

Summary

The home is a place that serves many purposes besides a place of residency. The home is where we begin and finish our day, where families and their children live, play, and grow for years, and where people have a sense of comfort and safety. The community also encompasses all of these characteristics of the home but at a grander scale in which every family collectively shares every aspect of it, regardless of their individual lifestyles. Unfortunately, both the home and community for some is a place where many known and unknown environmental toxins are causing health hazards that are continuously affecting these residents on a daily basis.

Indoor environmental hazards in the home harm millions of children and families each year. Scientists have long recognized that indoor toxic hazards can pose far greater risks to children's health than outdoor exposures because of the concentrated levels in enclosed, poorly ventilated spaces. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development have identified healthy homes/healthy communities as a priority for the coming years and have begun initiative to better understand, combat, and resolve the issues surrounding environmental toxins. Health hazards encountered in the home include: dust, mold, pests, lead (and other heavy metals), pesticides, herbicides, food additives, and a number of other toxic materials. The consequences of these preventable hazards in the home include asthma, learning disabilities, behavioral problems and degraded health; and dangerous gases such as carbon monoxide and radon which can result in long term brain damage, cancer, and death. The costs to the individual of these toxins can be school absenteeism, learning difficulties, academic failure, lack of employment, life-long health problems, socialization problems, criminal records. Societal costs include rising healthcare and hospitalization costs, higher special education needs, and increased burdens on juvenile and criminal justice systems.

Healthy Homes/Healthy Communities Initiative (HHHCI)

In response to the risks that these environmental toxins disproportionately pose to children and families' health, the Center for the Human Rights of Children (CHRC),

Center for Urban Environmental Research and Policy (CUERP), Center for Urban Research and Learning (CURL), Loyola University Medical Center, and Loyola Law School's Civitas ChildLaw Center ("The Centers") at Loyola University Chicago have developed an interdisciplinary, multi-sector initiative, *Advancing Healthy Homes/Healthy Communities – Tackling Environmental Disparities* ("Healthy Homes/Healthy Communities Initiative").

The **goal** of the Healthy Homes/Healthy Communities Initiative is to develop Loyola University Chicago as a leading educational institution with a commitment to advancing the notion of healthy homes and healthy communities free of environmental toxins in the City of Chicago and greater Cook County region. The initiative will use an integrative research and advocacy model to address the public health and housing problems associated with environmental toxins. This approach integrates a unique set of strategies and tactics, including applied research, public education, organizing, coalition building, legislative and policy advocacy, and public implementation.

Advancing the Notion of Healthy Homes/Healthy Communities - Request for Proposals (RFP)

As mentioned, the home is the place where many of these toxins can be remediated and where broader responses can be made to improve the long-term quality of life for families. There are, however, a number of research gaps on environmental toxin exposures and their effects on children's and to a greater extent, population health. For example, toxins such as pests, radon, and carbon monoxide have had few reviews or assessments of their long-term effects or associations with health status. While toxins such as lead have been found to have adverse effects on both children's physical and mental health, reviewed intervention studies have concluded that household educational or dust control interventions are largely ineffective at reducing blood lead levels in children.

As part of this initiative's goal and the need for new or current search on healthy homes and communities, a request for proposals (RFP) is being offered to Loyola faculty/staff/students funded through a grant provided by the Provost's office.

The **purpose** of this RFP is to elicit research that focuses on the intersections social, political and natural science research and practice that inform the development and implementation of healthy homes/communities policy or action in the City of Chicago and Cook County. The proposal can support:

1. Research that identifies a current or developing indoor environmental toxins **OR**
2. Identification of resources or assets that have/have not been previously recognized **OR**
3. Development of new policy ideas, interventions, or advocacy to address familiar problems

The **focus** of the proposed research is to provide vital information to a broad audience that can balance scientific research, intervention, action, and advocacy (to some extent), and that can be utilized *by any and all of the following sectors*:

- Academia
- Local Government
- Local Community Partners
- Public/Private Sector

Ultimately, the proposed research will help develop a sustainable network of social, economic, political, and academic relationships which will be a leading force in advocating for and creating healthier homes and communities.

The environmental toxins that have been identified for the purpose of this initiative and the RFP are shown in the “Burden of Unhealthy Housing” chart on pg. 5.

Strategies have been provided to help guide the proposal(s) towards the subject matters for the initiative.

