

# North Carolina Mentorship Participants

## Cumberland County Department of Public Health Environmental Health Division (NC)

### Background

**State:** North Carolina

**LHD Population Size Served:** 331,000 plus 160,000 visitors per month

**Number of Retail Food Establishments Inspected:** over 2100

**Retail Program Standards Met/Working On:** Met Self-Assessment, 1, and 7. Standard 3 and 9 will be submitted for audit by the end of August 2018. Working on Standard 5 and 6, as well as the courses for Standard 2.

**Enrolled in the Retail Program Standards:** 2014

**NACCHO Mentorship Program Cohort(s):** 4, 6, 7

CCDPH's mission statement is to provide high quality service in a professional, efficient, and fiscally responsible manner while improving the health of Cumberland County.

The purpose of the Food and Lodging section of Environmental Health is to ensure that the public receives the highest quality of service in its implementation of the food, lodging and institution programs, to enforce state regulations and county ordinances that address sanitation, safety, and prevention awareness in the food and lodging establishments, and institutions located in the County, investigate complaints and outbreaks, and educate consumers, industry, and others about food safety and how to reduce the occurrence of risk factors that contribute to foodborne illness.

### Role in Mentorship Program

Cumberland participated in the NACCHO Retail Program Standards Mentorship Program as a mentee in the fourth and sixth cohorts and a mentor in the seventh. They were mentored by Chatham County Department of Public Health Environmental Health Division (NC) on conducting a self-assessment and Standard 9. CCDPH mentored Richmond, NC and Randolph, NC on the initial self-assessment of all nine standards and Standard 7.

### Lessons Learned/Tips

In completing our Self-Assessment, Cumberland County found that there are a large number of areas of concern in our Food and Lodging Program that could be corrected with proper documentation and updated policies. This information is extremely helpful because we will be able to close some of those gaps and focus on a more quality and uniform inspection program. We also learned that more time needs to be spent updating forms to assist the public in accurately reporting information on complaints and applying to open new establishments. When completing the initial Self-Assessment, it is necessary to dedicate time for each Standard but only after compiling all of the department's documentation and the guides provided. Each Standard should be evaluated step-by-step, identifying what the department meets and does not. In doing so, oversights can be captured and strategies to fill them can be developed.

Final lessons learned included the following: 1. Participating as a mentor is very worthwhile and provides opportunities for learning from your mentees. 2. Being flexible is extremely important when participating as a mentor, because issues can arise for the mentees that may interfere with scheduled activities. 3. It is necessary to learn about the mentee organization and how they function early in the mentorship process. This will help you be a more effective mentor. 4. Not all mentees need the same level of mentorship however consistent contact is necessary to ensure program goals

are being met. 5. Attendance at the Mentorship meeting in DC is an absolute must. The networking capability and knowledge obtained from other mentors and mentees across the country is invaluable.

### **Contact**

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## **Chatham County Public Health Department (NC)**

### **Background**

**State:** North Carolina

**LHD Population Size Served:** 65,000

**Number of Retail Food Establishments Inspected:** 225

**Retail Program Standards Met/Currently Working On:** 1, 2 3, 9, Self-Assessment

**Enrolled in the Retail Program Standards:** 2011

**NACCHO Mentorship Program Cohort(s):** 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6.

Chatham County is comprised of 707 square miles of splendid countryside with a population of 65,000 and is located in the geographic center of North Carolina. The primary industry of Chatham County is agriculture including beef cattle, poultry farms, and poultry processing. In recent years our population has become more diverse with a large influx of Latino residents. This has required a more bilingual approach to achieve the Chatham County Public Health Department's mission of protecting and promoting the health and safety of Chatham County residents.

The Chatham County Commissioners approve funding for all program expenses including staffing for the Chatham County Public Health Department. Oversight of the Health Department is provided by a Board of Health comprised of 11 members including; three (3) public members, (1) engineer, (1) licensed dentist, (1) optometrist, (1) veterinarian, (1) registered nurse, (1) pharmacist, (1) physician, and (1) elected County Commissioner. The Board of Health makes and adopts policies and rules for the county health department, provides guidance on health issues in the county and appoints the Health Director.

### **Overview of Mentorship Program Participation**

Chatham County Public Health Department participated in the NACCHO Retail Program Standards Mentorship Program as a mentee in the second and fifth (cohorts and as a mentor in the third, fourth, and sixth cohorts. During the second and fifth cohorts,, Chatham County Public Health Department was mentored by Gwinnett County Environmental Health Department (GA) and Vineland Health Department (NJ). During the third cohort, Chatham mentored Jackson County Department of Public Health, Environmental Health Division (NC), Richmond County Health Department (NC), and Davie County Health Department (NC). In the fourth cohort, Chatham mentored Cumberland County (NC) Department of Public Health Environmental Health Division, and Lee County (NC) Health Department. In the sixth cohort, Chatham mentored Gaston County (NC) and Cumberland County (NC)

### **Mentorship Program Lessons Learned/Tips**

Most of what you need to meet a Retail Program Standard has already been created, though you may need to edit the policy, plan, or check list to meet your needs, the documents are available if you find someone who will share, which our mentor did willingly.

