

# From Excess to Access

Jackie Kirouac-Fram  
Executive Director, ReBuilding Center  
[jackie@rebuildingcenter.org](mailto:jackie@rebuildingcenter.org)

Ami Fitzgerald  
Empowered Neighborhoods Program Coordinator  
Equity and Policy Development Group  
City of Portland – Bureau of Development Services  
[Ami.Fitzgerald@portlandoregon.gov](mailto:Ami.Fitzgerald@portlandoregon.gov)



**ReBuilding Center is a climate justice nonprofit in Portland, Oregon.**  
Our mission is to build community resilience through reuse and repair.



What is affordable housing?

For every affordable housing unit that we build, two others are lost to abandonment, deterioration, or conversion to more expensive housing.



*Source: Urban Land Institute, "Preserving Multifamily Workforce and Affordable Housing," 2015.*

It costs an average of 26 times more to build a new affordable home than to repair an existing one.

*Source: Urban Land Institute, "Preserving Multifamily Workforce and Affordable Housing," 2015.*



45% of homes built before 1940 are in need of repair

33% of all occupied homes have structural, plumbing, electrical, and/or heating problems, leaks, and/or pest infestations. Even more homes have poor indoor air and water quality or lead contamination.

Most substandard homes are occupied by people who need physical and/or financial assistance with repairs, especially since the cost of some lumber products has increased by nearly 500% in one year.

*Source: Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University, "The State of the Nation's Housing," 2021.*

The CDC has identified investing in home repairs for low-income households as a high-impact strategy for addressing root causes of poor health due to dampness, mold, and inadequate temperature control.

Every \$1 spent on urgent home repairs can save \$19 in Medicare/Medicaid costs.

**Healthy Homes at CDC.**

Forty percent of U.S. homes have at least one significant health or safety hazard that places American families at unnecessary risk for injuries and illness, such as lead poisoning, asthma, carbon monoxide exposure, fire, and lung cancer; fortunately, evidence-based and cost-effective solutions exist.

Healthy homes programs at CDC are instrumental in equipping states, communities, decision makers, and the general public with the right data, evidence-based practices, funding, and information to improve health outcomes. The programs highlighted below collect and provide data critical to screening and prevention efforts; support states and communities that conduct surveillance, provide education, and coordinate services; and provide guidance for clinicians and other professionals. CDC's work also supports and complements other programs and departments across the federal government (e.g., HUD, EPA, HHS, DOE). For more information on why support for all federal healthy homes programming is critical, including within CDC's parent department of Health and Human Services, please see NCHH's other agency fact sheets.

