



FREE TESTING FOR LEAD IN SCHOOL DRINKING WATER THROUGHOUT PENNSYLVANIA

There is no safe level of lead in children's blood. Testing for lead in water at schools is critical because children spend at least 1,000 hours per year at school. Even low levels of lead in blood have been shown to affect learning, ability to pay attention and academic achievement. The good news is that childhood lead poisoning is 100% preventable, and testing is a first step to avoiding exposure. As the role of school boards is to promote the progressive advancement, control and conduct of public schools, board member support and endorsement for lead testing of drinking water is critical. Fortunately, there is free technical and professional support at the state level to assist your district in planning for the sampling of drinking water for lead and communicating test results and exposure risks to your community.

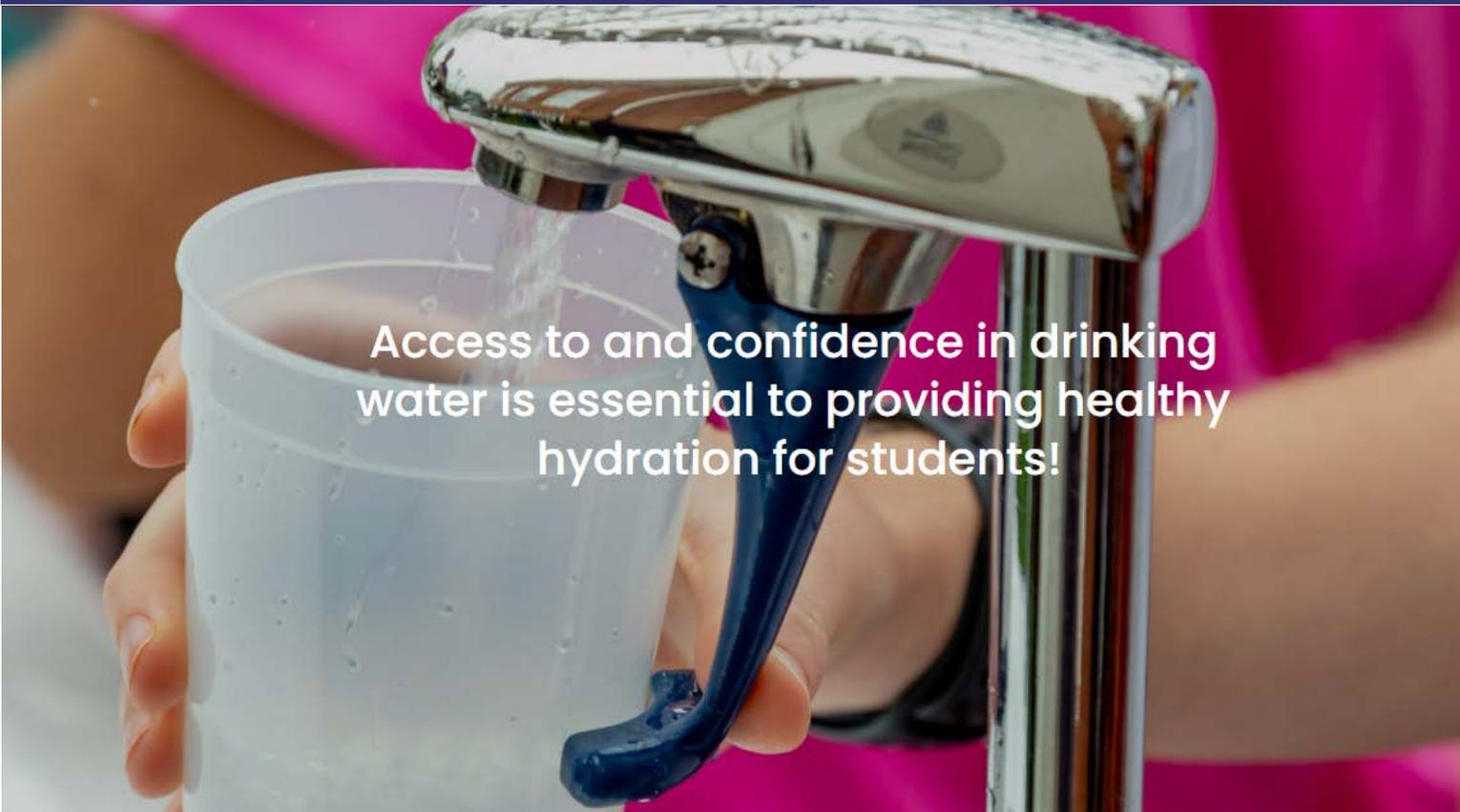
Pennsylvania's Governor Wolf [first announced](#) his Lead-Free Pennsylvania initiative in 2019. Shortly after, a group of state agencies worked together to develop a free and voluntary lead testing program for drinking water in schools and childcare centers that would be funded via Section 2107 of the federal Water Infrastructure

