

Applications due by 8:00 PM ET on Friday, October 6, 2017



**Voluntary National Retail Food Regulatory Program Standards
Mentorship Program (Cohort 7)**

REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS TO RECEIVE MENTORSHIP

OVERVIEW

The National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) invites all retail food regulatory programs¹ to submit applications to participate in a mentorship program with their peers to learn, share experiences, and acquire tools and resources related to the Voluntary National Retail Food Regulatory Program Standards (Retail Program Standards). The overall objective of the mentorship program, now in its seventh year, is to match retail food regulatory program practitioners experienced in applying the Retail Program Standards with retail food regulatory programs newly or currently enrolled in the Retail Program Standards that are looking for assistance, guidance, tools and resources, and recommendations for conducting a self-assessment, achieving a specific standard, or achieving multiple standards. This opportunity will provide capacity building among retail food regulatory programs participating in the NACCHO Mentorship Program. Additionally, the program will help strengthen relationships between retail food regulatory programs and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). This initiative is funded by a cooperative agreement between NACCHO and FDA.

There are two separate Requests for Applications (RFA) that can be used to apply for the Mentorship Program. Applicants interested in serving as a mentor are encouraged to respond to the *Request for Applications to Become a Mentor*, which can be found on the [NACCHO Mentorship Program webpage](#). Applicants interested in receiving technical assistance and support from a mentor are encouraged to respond to this request for applications to receive mentorship. Applicants are welcome to submit applications to [become a mentor](#) and to [receive mentorship](#); however, applicants will only be selected as a mentor or mentee for this cohort. For more information, visit <http://www.naccho.org/programs/environmental-health/hazards/food-safety/mentorship>.

NOTE: NACCHO and FDA staff will host two optional webinars for interested applicants on Monday, September 11 from 2:00-2:30 PM ET and Wednesday, September 27 from 1:00-1:30 PM ET. Access the webinar at <http://naccho.adobeconnect.com/nacchomentorship/> and dial 866-740-1260; Passcode: 5074221. The purpose of the webinar is to answer questions about this RFA. Please note that no new information will be shared during the webinar; as such, applicants need not wait for this optional call in order to begin or submit applications.

BACKGROUND

In 2011, the FDA Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) was signed into law and includes the most sweeping reform of U.S. food safety laws in more than 70 years. The Act aims to ensure the U.S. food supply is safe by

¹ Includes all state, local, tribal, and territorial retail food regulatory programs

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shifting the focus from responding to contamination to preventing it. In supporting the vision for an integrated food safety system, [The Voluntary National Retail Food Regulatory Program Standards](#) focuses on prevention with its ultimate goal being to reduce the occurrence of factors that cause and contribute to foodborne illness. The Retail Program Standards are designed to help retail food regulatory programs enhance the services they provide to the public and provide a means of recognition for programs that meet these standards. Program managers and administrators may establish additional requirements to meet individual program needs. 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 enhance the implementation of the Retail Program Standards by retail food regulatory programs. Participants supported under the program will receive peer-to-peer assistance and intensive technical support, thereby, advancing the practice of the standards among retail food regulatory programs. Through the mentorship program, participants will benefit from the experience of their peers in understanding how to best apply the Retail Program Standards to improve their retail food regulatory programs in the following areas. Based on the mentor applications received, the following standards may be available for guidance through the Mentorship Program:

- 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
- Self-Assessments

ELIGIBILITY

All retail food regulatory programs (e.g., state, local, territorial, and tribal) currently or newly enrolled in the Retail Program Standards are eligible to apply. Retail food regulatory programs interested in receiving guidance and mentorship in the Retail Program Standards are encouraged to apply. Applications are not eligible if the work plan submitted is similar to work that is funded through another grant (i.e. AFDO-administered Retail Program Standards Grant Program, direct cooperative agreement with FDA).

