



## BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

# AGENDA REQUEST & STAFF REPORT

**MEETING DATE:** November 4, 2024

**SUBJECT:** NEHA-FDA grant applications

**RECOMMENDED MOTION:**

Move to authorize applications for a NEHA-FDA Track3 Base grant; Capacity Building, Mentorship, and Training add-on grants; and a Special Projects add-on grant.

**BACKGROUND AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS:**

The National Environmental Health Association (NEHA) – U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) recognizes that one of the central features of most public health regulatory programs is retail food safety; however, regulatory programs often face a significant barrier to committing time and resources to build their capacity and reinforce their retail food safety programs. To overcome this barrier the NEHA-FDA have partnered to offer financial support to advance conformance with the Voluntary National Retail Food Regulatory Program Standards (Retail Program Standards).

Deschutes County Health Services (DCHS) applied for and received NEHA-FDA funding for the calendar year 2023 and 2024 grants. For calendar year 2025 grants, the application process has changed, requiring only two applications; one for the special project grant and one for the base grant and all other add-ons. Additionally, funding allows for 15% indirect costs and there is the opportunity to apply for three years of funding for some of the grant options. DCHS is requesting approval to apply for the 2025 Track 3 Development Base Grant, three add-on grants and one special project grant as follows:

**Track 3 Development Base Grant:** \$45,000, \$15,00/year for three years.

This grant will allow DCHS Environmental Health (EH) to continue work on incrementally meeting the Retail Program Standards which define what constitutes a highly effective and responsive program for the regulation of foodservice and retail food establishments.

In preparation for this grant application, DCHS EH completed an updated Comprehensive Strategic Improvement Plan (CSIP) in September 2024, which outlines our plan of meeting one FDA Voluntary Retail Program Standard per year for the next seven years. In the 2025 grant, we propose to:

- Work toward meeting criteria in Standard 2, Trained Regulatory Staff, with the goal of meeting Standard 2 in 2026.
- Maintain Standard 3, Inspection Program Based on Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) Principles.
- Work toward meeting Criteria 1.c of Standard 4, (Uniform Inspection Program, with the goal of meeting Standard 4 in 2026.
- Continue to make progress toward Standard 5, Foodborne Illness and Food Defense Preparedness and Response, with the goal of meeting Standard 5 in 2027.
- Maintain Standard 7, Industry and Community Relations.
- Maintain Standard 9, Program Assessment, by continuing to implement the Intervention Strategies identified in the 2024 Initial Risk Factor Study.

**Capacity Building Grant:** \$300,000, \$100,000/year for three years, add-on grant.

Funding from this grant would support approximately 50% of personnel costs for a current, 1.0 full time equivalent (FTE) Public Health position. The position would perform the following duties:

- Serve as a Retail Program Standards Coordinator to support the work that we are doing to achieve greater conformance with the Retail Program Standards, to include implementation of the Intervention Strategies at licensed food facilities.
- Serve as a Network Coordinator to reach out to adjacent counties in Central Oregon that are not enrolled in the Retail Program Standards program, to include Klamath and Lake counties, (which share an Environmental Health Lead), Jefferson and Crook counties, (which share an Environmental Health Lead) and North Central Health District (encompassing Wasco and Sherman counties).
- Serve as the coordinator for the second annual Food Safety and Sustainability Summit, along with a co-host (such as The Environmental Center).
- Initiate a webinar series to communicate with licensed facilities about food safety topics, rule changes, educational opportunities and strategies for success.

**Mentorship Grant:** \$10,000, one-year term, add-on grant.

DCHS EH is proposing to be a Mentee County for a third year. For the 2023 and 2024 Mentorship Grant years, we were paired with Boulder County, Colorado. For this third year, DCCHS EH will request to be paired with a larger county, such as King County, Southern Nevada Health District, or Los Angeles County. This will allow us to see of broader scope of how the Voluntary Retail Food Program Standards can be implemented in a larger jurisdiction. It will allow our staff to see a variety of diverse inspection sites during the annual site visit. And it will allow us to learn from the wealth of outreach and education programs that exist in larger jurisdictions that have more staff, more resources, and more specialization.

**Training Grant:** \$7,500, one-year term, add-on grant.

This grant will allow staff to travel to conferences and trainings that would be otherwise not be available to us. We are proposing to send staff to the Conference for Food Protection Biennial Meeting in Denver, Colorado in March, the NACCHO Emergency Preparedness

Summit in San Antonio, Texas in April, and to the NEHA Annual Education Conference in Phoenix, Arizona in July 2025.

**Special Projects Grant:** \$20,000, one-year term, add-on grant.

For this Special Project, DCHS EH will establish a protocol and criteria for a Voluntary Recognition Program for Food Recovery Partners. Using the EPA Food Waste Reduction Hierarchy, we propose to work collaboratively with Deschutes County Solid Waste, Knott Landfill and Central Oregon's two main private solid waste haulers, Republic Waste and Cascade Disposal. We will promote waste reduction techniques, such as using reusable containers, and educate the public and licensed food facilities on the recent rule change in Oregon which expands the use of reusable containers. We will promote "Too Good To Go", a food donation app that crowdsources excess recoverable food to people who are interested in receiving food. We will develop a Window Sticker Recognition Program and Educational Materials for the Food Recovery Partner program.

As part of this project, DCHS EH will also work with our local academic and community institutions to establish a Food Recovery Team, similar to other campus food recovery teams that draw upon a pool of volunteers to recover food from locations where it isn't needed and deliver it to places where food can be made available to the community. We propose to work with NeighborImpact and expand their existing food recovery programs. We will incorporate essential food safety and regulatory considerations, and build this program to ensure the project's success, regulatory compliance and safety for all consumers, whether paying for meals or receiving donated food.

This Special Project work will build on the last two years of Special Projects, the Surplus Food Donation Toolkit and the Food Safety and Sustainability Summit. It will be regional in nature and include the adjacent Jefferson and Crook Counties and the rural communities throughout Jefferson, Crook and Deschutes Counties. We will also make an effort to reach out to the Warm Springs Reservation, where Kelly Moffatt from Love Yourself Nutrition has existing connections, to listen to their needs and interest in participation in this project.

**BUDGET IMPACTS:**

If both applications are fully awarded, \$382,500 revenue. \$152,500 would be for calendar year 2025 and \$115,000 each for calendar years 2026 and 2027.

**ATTENDANCE:**

Emily Horton, Public Health Program Manager  
Adrea Albin, Environmental Health Supervisor