



City of Kenosha Awarded Safe Drinking Water Loan for Lead Service Line Replacement

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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KENOSHA – The City of Kenosha has been awarded funding to help remove lead water service lines on private property. The State of Wisconsin took advantage of federal legislation that allows states to make a one-time transfer of funds from the Clean Water State Revolving fund to the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund to address lead related threats. In doing so, the State of Wisconsin made \$63 million in principal forgiveness funding available to municipalities to replace lead service lines. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources through the Safe Drinking Water Loan Program has awarded the City of Kenosha \$1,950,000 for private lead service line replacements to be used in 2021. These funds will be made available to qualifying homeowners, schools, and daycares to cover the cost of replacing their private lead service, up to \$6,000 per service.

Kenosha Mayor John M. Antaramian said he was very pleased the City had received the funding.

“Safe, clean drinking water is vital,” he said. “The grant has enabled us to relieve homeowners of the costly replacement of lead pipes in older homes in the City, and improve the quality of their drinking water.”

Lead services are primarily found serving homes built before 1940, however are seen in

homes as late as the 1950s. Typically lead services are identified by an oval shaped bulb found on the line coming into the home before the water meter. If you think you have a lead service, please call [262-653-4315](tel:262-653-4315) or email lead@kenosha.org to find out more information about having your service removed as part of the 2021 grant program offered by the Kenosha Water Utility and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

David F. Bogdala, Chairman of the Board of Water Commissioners, said "The Kenosha Water Utility continues to prioritize replacing lead pipes throughout the city. We have been a leader in the state with our 'Get the Lead Out' campaign which has seen tremendous success since it's inception. This additional grant funding will allow more citizens to participate in the program and reduce the financial burden on families who are dealing with lead pipes."

"The lead service replacement program has been very important to our organization" said Curt Czarnecki, General Manager of the Kenosha Water Utility. "This is an excellent opportunity for the Kenosha Water Utility to remove lead from the drinking water system while reducing the financial impact to individual property owners and our customer base as a whole. This funding source should provide for additional participation in the voluntary program and help accelerate the lead service replacement program."

Individuals can be exposed to lead from a variety of environmental sources. These include lead based paints, soil, foods, cosmetics, medicines, consumer products and drinking water. Lead has been proven to seriously harm a child's health and cause well documented adverse effects such as damage to the brain and nervous system, slowed growth and development, learning and behavior problems and hearing and speech problems.

The largest obstacle to overcome in removing lead from the drinking water system is the public and private collaboration necessary. The water service line to an individual property is partially owned and maintained by the local Utility and the remaining portion is owned and maintained by the property owner. Prior to 2018 in the state of Wisconsin, regulations prevented public water systems from utilizing water rates or revenues to fund any portion of the privately owned water service line replacement. In 2018 however the State Legislature enacted 2017 Wisconsin Act 137, which allowed a utility to provide financial assistance to the owner of a property for the purpose of assisting the owner in replacing a customer-side water service line containing lead. Kenosha was the first utility in the State of Wisconsin to seek approval from the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin under the provision of Act 137. Act 137 however limited the financial contribution a utility could provide in the form of a grant to replace a customer-side lead service line containing lead. Wisconsin Statute § 196.372(3) (e)2.a dictates "Grants that are provided as financial assistance to an owner are limited to no more than one-half of the total cost to the owner of replacing the customer-side water service line containing lead." This previous funding will still be available to any business or private lead service that does not qualify under the new program and will continue beyond 2021.