

2021 Samuel J. Crumbine Consumer Protection Award

Application for Washoe County Health District
Environmental Health Services, Food Safety Program



**WASHOE COUNTY
HEALTH DISTRICT**
ENHANCING QUALITY OF LIFE



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Environmental Health Services
Washoe County Health District
1001 E. Ninth St, Bldg B
Reno, NV 89512
washocounty.us/health

Executive Summary

Washoe County is over 6,300-square-miles that spans portions of Nevada's western and northern borders with California and Oregon respectively. The County parallels the eastern slope of the Sierra Nevada Mountains and includes such major natural features as high desert, Lake Tahoe, Pyramid Lake, the Truckee River, and the Humboldt Toiyabe National Forest. Washoe County, which includes the cities of Reno and Sparks is home to nearly half a million residents and welcomes an additional five million visitors to the region each year.

More visitors are motivated to travel to the area each year to experience our stunning scenery such as Lake Tahoe and the Sierra Nevada Mountains. The Reno Aces Minor League Baseball, 1868 FC Professional Soccer League, Wine Walks, Pub Crawls and events such as the Reno Balloon Races, Reno Air Races, and Best in the West Rib Cook Off are consistent attractions for visitors. Rapid growth has brought a more diverse amenity base to the region including a unique and innovative restaurant scene that has been described as a culinary jackpot.

The Washoe County Health District (WCHD) has jurisdiction over all public health matters in Reno, Sparks, and Washoe County through the policy-making Washoe County District Board of Health. WCHD is comprised of five divisions including Administrative Health Services, Air Quality Management, Community and Clinical Health Services, Epidemiology and Public Health Preparedness and Environmental Health Services.

The Environmental Health Services (EHS) division is responsible for ensuring compliance with local state and federal laws, and regulating food, waste, water, vector, and other areas of public health in Washoe County. The many programs under EHS have an emphasis on enforcement, but also have a strong education component, promoting a collaborative approach with industry and consumers to meet established public health goals.

The EHS Food Safety Program (the program) enrolled in the Voluntary National Retail Food Regulatory Program Standards (Program Standards) in 2004 but made little progress towards meeting the Program Standards criteria. In 2013, however, the program received the FDA Advancing Conformance with the Voluntary National Retail Food Regulatory Program Standards grant. The program also began applying for and receiving the FDA/AFDO awards to work on achieving conformance with the Program Standards. In 2015, the Food Safety program participated in a Nevada Program Standards Strategic Planning Workshop hosted by our FDA Retail Food Specialist. As a result of the workshop, the additional funding, and dedicated staff resources, the program has made significant progress towards becoming an effective and focused retail regulatory program in the last six years.

Based on the gaps identified during the program's last self-assessment in 2016, a Program Standards strategic plan was implemented to update archaic food establishment regulations, revamp the food safety training and quality assurance program, shift towards a risk-based inspection program, and increase industry education and outreach to promote active managerial control in Washoe County Food Establishments.



Figure 1. Map of Washoe County, Nevada
Screenshot taken from *maps.google.com*

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Part I. Program Basics

Demographic Information

With a total estimated population of 465,735, Washoe County has two incorporated municipalities: Reno and Sparks. The City of Reno is the County Seat and the third largest city in Nevada, behind Las Vegas and Henderson. Reno’s population is approximately 250,989. The City of Sparks is home to approximately 104,254 residents while the remaining 110,492 live in unincorporated Washoe County.

Washoe County is home to the University of Nevada, Reno, Truckee Meadows Community College, and the Desert Research Institute. The area has also seen a recent increase in entrepreneurial startups, manufacturing, distribution and logistics, and technology-based industries such as Tesla, Switch, Amazon, Microsoft, Apple, Zulily, and Patagonia.