New enrollees to the program standards still have a great deal to offer whether it is through policies or knowledge; essentially we can still all learn, improve, and succeed together no matter the jurisdictions location or size.

### **Project Contact**

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## **Davie County Health Department (NC)**

### **Background**

**State:** North Carolina

**LHD Population Size Served:** 42,171

**Number of Retail Food Establishments Inspected:** 134

**Retail Program Standards Met/Working On:** Self-Assessment, 1, 9

**Enrolled in the Retail Program Standards:** 2010

**NACCHO Mentorship Program Cohort(s):** 3 and 4

The mission and purpose of the Davie County Health Department is to provide services designed to protect and improve the health of Davie County citizens. The type of retail establishments served by Davie include restaurants, food stands, school lunchrooms, mobile food units, push carts, commissaries, hotels/motels, local confinement institutional food service, hospital institutional food service, rest/nursing homes institutional food service, and meat markets. Davie County Health Department derives its regulatory authority through the NC Department of Health and Human Services.

### **Role in Mentorship Program**

Davie participated in the NACCHO Retail Program Standards Mentorship Program as a mentee in third and fourth cohorts. In the third cohort they were mentored by Chatham County Health Department (NC). In the fourth cohort, they were mentored by Wake County (NC) Environmental Health and Safety Division.

### **Lessons Learned/Tips**

The biggest challenge we faced as a small local health department was finding the time to work on the standard while completing our regular work load. We learned quickly that we had to make time to work on them and that some parts took longer than others. Example policies and forms uploaded to our mentorship group's FoodSHIELD workgroup by fellow participants were a huge help in finding resources to help us complete the self-assessment.

Through the Standard 9 baseline survey process we were able to identify several gaps in the education of our establishments. As well as clarifying questions that establishment's staff members were not comfortable asking in a formal inspection environment. We found it very helpful to be present in an informal capacity.

### **Contact**

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## Gaston County Department of Health & Human Services (NC)

### Background

**State:** North Carolina

**LHD Population Size Served:** 211,127

**Number of Retail Food Establishments Inspected:** 652

**Retail Program Standards Met/Working On:** self-assessment

**Enrolled in the Retail Program Standards:** 2016

**NACCHO Mentorship Program Cohort(s):** 6

The Gaston County Department of Health & Human Services' (DHHS) Mission Statement is "Enhancing the quality of life of Gaston County by caring for, protecting, and empowering the community to live healthy lives in a healthy environment."

The Gaston County DHHS – Food & Lodging staff consists of 1 Program Specialist; 2 Plan Review Specialists; 4 Environmental Health Specialists; and 1 Program Supervisor. In addition to regulating retail food establishments, staff regulates public swimming pools, child care and school sanitation, childhood lead poisoning prevention, tattoo artists, lodging and institutions.

Gaston County Food & Lodging regulates the 652 retail establishments, including restaurants, food stands, mobile food units, pushcarts, temporary food establishments, limited food establishments, institutional kitchens, private and public school lunchrooms, and catered meal sites for the elderly.

The state of North Carolina delegates authority to Gaston County Environmental Health to enforce North Carolina Rules and Regulations and the 2009 FDA Food Code North Carolina General Statutes Chapter 130A.

### Role in Mentorship Program

Gaston County DHHS participated in the NACCHO Retail Program Standards Mentorship Program as a mentee in the sixth cohort. Chatham County Health Department (NC) mentored Gaston on conducting a self-assessment.

### Lessons Learned/Tips

If you are conducting a self-assessment, attend the FDA self assessment audit workshop. Plan on meeting outside your usual work space so you can have more quiet space with less interruptions. Meet with someone who has done a self assessment recently. Don't worry about going in order for self assessment standards. If you are new to this, it is okay to say "no" we don't meet this standard because it is self assessment, initial self assessment does not need explanation on why you do not meet the standard.

