

NEHA NEWS

Note of Thanks to Departing Board Member

The National Environmental Health Association (NEHA) is fortunate to have members who are willing to volunteer their time and energy to NEHA through positions within our Board of Directors and on committees and work groups, as well as serve as subject matter experts, trainers, and peer reviewers. We would be remiss if we did not acknowledge the dedication, hard work, and efforts of one member of the NEHA Board of Directors on the occasion of her departure from the board: Immediate Past-President Sandra Long.



Immediate Past-President Sandra Long, REHS, RS, leaves the NEHA Board of Directors after 14 years of dedicated service. She served as regional vice-president (RVP) for Region 5 (Arkansas, Kansas, Louisiana, Missouri, Oklahoma, and Texas) for three consecutive terms between 2008 and 2017. In 2017, Long was elected as second vice-president and served as a national officer from 2017–2022, and NEHA president from 2020–2021.

“I met the NEHA Board of Directors when I was president of the Texas Environmental Health Association in 2006. I was familiar the Anthony Bennett and Brian Collins—both who served as RVP of Region 5—but I did not fully understand the significance of the position until I met the board,” stated Long. “The NEHA 2006 Annual Educational Conference (AEC) & Exhibition was held in San Antonio, Texas. I made two decisions at that AEC: 1) I wanted to contribute to the profession as a member of this board and 2) women were underrepresented on the board and I wanted to change that. Currently there are six women serving on the NEHA Board of Directors—all strong, dynamic women with an enthusiasm for environmental health.”

“As an RVP it was rewarding to visit the states in my region and attend the conferences,” stated Long. “It was an opportunity to meet people and learn more about how environmental health was structured in each state.” Overall, Long mentioned that being a board member afforded her the opportunity to work with accomplished professionals on the challenges facing the environmental health profession.

Long’s presidency was experienced through the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, which was both a challenge and an accomplishment. The first all-virtual NEHA AEC was accomplished in three parts in 2021 with the assistance and support of the NEHA staff and board working as One NEHA to support our members. Her goal as president was to bring environmental health to the forefront, promote the profession, and recognize the changing face of environmental health. “COVID-19 put us on the front lines and changed our daily operations, made us more flexible, and enabled us to do our jobs in more creative ways,” commented Long.

During her time on the NEHA Board of Directors, Long served on numerous NEHA committees including finance, policy and bylaws, affiliate engagement, membership, student engagement, AEC planning, and nominations. She noted that being appointed by 2014–2015 NEHA President Dr. Carolyn Harvey to serve on the selection committee for the new NEHA executive director was a great privilege. She recently chaired the Sick, Bereavement, and Memorial Committee and organized the memorial that was displayed at the NEHA 2022 AEC for the environmental health professionals who passed away since 2019. “NEHA has lost some of greats in environmental health in the last 3 years, several of whom I had to opportunity to know and learn from. As I attended the 2022 AEC, I missed them greatly,” reflected Long.

Long worked at the City of Plano, Texas, for almost 25 years and retired from there to become the environmental health manager for the Town of Addison, Texas. She enjoys the challenge of environmental health, as well as working with food establishments to provide training, achieve compliance, and strive toward improvement. “Working in a small town provides a feeling of family, teamwork, accomplishment, and appreciation,” stated Long.

Long was named 2020 Town of Addison Employee of the Year for informing and virtually engaging with the community and for responsibly promoting environmental health practices to keep the community aware of and as safe as possible from COVID-19. Long has also served on several other committees and councils including the Texas Sanitarian Advisory Committee from 2002–2010 and the National Environmental Health Science and Protection Accreditation Council from 2011–2017.

“I thank everyone who has supported me professionally and personally—my mentors, friends, coworkers, environmental health professionals, and family. If you are reading this text, you are included in one of these descriptions,” exclaimed Long.

In reflecting on her 14 years on the NEHA Board of Directors, Long stated, “Serving on the board has been both challenging and rewarding. It is an experience I am honored to have had and will treasure. It has given me the opportunity to engage with a wide range of environmental health professionals while allowing me to contribute to the profession in a meaningful way.”

