

## NEHA NEWS

**Call for Nominations**

By Katherine Sheppard ([ksheppard@neha.org](mailto:ksheppard@neha.org))

The National Environmental Health Association (NEHA) is governed by a Board of Directors who oversee the affairs of the association. There will be four board positions up for election in 2023:

- Region 1 vice-president (represents Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, and Washington; 3-year term)
- Region 5 vice-president (represents Arkansas, Kansas, Louisiana, Missouri, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas; 3-year term)
- Region 7 vice-president (represents Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee; 3-year term)
- Second vice-president (national officer; 5-year term that progresses through the national offices and will serve as NEHA president in 2026–2027).

We seek diversity on the board in terms of gender, ethnicity, and a balance between regulatory officials, academia, and industry. Most importantly, we want people who will help us develop new strategic visions, have experience managing diverse organizations, and can open doors for NEHA in building relationships with industry, academia, federal and state agencies, foundations, and other associations.

Requirements to serve on the board include:

- Membership with NEHA (individual or life) for 3 consecutive years prior to assuming office on July 1, 2023.
- Not simultaneously holding a voting position on the board of a NEHA affiliate.
- Endorsement by at least five voting members of NEHA (from members residing in the region for regional vice-president candidates and from members residing in at least three different regions for second vice-president candidates).
- Willingness to commit the time necessary to actively serve on the board.

If you are interested in serving on the NEHA Board of Directors, please visit [www.neha.org/elections](http://www.neha.org/elections) for information on the nomination and election process. You can also contact NEHA Immediate Past-President Roy Kroeger, chairperson of the NEHA Nominations Committee, at [ImmediatePastPresident@neha.org](mailto:ImmediatePastPresident@neha.org). The deadline to submit a nomination is **December 1, 2022**.

**We Asked. We Listened. Now What? Results of the 2022 NEHA Member Questionnaire**

By Becky Labbo, MA ([blabbo@neha.org](mailto:blabbo@neha.org)), Chana Goussetis, MA ([cgoussetis@neha.org](mailto:cgoussetis@neha.org)), and Heather Folker ([hfolker@neha.org](mailto:hfolker@neha.org))

NEHA recognizes that we are only as strong as our members. To ensure we stay connected to the needs and satisfaction of our members and align with our strategic goals of gaining constituent insight and practicing organizational excellence, a member questionnaire was developed and disseminated to approximately 6,800 NEHA members in spring 2022. There were 925 submis-

TABLE 1

**Value and Satisfaction of Services Offered by the National Environmental Health Association From the 2022 Membership Questionnaire**

Service	Value Rating	Satisfaction Rating	Not Aware of Service (%)
Annual Educational Conference (AEC)	2.87	2.72	12
<i>Journal of Environmental Health</i>	2.83	<b>2.85</b>	8
Government affairs	2.21	2.12	<b>25</b>
Credentialing	<b>3.52</b>	<b>3.23</b>	3
Educational offerings (other than the AEC)	<b>3.24</b>	<b>3.02</b>	5
Promotion of the profession	3.04	2.73	8
Funding opportunities	2.03	1.96	<b>28</b>
Award opportunities	1.94	2.10	21
Scholarship opportunities	2.14	2.12	<b>22</b>
Advocacy for the profession	<b>3.20</b>	2.77	7

*Note.* The rating for value is based on a 4-point Likert scale (1 = not very valuable and 4 = very valuable). The rating for satisfaction is based on a 4-point Likert scale (1 = not very satisfied to 4 = very satisfied). Bolded numbers indicate the top three rated services for each category.

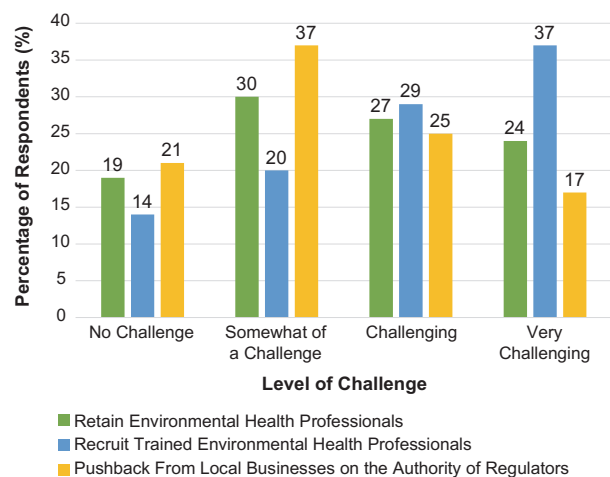
sions for a 13% response rate. These questionnaire findings provide a baseline for understanding what our members need and want from us.

