



**Center for Healthy Homes & Environment
Environmental Health Risk Assessment Program
Lead in Soil Education & Outreach - Short-Term Funding Opportunity**

The Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH) is offering short-term funding opportunities of up to \$4,950 each to eligible entities for projects to support and expand upon the Environmental Health Risk Assessment Program's (EHRAP's) efforts to engage with and educate communities on the risks posed by lead in urban soils, with a focus on soil screening, education, and outreach using the soilSHOP model.

Background:

Through EHRAP, RIDOH aims to investigate the public health implications of hazardous chemicals in the environment, educate affected communities and stakeholders about these implications, and proactively manage risks by exploring innovative solutions. Funded through the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry's (ATSDR's) Cooperative Agreement Program, EHRAP evaluates contaminated sites and analyzes potential links between site contaminants and community health outcomes.

As an ATSDR-funded program, EHRAP prioritizes community concerns about lead contamination in soils, particularly in urban gardening spaces and yards where children and families may be exposed. Lead exposure has significant impacts on health, especially for young children, and one of the primary pathways of exposure is through contaminated soil.

This Short-Term Funding Opportunity focuses on **expanding RIDOH's soil screening, health, outreach, and partnership (soilSHOP) program**. SoilSHOP is a model designed to:

- Screen community soil samples for lead,
- Provide plain-language results and interpretation,
- Educate participants about exposure risks and protective strategies, and
- Build long-term community partnerships to reduce risk.

Opportunity and Eligibility:

EHRAP's intention is to award up to eight (8) projects across both currently available short-term funding opportunities (Lead in Soil and Education & Outreach), not to exceed \$4,950 per award. Some organizations may request and receive less than the maximum Short-Term Funding Opportunity amount. Eligible applicants must be affiliated with or a part of a nonprofit, school, community-based agency, coalition, and/or grassroots organization that has a Federal Employer Identification Number or Federal Tax Identification Number. For-profit entities are not eligible.

RIDOH will fund eligible entities to expand upon EHRAP's soilSHOP program efforts. Projects may include site-specific work at community gardens, neighborhood outreach campaigns, or broad education efforts related to soil lead hazards.

Program Expectations

RIDOH will:

- Provide technical assistance throughout the project period, which will run from 4/15/2026 to 10/1/2026.
- Supply a standard form to be completed when community members submit soil samples.

- Providence plain-language education materials in English and Spanish
- Attend community events related to lead hazards as requested.
- Ensure soil samples are analyzed by the University of Rhode Island (URI) at no cost to community members or participating organizations.
- Provide anonymized results and summaries that can be shared by community partners.
- Provide technical support for community questions related to test results and exposure risks.

The funded organization will:

- Host at least one public-facing event centered on educating residents about the health risks of lead, with explicit discussion of soil as a pathway of exposure.
- Train community members to collect soil samples based on this method: [How to collect a soil sample - YouTube](#) (if you have any questions, RIDOH is available to assist).
- Establish a method for soil sample collection that works best for their community (e.g., drop box, office hours, collection event). Sample delivery to URI will be organized by RIDOH, so all soil samples must be submitted to the Environmental Health Risk Assessment Program at RIDOH.
- Clearly advertise that soil testing is free and accessible to all community members.
- Accept soil samples anonymously, while encouraging residents to provide a phone number or email so results can be reported back directly.
- Submit all soil samples to RIDOH by July 1, 2026, to ensure timely analysis and reporting.
- Develop a method to distribute the final anonymized project report (organized by sample code) to the community.
- Elevate any health-based questions from the community related to the results to RIDOH.

Project Period

The project period will run from **April 15, 2026, through October 1, 2026.**

- All soil samples must be submitted to the Environmental Health Risk Assessment Program at RIDOH by **July 1, 2026.**
- The timing of results will depend on the volume and submission dates of samples.

Application:

Completed Community Outreach, Education & Assessment Short-Term Funding Opportunity Applications must be submitted electronically to Melissa Orpen-Tuz at melissa.orpentuz@health.ri.gov no later than 4 p.m. on March 13, 2026. Submissions should not exceed eight (8) pages. Applicants must score at least 60 of the 100 points to be eligible for a Short-Term Funding Opportunity.

Questions relative to this solicitation may be submitted in writing to Melissa Orpen-Tuz at melissa.orpentuz@health.ri.gov by no later than close of business on Friday, February 27, 2026. At the conclusion of the Q & A period, all questions and all official answers will be posted as an addendum on the RIDOH website. RIDOH will not be responding directly to applicants. Please monitor the RIDOH website accordingly.

Upon award, RIDOH will provide recipients with a reporting schedule and templates to use for the mid-cycle and final reports and invoices. RIDOH requires two (2) invoices: RIDOH will require recipients to submit a first invoice and mid-cycle project report midway through the agreed-upon project duration and a second invoice accompanied by a final project report upon conclusion of the project timeline. RIDOH reimburses organizations after receiving program reports and invoices that demonstrate completion of work. RIDOH will not reimburse organizations for activities carried out prior to the issue date on the Purchase Order.

