COMMUNITY LEAD RESPONSE

LSLR Collaborative
LSLR Outreach for Private Side Replacements

September 16, 2020
PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION

- After elevated lead levels from partial replacements in early 2017, along with a change in state law in November 2017, PWSA adopted a policy offering private side LSLRs at no cost to our customers;
- PWSA’s customer-base generally had little trust in PWSA as an authority;
- General challenge gaining the trust of our customers to allow us inside their homes to replace LSLs;
- Challenge is highlighted in disadvantaged communities.
COMMUNICATION AND OUTREACH

• PWSA Board of Directors authorized private side replacements in late January 2018;
• Three 2017 Construction Contracts (which had been suspended while PWSA waited for a change in law allowing us to do private side replacements) starting in March 2018, and five 2018 Construction Contracts starting in June 2018;
• Everyone (PWSA, Contractors, Consultants, etc.) all starting this effort with little to no prior experience in replacing private side LSLs.
Conflict Can Breed Cooperation

• Over 8,000 members in the City of Pittsburgh.
• 2017 elevated lead levels raised their concerns.
• Prompted involvement of CWA
  • Regular attendance at monthly PWSA Board meetings.
  • Sought open and ongoing dialogue with key PWSA staff
• Purpose
  • Learn- PWSA proposed policy
  • Push- full lead line replacement
  • Disseminate- Evolving logistics.
MULTI-TIERED APPROACH

- Improve communication materials
- Develop internal and external customer support specific to lead and LSL issues
- Direct outreach with the assistance of NGOs
COMMUNICATION MATERIALS

- Worked with communications consultant to develop:
  - Information packages related to agreements necessary to allow private side replacements
  - Website specific to lead and lead service line issues
  - Videos of service line replacements and household flushing to allow a multi-media approach to work
  - Standardization of outreach materials related to lead
CUSTOMER SUPPORT

- Creation of the ‘Lead Help Desk’ consisting of customer support representatives dedicated to lead;
  - Describe and explain the LSLR process to customers who call;
  - Manage, track and solicit agreements for private side LSLRs;
  - Schedule appointments with Contractors
  - Manage complaint process
- Establishment of the Field Liaison Position;
  - Initial meeting with customer and contractor, document commitments made to the customer
Birth of a Partnership

• No cost private side LSLRs = Opportunity
• Low response rates among residents
  • Resident/ member feedback
  • PWSA messaging could be a little intimidating.
  • Built up years of general distrust
• Coordination
  • Share target communities for LSLRs
  • Follow up to initial PWSA contact-door to door, email & social media
  • Conduct one on one discussions to ease concerns & uncertainties
• Response rates rose across the board in several months
**DIRECT OUTREACH**

- **Community Meetings**
  - At least one per neighborhood where work is occurring
  - Additional meetings based on response, level of difficulty engaging community, availability of meeting/events
  - Lead Help personnel present to speak about customer-specific issues
  - Include political events, fairs, etc.

- **Door-to-Door Canvassing**
  - Locations within work area that did not return an agreement
  - Done by Field Liaisons during the working day based on availability
  - At least one after-hours or weekend canvass visit
Organize community meetings
• Target neighborhoods coming up for LSLR
• Goals
  • Endorsement of PWSA lead policy
  • Reach broader audience easier
  • Give PWSA new platform to talk
  • Educate the community
• 100 + in attendance at first meeting- March 2019
DIRECT OUTREACH - NGOs

• Created a “Community Lead Response Advisory Committee” (CLRAC) consisting of government and NGOs
  • City and county officials
  • PA Public Utility Commission representatives
  • University Professors
  • Union Representative
  • NGOs - Pittsburgh United (Clean Water Action, PULP, NRDC), Women for a Health Environment
• Team with these and other NGOs for community meetings in work areas
• Other groups like Clean Water Action conducted door-to-door canvassing to support private LSLRs
A Model for Others

Evolution of Community Events

• A year after the initial
• New Goals
  • Highlight areas outside the city where similar lead issues exist
  • Share the knowledge and power collaboration brought
  • Hold up success as model for other water authorities and communities.

• New format featuring three groups of speakers
  • Residents- concerns experienced with the water quality and lead among other topics.
  • Local organizers/organizations- discussing past community activism success and opportunities for duplication.
  • PWSA on what actions water authority is taking right now to continue to address concerns.
QUESTIONS?

Daniel Duffy, P.E.
LSLR Program Manager
Pittsburgh Water and Sewer Authority
dduffy@pgh2o.com

Steve Hvozdovich
Pennsylvania Campaigns Director
Clean Water Action
shvozdovich@cleanwater.org