			
<b>HEALTHY HOMES AND LEAD</b> Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program	<p><b>Collects screening data to target prevention</b> in high-risk areas.</p> <p><b>Awards grants to states and cities</b> for blood lead surveillance, education, coordination, and local program development.</p> <p><b>Provides guidance</b> to clinicians and allied professions.</p>	<p>Base funding of <b>between \$15 and \$35 million</b> (FY14-FY19).</p> <p>Near-elimination in FY12-FY13.</p> <p>Prior to 2012, its funding level was <b>as high as \$42 million</b>.</p> <p><b>49 states and 11 cities or counties</b> currently receive funding from this program.</p>	<p>The percentage of children testing with high blood lead has declined over 90% since 1997, but <b>535,000 children still have levels above the CDC reference value</b>.</p> <p>Keeping blood lead levels of children born in 2018 at zero would generate <b>\$84 billion in benefits</b>, including nearly \$18.5 billion for the federal government.</p>
<b>ASTHMA</b> National Asthma Control Program	<p>Funds states, localities, and others to <b>improve asthma surveillance, build coalitions</b> that implement interventions, <b>translate</b> asthma guidelines into public health practice, <b>collect and analyze</b> data not available elsewhere, and <b>increase</b> asthma awareness.</p>	<p>Funded at <b>between \$25.3 and \$30.9 million</b> since 2010.</p> <p>The program has supported <b>asthma control programs in 34 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico</b>.</p>	<p>NACP provides an <b>estimated return on investment of \$71 saved for each dollar spent</b>, a significant opportunity as asthma costs the U.S. an estimated \$63 billion a year.</p>
<b>EPHT</b> Environmental Public Health Tracking	<p>Delivers a core set of health, exposure, and hazards data, information, and tools to enable <b>analysis, visualization, and reporting of insights drawn from data</b>.</p>	<p>Funded at about <b>\$34 million</b> since 2010.</p> <p>Supports environmental public health tracking <b>programs in 25 states and one city</b>.</p>	<p><b>Provides 23 datasets, 124 indicators, and 449 health measures</b> for public use on data such as air quality, water, asthma, and birth defects.</p>
<b>EHL</b> Environmental Health Laboratory	<p>Helps states <b>measure and track exposure</b> to harmful chemicals, including those that may come from the home by providing <b>funding, expertise, training, and quality assurance</b> to state public health laboratories.</p>	<p>Funded at <b>between \$43.4 and \$65.7 million</b> (FY10-FY19).</p> <p>Currently funds <b>6 awardees</b> (representing <b>9 states</b>) a total of \$5 million annually.</p>	<p>Measures and publishes findings related to more than <b>300 priority environmental chemicals</b>.</p> <p><b>Conducts or collaborates on more than 75 studies</b> annually to help identify harmful or abnormally high exposures.</p>

# More importantly:

Home repair improves occupants' physical and mental health.

Home repair keeps homes from falling into significant disrepair and abandonment or sale to predatory purchasers.

Home repair increases property value sustainably, which benefits the whole neighborhood.



# What resources do we have to leverage?

458 million tons of construction debris is thrown into the landfill each year. Much of that material is still usable – especially lumber, fixtures, doors, windows, and appliances.

Lots of new materials are sitting as overages from construction and development projects.



Our 2022 EPA-Funded Project:

# From Excess to Access

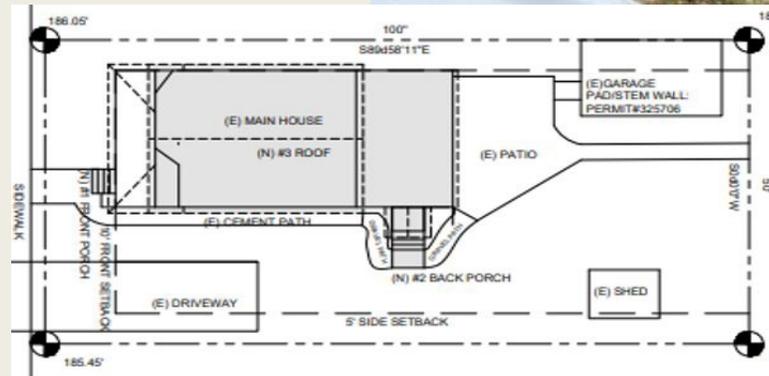
Partnering with the City of Portland to:

1. Increase material donations – both reclaimed and new.
2. Provide free materials to people to property owners in the Empowered Neighborhoods program who are working to bring their properties up to code or complete preventative maintenance.



# Empowered Neighborhoods Program

- \*Residential and Commercial Compliance
- \*Internal and volunteer external team
- \*Planning, draft, permit, construct
- \*External team:
  - PCC- Architecture
  - PHB Lead Abatement
  - PHB Repair Program
  - African American Alliance for Homeownership
  - Portland Clean Energy Fund
  - PSU/Grummel Engineering
  - From Excess to Access



## How can you help?

### Donate materials!

A list of acceptable materials is on the website:  
[www.rebuildingcenter.org/donations#guidelines](http://www.rebuildingcenter.org/donations#guidelines)

Provide connections to material manufacturers and distributors who may have overstock to donate.

Make sure your clients know they can donate reclaimed materials to the ReBuilding Center.