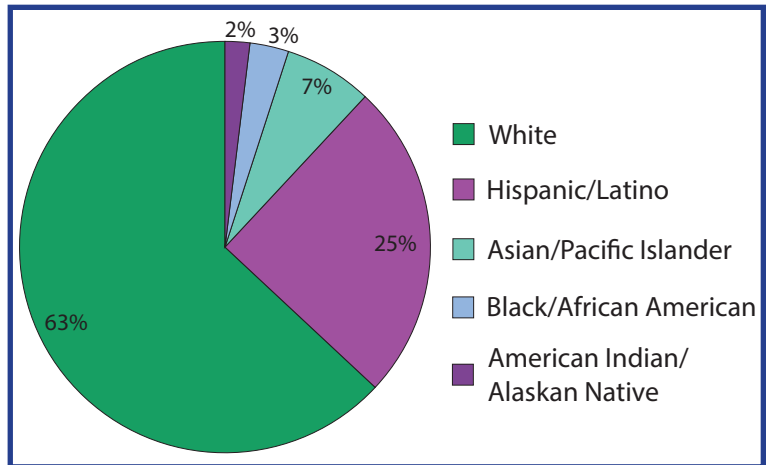


Figure 2. Washoe County Race Demographics

Along with significant economic growth, Washoe County has become more ethnically diverse, with the largest increase among the Hispanic population (+27.3%) from 2007 to 2017. As of 2019, 63% of the population is White, 25% Hispanic or Latino, 2.8% Black or African American, 2.2% American Indian and Alaskan Native, and 0.7% Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander. Languages spoken at home include English at 74.6% of the population, Spanish at 18.9% of the population, and other languages such as Asian/Pacific Islander and Indo-European making up the remainder of languages spoken in Washoe County (Figure 2).

There are approximately 4,000 permitted retail food establishments in Washoe County including full-service restaurants, fast food establishments, school kitchens, food manufacturing establishments, mobile food units, and retail food stores such as delis, meat departments, seafood departments, produce departments, and bakeries (Figure 3). In addition to annually permitted facilities, the WCHD has an extensive special events season and issues over 900 temporary food and event promotor permits in an average year.

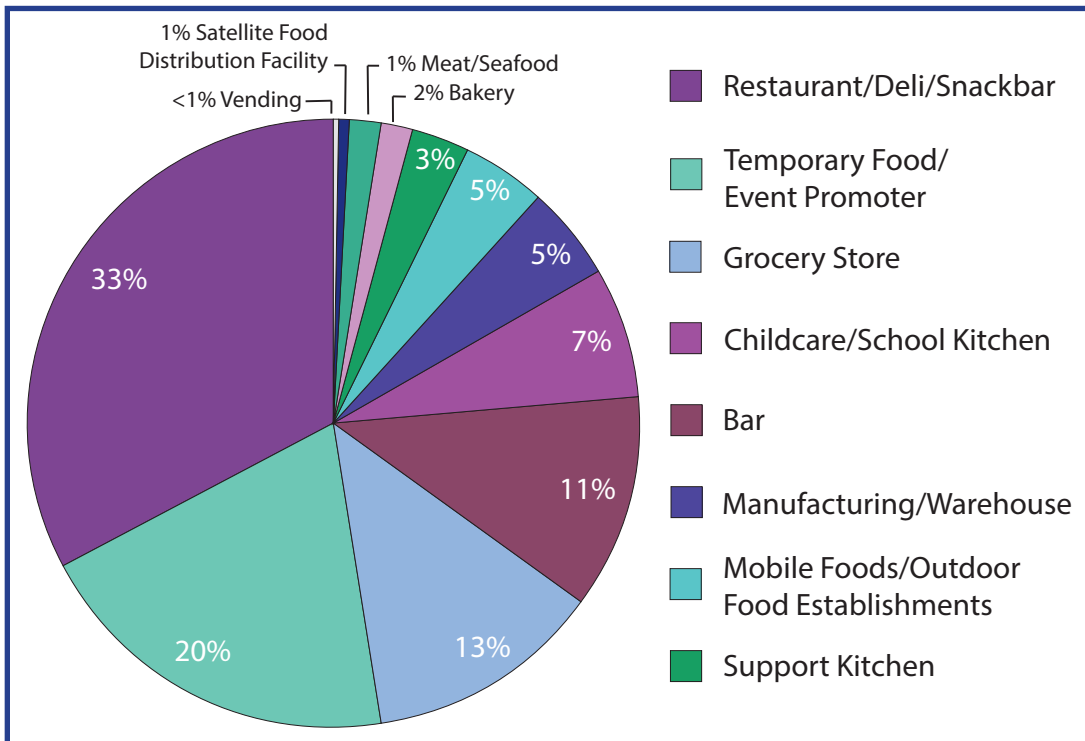


Figure 3. Food Establishment Permit Categories

Program Resources

Revenues for WCHD come from licensing and permits, grant funding, restricted intergovernmental funding, charges for services, the County General Fund, and miscellaneous revenue from supporting agencies who invest in a particular project (Figure 4).