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS AND EXPECTATIONS

From November 2017 through August 31, 2018, retail food regulatory programs selected as mentors will comply with the following:

- Adhere to NACCHO's [standard contract language](#) and be able to sign and return a contract to NACCHO within 30 days of receiving it. Costs incurred will be on a reimbursable basis (e.g. salary and wages,

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fringe benefits, supplies, consultants, printing, training). **No modifications to the terms or contract language will be made.** Agencies that cannot agree to NACCHO’s contract language should not apply for this initiative. As part of the proposal, the agency will be asked to verify that it has read NACCHO’s standard contract language and has provided a copy to the individual with signing authority at the agency for advanced consideration; and

- Designate one main point of contact to serve as the project coordinator. Even if this person will not be leading all project activities, the site must designate one individual with whom NACCHO will directly communicate on all matters related to this project; this person will be responsible for submitting all deliverables, participating in conference calls, and completing evaluation activities. If there is more than one contact person, the designated contact is responsible to identify all staff involved and provide their contact information to NACCHO.

Key Activities and Dates

<u>Deadline for Completion</u>	<u>Activity</u>
Mid-November/early December 2017 (date to be determined)	Participate in kick-off call/webinar for the mentorship program
Early December	Submit Pre-Assessment Evaluation
Early December	Revisit/revise action plan with guidance from mentor and begin work with mentor on objectives outlined in work plan
Dates to be determined	Participate in sharing sessions
Date and Location to be determined by mentor and mentee(s)	Participate in at least one site visit with assigned mentor
Within two weeks of site visit	Submit travel expense forms to NACCHO for site visit
April 20, 2018	Submit 1st Invoice (All expenses incurred through March 31, 2018)
July 20, 2018	Submit 2nd Invoice: (* End of NACCHO fiscal year. All expenses incurred between April 1, 2018 and June 30, 2018. DO NOT combine expenses incurred prior June 30 with expenses incurred after June 30th for this invoice. *)
Ongoing	Work with mentor to make any necessary revisions to work plan and make progress in identified standard(s) or phase(s) of the Retail Program Standards as identified in the mentee’s proposed work plan
Ongoing	Participate in regular conference calls with mentor: Ongoing and frequency determined by mentor/mentee
Ongoing	Utilize FoodSHIELD to document and share lessons learned and all related tools and resources used that were helpful for all phases of the project
Ongoing	Communicate progress and any major changes to the proposed work plan to NACCHO
July or August, 2018	Participate in a face-to-face meeting in July or August 2018 (tentative)
August 31, 2018	Submit Post-Assessment Evaluation/Final Report detailing the successes, challenges, and lessons learned
September 20, 2018	Submit 3 rd invoice: (All expenses incurred between July 1, 2018 and August 31, 2018)

AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS

NACCHO plans to award approximately \$200,000 in total to retail food regulatory programs to participate in the mentorship program.

In addition to the awarded amount, all participating retail food regulatory programs will be eligible to receive travel stipends to participate in a site visit with their mentor and to enable participation at the tentative mentorship program face-to-face meeting (up to \$1,400 per jurisdiction for each event). The travel stipend will be managed and administered by NACCHO, separate from the awarded amount to participants. Jurisdictions that choose to send multiple staff members and/or anticipate spending above the \$1,400 amount to the site visit and/or tentative face-to-face meeting should budget additional staff travel in their proposed awarded budgets.

The program duration will be from November 2017 through August 31, 2018. Ongoing technical assistance, beyond the one-time funding, will be available. Funding per mentee agency can range up to \$8,000. The amount awarded to each selected mentee will be contingent on the number of eligible applications received. NACCHO plans to announce the selected agencies in November 2017. Funding estimates for the overall program and for individual projects may change.

In the event the number of qualified applicants exceeds the available award funding, travel stipends may be awarded to qualified applicants who were not selected to receive award funding to participate in the program. Travel stipends will include funding for staff travel to site visits and to the tentative face-to-face meeting (up to \$1,400 per jurisdiction per event). This information will not impact the determination of which qualified applicants receive award funding.

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES

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

- Establish a growing network of retail food regulatory programs experienced in the implementation of the Retail Program Standards;
- Improve NACCHO's and FDA's understanding of the technical assistance needs of retail food regulatory programs around the Retail Program Standards;
- Identify strategies to improve implementation of the Retail Program Standards by all retail food regulatory programs;
- Provide a venue for retail food regulatory programs interested in the Retail Program Standards to share resources, experiences, and lessons;
- Strengthen relationships between retail food regulatory programs and FDA;
- Identify resource needs in implementing the Retail Program Standards; and
- Assist retail food regulatory programs in making progress towards conformance with the Retail Program Standards.

