



US EPA's FY2026 Commitments Under Federal Lead Action Plan

[Editor's note: many thanks to Tom Neltner for his consistently great blog posts and permission for one of them to be re-printed in LEAD Action News. Whereas Tom writes re: the United States context: "Keep in mind that commercial and industrial buildings continue to be allowed to use paint with added lead; the [CPSC limits](#) only apply to residential and consumer applications", the huge advantage of what [The LEAD Group has achieved in Australia](#) is that nearly all **non-residential** new paints sold since 1st October 2021 have been required to comply with the WHO (also US CPSC) limit of less than 90 parts per million lead in paint. This means that Australian conversions from commercial or industrial premises to residential premises will only need to be concerned about lead paint for decades or centuries in to the future for all the buildings built prior to Oct 2021, whereas in the US, this lead-concern built date is prior to sometime in the future when all new paint sold will hopefully be required to comply with the WHO definition of unleaded paint in the USA too!].

Unleaded Kids blog

Agency plans greater focus on adaptive reuse, tribal needs, and soil cleanup.

By [Tom Neltner](#), [March 28, 2026](#)[General](#), [Housing](#), [Paint](#), [Pipes](#), [Products](#), [Soil](#)



What Happened

Almost halfway through the federal fiscal year, EPA published its [FY2026 commitments](#) it plans to accomplish pursuant to the [2018 Federal Lead Action Plan](#) issued by the [President's Task Force on Environmental Health Risks and](#)

[Safety Risks to Children](#). The agency has made [similar commitments](#) and posted progress reports since 2019.

Here are some highlights:

Adaptive Reuse: EPA plans to undertake an effort to support and accelerate the conversion of existing commercial and industrial buildings into new residential homes where lead and other environmental hazards are present. By June 30, 2026, it will host one private sector



forum on adaptive reuse and publish at least one case study on the issue by September 30, 2026.

Tribal Communities: In its [2022 Strategy to Reduce Lead Exposures and Disparities in U.S. Communities](#),¹ EPA said it would evaluate exposure pathways unique to tribal members and consider [traditional ecological or indigenous knowledge](#) at lead-contaminated sites impacting tribal nations. It also planned to support use of the EPA's [Tribal Lead Curriculum](#).

In its FY2026 commitments, EPA expanded on this saying it plans to:

- By September 30, 2026, “track and report EPA’s direct implementation activities related to lead programs in Indian country to better understand EPA program delivery and ensure human health and environmental protection is as strong in Indian country as outside of Indian country.”
- By December 31, 2026, identify tribes with priority lead concerns based on the EPA-Tribal Environmental Plans ([ETEPs](#)).² The goal is to “gain an understanding of what efforts Tribes currently have underway to address lead exposure and risks.”
- By December 31, 2026, “host a tribal workshop on lead risks, regulations, remediation, and available resources to support tribes in addressing contamination and administering lead programs.”

National Center of Excellence for CERCLA³ Residential Lead Cleanups: By the Fall of 2026, EPA plans “to establish a National Center of Excellence for CERCLA Residential Lead Cleanups.” EPA described the National Center in its [October 2025 announcement](#) that weakened its [soil cleanup guidelines](#) saying it would serve as a “centralized resource to share expertise across regions, identify and facilitate efficiencies, and establish best management practices across all phases of characterization and cleanup” for industrial and commercial operations that release lead into the environment. It will include:

- “A National Residential Lead Portfolio Manager to monitor the scope, schedule and cost of all CERCLA residential lead response actions, as well as identify and facilitate resolution of obstacles in conjunction with the Center of Excellence and site teams.”
- “A contracting strategy for CERCLA residential lead cleanups that allows for efficient acquisition of cleanup contractors and creates measurable efficiencies by focusing contracting tools to address the unique requirements and challenges associated with residential cleanups.”
- A model program “for early and sustained implementation of institutional controls and other non-engineered instruments to complement engineered cleanup components.”



EPA also committed to two rulemakings.

- By Winter of 2027, “propose a soil-lead hazard standard reconsideration rule to increase protection for children in homes and child-care facilities where soil-lead hazards are present.
- By end of the year, “finalize amendments to secondary lead smelters National Emission Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants.”

Why It Matters

Annual commitments to specific milestones are important tools to set priorities and focus efforts for any organization, including federal agencies. They are particularly important when made public in a timely manner so stakeholders can use the information to engage in the effort, track progress, and flag omissions.

Often the commitments can become a laundry list of tasks big and small that lack context. Fortunately, for federal agencies working to reduce people’s exposure to lead, the [2018 Federal Lead Action Plan](#) provides that context.

Our Take

We applaud EPA for publicly releasing its FY26 commitments that it plans to accomplish pursuant to the [2018 Federal Lead Action Plan](#). This type of accountability is important not just to staff and management but to stakeholders who may want to shape the agency’s priorities and plans. We encourage other agencies with significant responsibilities under the Plan, specifically HUD and CDC, to follow EPA’s example.⁴

We are excited to see the new focus on converting commercial and industrial properties to new residential uses to address environmental threats such as lead, asbestos, PCBs, mold, asthma triggers, formaldehyde, and carbon monoxide. Without careful consideration, these conversions can harm residents and undermine the value of the property.

We saw that happen in 2024 for an [old factory conversion project](#) in Connecticut. An EPA investigation of tenant complaints about dust-lead hazards resulted in EPA finding the building “may present an imminent and substantial endangerment.” EPA ordered a cleanup of those hazards pursuant to its hazardous waste authorities. Keep in mind that commercial and industrial buildings continue to be allowed to use paint with added lead; the [CPSC limits](#) only apply to residential and consumer applications.

Too often, federal agencies approach these environmental threats in a siloed manner that ignores conflicts that can increase costs and delay implementation or fail to leverage synergies to accelerate progress. An integrated healthy homes approach, such as those promoted by the [National Center for Healthy Housing](#) and [Green and Healthy Homes Initiative](#), provide a means to address root causes of environmental threats such as moisture damage and poor ventilation. This approach has a track record of success in delivering health and affordable housing crucial to thriving communities.

For that reason, we encourage EPA to include many of the healthy-homes focused organizations in the forum it plans to hold before June 30, 2026.



We similarly support EPA's plans for a National Center of Excellence for CERCLA Residential Lead Cleanups and encourage it be closely coordinated with the federal efforts to address lead-based paint hazards. While the sources may be different, the interventions are often similar. This national coordination is important because it is becoming clear that lead in soil is an important route of exposure and significant contributor to dust-lead hazards inside homes.

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