

Voluntary National Retail Food Regulatory Program Standards Mentorship Program

REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS TO RECEIVE MENTORSHIP

*****Applications must be received by January 31, 2012 at 8:00 PM EST*****

The National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) invites local health departments (LHDs) to submit applications to participate in a mentorship program with other peer LHDs to share experiences, learn, and provide tools and resources related to the Voluntary National Retail Food Regulatory Program Standards (Retail Program Standards). The overall objective of the mentorship program is to match seasoned LHD practitioners with experience applying the Retail Program Standards with LHDs currently enrolled in the Program Standards and looking for guidance, tools and resources, and recommendations for achieving a standard or standards. This opportunity will provide capacity building at the LHDs receiving mentorship. Additionally, the program will help strengthen relationships between LHDs and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Regional Offices. This initiative is funded by a cooperative agreement between NACCHO and FDA.

BACKGROUND

[The Voluntary National Retail Food Regulatory Program Standards](#) serve as a guide to regulatory retail food program managers in the design and management of a retail food regulatory program and provide a means of recognition for those programs that meet these standards. Program managers and administrators may establish additional requirements to meet individual program needs.

The Retail Program Standards are designed to help food regulatory programs enhance the services they provide to the public. When applied in the intended manner, the Retail Program Standards should:

- Identify program areas where an agency can have the greatest impact on retail food safety;
- Promote wider application of effective risk-factor intervention strategies;
- Assist in identifying program areas most in need of additional attention;
- Provide information needed to justify maintenance or increase in program budgets;
- Lead to innovations in program implementation and administration; and
- Improve industry and consumer confidence in food protection programs by enhancing uniformity within and between regulatory agencies.

NACCHO's Mentorship Program is part of an ongoing effort to increase the use of the Retail Program Standards by LHDs. LHDs supported under the program will receive peer-to-peer assistance and intensive technical support, thereby, advancing the practice of the standards among LHD-based practitioners while increasing the number of LHDs enrolled in FDA's Retail Program Standards. Through the mentorship program, participating LHDs will benefit from the experience of other LHDs in understanding how to best apply the Retail Program Standards to improve their retail food protection programs in the following areas.

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- Standard No. 1 - Regulatory Foundation
- Standard No. 2 - Trained Regulatory Staff
- Standard No. 3 - Inspection Program Based on HACCP Principles
- Standard No. 4 - Uniform Inspection Program
- Standard No. 5 - Foodborne Illness and Food Defense Preparedness and Response
- Standard No. 6 - Compliance and Enforcement
- Standard No. 7 - Industry and Community Relations
- Standard No. 8 - Program Support and Resources
- Standard No. 9 - Program Assessment

Participating LHDs may also gain insight on how to best accomplish key Retail Program Standards milestones, such as completing self-assessments, developing improvement plans, and conducting verification audits.

AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS

NACCHO plans to award approximately \$108,000 to local health departments to participate in the mentorship program, which includes:

- Enrolling in the Retail Program Standards (if not already enrolled);
- Developing a work plan that identifies which standard(s) or phase(s) of implementation the LHD is seeking guidance and mentorship; and
- Partnering with an experienced LHD as identified through the mentorship program to help accomplish the work plan;
- Submitting a project report that describes lessons learned, tools used, and tips and strategies for success for distribution to other LHDs; and
- Participating in a face-to-face grantee meeting in September 2012 (Washington, DC).

Selected LHDs will also be eligible to receive a travel stipend up to \$1,400 for an in-person meeting between paired mentee and mentor LHDs.

The program duration will be from February 17, 2012 through August 17, 2012. Ongoing technical assistance, beyond the one-time funding, will be available. The amount awarded to each selected LHD will range in size with a maximum award of \$12,000. NACCHO plans to announce the selected LHDs in February 2012. Funding estimates for the overall program and for the individual project may change.

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ELIGIBILITY

Eligible applicants are limited to LHDs. LHDs interested in receiving guidance and mentorship on the use of the Retail Program Standards, including those seeking assistance on conducting a self assessment and/or verification audit are encouraged to apply.

In order to be selected for a grant, the applicant will need to become a dues-paying NACCHO member if they are not one already. For more information about membership information, please visit www.naccho.org/membership.