Research Topics/Interest for Proposal(s)

Identify indoor environmental health hazards within Chicago and Cook County

- General analysis of current or emerging toxins (see “Burden of Unhealthy Housing”) using data analysis of local or county data **or** nationally representative data on one or more toxins.
 - i. Analysis can be done utilizing statistical methods (quantative/qualitative) or geospatial/mapping methods

Identify or analyze resources, interventions, or policy relating to healthy homes

- Existing or lacking resources to respond to these issues – both public and private
 - i. Organizational/Communal
 - ii. Legislative/Public Health Policy
- Community, university, government and/or private sector interventions/best practices to address healthy homes issues
- Current laws, regulations, and implementation of various environmental toxins (City/Municipal, Cook County, State of Illinois, Federal)

Outreach, education, and advocacy to develop models for engagement

- Cross-sector communication and coordination related to:
 - i. Hazard identification and prioritization
 - ii. Engagement with organizations including
 1. Government
 2. Private/public sector
 3. Community/Advocacy groups
 4. Academia
 - iii. Supporting lasting systems to improve and maintain healthy homes

HHHCI Initiative Grants - Funding

Stipends of **\$1,000-\$3,000** will be awarded per proposal. Research partnerships with LUC faculty/staff/student teams, public sector agencies, and/or community organizations will be prioritized. Recipients will be chosen based on the following criteria and must be able to provide the deliverables as outlined below:

Eligibility Criteria—Eligible applicant individuals or organizations include:

- Faculty and students (all levels) at Loyola University Chicago at Lake Shore, Water Tower, and Maywood campuses. (Faculty supervision of all students is required).

NOTE: Interdisciplinary collaborations are encouraged, as are partnerships with community organizations and public sector agencies. We encourage and will prioritize proposals from applicants who incorporate students, community groups, and/or government agencies, in their work. The initiative can also provide or connect researchers with collaborative community partners/organizations (upon request)

Evaluation Criteria

- Focus on the disproportionate impact of environmental toxins on children, youth, and families within the City of Chicago and/or Cook County
- Focus on environmental toxins identified in the RFP (See “Burden of Unhealthy Homes” Chart)
- Potential for important future advances in the field(s) and understanding the burden of environmental toxins in homes and communities and their impacts on child and family health
- Potential for the proposal to create new and sustainable partnerships between key public and private stakeholders on the importance of tackling environmental disparities and advancing the notion of healthier homes and communities

- Potential for identifying new forms of intervention and advocacy, in addition to informing existing approaches.

Deliverables

1. A paper suitable for publication in a referenced journal
2. A presentation of the paper at a Healthy Homes/Healthy Communities City of Chicago and Cook County Summit held in the Spring 2014. During this summit, presentations and research results will inform the basis of a Strategic Plan to address the burden of unhealthy homes/communities within the City of Chicago and Cook County.

How to Apply—Applicants must submit

1. Research project overview (1000 words or less)
 - This must include:
 - a. A brief abstract of the project
 - b. How the proposed work connects to the broader goals and vision of the *Healthy Homes/Healthy Communities* initiative (see Evaluation Criteria)
 - c. A list of major sources (e.g. partners) you have consulted to date, as well as potential sources you intend to use for purposes of conducting your research
 - d. Proposed Budget
2. Resume/CV (Faculty/Student) as well as a description/background of any community partners or outside agencies

Key Dates and Deadlines

- **February 20th, 2013** – RFP Open to Apply
- **May 15th, 2013** – Deadline to submit a full proposal
- **May 31st, 2013** – Recipients notified of award
- **September 2nd, 2013** – Paper Due

Submission for the *Healthy Homes/ Healthy Communities* initiative should be sent electronically to:

Adrian J. Segura
Project Coordinator
Advancing Healthy Homes/Healthy Communities Initiative at Loyola University Chicago
asegura2@luc.edu
(773) 508-8052

Questions/request for clarification should be brought to the attention of Adrian J. Segura or a member of the review committee (see below)

More Information can be found at our website:

<http://luc.edu/chrc/environmentsustainability/advancinghealthyhomeshealthycommunities/#d.en.83996>

Review Committee:

David Crumrine, PhD –Center for Urban Environmental Research and Policy

Philip Nyden, PhD – Center for Urban Research & Learning

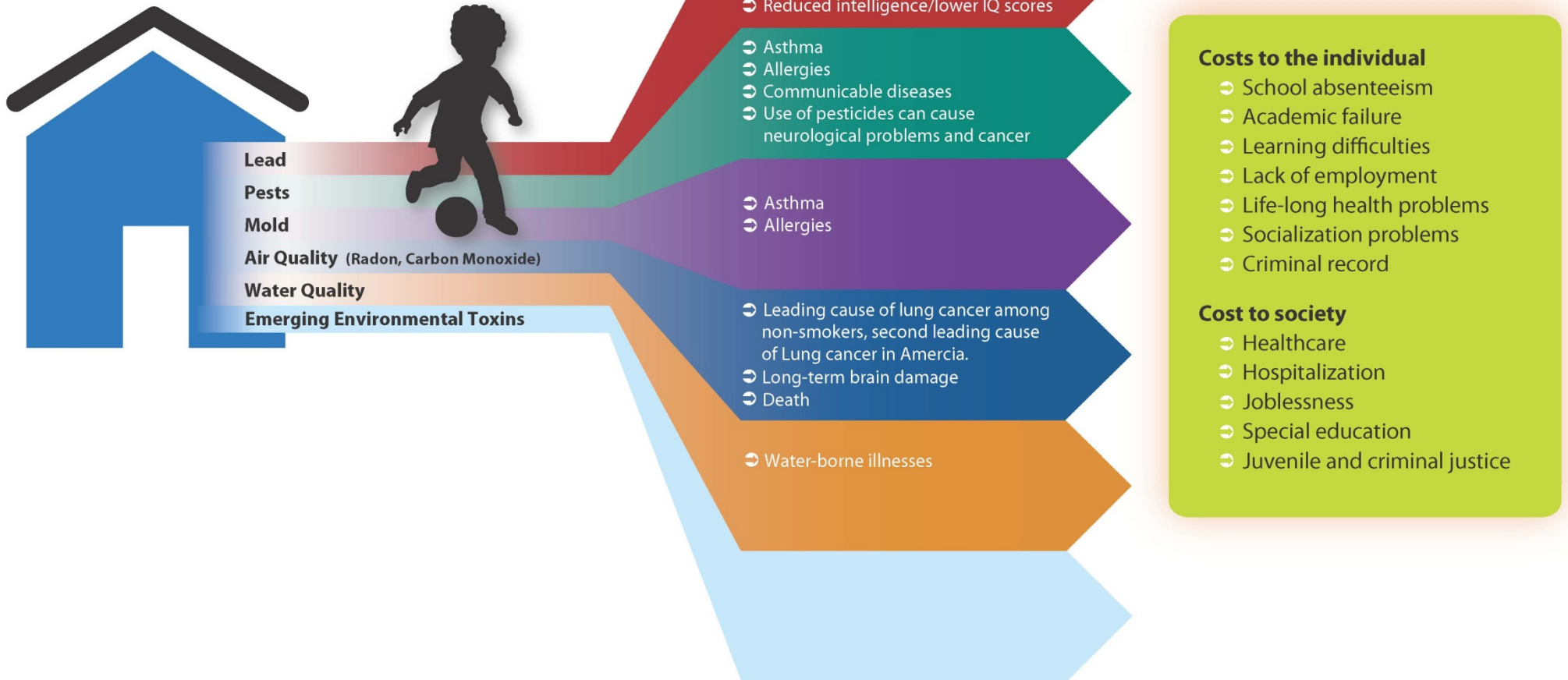
Katherine Kaufka Walts, JD – Center for the Human Rights of Children

Anita Weinberg, MSW, JD – Civitas ChildLaw Center

David Treering, GIS Specialist –Center for Urban Environmental Research and Policy

Aaron Durnbaugh, Sustainability Director – Office of Sustainability

The Burden of Unhealthy Housing



Costs to the individual

- ↳ School absenteeism
- ↳ Academic failure
- ↳ Learning difficulties
- ↳ Lack of employment
- ↳ Life-long health problems
- ↳ Socialization problems
- ↳ Criminal record

Cost to society

- ↳ Healthcare
- ↳ Hospitalization
- ↳ Joblessness
- ↳ Special education
- ↳ Juvenile and criminal justice

Prepared by Lead Safe Illinois at Loyola University Chicago
Civitas ChildLaw Center and Policy Institute