NACCHO's Mentorship Program is expected to improve the public health system in the jurisdictions of the retail food regulatory programs receiving and providing guidance and technical assistance. System-level outcomes likely will include staff trained in the Retail Program Standards, demonstrated retail food regulatory program capacity for future work, and improved relationships among retail food regulatory programs, NACCHO, and FDA.

SELECTION PROCESS

Applications will be reviewed by NACCHO and FDA.

- Late applications will not be accepted.
- Incomplete applications, those submitted by ineligible applicants, or those received through any format other than the application materials provided will not be reviewed.
- Applicants will be notified of their selection status on or about the week of November 6, 2017 (via e-mail to the specified project coordinator).
- Applications will be reviewed and scored based on the following criteria:
 - Completeness in answering the questions and submission of all required documents;
 - Agency capacity to carry out the proposed activities;
 - Appropriate work plan to complete the project activities;
 - Experience in the implementation of the Retail Program Standards;
 - 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.
- 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.

RFA KEY DATES

Applicants are advised to consider the following dates.

- Request For Application Question & Answer Sessions:
 - Monday, September 11 from 2:00-2:30 PM ET
 - Thursday, September 27 from 1:00-1:30 PM ET
- Access the webinar at <http://naccho.adobeconnect.com/nacchomentorship/> and dial 866-740-1260; Passcode: 5074221
- Application deadline: October 6, 2017 at 8:00 PM ET
 - Award notification: Week of November 6, 2017 (tentative)

APPLICATION PROCESS

- Review the requirements and expectations outlined in this RFA and in the [Application](#).
- Applicants are urged to carefully propose a work plan that will be both meaningful and feasible to accomplish during the project timeframe.
- Read NACCHO's [standard contract language](#) and provide a copy to the individual with signing authority at the agency for advanced consideration. Participating agencies must agree to the contract language and be able to sign and return a contract to NACCHO within 30 days of receipt. **No modifications will be made.**
- Submit the application form as a **Word Document** and letter of support from health director or official (optional but strongly encouraged) as a **PDF**. The Application Form must not exceed **20 pages** (single-spaced, Times New Roman, and 12-point font). The letter of support and [draft action plan](#) will not count toward the page limit. Applications not in the required format and exceeding page limitations will be considered incomplete and not scored.
- Applicants may include supporting materials in a separate appendix.

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- Submit the application by 8:00 PM ET by Friday, October 6, 2017. Please e-mail the application material to foodsafetyinfo@naccho.org. NACCHO will confirm receipt of e-mailed applications. Applications received after the deadline will not be considered. Please note: Applicants are welcome to submit applications to become a mentor and to receive mentorship, however, will only be selected as a mentor or mentee for this cohort.
- For more detailed information, refer to the [Application Form](#)

Mentorship Program Considerations:

- Please list any considerations that you would like NACCHO to keep in mind when matching your agency with a mentor for the mentorship program (i.e. size of jurisdiction, location, expertise, governance structure², type of agency (state, local, territorial, or tribal), etc.).
- Please indicate if you are interested in participating in the Mentorship Program without award funding if the number of qualified applicants exceed the available award funding. (*Note: This information will not impact the determination of which qualified applicants receive award funding. All participants in the Mentorship Program, including those who participate without award funding, will receive funding for staff travel to the site visit and tentative face-to-face meeting (up to \$1,400 per retail food program per event).

Background (15 points):

Part I. Please provide information on your agency and retail food regulatory program, addressing each of the following bulleted items:

- Organization's mission statement;
- Brief description of your retail food regulatory program;
- Number of staff in the retail food regulatory program;
- Types of retail establishments regulated;
- Number of retail establishments regulated;
- Version of FDA Food Code adopted; and
- Where your agency derives regulatory authority from (i.e. local ordinance, state).