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS AND EXPECTATIONS

From February 17, 2012 through August 17, 2012 LHDs selected as mentees will be expected to do the following:

- Participate in kick-off call/webinar of mentorship program (exact date to be determined);
- Participate in mid-project review conference call (exact date to be determined);
- Hold at least one in-person meeting with an assigned mentor LHD, either at the mentor LHD's site or the mentee LHD's site;
- Work with mentor LHD to make progress in identified standard(s) or phase(s) of the Retail Program Standards as identified in the proposed work plan;
- Participate in periodic conference calls with the mentor LHD;
- Budget travel expenses for one team member to attend an in-person grantee meeting in September 2012 (Washington, DC);
- Document and share lessons learned and all related tools and resources used that were helpful for all phases of the project. Share results of any assessments and evaluations. This information will be shared with NACCHO for dissemination to LHDs and other interested stakeholders;
- Communicate progress and any major changes to the proposed work plan to NACCHO;
- Submit one final report by August 31, 2012 detailing the implementation and evaluation process, barriers to implementation, evaluation, and collaboration, how these barriers were addressed, and lessons learned;
- Provide feedback on the strengths and weaknesses of the mentorship program and give suggestions for improving the program by completing an evaluation survey at the end of the program period; and
- Serve as a resource for other LHDs interested in implementing similar types of activities by providing technical assistance via telephone, email, or, if resources allow, in person. If asked, participate in a webinar for interested LHDs on lessons learned and all related tools and resources used that were helpful for all phases of the project.

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ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES

Through the mentorship program, the following anticipated outcomes are expected:

- Establish a growing network of LHDs experienced in the implementation of the Retail Program Standards;
- Improve NACCHO's understanding of the technical assistance needs of LHDs around the Retail Program Standards;
- Identify strategies to improve implementation of the Retail Program Standards among LHDs;
- Provide a venue for LHDs interested in the Program Standards to share resources, experiences, and lessons;
- Strengthen relationships between LHDs and FDA Regional Offices; and
- Identify resource needs in implementing the Retail Program Standards.

NACCHO's Mentorship Program is expected to improve the public health system in the jurisdictions of the LHDs receiving guidance and technical assistance. System-level outcomes likely will include staff trained in the Retail Program Standards, demonstrated LHD capacity for future work, and improved relationships among LHDs, NACCHO, and FDA. The mentorship program will run from February 17, 2012 through August 17, 2012.

APPLICATION SUBMISSION INFORMATION

All applicants must submit the application form, project narrative, budget request, and letters of support (optional) as Word or PDF files. The project narrative (Part 3 of the Application Form) must not exceed **nine pages** (double-spaced, Times New Roman, 12-point font, and 1-inch margins). Applications not in the required format and exceeding page limitations will be considered incomplete and not scored.

All application materials must be received electronically no later than 8:00 PM EST on January 31, 2012. Please e-mail the application material to Rebecca Johnson, Program Analyst, at rjohnson@naccho.org. NACCHO will confirm receipt of e-mailed applications. Applications received after the deadline will not be considered.

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Project Narrative

The project narrative must be in the required format (double-spaced, Times New Roman, 12-point font, and 1-inch margins) and answer all of the questions listed in Part 3 of the Application Form. Applicants may include supporting materials in a separate appendix. The project narrative must be divided into each of the four sections listed in the Application Form. Please be as descriptive as possible as the following information will be used to select LHDs to participate in the mentorship program and to pair up mentee and mentor LHDs.

- Background
- Statement of Need
- Project Description
- LHD Staffing

Key Dates

Applicants are advised to consider the following dates.

- Application deadline: January 31, 2012 8:00 PM EST
- Award notification: February 17, 2012
- Kick-off call/webinar: February 2012 (exact date and time to be determined)
- Mid-project review conference call: May 2012 (exact date and time to be determined)
- Submit satisfaction/evaluation survey: August 31, 2012
- Submit final report to NACCHO: August 31, 2012
- In-person grantee meeting: September 2012 (exact date and time to be determined)

SELECTION PROCESS

Applications will be reviewed according to the following criteria:

- Completeness in answering the questions;
- Agency capacity to carry out the proposed activities;
- Appropriate work plan to complete the project activities;
- Appropriate staffing plan;
- Realistic and appropriate budget; and
- Demonstration of overall commitment.

Each eligible application will be scored by multiple members of a review panel. Ineligible applicants will not be scored. Applications not in the required format and exceeding page limitations will be considered incomplete and not scored.

Scores for each section are listed in the Application Form. The maximum score is 100. The final selection, including selecting tied participants, will be at the discretion of the project team.



National Association of County & City Health Officials

The National Connection for Local Public Health

**Voluntary National Retail Food Regulatory Program Standards
Mentorship Program**

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For questions about this Request for Applications, contact:

Rebecca Johnson

Program Analyst, Environmental Health

(202) 507-4284

rjohnson@naccho.org

For assistance in proposal writing, please consult NACCHO's free archived webinars. The three-part series, *Elements of a Strong Proposal*, includes information on writing specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-phased (SMART) goals and objectives, introduction to logic models, and development of a need statement. The webinars can be viewed at <http://webcasts.naccho.org/series.php?id=569>.