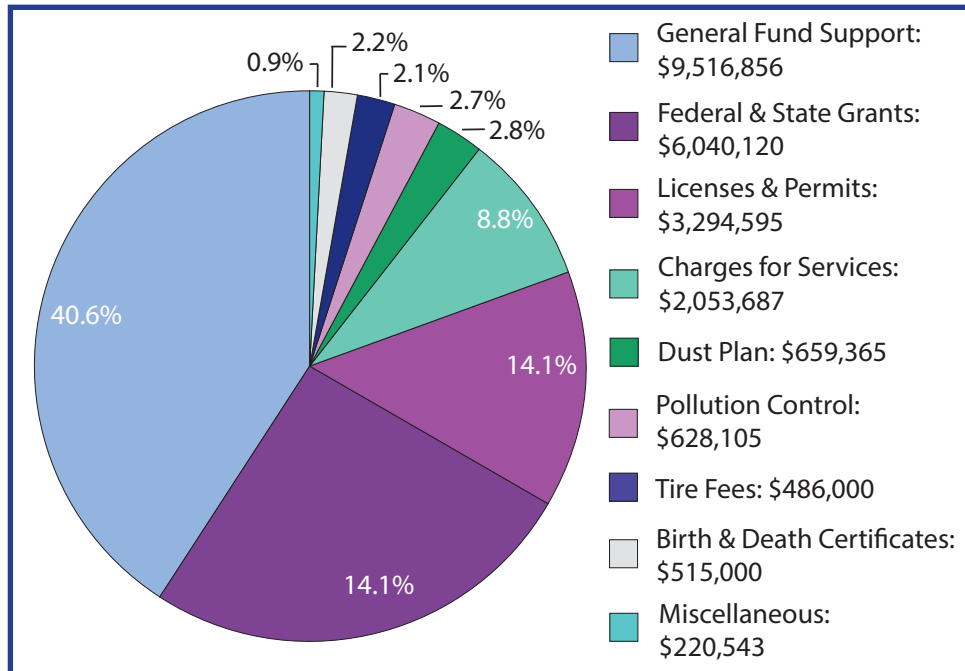


Figure 4. WCHD FY20 Adopted Budget - Revenues \$23.4 million

The total operating budget for the EHS division is \$7,966,128. The division has established a cost recovery system with permit fees accounting for 64% of the program budget. The current fee schedule adopted by the Washoe County District Board of Health is included in Appendix A.

The Food Safety Program is the largest permitting program in EHS and generates most of the revenue for the division (Table 1).

The program has also been successful in obtaining grant funding to supplement the program budget (Appendix B). Over the six-year application period, the program has received grant funding from the FDA, the Association of Food and Drug Officials (AFDO), the National Association of City and County Health Officials (NACCHO), and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). This funding has been instrumental in allowing the program to advance conformance with Program Standards.



WCHD Staff Public Outreach Event

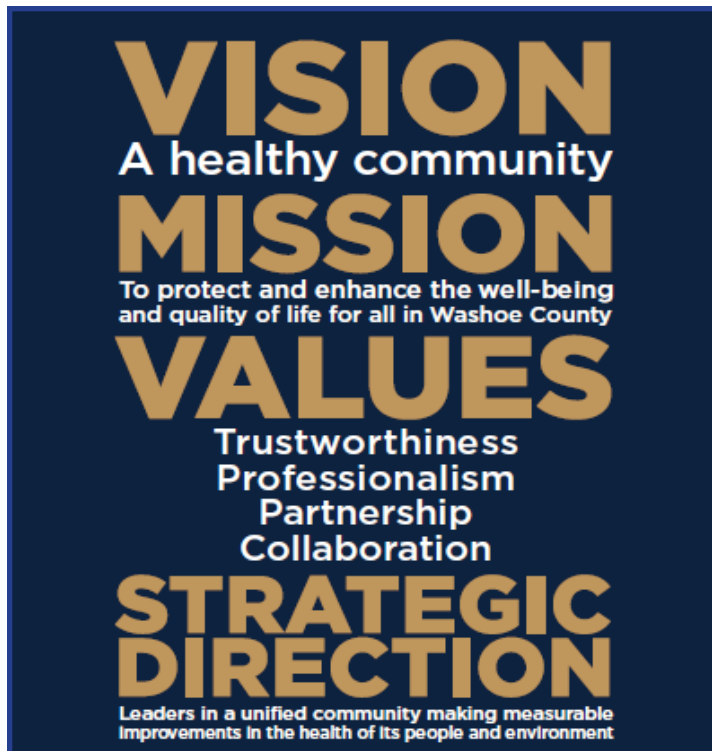
Funding Source	Amount
Permit Fees	\$1,737,308
Plan Review	\$92,306
Re-inspection and Validated Complaint Fee	\$150,474
Grants	\$96,661
Total	\$2,076,750

