

NEHA NEWS

NEHA Announces Participation in the Retail Food Safety Regulatory Association Collaborative

The National Environmental Health Association (NEHA) is pleased to announce our participation in the Retail Food Safety Regulatory Association Collaborative (Collaborative). The Collaborative was formed in 2019 and is comprised of the following organizations and federal agencies: Association of Food and Drug Officials (AFDO), Conference for Food Protection (CFP), National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO), NEHA, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

Through a series of discussions, these stakeholders identified the need to have a collaborative approach to effectively leverage the retail food safety activities of each organization to maximize their individual and collective effectiveness. The Collaborative recognizes the important contributions of other retail food safety organizations and assesses opportunities to leverage their impact toward the advancement of Collaborative objectives.

To date, the Collaborative has resulted in the coordinated approach of AFDO, CFP, NACCHO, and NEHA with harmonized objectives or specific aims:

- Develop a national FDA *Food Code* adoption strategy, including the Food Code Adoption Tool Kit.
- Improve the approach, competency, and food safety culture in the regulatory community.
- Increase enrollment, engagement, and conformance in the Voluntary National Retail Food Regulatory Program Standards.
- Improve foodborne outbreak investigation methods.
- Increase the number of establishments that have well-developed and implemented food safety management systems.
- Develop a strategy to enhance communications and better tell our collective story.

The members of the Collaborative responded to FDA's funding opportunity: RFA-FD-20-028 Retail Food Safety Association Collaboration (U18). This 2-year cooperative agreement is viewed as a demonstration project, recognizing that within 2 years the full objectives of the agreement are not attainable but significant foundational elements can be developed that will establish building blocks for achieving the objectives. The associations have submitted a coordinated set of funding applications. As part of the coordinated applications, there will be coordination meetings (ideally in-person)

twice a year with the Collaborative members, as well as ongoing coordination among the associations across the projects and work-groups associated with the projects. Each specific aim has a lead association(s), but all associations will have a role in each aim.

NEHA Staff Profile

As part of tradition, NEHA features new staff members in the *Journal* around the time of their 1-year anniversary. These profiles give you an opportunity to get to know the NEHA staff better and to learn more about the great programs and activities going on in your association. This month we are pleased to introduce you to one NEHA staff member. Contact information for all NEHA staff can be found on page 54.



Laura Wildey

I am a highly motivated, passionate food safety professional with 10 years of experience in both the private and public sectors of food safety management and regulatory enforcement. As the senior program analyst for food safety in the Programs and Partnership Development Department, I serve NEHA and its members in providing assistance and expertise in the field of food safety.

Previous to my position with NEHA, I served the District of Columbia Department of Health as program manager of the Food Safety and Hygiene Inspection Services Division. Additional work experience includes conducting regulatory inspections in food manufacturing and retail establishments as a senior food safety specialist with the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, third-party auditing with EcoSure, and working as a kitchen manager with Great American Restaurants. I received my undergraduate degree in hotel, restaurant, and institutional management from the University of Delaware. I am currently studying at Michigan State University to obtain a master of science in food safety!

I'm so very excited to work with NEHA! I am lucky to have the unique opportunity to use my experience, skill set, and knowledge base to support our members in our fight against foodborne illness. I look forward to working with the food safety community to tackle issues and help build programs that improve public health. If you want to talk food safety, please don't hesitate to reach out! 🍷

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