

Our mission is to improve lives and our community by engaging people to give, advocate and volunteer.

October 27, 2022

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Louisville Metro Council Members,

As Metro United Way works at every level of change to address the social determinants of education, economic mobility, and health in our community, we are grateful for your consideration of legislation to prevent an incurable, but preventable, condition harming children and families in our community—lead poisoning.

We urge your support of Ordinance O-134-22, providing basic protections from lead exposure in rental units where our families live and our children grow. With nearly 18,000 Jefferson County children under the age of 6 currently living in rental housing with an elevated risk of lead exposure, our community cannot act urgently enough to establish a process for identifying and addressing lead hazards in rental units with the greatest likelihood of lead presence.

Metro United Way fights for all children to have a strong, healthy start to their lives and learning journeys. Childhood lead exposure presents a significant barrier to both with links to traumatic lifelong impacts on well-being, including lowered educational attainment and income as well as increased rates of justice system involvement. Devastatingly, 9,823 Jefferson County children have experienced elevated blood-lead levels since 2016—a number that only represents families with awareness of and access to lead screening.

While we cannot know the full extent of lead's damage to our neighbors, we know the risk of lead exposure compounds our community's deepest inequities. Children living in northwest Jefferson County face 9.37-times greater risk of lead poisoning than children in other areas, an injustice rooted in institutional racism and contributing to current health and education disparities.

Ordinance O-134-22 provides the opportunity to protect our families today and achieve a more equitable community tomorrow. Research that shows cities with proactive inspection policies report lead poisoning cases decreasing at twice the rate of those nearby without proactive policies. Our local legislation is positioned to efficiently achieve the same results with a sole focus on units with a high probability of lead-based hazards based on construction dates, renovations, and current maintenance procedures. A six-months-long process engaging stakeholders from public health, housing, business, and community organization perspectives supported the development of these provisions and built a strong network of partners ready to assist home renters, landlords, and city leaders with policy implementation and access to significant local resources available for the range of lead remediation and abatement measures the ordinance allows.

The time is now. The solution is here. Our children and families cannot wait. We ask you to support Ordinance O-134-22 to prevent lead poisoning in rental units now and protect our community for generations to come. Thank you sincerely for your continued leadership and service.

In community,



Adria Johnson
President & CEO