



Fact Sheet

South Carolina Department of Environmental Services • des.sc.gov

Lead Testing in Drinking Water at S.C. Schools & Child Care Centers

What is the Lead Testing in Schools and Child Care Programs Drinking Water Grant?

Authorized under the federal Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation (WIIN) Act, the “Lead Testing in School and Child Care Program Drinking Water Grant” creates a voluntary program that allows SCDES to work with schools and child care facilities to sample for lead and improve water quality for children in South Carolina.

Many schools and child care facilities are served drinking water by a public water system. While these systems have done the required regulatory sampling, many school and child care facilities have not had their faucets sampled specifically. This grant will be used to do just that, analyze the water in schools and child care facilities.

Sampling will be conducted using established sampling protocols and the DHEC lab, an EPA certified lab, will provide the sampling results. Most importantly, all fees associated with sampling will be covered by the grant. More information is available at des.sc.gov/WIINGrant.

Why Sample Drinking Water at Schools and Child Care Facilities?

The goal of this program is testing drinking water for lead and to use the results to reduce children’s exposure to lead while at school or a state-licensed or approved child care facility. According to the EPA, children six years old and younger are the most susceptible to the effects of lead. Their growing bodies absorb more lead than adults and their brains and nervous systems are more sensitive to the damaging effects of lead. Even at very low levels of exposure to lead, children may experience effects including, lower IQ levels, reduced attention span, hyperactivity, poor classroom performance, or other harmful physical and behavioral effects.

Program Description

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) awarded DHEC approximately \$519,000 in grant funding to develop a program to reduce the exposure of children, who are among the most vulnerable, to lead in drinking water at schools and child care facilities. Utilizing the EPA’s 3Ts for Reducing Lead in Drinking Water guidance, the grant will:

- Prioritize funding towards schools and child care programs where children are most vulnerable;
- Provide education about lead and the importance of testing in schools and child care facilities;
- Foster sustainable partnerships at the state and local levels to allow for the more efficient use of existing resources and exchange of information among experts in various educational and health sectors; and
- Enhance community, parent, and teacher cooperation and trust.

Program Partners

Implementation Partners include school and child care facility staff and personnel as well as:

- SC Department of Education
- SC Department of Social Services
- Clemson University
- South Carolina Rural Water Association
- Regional and Municipal Water Utilities
- Local Health Departments

Resources

The resources below provide more information:

- [EPA WIIN 2107 Factsheet - Lead Testing in Schools and Child Care Facilities](#)
- [Environmental Protection Agency’s 3 T’s Revised Technical Guidance](#)