Part II. Briefly list and describe your familiarity with the Retail Programs. When applicable, please include the following information

- When your agency enrolled in the Retail Program Standards;
- If you are newly enrolled or do not have any experience in the Retail Program Standards, indicate which Standards or phases you plan to work on initially;
- Standard(s) you have met (for each standard met, please indicate if your self-assessment was verified by a verification audit);
- Standards you have not met, but are currently working toward meeting;
- Any work that you have done or any work under way, related to implementation of the Retail Program Standards.
- If you have participated in the NACCHO mentorship program in previous cohorts, describe any work that was completed (including any work not completed and why) during the mentorship program period.

² Local = All local health departments (LHDs) in state are units of local government; State = All LHDs in state are units of state government; Shared = All LHDs in state governed by both state and local authorizes; Mixed = LHDs in state have more than one governance type

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Project Description (40 points):

Submit a work plan for your agency's participation in the mentorship program, describing how you plan to achieve conformance with specific Standards, or how you plan to achieve conformance with specific elements within a Standard. For the period between November 2017 and August 31, 2018, the work plan should include goals, objectives, activities, expected outcomes, and a timeline with a month-by-month description of key tasks and milestones for project completion, and specific deliverables.³ (Please use the [Draft Action Plan template](#) provided on the NACCHO website to inform and guide the work plan. Attach the Draft Action Plan as an appendix. The Draft Acton Plan is SEPARATE from the work plan and provides an overall vision for your agency's approach to achieving conformance with the Retail Program Standards. The Draft Action Plan will not count towards the page count.)

Statement of Need (20 points):

Part I. Describe the need for mentorship on the Retail Program Standards in your jurisdiction. Please include the following information:

- What kind of technical assistance will you require to complete the work plan described in the project description?
- Describe challenges or barriers that your agency is facing in making progress with the work plan described in the project description.

Part II. Briefly describe how working with a mentor in the Mentorship Program will move forward efforts to achieve your work plan described in the project description? Please also describe other resources in your jurisdiction and/or state that may be available to support these efforts.

Staffing Plan (25 points):

Describe the proposed staffing plan and list the following for all retail food regulatory program personnel that may participate in the mentorship program:

- Names of lead staff and staff members;
- Background information on each staff member, including experience in food safety and experience in the Retail Program Standards; and
- Each staff member's role and responsibilities for the mentorship program. Please provide detailed information about the expected role for each staff member assigned to work on this project.

Budget Request:

Funding per mentee retail food regulatory program is up to \$8,000. The amount awarded to each selected mentee will be contingent on the number of eligible applications received. Applicants must complete the budget narrative.

Please see the attached sample budget narrative for guidance in submitting a detailed budget narrative. Fill out the attached budget narrative form provided. The budget narrative should be consistent with the goals, objectives, and activities proposed within the application. Items that may be included in the request for funds are staff salary and fringe benefits, phone/facsimile, postage, field supplies, travel to relevant trainings or workshops, and contractual fees. Project funds can support the purchase of field supplies if the purchase meets the needs outlined in the application and will help to achieve replicable knowledge. If additional funds and/or resources will be leveraged, please describe them. *Funds cannot be used for the purchase or upkeep of office*

³Applications are not eligible if the work plan submitted is similar to work that is funded through another grant (i.e. AFDO-administered Retail Program Standards Grant Program).

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equipment. Additionally, project funds cannot be used to purchase food or beverages.

Please note that the awards are categorized as subawards, disbursed in up to three installments upon receipt of invoices and supporting documentation. Since this is a cost-reimbursement award, participants will be required to submit receipts for their expenses throughout the project. The purpose of the budget narrative is to demonstrate that the applicant has considered appropriate funding needed to accomplish the work it has proposed.

Additionally, please note that travel expenses for staff members from participants to attend a site visit with the mentor and the tentative face-to-face meeting do NOT need to be included in the budget. Costs incurred for the meetings (up to \$1,400 per jurisdiction per event) will be reimbursed by NACCHO, separate from the awarded amount to selected retail food regulatory programs to participate in the mentorship program. Participants that choose to send multiple staff members and/or anticipate spending above the \$1,400 amount to the site visit meeting and/or tentative face-to-face meeting should budget additional staff travel in their proposed awarded budgets.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Questions about the mentorship program, request for application, and application can be directed to:

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