### Contact

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## Hoke County Health Department (NC)

### Background

**State:** North Carolina

**LHD Population Size Served:** 52,000

**Number of Retail Food Establishments Inspected:** 150

**Retail Program Standards Met/Working On:** 1, 3, Self-Assessment

**Enrolled in the Retail Program Standards:** 2015

**NACCHO Mentorship Program Cohort(s):** 6

*The mission of the Hoke County Health Department is to provide public health services that promote, protect, and preserve the wellness of Hoke County citizens and the surrounding communities.*

Hoke County Environmental Health is the Section of the Hoke County Health Department tasked with operating the retail food regulatory program in Hoke County NC. Hoke County Environmental Health (HCEH) consists of three Registered Environmental Health Specialists (REHS) and one Administrative Support person. HCEH has one REHS working in the retail food regulatory program. This specialist is responsible for permitting, inspections, complaint investigations and plan reviews for all food and lodging establishments, institutions, child care centers, schools, residential care facilities and public swimming pools. The two other specialists work in the onsite wastewater/private wells program, the childhood lead prevention program and the tattoo program. Our jurisdiction consists of approximately 52,000 year-round residents and has seen significant growth in recent years as the nearby military base at Ft Bragg NC has expanded. Hoke County has approximately 150 food service establishments, including restaurants, food stands, school lunchrooms, meat markets, grocery store produce and deli departments, congregate nutrition sites, childcare centers, nursing and rest home kitchens, hospital cafeterias, resident camp kitchens, mobile food units, pushcarts and limited food service establishments as well as a growing number of temporary food establishments associated with weekend events and festivals. HCEH provides plan reviews and permitting of new and renovated facilities and is responsible for mandatory inspections of each establishment at a frequency of 1 to 4 times per year, depending on the assigned risk category. Our health department derives regulatory authority from the North Carolina General Statutes. All counties in North Carolina enforce the same food sanitation rules. North Carolina adopted the 2009 FDA Food Code in 2012.

### Role in Mentorship Program

Hoke County participated in the NACCHO Retail Program Standards Mentorship Program as a mentee in the fifth and sixth cohorts. In the fifth cohort, Hoke was mentored by Pitt County Health Department (NC) on conducting a self-assessment and Standard 1. In the sixth cohort, Hoke was mentored by Vineland Health Department (NJ) on Standard 3.

### Lessons Learned/Tips

Our department completed the initial self-assessment for each of the 9 standards. We also completed all of the worksheets and requirements to be in compliance with standard 1. Biggest lesson learned was to utilize the experience and advice of other jurisdictions who have previously completed these tasks. Being a mentee was an extremely valuable experience, especially for a small department such as ours. Having others to work with made a lot of difference and helped us "see" our way forward when things got difficult. A tip we would like to share is to be honest with where you are during your initial assessments. It is ok to not meet a standard. The idea is not to meet everything right away but, rather, to identify areas where your department has room to improve. We are excited about having a greater understanding of our capacity and our shortcomings. We now have focus as to what to work on next. We look forward to working towards compliance with more standards next year.

### Contact

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## **Jackson County Department of Public Health (NC)**

### **Background**

**State:** North Carolina

**LHD Population Size Served:** 40,448 plus an additional 10,106 transient students from WCU

**Number of Retail Food Establishments Inspected:** 571 food service establishments per fiscal year

**Retail Program Standards Met/Working On:** Self-Assessment, Standards 1, 4, 7, 9

**Enrolled in the Retail Program Standards:** August, 2013

**NACCHO Mentorship Program Cohort(s):** 3, 4, and 5

The mission of the Jackson County Department of Public Health is to ensure, promote and protect the health of all Jackson County residents with an overall effort to enhance their health status through prevention and education.

Our retail food regulatory program is designed to be forward thinking and innovative as we have learned that food safety principles are not always achieved as cookie cutter nor a one size fits all approach. The food industry is constantly changing and it is important for our Environmental Health Specialists to receive the most current training. Our program is team oriented and focused on prevention measures rather than prophylaxis measures. Our success is measured by the relationships we have built to foster best management practices concerning food safety. Our vision is for the residents of our county to view the Jackson County Department of Public Health as the primary resource for individual health, community health, and environmental health.

### **Role in Mentorship Program**

Jackson County participated in the NACCHO Retail Program Standards Mentorship Program as a mentee in the third, fourth, and fifth cohort and was mentored in this last cohort by Pitt County, NC.

### **Lessons Learned/Tips**

The Jackson County Department of Public Health Department was one of the first to utilize a new data base for data collection of Standard 9. We will be finished with the Risk Factor Study By August 31st and are still entering data into the data base. It is crucial to be consistent with each of the questions in how an agency interprets the question for consistency and quality assurance reasons.

Also, it is important to look up the code to see if it is cited correctly. There was a code missing in the instructions and after communication from Donna Wanucha from the FDA, we then had to pencil that code in the marking instructions.

Take your time in filling out the surveys so that captured data is not rushed. Also, weekly meeting were important to assure quality assurance.

