



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CONTACT: A. Dylan Hurst

Public Relations Unit
adney.hurst@adem.alabama.gov
(334) 260-4501

ADEM Completes Voluntary Testing of Lead Levels in Drinking Water in Schools and Childcare Facilities

MONTGOMERY – To promote public confidence and to help childcare facilities (daycare, pre-K, Head Start) and schools minimize child exposure to possible high levels of lead in drinking water, the Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM), the Alabama Department of Human Resources (DHR), Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education, and the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) assisted schools and daycare facilities across the state with voluntary testing for lead in drinking water.

The program was funded by a grant from the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). This grant began in 2020 and was an expansion of a successful three-year sampling grant program in 2017-2019 for the State's public schools. ADEM recruited the Alabama Rural Water Association (ARWA) who hosted training sessions for facility personnel and provided on-site technical assistance as needed.

Childhood exposure to lead has long been a concern of researchers and medical professionals. EPA finalized the Lead and Copper Rule Revisions on December 17, 2021, and the Lead and Copper Rule Improvements on October 30, 2024, which now includes a requirement for public water systems to sample all childcare and elementary schools. This voluntary program has provided an excellent opportunity for childcare facilities and schools to be prepared to work with their public water systems to establish meaningful sampling programs going forward.

During the testing program, representatives from ADEM and partnering agencies and organizations visited staff from the facilities and schools. These visits consisted of an introduction to the program, instructions for sampling, and a sampling kit, which was returned to the state drinking water laboratory for analysis. Under this grant program, over 5000 samples were analyzed at over 1100 schools and childcare facilities. ADEM provided a copy of the results to the facility and/or school. A report of all results is available on the ADEM website. The individual results were also placed in the ADEM eFile system for internet access by the public.

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