More than one half of respondents (54%) reported working for local organizations and agencies while the remaining are distributed among state, industry, federal, and education institutions. Most respondents were environmental health specialists (40%) and have worked in the field >15 years (46%). The length of NEHA membership among respondents was well distributed and ranged from <1 year to >15 years.

The top reasons to join NEHA were for training and professional development, networking, discounts on credentials, and to be part of a community. In line with that, the top three products and services that were most valued were credentialing, educa-

FIGURE 1

## Extent of Top Three Challenges Identified in the 2022 Membership Questionnaire



tion offerings (other than the NEHA Annual Educational Conference & Exhibition), and advocacy for the profession. The top three services rated the highest for satisfaction were credentialing, educational offerings, and the *Journal of Environmental Health*. Approximately one quarter of respondents said they were unaware of government affairs services and funding and scholarship opportunities. These results show where we might better market and raise awareness about the benefits of each product and service we offer (Table 1).

Mentioned as a valued service, one of the premier credentials we offer is the Registered Environmental Health Specialist/Registered Sanitarian (REHS/RS) credential. Overall, 67% of respondents ( $n = 517$ ) indicated they hold this credential and were highly satisfied; respondents rated this credential as a 4.2 on a 5-point Likert satisfaction scale. Respondents would like us to offer additional credentials (e.g., HACCP, pool inspection, onsite wastewater systems, air quality, healthy homes, hazardous waste, solid waste, water, and drinking water) and shared there is a need for credential reciprocity with and between states.

In addition to the traditional food safety focus, respondents suggested more focus in emerging topics, trends, and updates in the field. Respondents suggested we provide education, training, and support on topics including water quality, wastewater, healthy homes, institutions (e.g., schools, hospitals, etc.), climate change, body art, hazardous waste, solid waste, emergency preparedness, and informatics. Some noted an interest in policy, government, legal briefs, and legislative updates. Furthermore, there was an identified need for workforce information such as career and salary data, how to collaborate with local stakeholders, how environ-

mental health is interconnected with other disciplines, leadership, and workplace culture.

Most respondents are interested in receiving regular updates from us about training opportunities, updates to environmental health practice and science, information on national and state policy updates, training opportunities from other organizations, and updates on environmental health technologies. Respondents want to receive this information as a one-way communication from us through emails and the NEHA website. About one quarter of respondents are interested in more active engagement with us through committee participation, as a reviewer or subject matter expert to provide input on programs and services, and to join LinkedIn groups to engage with other environmental health professionals.

Lastly, three key challenges were identified. Respondents shared the greatest challenge they face is recruiting trained environmental health professionals. The next greatest challenge is retaining environmental health professionals followed by managing pushback from local businesses on the authority of regulators (Figure 1). The promotion of environmental health as a career opportunity is drastically needed and respondents suggested that we actively promote the profession to the public, represent the profession better, and spread the word on what we do and why it is important.

These results have been shared internally with our staff, leadership, national officers, and regional vice-presidents. It is our mission to build, sustain, and empower an effective environmental health workforce and with this information, we are committed to making improvements to best meet the expressed requests of our members. A few exciting changes are coming soon that address new topics, how we engage and communicate with members, and how we can advocate for the profession:

- We were recently awarded funds by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for a project focused on lead, which will expand the breadth of environmental health work we support in addition to food safety. The initiative will include training, resource development, and a mini grant opportunity.
- In 2022, we expanded the National Environmental Public Health Internship Program as one strategy to help address the limited pipeline of trained environmental health professionals. The program links environmental health students with environmental public health programs. Internship funding for students and health departments is provided by CDC.
- We are launching a newly designed and updated website as one of many steps we are taking to make resources, education, and advocacy for the profession easy to find and use.
- Along with the launch of our new website, we are introducing an online community platform for members to engage with each other in thoughtful discussions to share ideas, information, and ask questions. 🌸