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## **Lee County Health Department (NC)**

### **Background**

**State:** North Carolina

**LHD Population Size Served:** 60,000

**Number of Retail Food Establishments Inspected:** 246

**Retail Program Standards Met/Working On:** Self-Assessment, met Standard 1, working on Standards 2, 3, 4, 5, and 7.

**Enrolled in the Retail Program Standards:** 2014

**NACCHO Mentorship Program Cohort(s):** 4-7

Lee County is comprised of 259 square miles with a population of 60,266. Lee County is nestled between the RTP, Fayetteville and Southern Pines, which is located in the central part of North Carolina. The majority of the residents of the county are employed by businesses such as the educational system, industrial, poultry processing plants, healthcare services, and public administrative offices. With such a diverse employment population, the services of the Lee County Health Department are in great demand. It is our mission to help prevent disease, promote health, and protect the environment for all citizens of Lee County and to continually assess and respond to the health needs of the community.

Our health department employs forty seven full-time staff members. Among the total number of employees, four are Registered Environmental Health Specialist, one supervisor and three field staff. The Environmental Health Section is responsible for a minimum of 637 inspections from 236 establishments, which include retail establishments such as restaurants, foodstands, meat markets, mobile food units, push carts, public school lunchrooms, institutional kitchens, limited foodservice establishments, and temporary food establishments.

The state of North Carolina through its law making process made it the responsibility of local health departments and its authorized staff, in Chapter 130A- 1.1 Mission and essential services to receive regulatory authority. In which, the Board of Health is the local health authority. The Board is composed of one licensed physician, one licensed dentist, one licensed optometrist, one licensed veterinarian, one registered nurse, one licensed pharmacist, one County Commissioner, one professional engineer, and three representatives of the general public. They are appointed by the Board of Commissioners to serve three year terms. Board members are limited to three consecutive three year terms. The local Health Director serves as Secretary to the Board.

### **Role in Mentorship Program**

Lee participated in the NACCHO Retail Program Standards Mentorship Program as a mentee in the fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh cohorts. In the fourth cohort, they were mentored by Chatham County Health Department (NC) on conducting a self-assessment and Standard 1. In the fifth cohort, Lee was mentored by Pitt County Health Department (NC) on Standard 9. In the sixth cohort, Lee was mentored by Oakland Health Department (MI) on Standard 2. During the seventh cohort, Rockingham, NC mentored Lee County on Standard 4.

### **Lessons Learned/Tips**

Lee found even though we are doing well as a jurisdiction, we need the policies and procedures in place in writing in order to have sound strategic planning efforts now and in the future concerning an environmental health profession which adapts to change constantly. In our capacity to adapt, we must develop the documentation to illustrate and convey the needs of all stakeholders involved are being met. Many improvements can be made and NACCHO has provided the foundation to begin implementing these improvements with the completion of the self-assessment and successful audit of Standard 1. Lee is excited about the opportunity to grow as a jurisdiction and continue to improve efforts to provide sound strategies concerning sound retail practices.

Any effort to improve the retail food safety regulatory program in your community has a direct impact on public health. Most notably, trained staff who are competent and informed are able to achieve outcomes that will minimize risk factors. Though difficult to measure success, the impact on public health should translate to fewer incidences of food borne illness in the community.

**Contact**

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**Link:**

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## **Pitt County Health Department (NC)**

### **Background**

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**State:** North Carolina

**LHD Population Size Served:** 176,000 (July 2015, US Census Bureau)

**Number of Retail Food Establishments Inspected:** 663

**Retail Program Standards Met/Currently Working On:** 7, 9, Self-Assessment

**Enrolled in the Retail Program Standards:** 2012

Pitt County Health Department, located in Greenville, NC, is an agent of the North Carolina Division of Health and Human Services, given direction by the local Board of Health and directly supervised by Dr. John Morrow. Our mission as the Pitt County Health Department is to protect, promote and assure the health of the people of Pitt County, which serves a population of almost 176,000 citizens. In addition to our fixed population, we serve an increasing transient population which includes more than 22,000 students attending East Carolina University, the Brody School of Medicine, and ECU School of Dental Medicine. Pitt County currently serves one of the larger Eastern NC populations of migrant workers, providing education and health services. This is accomplished by offering clinics in Maternal Health, Communicable Disease Prevention, Women and Child Nutrition, Environmental Health and regulatory services, Health Education, and most recently by serving all of Pitt County through enacting initiatives for healthy living and healthy food choices.

### **Overview of Mentorship Program Participation**

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Pitt County Health Department participated in the NACCHO Retail Program Standards Mentorship Program as a mentee in the second cohort (2012-2013). Wake County Environmental Health Services (NC) served as Pitt County Health Department's mentor. Pitt County is currently serving as a Mentor to three Mentee Counties, Hoke County, Jackson County, and Lee County, all in North Carolina, through various stages of program standards adoption.

