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Faulconer Announces \$3.4M Federal Grant to Improve Health and Safety for Young Children

Business — 12 December 2014



San Diego, CA – Standing outside a City Heights home recently upgraded to make it safer, Mayor Kevin L. Faulconer today announced the City of San Diego has received a \$3.4 million grant from the federal government to help improve the lives of residents in neighborhoods throughout the city.

The city has an estimated 310,000 homes built before 1978, the year lead-based paint was banned for residential use throughout the country. The grant

will be used to eliminate lead paint and other hazards in those homes.

"This is yet another example of how the City is working to help San Diegans living in some of our oldest neighborhoods," Mayor Faulconer said. "No matter where you live in San Diego you deserve to be safe and healthy."

The grant comes from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and will be used by the City's Lead Safety and Healthy Homes Program, which prioritizes homes in which children under the age of six reside or frequently visit.

Lead-based paint can become a hazard if it is peeling, chipping, chalking, cracking or heat-damaged because that allows the toxic lead to be released into the home environment.

Lead poisoning is a serious problem that threatens the health of residents. Children under the age of six are at higher risk for lead poisoning because their bodies absorb more lead and their hand-to-mouth activities increase exposure. Even small amounts of lead can have severe effects on a child's nervous system and can also cause brain damage, learning disabilities, hearing loss, and reduced muscle and bone growth.

"Childhood lead poisoning is the number one preventable health problem facing children today," said Mario Sierra, director of the Environment Services Department, which administers the City's Lead Safety & Healthy Homes Program. "I urge residents to understand the danger of lead exposure to our children and help eliminate lead poisoning in San Diego."

The funding will enable the City's Lead Safety & Healthy Homes Program to eliminate lead and other home hazards in more than 150 residences over the next three years. Grants ranging from \$4,500 to \$10,000 per unit will be available for owner-occupied residences and rental housing. Eligibility for the program is based on family size and income. The program targets homes in which children under the age of six reside or frequently visit.

Since 2002, through various programs in the City and with the help of more than 30 key community partners, lead hazards have been eliminated in about 3,000 San Diego residences. Those partners include the San Diego Housing Commission, the Environmental Health Coalition, the County of San Diego, Urban Corps of San Diego, Grid Alternatives, the Metropolitan Area Advisory Council, Richard Health and Associates, Campesinos Unidos Inc. and La Maestra Community Health Center.

For more information, please contact the City's Lead Safety & Healthy Homes Program at **(858) 694-7000** or **lead-safe@sandiego.gov** or go to **sdhealthyhomes.org**.

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