Improvements for the Nation (WIIN) Act. Pennsylvania's testing program is a public-private/partnership headed by PENNVEST and implemented by Terraphase Engineering Inc, <https://terraperase.com>. Terraphase has collected tens of thousands of samples at several hundred school facilities across the country, and the company's experience has led to an established approach that includes key elements of communication, planning, data management and reporting. This program makes Terraphase's expertise available to the schools of the commonwealth for addressing this important and pervasive issue.

Pennsylvania's Voluntary Lead in Drinking Water Testing Program was officially announced in March of 2021. The program homepage can be found at <http://leadfree.pa.gov/>, where any interested party can learn more and enroll. The program will remain available until September 2023. Free program services are available for eligible facilities, including state-licensed childcare providers and public schools serving children ages 6 and under. Facilities located in disadvantaged communities and environmental justice areas are

considered top priorities for the program, as well as older buildings that are likely to have lead plumbing.

To date, the program has enrolled over 380 facilities. Testing is underway or completed at nearly 75% of those facilities. Program data collected to date indicates that lead has been detected at approximately 40% of the water outlets tested. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) action criteria of 15 parts per billion (ppb) has been exceeded approximately 4% of the time. After test results are received, Terraphase experts help facilities handle the communication regarding drinking water testing and planning, results notifications and managing the corrective actions associated with high lead levels. The EPA's "3Ts" ([Training, Testing and Taking Action](#)) guidance document provides the overarching framework for the lead testing process in schools and childcare facilities. When exceedances have been detected in sampling, the focus is on **low-cost and no-cost corrective actions to eliminate the risk** of exposure to lead in drinking water.



Access to and confidence in drinking water is essential to providing healthy hydration for students!

Most facilities have opted to replace outdated fixtures with newer lead-free models and retest to show the corrective action was effective. Others no longer use certain outlets for drinking or cooking. One common misconception is that major expensive plumbing repairs will always be necessary when exceedances are detected for most schools or daycares. The reality is that costly repairs are not typically necessary *for eliminating the risk of exposure to lead.*

Susan Acel, maintenance director of the Oil City Area School District (OCASD) in Venango County in southwestern Pennsylvania has a very positive story to tell about her experience with the commonwealth's Voluntary Lead in Child Care and School Drinking Water Testing Program coordinated by PENNVEST, as well as the Women for a Healthy Environment's 1,000 Hours A Year

program. All the faucets used for drinking and cooking in the district's elementary schools were tested for free through the PENNVEST program. Sampling revealed eight faucets in one of the schools had lead present. After consulting with Terraphase, the district replaced the eight faucets, and all water lines inside the building were replaced from the faucets to the main line. Further testing has revealed continued elevated lead levels, which may require eventual replacement of the service line. Until then, OCASD will likely install Point of Use (POU) lead filters at the faucets that are national Science Foundation (NSF) 42 and NSF 53 certified for lead removal. Because OCASD is a part of the 1,000 Hours A Year program <https://www.1000hoursayear.org/>, the cost for all the remediation activity was covered by its participation in the program. Acel is a huge fan of both programs and found her work with

Terraphase and Women for a Healthy Environment supportive and helpful in addressing lead exposure issues in her schools.

Testing the drinking water in these facilities is invaluable in assuring all students and staff are safe and healthy. Keeping your school lead-free is achievable and necessary for protecting the health of future generations.





Pennvest Lead Testing Program - Process Overview

1



ENROLL

Sign up to participate in this **FREE** and voluntary state-funded program

2



TRAIN

Review 30 to 40-minute **ONLINE VIDEOS** to learn how to conduct the sampling

3



SAMPLE PLAN

Conduct a walk-through of your facility and create an **INVENTORY** of which outlets to test

4



TALK WITH AN EXPERT

Schedule a **PHONE CALL** with an expert to review your sampling plan

5



RECEIVE FREE KIT

Sampling kit with instructions will be **MAILED** to your facility at no charge

6



COLLECT WATER SAMPLES

Based on your sampling plan, collect water samples and ship back **FREE** of charge

7



EXPERT REVIEW

Testing results come back within 14 days. Our trained experts will contact you to discuss and determine **NEXT STEPS**

8



SHARE RESULTS

COMMUNICATE information with families, staff, and any occupants

9



KNOW WHAT'S NEXT

Our experts will discuss available **REMEDIES** if elevated levels of lead are present