### **Mentorship Program Lessons Learned/Tips**

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One of the biggest suggestions that we can offer as a Mentor is to get your projects started quickly. Large projects such as Standard 9 are very difficult to accomplish in the grant time frame. Another tip that Pitt County has benefited from was constant communication. We set up monthly conference calls with our Mentees checking their progress and offering any help possible.

### **Project Contact**

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<http://www.pittcountync.gov/341/Health-Department-Overview>

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## **Randolph County Health Department, NC**

### **Background**

**State:** North Carolina

**HD Population Size Served:** 143,416

**Number of Retail Food Establishments Inspected:** 459 Retail Food Establishments, on average 45 TFE permits per year, and 94 additional establishments that incorporate foodservice as a part of their inspection.

**Standards Met/Working On:** 0 Standards Met. Working on Standard 2 and Standard 9.

**Year Enrolled in Standards:** 2017

**NACCHO Mentorship Program Cohort(s):** Cohort 7 and 8

**Version of Food Code:** 2009

**Pursuing Accreditation (Y/N?)** No national accreditations are being pursued. We are accredited (with honors) by the North Carolina Local Health Department Association.

### **Mission and Background:**

The mission of the Randolph County Health Department (now Randolph County Public Health), the department that encompasses Randolph County Environmental Health, is "to preserve, protect and improve the health of the community." Randolph County Environmental Health is responsible for the regulation of the retail food program within the county, among other inspection types, including inspections of childcare establishments, lodging facilities, seasonal camps, and long-term care facilities, among others. All REHS within this program are responsible for completing inspections, reviewing establishment plans, issuing permits, investigating complaints, as well as making educational and compliance visits within our jurisdiction. When at full staff, Randolph County Environmental Health has six individuals authorized to complete the work listed above; five field staff and one supervisor.

### **Role in Mentorship Program**

Cohort 7: Cumberland County, NC mentored Randolph on conducting an initial self-assessment.

Cohort 8: Southern Nevada Health District, NV mentored Randolph on Standard 9 – conducting a risk factor study.

### **Accomplishments in the Mentorship Program**

- What Standard(s) did you work on and what did you accomplish? Standard 9 – We completed all data collections for Year one of the Standard 9 Risk Factor Study. We focused on Full Service and Fast Food Restaurants in Year One, with remaining facility types to be completed in Year Two. A draft report was assembled that discussed the methods by which we set up our study and that began to discuss our findings in year one. The report will be finalized when data collections are completed in Year Two.

### **Lessons Learned/Tips**

- No county (or State for that matter) is an island. Though we had worked with some of our neighboring counties to complete projects in the past, we have never had to rely on them as much as we did while completing our initial self-assessment. Being new to the FDA Retail Program Standards, it was often difficult to determine if policies or practices that we had in place actually met the intent of the various parts of standards. It was very helpful to solicit the guidance of our mentor (Cumberland County), the counties in our immediate vicinity, and those that had claimed to have met a standard from across the State when determining whether or not a standard had been met. We look forwards to working with other counties and States as we progress through the Standards.

- We realized that we have a ways to go before we begin to meet Standards in their entirety, but that in most cases, we have the building blocks in place in order to build our program up to meet those standards. It was very helpful to be able to take a comprehensive look at where our program stands in order to evaluate our strengths and to take stock of our weaknesses. We can now begin to develop a plan in order to fill in some of the gaps we have in our program and to further add to our strengths so that we can offer the best possible retail food safety program for the people of Randolph County. + Leave yourself ample time to set up your study and to train your staff on the data collection process. There is more to this process than one might think.
- When in doubt, reach out. Communicate with your FDA Retail Food Specialist for your region throughout the process. Their expertise on this endeavor will prove to be invaluable. Your mentor county/district (if participating in NACCHO) is also a great resource, as they have experience doing almost if not the exact same project that you are working on at the local level.
- Consider doing the risk factor study data collections separate from your inspection. This will help put your restaurant operators and staff at ease. We found that they were more likely to be open and honest during our visits and acted more like they would during a normal day's operation than they would during an inspection that might impact their score.
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### Contact

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### Link to food safety program website:

<http://www.randolphcountync.gov/Departments/Health-Department/Environmental-Health>