To apply, complete and submit the following items by the deadline and delivery methods outline above:

1. Short-Term Funding Opportunity Cover Form;
2. Short-Term Funding Opportunity Application and Proposed Budget;

Please note:

RIDOH requires that recipients provide a 10%-in-kind match (more details are provided in the budget section of the application).

Submit completed applications to:

Melissa Orpen-Tuz, Program Manager
Center for Healthy Homes & Environment
Rhode Island Department of Health
melissa.orpentuz@health.ri.gov



**Center for Healthy Homes & Environment
Environmental Health Risk Assessment Program
Lead in Soil Education & Outreach Short-Term Funding Opportunity**

Due Date: 4:00 p.m. on March 13, 2026

Short Term Funding Opportunity Cover Form

Organization/Agency Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/ZIP Code: _____

Phone: _____

Federal Employer Identification # (FEIN): _____

Contact Person: _____

Email: _____

Submissions should use the templates provided and not exceed eight (8) typed pages*. This includes the required forms noted below:

- **Short Term Funding Opportunity Cover Form;**
- **Short Term Funding Opportunity Application;**

Email application to:

Melissa Orpen-Tuz, Program Manager
Center for Healthy Homes & Environment
Rhode Island Department of Health
melissa.orpentuz@health.ri.gov

Submit any questions in writing to Melissa Orpen-Tuz at melissa.orpentuz@health.ri.gov by no later than close of business on Friday, February 27, 2026. At the conclusion of the Q & A period, all questions and all official answers will be posted as an addendum on the RIDOH website.

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

Section I: Agency Capacity (10 points)

Briefly describe your organization and its experience in:

- Conducting outreach and education on environmental or public health issues.
- Working with underserved communities in Rhode Island.
- Hosting events or workshops that engage residents in learning about health risks.

Section II: Personnel (10 points)

List the personnel who will work on the project and briefly describe:

- Their experience with environmental health, community engagement, or related fields.
- Their specific role in hosting events, managing soil sample collection, or reporting back to the community.

Section III: Project Scope (25 points)

Provide a summary of your proposed project that includes:

- How your organization will host at least one public-facing educational event about lead exposure, with explicit discussion of soil as one potential pathway.
- The methods you will use to collect soil samples from your community and how you will make clear that testing is free.
- How you will communicate with participants about their individual soil results, while also preparing an anonymized final report for public distribution.
- The population you aim to serve, why this population is at risk, and how your project addresses their needs.

Section IV: Work Plan (25 points)

Explain your plan for completing the project between April 15, 2026 and October 1, 2026. Be sure to address:

- How you will ensure all samples are submitted by July 1, 2026.
- How you will promote participation and ensure accessibility (e.g., multilingual materials, partnerships, trusted messengers).
- How you will measure success (e.g., anticipated number of soil samples collected, number of participants at events, knowledge increase from outreach).

Section V: Budget (30 Points)

Briefly describe your proposed expenses for this project. The maximum allowable budget is \$4,950. **Stipends, gift cards, costs associated with child care at events, and food and beverage are not permitted under this funding source**, however, can be used toward the 10% in-kind match.

RIDOH requires that funded entities provide a 10% in-kind match. Most organizations use cash, computer hardware, software, office supplies, salaries, space, and volunteer services for matching funds. If using volunteer services, you may use the market rate for similar work. Bureau of Labor Statistics data for Rhode Island, which can be used to determine the market rate, can be found here: https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_ri.htm. Generally federal funds cannot be used as a match for another federal grant; however, there are some exceptions. If you receive federal funds from another source, you must confirm with the grantor before using these as matching funds.

Budget must include the following:

- Purchase of quart-sized Ziploc bags for soil samples
- Mileage and staff time to transport samples to RIDOH

Staff			
Name, Title	Hourly Rate	Total Number of Hours	Total Cost
Total Staff Budget			\$
Operating and Program Expenses			
	Per Unit Price	Number of Units	Total Cost
Copying/Printing			
Postage			
In-State Travel (for 2026, .725 per mile)			
Equipment/Supplies			
Total Operating Expenses			\$
Other Expenses			
	Per Unit Price	Number of Units	Total Cost
Describe Expense:			
Describe Expense:			

Describe Expense:			
	Total Other Expenses		
10% In-Kind Match			
	Per Unit Price	Number of Units	Total
Describe:			
Describe:			
Describe:			
	Total (must equal 10% of budget)		
Indirect Costs/Admin Costs*			\$
	TOTAL REQUEST AMOUNT		\$

*If including indirect charges in the budget, a copy of your federally approved indirect rate must be attached. If you do not have a federally approved indirect rate, you may charge a 10% de minimis rate.