

## NEHA NEWS

### Engage and Share Resources on NEHA's COVID-19 Response Online Community

The COVID-19 pandemic has profoundly impacted the environmental health workforce, including changes to how local and state regulatory agencies conduct training and engage in regulatory inspections. In the rapidly changing world of COVID-19 response, we recognize that many agencies and organizations have created excellent training resources and inspection forms that, should they be readily accessible, would help ease the burdens of other jurisdictions. While guidance from federal agencies is very important, putting this information to use within state and local areas requires countless resources to create the forms and tools to serve each specific jurisdiction. This process has been the case regarding restaurant reopenings and similarly is being repeated for swimming pools, body art, hotels, schools, correctional facilities, HVAC units, and wastewater, to name just a few.

The National Environmental Health Association (NEHA) recognizes the need for a credible resource repository that can help environmental health professionals gain access to best practices on COVID-19 response, recovery, and resilience building and as they relate to environmental health. Based on feedback we have received from many of you, we are pleased to announce the launch of the COVID-19 Response Online Community (ROC) for you to engage in peer-to-peer learning and resource sharing.

Through this platform, users can access a resource library where participating state, tribal, local, and territorial (STLT) public health agencies and environmental health programs are able to share their communication, training, inspection forms, and other such resources developed for COVID-19. We are working to collect and collate user submitted resources into different categories—restaurants, body art, swimming pools/recreational waters, etc.—allowing environmental health professionals and safety specialists to engage with their peers through an interactive discussion forum that facilitates resources sharing, information exchange, and making connections that create opportunities for technical assistance.

This virtual community of practice has multiple features that facilitate collaboration and professional development in emergency management. Membership to the virtual community is free and does not require NEHA membership to join and participate. Individuals who sign in through the MyNEHA portal can directly upload the materials they have created. The COVID-19 ROC is an extension of our COVID-19 website ([www.neha.org/covid-19](http://www.neha.org/covid-19)) where we provide access to NEHA's COVID-19 resources and resources we have curated from across our nationwide network of STLT agencies, organizations, industry partners, and academic institutions.

Features of the COVID-19 ROC include a discussion forum, resources library, events calendar, member directory, and community-wide search option. Members of the community can engage on the virtual platform by uploading or downloading relevant materi-

als, engaging in discussions, connecting with peers, and promoting relevant events. The discussion forum on the online community will serve as an interactive social storehouse to help local and state agencies share resources and templates on COVID-19 communication, training, and inspections. The discussion forum also allows users to comment on posts and cast positive votes on responses to recommend a response or highlight it as a “best answer.” The follow button allows a user to follow a discussion thread as it develops.

The COVID-19 ROC is monitored by NEHA to provide a safe, secure, and productive virtual environment that is conducive for peer-to-peer learning and knowledge sharing. The membership of NEHA's COVID-19 ROC is diverse and is open to STLT governmental environmental and public health agencies and programs, other state agencies and departments, federal agencies, national organizations, industry personnel, and academic institutional partners.

To join the COVID-19 ROC, visit <https://emergency-neha.org/covid19/communities>.

### 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 56.



#### Madelyn Gustafson

I officially joined NEHA in August 2019 as a project coordinator in Program and Partnership Development. Prior to this opportunity, I worked as a preceptee at NEHA and finished up my undergraduate degree. After a summer working with NEHA, I knew this organization was exactly where I wanted to start my environmental health career.

Born and raised in Wisconsin, my family and I loved spending every possible moment outdoors. These memories range from backyard cookouts to weekends “up north.” My love for these moments continued into college at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse as I decided to pursue a degree in public health—community health education with a focus on environmental studies. As a young public and environmental health professional, I am motivated to provide adequate needs and care to all people, grow our communities to become more sustainable, and help shape the next generations to be happier and healthier.

In my personal life, you can find me exploring the Colorado landscape, listening to music, golfing, planting and gardening, and cheering on the Milwaukee Brewers, Milwaukee Bucks, and the Green Bay Packers. Go Pack go!