## **Richmond County Health Department (NC)**

### **Background**

**State:** North Carolina

**LHD Population Size Served:** ~50,000

**Number of Retail Food Establishments Inspected:** 600

**Retail Program Standards Met/Working On:** Met-1, 4, 5, and 9. Have submitted 3 to the auditor and 7 is on the way.

**Enrolled in the Retail Program Standards:** 2012

**NACCHO Mentorship Program Cohort(s):** 3, 4, and 7

Richmond County is comprised of 480 square miles and is 350 feet above sea level with a population of 46,918. Richmond County is nestled between the Sandhills region and the Pee Dee River, which is located in the south-central part of North Carolina. The majority of the residents of the county are employed by businesses such as the educational system, poultry processing plants, healthcare services, public administrative offices, and rail services. With such a diverse employment population, the services of the Richmond County Health Department are in great demand. It is our mission to help prevent disease, promote health, and protect the environment for all citizens of Richmond County and to continually assess and respond to the health needs of the community. Our health department employs seventy staff members, full-time and part-time included. Among the total number of employees, four are Registered Environmental Health Specialist, one supervisor and three field staff. The Environmental Health Section is responsible for a minimum of 601 inspections from 272 establishments, which include retail establishments such as restaurants, food stands, meat markets, mobile food units, push carts, public school lunchrooms, institutional kitchens, limited foodservice establishments, and temporary food establishments.

The state of North Carolina through its law-making process made it the responsibility of local health departments and its authorized staff, in Chapter 130A-1.1 Mission and essential services to receive regulatory authority. In which, the Board of Health is the local health authority. The Board is composed of one licensed physician, one licensed dentist, one licensed optometrist, one licensed veterinarian, one registered nurse, one licensed pharmacist, one County Commissioner, one professional engineer, and three representatives of the general public. They are appointed by the Board of Commissioners to serve three year terms. Board members are limited to three consecutive three year terms. The local Health Director serves as Secretary to the Board.

### **Role in Mentorship Program**

Richmond participated in the NACCHO Retail Program Standards Mentorship Program as a mentee in third and fourth cohorts. In the third cohort, they were mentored by Chatham County Health Department (NC). In the fourth cohort, they were mentored by Wake County (NC) Environmental Health and Safety Division. In the seventh cohort, Richmond was mentored by Cumberland County, NC on Standard 7.

### **Lessons Learned/Tips**

As a part of the Mentorship Program I have learned many lessons from my mentor, my other mentees in my region and mentees from other health districts. These lessons can only be learned through a program such as this. The networking and project sharing with like-minded people was mind boggling. Each person was willing to share information on any of the Program Standards and was willing to hear new ideas.

## Contact

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## Rockingham County (NC) Health Department

### Background

**State:** North Carolina

**LHD Population Size Served:** 91,758

**Number of Retail Food Establishments Inspected:** 295

**Retail Program Standards Met/Working On:** Met Standards 1, 4 & 9 Working on 2, 3 and 6

**Enrolled in the Retail Program Standards:** 2014

**NACCHO Mentorship Program Cohort(s):** 5 and 7

Rockingham County (NC) Department of Health and Human Service's mission statement is "Protect the health, safety, and wellbeing of our customers by providing essential health and human services in the most efficient manner." Our Department offers a wide range of services for the citizens of Rockingham County. The main goal of the Environmental Health Program is the prevention of communicable and environmentally related diseases in the community. Citizens should have a safe food supply and a clean environment. Our program strives for continuous quality improvement of the services offered to the public through continuing education of staff and enrollment in the FDA Voluntary Program Standards.

Rockingham County Health Department has nine Registered Environmental Health Specialists in our section and four of those work in the Food Protection and Facilities Program. Our jurisdiction consists of approximately 91,878 residents and has approximately 40 seasonal and 280 year round food service establishments, including restaurants, grocery stores, hotel continental breakfasts, school cafeterias, hospital cafeterias, nursing home cafeterias, convenience store grills, mobile food units, push carts, meat markets, food stands and concession stands. The number of inspections conducted at each food service establishment depends on the Risk Category assigned. All food service establishments are inspected between 1-4 times a year. Our program is also responsible for inspecting an additional 247 establishments that include public swimming pools, tattoo artist, child care centers, school buildings, hospital buildings, nursing home buildings, residential care facilities, lodging establishments, the local confinement, Adult Day Services and Residential Summer Camps. In total, our program conducts approximately 1,200 inspections a year. In addition, our program also teaches a ServSafe Food Manager Certification Course twice a year to help educate food operators and their employees. Our health department derives regulatory authority from Chapter 130A of the North Carolina General Statutes.

### Role in Mentorship Program

Rockingham County participated in the NACCHO Retail Program Standards Mentorship Program as a mentee in the fifth cohort and was mentored by Fairfax County Health Department (VA). In the seventh cohort, Rockingham mentored Marlborough, MA and Lee County, NC on Standard 4.