Table 1. Food Safety Program Revenue Sources FY2020

Program Vision, Goals, and Objectives

The mission of the WCHD is to protect and enhance the well-being and quality of life for all in Washoe County. The Food Safety Program is continuously striving to meet this mission statement by promoting active managerial control of risk factors most associated with foodborne disease in Washoe County food establishments.

Implementation of the Program Standards has been instrumental in helping the program realize the mission statement. The Program Standards have served as a quality improvement program, providing a foundation for which the Food Safety Program can build upon to ensure an effective program with measurable achievements.



WCHD Vision, Mission, and Value Statement

Since identifying the gaps in the Program Standards framework, the program is now working to support a culture of professional development by enabling employees to acquire new food safety related skills through conferences, training seminars, and field standardization. The program actively seeks innovative ways to support, engage, and recognize food establishment operators and the regulated community. The program also continues to ensure consistency in the application of regulatory provisions and compliance and enforcement procedures.

In 2018, program staff garnered support from the District Board of Health in the implementation of the Program Standards and successfully incorporated elements of the Program Standards as goals in the district wide strategic plan. The most significant strategic goal is the reduction of the occurrence of foodborne illness risk factors in Washoe County Food Establishments. Table represents the program's progress with the Program Standards as of January 2021.

Met	Standard	Progress	Standard Elements (Incomplete elements identified in red and completed elements identified in strikethrough text)
✓	1 REGULATORY FOUNDATION	Fully Met	1a 1b 1c 2a 2b 3a 4a
✗	2 TRAINED REGULATORY STAFF	88.9% met	1a 1b 2a 2b 3a 3b 4a 4b 5a
✓	3 INSPECTION PROGRAM BASED ON HACCP PRINCIPLES	Fully Met	1a 1b 1c 2a 3a 4a 4b 4c 5a 6a
✗	4 UNIFORM INSPECTION PROGRAM	93.8% met	1a 1b 1c 2 2i 2ii 2iii 2iv 2v 2vi 2vii 2viii 2ix 2x 3a 3b
✓	5 <u>FOODBORNE ILLNESS AND FOOD DEFENSE PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE</u>	Fully Met	1a 1b 1c 1d 1e 1f 1g 1h 1i 2a 2b 3a 3b 4a 5a 5b 5c 6a 7a 7b1 7b2 7b3 7b4 7b5 7b6 7b7 7b8 7b9 7c
✗	6 COMPLIANCE AND ENFORCEMENT	75.0% met	1a 1b 2a 2b
✓	7 INDUSTRY AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS	Fully Met	1a 1b
✗	8 PROGRAM SUPPORT AND RESOURCES	61.5% met	1a 2a 2b 3a 3b 4a 4b 4c 4d 4e 4f 4g 4h
✗	9 PROGRAM ASSESSMENT	85.7% met	1a 1b 1c 2a 2b 3a 3b

Table 2. Food Safety Program Progress On Voluntary National Retail Food Regulatory Program Standards

Part II. Baseline and Program Assessment

Regulatory Foundation

By the authority established through Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS 439.370 et seq.) and the 1972 Interlocal Agreement (last amended 1993), the Washoe County Health District has jurisdiction over all public health matters in Reno, Sparks, and Washoe County through the policy-making Washoe County District Board of Health.

Regulatory authority in Washoe County is derived from the local Regulations of the Washoe County District Board of Health Governing Food Establishments (Food Establishment Regulations) which are adopted by the Washoe County District Board of Health and approved by the Nevada State Board of Health.

Prior to the most recent adoptions, the Food Establishment Regulations had not been revised for over 30 years. In 2015, the WCHD Food Safety Program conducted a comprehensive review and revision to the body of the regulations and incorporated provisions from the US FDA 2009 Food Code and some provisions from the 2013 US FDA Food Code. In an effort to promote active managerial control of the risk factors most commonly associated with foodborne disease in food establishments, the program completed another regulation revision in 2016 to remove the previous food establishment inspection grading system. A new color coded rating system of Pass, Conditional Pass, and Closed was incorporated that more accurately reflects the occurrence of foodborne illness risk factors in food establishments (Figure 5).



