligible for additional assistance through the City's Housing Rehab Program (www.icgov.org/housingrehab)

Eligibility:

- Residential service line materials confirmed to be lead or lead contaminated by the City.
- Work is completed after November 14, 2023
- Reimbursement request submitted within one year of the work completion.
- Information on the City's Housing Rehab Programs is available at www.icgov.org/housingrehab

Reimbursable Costs

- Qualified expenses for the cost-share include material and labor associated with the removal of lead or leaded components comprising the water service line, pavement restoration, ground surface restoration with grass seed or sod.
- The property owner is responsible for watering and maintenance of the restored ground surface.
- Repair or replacement of landscaping elements is not a qualified expense. Landscaping elements include but are not limited to fencing, retaining walls, trees, shrubs, and growing beds with flowers or other ornamental plants.
- The expectation is for pavement disturbances to be minimized by competent workmanship and available construction techniques (i.e. trenchless installation).
- Components not requiring replacement due to being lead-free (i.e. copper pipe) and being so configured as to be economical to remain (i.e. the copper pipe is not between two sections of pipe requiring replacement) should not be replaced.
 - o This statement is to identify some service line components or sections may be copper, or another material not containing lead, and may remain as-is thereby reducing the cost of the work to achieve a Full Lead Service Line Replacement per Iowa City Code.

Verification of Service Line Materials Cost-Share

Intent:

- To verify the water service line materials by exposing the curb stop and 2-feet of pipe on both sides of the curb stop for residential properties with insufficient material records and at risk for lead service lines due to home age.
- The intent of the materials verification dig is not to allow for extra exploratory digging during a service line break to try to find a leaded component. Homeowners are encouraged to apply for service line insurance which will allow for the full replacement of a lead OR galvanized iron service line.

Amount:

- 50% of the cost not-to-exceed \$3,000, whichever is less
- Will stack with the lead service line replacement if lead is verified.

Eligibility:

- City's service line material inventory map identifies the property as a "Lead Service Unknown", or customer provides evidence to suspect lead or lead contaminated components in the service line.
- Work is completed after November 14, 2023
- Reimbursement request submitted within one year of the work completion.
- Residents with a broken service line in need of repair will not be eligible for verification cost-share money. The intent is for residents to have water service line insurance.

Reimbursable Costs

- Qualified expenses for the cost-share include material and labor associated with excavating the curb stop and exposing 2-feet of water service pipe on both sides, stop box replacement, curb stop replacement if found to be non-functional and would not cause a disturbance to a lead component or pipe, pavement restoration, ground surface restoration with grass seed or sod.
- The property owner is responsible for watering and maintenance of the restored ground surface.
- Repair or replacement of landscaping elements is not a qualified expense. Landscaping elements include but are not limited to fencing, retaining walls, trees, shrubs, and growing beds with flowers or other ornamental plants.
- The expectation is for pavement disturbances to be minimized by competent workmanship and available construction techniques.

Faucets, Fountains, and Filters Cost-Share

Intent:

- Lead or lead-contaminated water service line pipes are not the only source of lead contamination in a home plumbing system. This cost-share is intended to provide owners with the opportunity to replace existing leaded plumbing components with low-lead components, or to install a point-of-use filtration system to reduce drinking water contaminants.

Amount:

- Faucets: 50% of the cost not-to-exceed \$500, whichever is less
- Drinking fountains and filtration systems: 50% of the cost not-to-exceed \$1,000, whichever is less

Eligibility:

- Work is completed after November 14, 2023
- Reimbursement request submitted within one year of the work completion.

- Faucets and drinking fountains:
 - o Available to Iowa City Water customers.
 - o A limit of (1) faucet per property address for homes built on or prior to 2014
 - o A limit of (1) drinking fountain per property address for commercial, industrial, or government customers
 - o Must replace an existing fixture installed purchased or installed prior to 2014 with a comparable fixture complying with the definition of “Low Lead” per the Safe Drinking Water Act revisions of 2014.
 - o EPA Reference: [“Brochure: How to Identify Lead Free Certification Mark for Drinking Water System & Plumbing Products”](#)

- Filtration systems:
 - o Available to Iowa City Water customers.
 - o A limit of (1) filtration device per property address for homes built on or prior to 1988
 - The Federal ban on lead solder occurred in 1986 and took effect in Iowa in 1988
 - o Must meet applicable NSF/ANSI standards for the removal of lead.
 - o Filtration systems require ongoing maintenance and upkeep associated with filter cartridge replacements or other manufacturer recommended maintenance.
 - The property owner is responsible for the maintenance of their filtration system
 - o Point-of-Use Filters: NSF/ANSI 53, or NSF/ANSI 42 & 53
 - EPA Reference: [“A Consumer Tool for Identifying Point of Use Drinking Water Filters Certified to Reduce Lead”](#)
 - NSF Reference: [“Certified Product Listings for Lead Reduction”](#)
 - o Reverse Osmosis (RO) systems: NSF/ANSI 58
 - EPA Reference: [“Point-of-Use Reverse Osmosis”](#) and information on the draft “WaterSense” specification to identify water efficient RO systems.
 - NSF Reference: [“NSF/ANSI 58: Reverse Osmosis Drinking Water Treatment Systems”](#)

Other information

Public improvement projects:

When the City conducts a public improvement project with the replacement of public water main, a process will be followed to identify lead or potential lead service lines in the project area. The project will be bid with an appropriate quantity of service line replacements. Property owners will receive a new service line from the water main up to and including the curb stop as part of the project. If the service line after the curb stop is lead or lead-contaminated, the property owner will have the option to complete the full replacement at a reduced cost or receive a point-of-use filter with 6-months of filter cartridges from the City.

Lead and Copper Rule

The Federal Lead and Copper Rule is set up to require community water systems to manage the chemistry of the drinking water to prevent corrosion and subsequent release of metals such as lead. Iowa City achieves this control by maintaining pH to allow the water to deposit a thin film of calcium carbonate on the inside of pipes. This thin film acts as a barrier between the pipe material and the water. When a water service line or home plumbing is disturbed, there is the potential to remove the layer and expose the water to the pipe material. Residents and contractors are encouraged to understand a pipe containing lead or lead contaminated components has a risk of generating high lead levels in the drinking water until the layer re-establishes itself. This re-establishment takes about 6-months.

Lead sampling

The City and the University of Iowa Get the Lead Out Iowa program (GTLO) offer free lead testing. These tests can only identify if lead is present, not the source of lead. If a lead test is desired, call the City Water Division at 319-356-5160 during normal business hours to schedule, or register with the [GTLO](#) program to receive an at-home sampling kit.