National Assessment Aims to Identify Food Safety Training Needs

A national assessment was launched in July 2022 aimed at identifying the knowledge and training needs of retail food regulators. The assessment, developed by NEHA as part of the NEHA-FDA Retail Flexible Funding Model (RFFM) Grant Program, will be promoted widely and will use the findings to bolster educational resources, reduce knowledge gaps, and improve workforce capabilities to ensure safe retail food for the public.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that every year approximately 1 in 6 people living in the U.S. (48

million people) get sick, 128,000 are hospitalized, and 3,000 die of foodborne illness. Local, tribal, state, territorial, and federal environmental public health and agricultural departments, agencies, and organizations make up the retail food regulatory community and are responsible for preventing and responding to foodborne illness.

“This assessment is essentially a national census of the retail food regulatory community. It is significant for both what it includes and who it surveys,” stated Rance Baker, director of the Entrepreneurial Zone department at NEHA. “With so many competing interests pursuing the same financial resources, it is important that we determine where the training dollars are needed most. This survey will look at the intersection between curricula and needs in the retail food regulatory community to identify gaps in the integrated food safety system.”

A comprehensive training infrastructure for retail food safety regulatory professionals is an essential component in preventing foodborne illness. The information provided in this national survey will inform decisions about food safety training and resources for years to come.

All individuals working in retail regulatory food safety are encouraged to complete the survey. It will remain open until this fall. “Who should complete the census? Everyone in the regulatory realm of the U.S. retail food safety system,” said Baker.

For more information about the assessment, visit www.neha.org/retailgrants/rpss/needs-assessment.

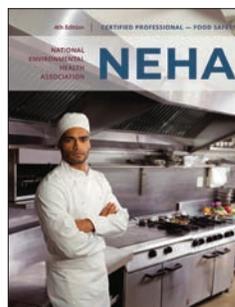
NEHA-FDA RFFM Grant Program Year 2 Application Is Open



The NEHA-FDA Retail Flexible Funding Model (RFFM) Grant Program is a funding opportunity for state, local, tribal, and territorial jurisdictions to enhance their efforts to reduce foodborne illness through conformance with the Voluntary National Retail Food Regulatory Program Standards (Retail Program Standards).

The application period for Year 2 of the NEHA-FDA RFFM Grant Program will be open Wednesday, August 17–Wednesday, October 12 (7:59 p.m. EDT), offering multiple 1-year grants with a 2023 project period. This grant period offers two application tracks for Development base grant funding that depends on your jurisdiction’s level of conformance with the Retail Program Standards. Optional add-on grants include Mentorship, Special Projects, and Training. This year, the NEHA-FDA RFFM Grant Program offers a simplified application process and will continue to provide a responsive support team. Visit the Retail Grants webpage at www.neha.org/retailgrants for program resources, training options, and the latest updates.

NEHA Releases New Edition of the CP-FS Study Guide



NEHA has released a new edition of the *Certified Professional–Food Safety (CP-FS) Study Guide*. The fourth edition of the study guide has been updated to the current FDA *Food Code* and includes information and requirements from the Food Safety Modernization Act. It was developed by retail professionals to help prepare candidates for the NEHA CP-FS credential exam with in-depth content, an examination blueprint, practice test,

and many helpful appendices. The study guide is the go-to resource for students of food safety and food safety professionals in both regulatory agencies and industry.

Sections in the new edition include:

- Foreword
- Introduction
- Causes and Prevention of Foodborne Illness
- Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) Plans
- Cleaning and Sanitizing
- Facility and Plan Review
- Pest Control
- Inspections
- Foodborne Illness Outbreaks
- Sampling Food for Laboratory Analysis
- Food Defense
- Responding to Food Emergencies
- Legal Aspects of Food Safety
- Appendix A: pH Values of Selected Foods
- Appendix B: Foodborne Illness–Causing Agents in the U.S.
- Appendix C: Food Facility Design Checklist
- Appendix D: Factors Influencing Microbial Growth
- Appendix E: Analysis of Microbial Hazards in Time/Temperature Control for Safety (TCS) Foods
- Appendix F: Calibrating a Thermometer
- Proper Hand Washing Technique
- CP-FS Review Quiz
- CP-FS Review Quiz, Answer Sheet
- Recommended Reading
- Bibliography and References
- Index

A CP-FS is an individual who possesses the knowledge and skills necessary to ensure safe food in any retail environment as a quality assurance or quality control manager, facility manager, food-safe chemical supplier, or regulatory inspector/investigator. A CP-FS is able to conduct facility and HACCP plan reviews and recognize and prevent the causes of foodborne illnesses. The CP-FS credential is well respected throughout the industry and is highly valued by employers when hiring food safety professionals.