Figure 5. Color Coded Rating System

With the release of the 2017 FDA Food Code, the program began another regulation revision to incorporate provision from the 2017 Food Code and on July 25, 2019, the Washoe County District Board of Health adopted the most recent version of the Food Establishment Regulations.

During the most recent Program Standards self-assessment period in 2016, the program determined that the criteria of Standard 1 – Regulatory Foundation was met. This was confirmed through a verification audit in March 2017. During the next self-assessment cycle to occur in the Fall of 2021, the program anticipates continued conformance with Standard 1 with a comparison of the 2017 FDA Food Code.

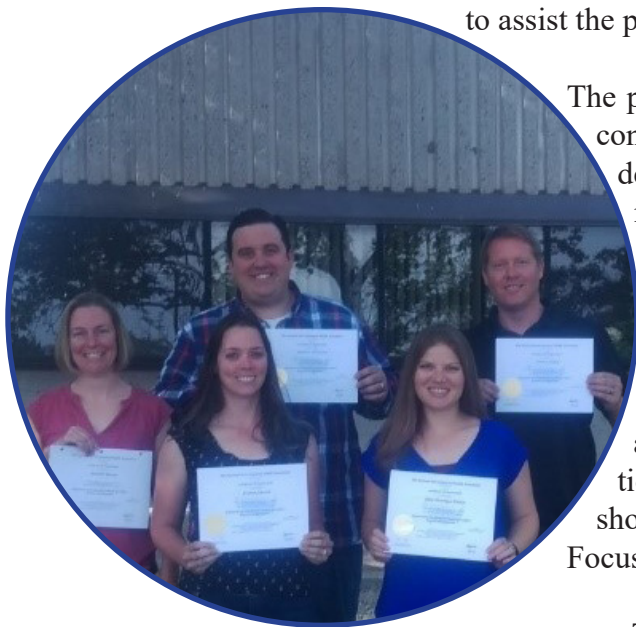
With the objective of maintaining the highest level of public health protection and an understanding of emerging food safety science and technology, staff from the WCHD Food Safety Team have participated in the Conference for Food Protection (CFP) for the last several years. Staff worked on the Program Standards Committee from 2016 to 2018 and from 2018 to 2020, as well as the Allergen Committee, the Product Assessment Committee, and the Produce Wash Committee from 2018 to 2020. Additionally, a WCHD staff member will be participating as a member of Council III- Science and Technology at the 2020 Biennial Meeting. Participation in this forum has contributed to the program's progressive mindset and desire to regularly update the Food Establishment Regulations with an anticipated result of continued conformance with Standard 1.

Training Program

The Food Safety Program recognizes the importance of staff training and strives to ensure inspection and supervisory staff have the knowledge and skills needed to adequately perform their inspections and maintain consistency in the application of the food establishment regulations.

Prior to 2015, the Food Safety Program had a training program that loosely mirrored the criteria of Standard 2 – Trained Regulatory staff. Beginning in 2015, the Food Safety Program developed a comprehensive written training program that documents completion of the FDA ORAU training courses, and completion of more than 50 joint field training inspections using a field training manual consistent with the CFP manual. Newly hired or assigned food establishment inspection staff complete the above steps over an eight to twelve-week period. At the end of this training period, inspection staff are evaluated by the Food Safety Program Senior or Supervisor and must demonstrate competency in all performance measures listed in the training manual prior to being released to conduct independent inspections. The success of this structured and documented training program led to the use of the training manual as a framework to develop written training manuals in the other EHS programs and to prepare staff to take the Registered Environmental Health Specialist Exam as required by Nevada state law. The comprehensive training manual can be found in Appendix C.

Staff hired after the development of the training manual have completed the training program detailed above and the program currently has two newly hired staff in the process of completing the field training using this program. Existing staff hired prior to the implementation of the training program have completed affidavits attesting that they completed a training curriculum equivalent to the above program. Within 18 months of hire/assignment into the Food Safety Program, staff completes field standardization using the FDA standardization procedures. For existing staff, standardization is conducted according to a three-year standardization schedule. The Food Safety Program currently has one Environmental Health Supervisor and one Senior Environmental Health Specialist trained as training Standards. The program fell behind on standardization and re-standardization of staff due to staff resources being diverted to the COVID-19 response. However, a detailed plan has been developed to get back on track with field standardizations in 2021 with the use of an AFDO grant to hire a Standardization Officer to assist the program with this effort.



