

National Collaborative Honors Excellence in Lead Pipe Replacement

The Lead Service Line Replacement Collaborative recognized 16 people and programs leading the charge to remove lead from the nation's drinking water systems

WASHINGTON DC, DC, UNITED STATES, June 23, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ --

[The Lead Service Line Replacement Collaborative](#) (LSLRC) recognized 16

people and programs that have demonstrated excellence in lead service line (LSL) replacement. The “Honoring Excellence in LSL

Replacement” initiative, which held its recognition ceremony alongside the American Water Works Association’s annual convention (ACE), aims to spotlight the many communities working to remove LSLs from their water systems and reduce the health risks of lead exposure.

“

LSL replacement is complex. Today's award recipients exemplify the dedication that different stakeholders bring to the task - leveraging the strengths of utilities, public health and community groups.”

Lynn Thorp, President, Clean Water Action

“Replacing toxic LSLs is imperative to ensure our children can lead healthy lives. That’s why the Collaborative is keeping the spotlight on the dedicated crews and communities that are making it happen, especially communities that began replacing their LSLs voluntarily before there was a legal obligation to do so.”– Roya Alkafaji, Manager, Environmental Defense Fund and LSLRC Steering Committee member

The U.S. EPA's latest estimate is that over 4 million LSLs remain connected to water systems in the United States. There is no safe level of lead exposure, especially for young

children. Launched in the wake of the Flint Michigan Water Crisis, the Collaborative is a consortium of 28 national organizations committed to accelerating LSL replacement by providing how-to resources, amplifying good practices, and facilitating cross-sector collaboration.



This event marks the Collaborative's 10th anniversary. Over that time, water systems and communities across the country have made great strides in replacing LSLs. Programs were recognized for excelling in areas that align with the Collaborative's principles for effective LSL replacement, including technical efficiency, fiscal savvy, community engagement, and equal access to services. The ceremony also honored individuals who have demonstrated longstanding leadership in the space.



Honorees:

Outstanding Leadership in LSL Replacement: EquiFlow Lead-Free Program in Wausau, WI; Denver Water's Lead Reduction Program; Lead Free DC

Excellence in Community Engagement: Grand Rapids Water System Lead Line Replacement Program; Lead Free Memphis; Lead Protection Program, Greeley, CO

Cross-Sector Collaboration to Enhance Lead Service Line Replacement: LeadCare Cook County

Policy Innovation & Leadership: Jersey Water Works Lead Service Line Implementation Workgroup

Enabling Equal Access to Lead Service Line Replacement and Associated Jobs: Lead Free St. Paul Regional Water Services

Efficiency & Technical Innovation: Milwaukee Water Works LSL Replacement Program

Fiscal Savvy & Funding Innovation: Trenton Water Works LSL Replacement Program; Wilmington Water Lead Reduction Program

Public Health Champion: Stephen Estes-Smargiassi, Executive Director, Massachusetts Water Resources Authority

Community Ambassador: Kareem Adeem, Director, City of Newark's Department of Water & Sewer Utilities

Contractor/Consultant Extraordinaire: Sandy Kutzing, Senior Vice President, CDM Smith

Elected Leader: Mayor Nathaniel George Booker, Village of Maywood, IL

Awardee Quotes

"[The recognition] validates not just our model but our results, which have proven to be significantly faster, more cost-effective, and at a level of accountability and transparency that is unmatched in this industry." – Shawn Kerachsky, President and CEO, Community Infrastructure Partners

"Since 2020, more than 38,000 customer-owned LSLs have been replaced at no direct cost to the property owner through Denver's first-of-its-kind Lead Reduction Program. [...] we're excited to be part of the national movement working — together as one — toward a lead-free future." – Alexis Woodrow, Manager, Denver Water's Lead Reduction Program

"The power of collaboration, transparency, and meaningful community engagement in advancing LSL replacements and protecting public health within our community is what makes the Grand Rapids community so special." – Wayne Jernberg, Utilities Director, City of Grand Rapids

"This honor reflects the heart of our Lead Free Memphis initiative. Together, we are proving that every neighborhood deserves clean, safe drinking water, and that getting lead pipes out of the ground is how we protect our children and build healthier communities." – LaTricea Adams, Founder & President, Young, Gifted & Green

"LeadCare Cook County has provided lead service line replacements to nearly 300 child care providers in suburban Cook County, ensuring thousands of children have enjoyed access to safer, healthier drinking water." – Toni Preckwinkle, Cook County Board President

"New Jersey's success in tackling one of the most persistent public health challenges demonstrates the power of data-driven policy, cross-sector collaboration, and relentless focus on equity." – Deandrah Cameron, Policy Manager, New Jersey Future

"This award recognizes the progress we have made as a city in improving how LSL replacement work is planned, coordinated, and delivered. We are proud of that progress and committed to continuing this work for Milwaukee residents." – Patrick Pauly, Superintendent, Milwaukee Water Works

"The secret to Trenton Water Works' (TWW) fiscal savvy is a relentless staff, supportive TWW Director and City Administration, a dedicated City Council, and a super generous NJ Infrastructure Bank." – Noemi de la Puente, Principal Engineer, Trenton Water Works

"[The recognition] is confirmation that our Lead Reduction Program is successfully protecting the

health of the people we serve; thank you to our dedicated staff whose hard work made it possible.” – Kelly Williams, Commissioner, Wilmington Department of Public Works

“For three decades, I have worked to build partnerships with local and state public health officials and with local and national advocacy groups to understand and clearly communicate the risks of lead in drinking water and ways to mitigate that risk.” – Stephen Estes-Smargiassi, Executive Director, Massachusetts Water Resources Authority

“It is a great honor to be recognized as the Community Ambassador by the LSLR Collaborative. [...] In Newark, we had the political will to get our 20,000-plus lead lines replaced as quickly and efficiently as possible.”– Kareem Adeem, Director, City of Newark's Department of Water & Sewer Utilities

“Contributing to this monumental task of finding and removing all LSLs from our drinking water is incredibly rewarding. The phrase "it takes a village" has never been more appropriate and I'm proud of how my team, water systems, and so many in this industry have stepped up to the challenge.” – Sandra Kutzing, Senior VP, CDM Smith

“Every child, every family, and every resident deserves access to safe, clean drinking water without the risk of lead exposure. In Maywood, we understand that investing in critical infrastructure is an investment in our people, our neighborhoods, and our future.” -- Honorable Nathaniel George Booker, Mayor, Village of Maywood

Mason Hines

RESOLVE

+1 202-965-6218

[email us here](#)

This press release can be viewed online at: <https://www.einpresswire.com/article/920806464>

EIN Presswire's priority is source transparency. We do not allow opaque clients, and our editors try to be careful about weeding out false and misleading content. As a user, if you see something we have missed, please do bring it to our attention. Your help is welcome. EIN Presswire, Everyone's Internet News Presswire™, tries to define some of the boundaries that are reasonable in today's world. Please see our Editorial Guidelines for more information.

© 1995-2026 Newsmatics Inc. All Right Reserved.