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The *CP-FS Study Guide* is 358 pages and is now available for purchase in the NEHA bookstore at www.neha.org/store. The study guide is priced at \$199 for members and \$229 for nonmembers. You can also find information about the CP-FS credential exam at www.neha.org/cpfs.

COVID-19 Early Care and Education Collaborative Accomplishments

The practice of environmental health plays a vital role in reducing the spread of COVID-19, specifically in the areas of sanitation, disinfection, food safety, and indoor air quality. The need for guidance on safer cleaning practices and how to improve indoor air quality is especially necessary in early care and education (ECE) facilities, where many children spend a majority of their active hours during the day and may be at increased risk for exposure to COVID-19 and other environmental health hazards.

To meet this challenge and provide coordination around ECE-related guidance in the early days of the pandemic, the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) provided support to establish the COVID-19 ECE Collaborative in mid-2020. The Collaborative, convened by NEHA, served as a forum to bring together key environmental health organizations, each with their own specialization and constituents, to better coordinate activities and messaging during the beginning of the pandemic before vaccinations were available. Convening a broad range of organizations ensured that messaging was both coordinated and tailored to the ECE community including ECE facilities, home-based child-care settings, clinicians and other healthcare providers, and public health organizations.

Collaborative members worked to identify needs and gaps and developed educational materials, webinars, and trainings on priority topics including safe cleaning, disinfection, food handling, and improving indoor air quality during the early stages of the COVID-19 response. Collaborative members also created tools for engagement and relationship building between ECE facilities and health departments that can be carried on in a post-pandemic environment. This project serves as an example of how collaborative partnerships, utilizing Health in All Policies principles, can be rapidly established and implemented in real time to holistically address public health challenges and protect children's health.

A summary report of the accomplishments of the Collaborative, as well as fact sheets, assessment forms, webinars, videos, infographics, and other resources, can be accessed at www.neha.org/eh-topic/covid-ece-collaborative. The report provides a history of the Collaborative, highlights the coordination and resources created, explores the Collaborative's impact, and includes links to the numerous resources developed.

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 pages 48 and 49.



Nathan Galanos

Prior to autumn 2019, I had never lived a day of my life outside of Southeast Texas. I was ready for a change and ready to challenge myself by doing something bold by moving outside of my comfort zone. Much like my move away from everything I had ever known required boldness on my part, I believe being an environmental health professional also

requires a certain level of boldness to passionately fight for the health, safety, and environment of our communities through our actions, words, and work. It makes me happy to work with people who care about environmental health.

I joined NEHA in September 2021 as a contract administrator in the Finance Department to provide support for NEHA's many federally-funded grants and related third-party contracts. I have a bachelor of arts degree in mass communication—print journalism from the Dan Rather Communications Building at Sam Houston State University.

I first started working with contracts in 2010, preparing civil engineering and architecture contracts for the Harris County Commissioners Court in Houston, Texas. At the Texas A&M Sponsored Research Services Office, I learned the ins and outs of the pre-award process and was thrown into the fire on a number of high dollar proposals. In my time at the Texas A&M Natural Resources Institute, I handled cradle-to-grave processes (both pre- and post-award). Sponsors I have worked with in the past include the National Institutes of Health, National Science Foundation, U.S. Department of Agriculture, National Aeronautics and Science Administration, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and many state sponsors.

At NEHA, I assist in preparation of budgets and proposal documents for our sponsored grant applications and input those documents into the grant portal prior to submission. I draft and review numerous third-party contracts and addendums, and track them through execution. I assisted in procuring our new building lease and submitting multiple grant applications. I am currently in the process of developing standard operating procedures for both grants and contracts.

Outside of work I am an avid sports fan, particularly baseball and football. I love to spend time with my wife and daughter out in nature, especially at the beach or in the mountains. 🏞️