WCHD Staff with REHS Certificates

The program maintains records to document and track food safety continuing education. In January 2017, an internal policy was developed requiring all staff who conduct food establishment inspections, including temporary food inspections and emergency response inspections, to maintain a minimum of 20 food safety CEUs every 36 months. Over the last several years, the program has used grant funding to provide training opportunities to not only WCHD staff, but to staff from other Nevada jurisdictions and the regulated community as well. Some examples include the North Carolina State Retail HACCP Validation and Verification Course, Managing Employee Health Workshop, Brian Nummer's Retail Fermented Foods, and Strategies to Focus Retail Food Inspections (Appendix D).

The WCHD plans to continue utilizing grant funding from the FDA and AFDO to supplement the program training budget and ensure staff can attend, either virtually or in-person, training such as, the FDA Pacific Region Seminar, The Nevada Food Safety Task Force conference, the Conference for Food Protection, and FDA Office of Training Education and Development (OTED) training courses. The program anticipates full compliance with Standard 2 by the end of 2021.

Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) Principles

The Food Safety Program uses a HACCP based inspection process to focus inspections on activities most likely to cause foodborne illness and helping food establishment operators develop and improve food safety management systems to reduce the occurrence of those activities.

In 2016, the Food Safety Program developed a new risk-based inspection rating system and a new inspection form (Appendix E) that identifies the foodborne illness risk factors and interventions, documents compliance status as IN/OUT/NO/NA, and documents compliance and enforcement activities.

The program also developed a corresponding inspection field guide (Figure 6/Appendix F) to include:

- Detailed marking instructions and code references,
- Example violations and standard comments,
- A written policy requiring on-site corrective actions for critical violations, and
- Re-inspection time periods to ensure long-term control of risk factors and interventions.

The program used funding from an FDA Cooperative agreement to hire a software vendor to convert the new inspection form and resulting inspection rating into an electronic format that can be viewed online at WashoeEats.com.

The WCHD groups all food establishments into three categories based on potential and inherent food safety risk. Washoe County food establishment regulations define these three categories and food establishment inspectors are required to ensure each facility is assigned the appropriate category.

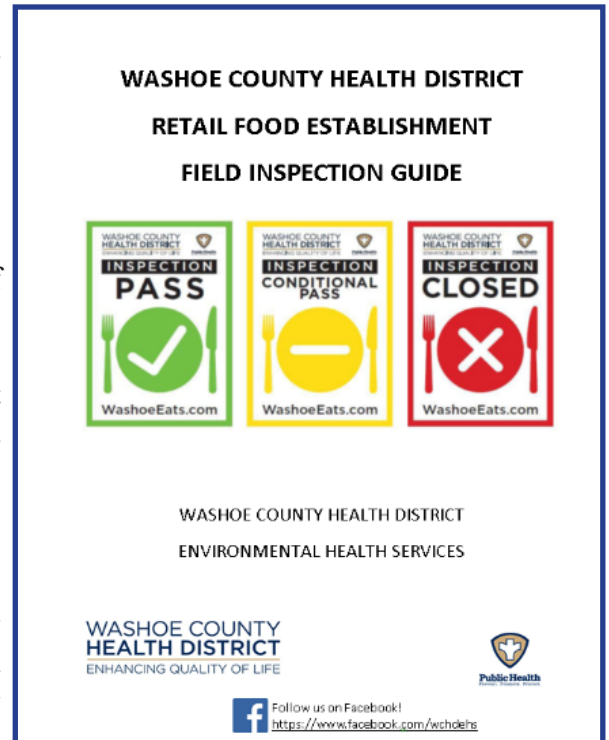


Figure 6. Food Inspection Field Guide

In 2018, the program increased the inspection frequency for operations with greater food safety risk. WCHD staff is currently conducting routine inspection using the following annual frequency:

- Risk Level I establishment – One routine inspection
- Risk Level II establishments – One routine inspection
- Risk Level III establishments – Two routine inspections

The program will conduct as many follow-up inspections necessary to gain compliance regardless of the risk level.

