LEAD REMEDIATION AND ABATEMENT PROGRAM

Making Elizabeth's older homes lead-safe, at no cost to families.

The Elizabeth Development Company has helped more than 65 Elizabeth households remove lead paint hazards, replacing old windows and doors with no bill to the owner or tenant.

Elizabeth Development Company · October 2026



65+
Elizabeth households made lead-safe

$0
Cost to qualifying homeowners, landlords and tenants

1978
Homes built before this year may contain lead paint

$40,000
Maximum free abatement per home

When Nico Gideon and his brother bought their home in Elizabeth, they knew the windows and doors had to go. Every year they got another quote, and every year the price was out of reach. "Whenever we got a quote, it wasn't easy to do," he says. "Very, very expensive."

Then the Elizabeth Development Company's Lead Remediation and Abatement Program, known as LRAP, stepped in. Certified contractors replaced the lead-painted windows and doors, and an inspector confirmed the home was clear. The family paid nothing.

"The difference is just day and night," Gideon says. "Now my home is lead-free. I don't have to worry about that, and I know my children are safe."



WATCH

Lead-Safe Elizabeth

Hear from EDC Executive Director Bill O'Dea, Lead Program Coordinator Nazly Sanchez, contractor Afshana Anzum and homeowner Nico Gideon. 4 minutes.

WHY IT MATTERS

A hidden danger in older homes

Lead is toxic, and it is especially dangerous for young children. Peeling or chipping lead paint, and the dust it creates around windows, doors and stairs, can be swallowed or breathed in. In children under six, lead in the body can affect memory, appetite and growth, and the damage can be permanent.

For some families the danger is already real. Children who test positive for elevated blood lead levels may need hospital care, and their homes must be made safe before they can come back. "Lead-based paint is a serious issue to get addressed, especially if you have children," says Bill O'Dea, Executive Director of the Elizabeth Development Company. "Even as a young person growing up, they always told us about what could happen if a child consumed chips of peeling lead-based paint."

1978

The year lead paint was banned from U.S. homes. Many Elizabeth homes were built before it.

That date is the heart of the program. Housing built before 1978 is likely to contain lead-based paint, and Elizabeth has a large share of older homes.

> *"Elizabeth has a lot of older houses, and many of them were built before 1978, which is one of the criteria the program needs to qualify."*
>
> Nazly Sanchez, Lead Program Coordinator, EDC



THE PROGRAM

Free repairs, funded by the state, delivered by EDC

LRAP is funded through the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs (DCA) and run locally by the Elizabeth Development Company. It removes lead-based paint hazards from homes occupied by low- and moderate-income families, and the work costs the family nothing.

“It doesn’t cost the family anything,” O’Dea says. He explains that DCA Commissioner Jacquelyn A. Suárez has made lead a priority for urban areas like Elizabeth, and EDC was well placed to carry the work out. Through its neighborhood revitalization work, EDC already partners with the City of Elizabeth and Mayor J. Christian Bollwage to identify the properties that qualify.



Bill O’Dea
Executive Director, Elizabeth Development Company

The program also responds to emergencies. When a child in the city tests positive for lead, the Elizabeth City Health Department refers the case to EDC, and the home is prioritized for abatement. At the time of filming, eight of the households served had been abatement cases like these.

HOW IT WORKS

Four steps to a lead-safe home

Nazly Sanchez guides each household from the first call to the final inspection.

STEP 01

Apply

Contact EDC. You provide documents that show the household's income, and EDC confirms the home and the household qualify.

STEP 02

Assess

A certified inspector tests the property for lead and completes a risk assessment, free of charge. A lead construction manager turns the report into a scope of work.

STEP 03

Repair

A certified lead contractor prices the job, sets a start date and does the work, most often replacing lead-painted windows and doors.

STEP 04

Clear

When the work is done, the inspector returns for a final inspection and clears the home of the lead hazards.



Finished stairs inside a home repaired through LRAP.



New windows replaced lead-painted ones in the Gideon home.

> **"We give the homeowners and renters new doors, new windows if they have lead-based paint, and it is free."**
>
> Afshana Anzum, CEO, Tahshin Construction, LLC

THE RESULTS

More than 65 households and counting

Since launching the program, EDC has helped more than 65 Elizabeth households, with a few more units being completed now. Many families heard about it from neighbors who saw the work happening on their block and came to ask how to apply.

EDC set out to use every dollar it was given. “We made it a point that we were going to spend every last dollar,” O’Dea says.

> **“This is another program that EDC has brought to help the community, removing the lead from properties at no cost to the tenant or the landlord.”**
>
> Nazly Sanchez, Lead Program Coordinator, EDC

WHO QUALIFIES

Is your home eligible?

LRAP is open to homeowners, landlords and tenants. The household living in the home must meet the income guideline.

The property

- ✓ Was built before 1978
- ✓ Has lead-based paint hazards
- ✓ Has no more than 10 residential units
- ✓ Is free from structural issues

The household

- ✓ Gross household income does not exceed 80% of the area median income
- ✓ Tenants and landlords can both apply; the occupant must be income-eligible

WHAT THE PROGRAM PROVIDES, FREE

Testing
Preliminary lead testing

Inspection
Lead inspection and risk assessment of your home

$30,000
Free remediation, up to this amount

$40,000
Free abatement, up to this amount

GET HELP

Not sure if your home has lead paint? Call EDC.

The current round of LRAP funding closes at the end of October 2026, and EDC plans to apply for the next round so it can keep serving Elizabeth families. If your home was built before 1978, call to ask about the program and how to get on the list.

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Program contacts

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The Lead Remediation and Abatement Program is funded by the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs and administered locally by the Elizabeth Development Company. Benefit amounts and eligibility are set by the program guidelines. Video and photography by Cupo Creative.