### Lessons Learned/Tips

- The main lesson we learned is that there are extensive resources on FoodSHIELD such as policies and forms that we could use while working on the Program Standards so there was no need for us to reinvent the wheel. Our Mentor County was also invaluable resource and was very helpful in reviewing our documents and offering advice and guidance.
- To better help our mentees with developing their own QA programs, we found it more beneficial to show them how our county met Standard 4 with our QA program instead of only discussing it with them. During our site visit, we were able to go out and demonstrate a mock QA field evaluation and show how we document them to meet Standard 4.
- We also shared our experience with meeting Standard 9, including completing a Risk Factor Study, writing the report, and developing interventions to address our most non-complaint of control risk factors to encourage our mentees to plan their own Risk Factor Studies.

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## **Stanly County Health Department (NC)**

### **Background**

**State:** North Carolina

**LHD Population Size Served:** 60,585

**Number of Retail Food Establishments Inspected:** 217

**Retail Program Standards Met/Currently Working On:** 4, 9, Self-Assessment (self assessment has been completed, Dec 2012)

**Enrolled in the Retail Program Standards:** 2012

Stanly County is located in the south central portion of North Carolina, approximately 45 miles east of Charlotte. It has a population of 60,585. (2010 U.S. Census) Stanly County is an engaging mix of small towns and rural settings. According to the 2010 U.S. Census, 32.29% of the county population lives in urban areas and 67.71% of the population lives in rural settings.

The Stanly County Health Department's mission is to protect, promote, and preserve the health of the citizens and communities of Stanly County. That is a mission that officially began in 1937 and is continuing today. The Stanly County Health Department's jurisdiction encompasses 10 incorporated communities in the county: Albemarle, Badin, Locust, New London, Norwood, Oakboro, Richfield, Stanfield, Red Cross, and the Village of Misenheimer. Unincorporated communities include Aquadale, Big Lick, Cottonville, Endy, Finger, Frog Pond, Lambert, Millingport, Palestine, Palmerville, Plyler, Porter, and Tuckertown.

Environmental Health has played a primary role in providing public health services in Stanly County from the very beginning. One of the core services listed in 1937 was "to conduct an educational and supervisory program which will go far toward correcting environmental sanitation, with particular emphasis on safe excreta disposal, malaria control, providing a pure and wholesome water supply, a pure milk supply, and pure food within the county."

Food safety is still a primary focus of the Stanly County Environmental Health staff. By enforcing State laws as well as participation in investigative and education outreach activities, the risk factors that contribute to foodborne illnesses are reduced. There are 217 permitted food establishments in Stanly County that are required to be inspected. The number of permitted food establishments has remained relatively consistent each year. The importance of properly inspecting permitted food establishments will only increase due to the population trend in Stanly County. Those 65 years old and older or under five years of age comprise 21.6% of the population. These two age groupings have an increased susceptibility to foodborne illnesses. According to the 2010 U.S. Census, the largest percentage increase in our population was in the 60-64 age group.

The Board of Health is the local health authority. The Board is composed of one licensed physician, one licensed dentist, one licensed optometrist, one licensed veterinarian, one registered nurse, one licensed pharmacist, one County Commissioner, one professional engineer, and three representatives of the general public. They are appointed by the Board of Commissioners to serve three year terms. Board members are limited to three consecutive three year terms. The local Health Director serves as Secretary to the Board.

### **Overview of Mentorship Program Participation**

The Stanly County Health Department participated in the NACCHO Retail Program Standards Mentorship Program as a mentee in the second cohort (2012-2013). The Stanly County Health Department was mentored by Wake County Environmental Services (NC).

## **Mentorship Program Lessons Learned/Tips**

Our original proposal was to develop the QA policy for standard 4 and complete the baseline survey for standard 9 and submit that standard for auditing. I did not plan on completing standard 4. The QA policy has been completed and approved by the Health Director. The QA procedures are now in place and will be ongoing from this point forward. Regarding Standard 9 I definitely found that I need to do a better job of project management. Realistic deadlines need to be determined based on available resources.

## **Project Contact**

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## Wake County Environmental Services Department (NC)

### Background

**State:** North Carolina

**LHD Population Size Served:** 1,000,000

**Number of Retail Food Establishments Inspected:** 3,230

**Retail Program Standards Met/Currently Working On:** 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 9

**Enrolled in the Retail Program Standards:** 2008

#### *Introduction*

Wake County Food Lodging Institution Section (FLIS) is a section of the Environmental Health and Safety Division (EH&S) of the section operates under the supervision of a department and county commission. General Statutes require local jurisdictions to provide public health services, such as retail food protection to citizens. Health authority is delegated to the agency from the state. FLIS is responsible for enforcing state rules, investigating complaints and outbreaks, and educating retail food service managers about food safety and how to reduce the occurrence of risk factors that contribute to foodborne illness.

