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**Vermont Wins \$5.8 Million to Reduce Lead Paint Hazards**  
*20% of Vermont Children Are Affected by Lead Exposure*

The City of Burlington's Community & Economic Development Office (CEDO) and the Vermont Housing & Conservation Board (VHCB) have won grants from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to reduce lead-based paint hazards in the homes of low-income residents throughout Vermont. CEDO will use \$2,865,629 to make 180 eligible Burlington housing units lead safe, while VHCB is being awarded \$3,000,000 to perform lead hazard control in 230 housing units statewide.

Senator Leahy said, "We wouldn't take no for an answer, and I'm delighted we finally got to yes with HUD for this funding. Our lead removal efforts are among the most successful in the entire country, and these funds are essential to this work. Vermont has the seventh-oldest housing stock in the country, and in each of the last five years 300 of our children have been stricken with lead poisoning. Burlington alone has a childhood lead poisoning rate that is more than double the national average. Significant lead paint hazards are characteristic of the deteriorated condition of many of our oldest homes and buildings. These funds will allow the City of Burlington and VHCB to continue their top-notch programs to make the homes of low-income children safe from the dangers of lead-based paint. I'm proud of VHCB and the City for making children's health such a high priority." Leahy is a senior member of the Senate Appropriations Committee and of its subcommittee that oversees HUD's budget.

Senator Bernie Sanders said, "I am delighted that the City of Burlington and the Vermont Housing & Conservation Board will be receiving this HUD grant to remove lead paint from homes and apartments. Lead paint is responsible for terrible things happening to children and I'm glad that the City of Burlington and the state intend to be aggressive in addressing this issue."

Although recent press reports have focused on lead paint on toys made in China, deteriorated lead paint and contaminated dust in the home are the primary causes of lead poisoning in children. The hazards posed by lead-based paint are found throughout Vermont and are not confined to low-income families or neighborhoods. Lead poisoning in children can reduce IQ, cause learning and behavior problems, and impair hearing. Children who have elevated blood lead levels often experience attention deficits, hyperactivity, and neurological problems. At higher exposures, lead can damage a child's kidneys and central nervous system and cause anemia, coma, convulsions and even death.

A report released this year with the results of a yearlong study of lead poisoning in Vermont outlines priorities for reducing lead hazards to Vermont's children and citizens. Based on the findings of the report, "Get the Lead Out of Vermont," and the latest medical research, the Vermont Department of Health has lowered the State's threshold level of concern for lead in children's blood from 10 to 5 micrograms per deciliter. One of every five Vermont children

tested has levels at or above 5 micrograms per deciliter, underscoring the fact that lead poisoning remains the number one environmental threat to young children.

“VHCB is excited to be able to continue this very important program,” said Gus Seelig, VHCB’s Executive Director. “Lead poisoning is a preventable condition,” added Seelig, “and our program provides the funding and know-how to make homes safe, conducts outreach and community education, and trains property owners and contractors to use lead-safe work practices.”

Mayor Bob Kiss said, “Every child deserves to live in a safe home. With this grant, the Burlington Lead Program has the resources to make that a reality for nearly 200 low-income families over the next three years.” The Mayor added, “With this new grant HUD recognized that Burlington possesses all of the ingredients for continuing one of the nation's most successful lead hazard reduction programs.”

CEDO Director Michael Monte said “With this new HUD grant, we are now able to continue our progress moving Burlington closer to becoming a truly lead-safe city. Preventing more children from getting lead poisoning has far-reaching benefits to our entire community— children, families, neighborhoods and schools all benefit when we make Burlington a safer place to grow up.”

The Vermont Housing and Conservation Board has reduced lead-based paint hazards in over 1,900 housing units since establishing their Lead Program for the State of Vermont in 1994. CEDO, which launched the Burlington Lead Program in 2004 with a \$1.5 million HUD grant, has made over 90 homes lead safe and has dozens more awaiting the word on this grant. Both CEDO and VHCB operate some of the most effective HUD-funded lead programs in the nation and demand for assistance has consistently outpaced available funding.

For more information about the Burlington Lead Program, please call 865-LEAD or visit [http://www.cedoburlington.org/housing/housing\\_programs.htm#Burlington\\_Lead\\_Program](http://www.cedoburlington.org/housing/housing_programs.htm#Burlington_Lead_Program). Outside of Burlington, call the toll-free VHCB lead hotline at 1-800-290-0527 or visit [www.vhcb.org](http://www.vhcb.org).

For more information on Vermont’s lead paint laws, reducing hazards in the home, and general lead paint safety, visit [www.LeadSafeVermont.org](http://www.LeadSafeVermont.org) or contact Jenny Samuelson in the Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program at the Vermont Department of Health (1-800-439-8550). A copy of the report “Get the Lead Out of Vermont” can be downloaded from the website: <http://www.atg.state.vt.us/display.php?smod=218>

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