#### *Mission*

The mission of Wake County Food Lodging Institution Section (FLIS) is to reduce the occurrence of foodborne illness risk factors in retail food establishments, through education, outreach and inspections. These strategies promote safe and healthy dining experiences to citizens and visitors of Wake County inspection each month. In recent years, the number of critical violation has been trending lower.

#### *About Wake County*

One of the fastest growing counties in the country, Wake County is the second-most populous of North Carolina's 100 counties. The County consists of 12 municipalities and includes Raleigh, the county seat and state capital. A unique mix of urban and rural small towns distinguishes Wake County from other counties in the state. Wake County is part of the Research Triangle metropolitan region, which encompasses the cities of Raleigh, Durham, Cary and Chapel Hill and their surrounding suburban areas. The County has a population of nearly 975,000 residents and greets more than 10 million visitors each year. Twenty-eight (28.3%) of Wake County's population is older than 60 or younger than 9 years of age. These groups are often considered highly susceptible to foodborne illness. More than 3,200 retail food service establishments operate in Wake County, with an additional 664 facilities in operation since 2007, an increase of 2.5% each year.

Wake County is home to a number of large corporations, including GlaxoSmithKline, Progress Energy, PNC and SAS. Eight institutions of higher learning are situated in the County, with the largest being North Carolina State University. Research Triangle Park and major universities in the area provide an innovative environment for businesses located here. Johnson and Wales University, a renowned culinary school nearby, teaches specialized food processes and graduates executive chefs who work in Wake County.

#### *Resources*

Wake County is governed by a seven-member elected Board of Commissioners. The County's 2016 general fund budget was \$1.4 billion, and the County has approximately 3,700 employees. The Department of Environmental Services is one of 19 departments in Wake County, which has four divisions: Animal Services, Environmental Health and Safety (EH&S), Solid Waste and Water Quality. FLIS receives the majority of its funding through the County's general fund. The 2016 budget is \$1.9 million.

FLIS employs 26 positions including one supervisor, four team leaders and 21 field staff members. Each staff person must meet the requirements of the North Carolina Registered Board of Environmental Health Specialist (REHS) Examiners, satisfy yearly training requirements, and

maintain current registration with the REHS board. In addition, EHSs must be authorized agents of the State in order to perform job duties in the county.

### **Overview of Mentorship Program Participation**

Wake County participated in the NACCHO Retail Program Standards Mentorship Program as a mentor in the first, second, and fourth cohorts. In the first cohort, Wake County mentored South Central Public Health Department (ID) and RiverStone Health (MT). In the second cohort, Wake mentored Pitt County Health Department (NC), Stanly County Health Department (NC), and Sacramento County (CA). In the fourth cohort, Wake mentored Davie County (NC) Health Department, Wilkes County (NC) Health Department, and Richmond County (NC) Health Department.

### **Mentorship Program Lessons Learned/Tips**

- There is a lot of energy in relationships and in partnering with others who are equally excited about a common project. With an appropriate match, there is a lot of opportunity for learning both for the mentee and the mentor. Not only do the partners learn the technical aspects of advancing the Program Standards, but partners learn about other communities and challenges that are similar to their own.
- When jurisdictions collaborate, there is an unspoken responsibility to keep on track with deadlines and to be respectful of the other's time.
- Last and most importantly, participants get an opportunity to look at best practices, which can be tailored to their unique operations.

### **Project Contact**

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## **Wilkes County Health Department (NC)**

### **Background**

**State:** North Carolina

**LHD Population Size Served:** 69,023

**Number of Retail Food Establishments Inspected:** 221

**Retail Program Standards Met/Working On:** 1, 2, 3, 7, and Self-Assessment

**Enrolled in the Retail Program Standards:** 2014

**NACCHO Mentorship Program Cohort(s):** 4

Wilkes County Health Department's mission is to promoting health and preventing disease in our community. The county has four retail food regulatory staff and a total of 70 Wilkes County Health Department Employees serving the community population of 69,023.

Wilkes County Health Department derives authority from the state of North Carolina and uses the Food Code as the basis of their retail food inspections. Their program consist of an Environmental Health Program Specialist, two Environmental Health Specialists, an Administrative Assistant, and an Environmental Health Supervisor.

The jurisdiction has 221 foodservice facilities consisting of the following: School Cafeterias, Restaurants, Food Stands, Limited Food Service Establishment, Temporary Food Establishments, Mobile Food Units, Senior Nutrition Sites, Nursing Homes/Hospitals.

### **Role in Mentorship Program**

Wilkes participated in the NACCHO Retail Program Standards Mentorship Program as a mentee in the fourth cohort. They were mentored by Wake County Environmental Health and Safety Division (NC).

### **Lessons Learned/Tips**

Don't recreate the wheel! Utilize available resources. Sharing and comparing builds relationships and positive change. It is timely to implement new ideas and projects.

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