With the significant regulation update that occurred in 2015, the food establishment regulations incorporated provisions on HACCP and waiver procedures. The Program implemented a policy identifying activities that require a waiver request, operational plan, or HACCP plan, with procedures on reviewing, approving, validating, and verifying such plans. This policy also developed a review team dedicated to processing these plans as required by the [Washoe County Food Establishment Regulations](#).

The WCHD received a verification audit in 2020 and it was determined that the criteria of Standard 3 has been fully met.

Quality Assurance Program

The WCHD has made tremendous efforts over the last six years to improve the quality and uniformity among staff in the interpretation of regulatory requirements and policies. Prior to the development of a formalized quality assurance program, the WCHD Food Safety Program used the Food Establishment Field Inspection Guide, periodic inspection report reviews, and staff meetings to ensure consistency among field staff.



WCHD Environmental Health Services Staff

In addition to the above quality assurance efforts, the WCHD developed a formal Quality Assurance (QA) Program as part of cohort 6 of the NACCHO Mentorship Program in 2017. The QA Program includes a written QA program policy (Appendix H) that was last updated in 2019. The policy provides a method to review and monitor the 20 quality elements described in the 2017 Program Standards and additional quality elements determined by the WCHD. The policy applies to any employee regularly conducting food establishment inspections that has completed the training program including initial field standardization. Each field staff member receives a file review and field evaluation by The Program Supervisor or Senior EHS of three establishments every

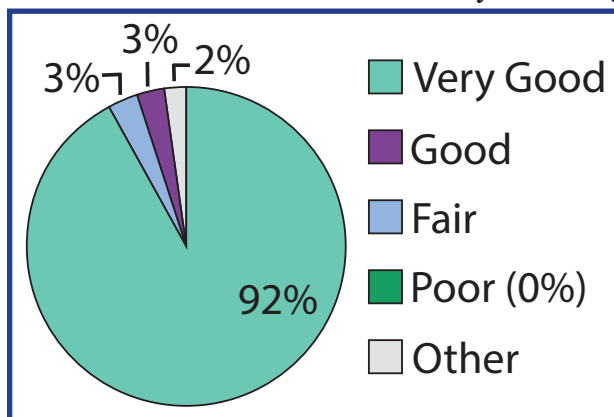


Figure 7. Post Inspection Survey Results, Overall Satisfaction with WCHD Inspectors

18 months. An evaluation form guidance document to aid the assessor in performing the field/file evaluation is included in the QA Program. An Excel worksheet that includes a summary tab for each employee evaluated tabulates the overall employee compliance percentage and the compliance percentage per goal (1-22). An additional program summary tab calculates the overall QA Program compliance percentage, and the program percentage per goal. The calculations are analyzed every 18 months by program management to determine if the inspection program has overall programmatic deficiencies and if more training is needed for all inspection staff in a particular area, or if deficiencies need to be addressed on an individual staff basis.

The QA Program also includes ongoing monthly inspection report audits of a minimum of 10% of completed inspections per inspector. The purpose of the audit is to ensure staff are properly citing and documenting code violations, taking appropriate and immediate corrective actions, and following internal compliance and enforcement policies. The inspection reports are pulled from the WCHD electronic permitting system and audits are performed by The Program Supervisor and Senior EHS staff with written feedback provided to each inspector using an inspection report review form.

Additionally, a post inspection survey (Figure 7/Appendix I) is distributed to food establishment operators via email at the end of each inspection. The results of the post inspection survey are analyzed on an annual basis and shared with staff to identify additional areas of improvement.

Foodborne Illness and Emergency Response

The WCHD Food Safety Program staff work collaboratively with the WCHD Communicable Disease staff to address instances of foodborne and waterborne disease. Weekly meetings are held between the two divisions to review foodborne disease complaints and confirmed enteric diseases. A multidisciplinary Outbreak Response Plan (ORP) was developed between the two divisions to ensure a prompt, coordinated, and effective response to disease outbreaks or other public health events (Appendix J). The plan includes policies and procedures for responding to disease outbreaks, defines responsibilities of the outbreak response members, defines protocols for disseminating information to the public regarding foodborne disease outbreaks or public health emergencies, and procedures for coordinating and notifying other agencies including the Nevada State Public Health Laboratory, law enforcement, Nevada State Epidemiologists and other relevant parties.

In addition to the multidivisional ORP, the Food Safety Program has written foodborne illness and injury investigation procedures that focus on foodborne illness tracking and investigation processes, trace-back procedures, and recall procedures (Appendix K). All foodborne illness and injury complaints, as well as all confirmed enteric diseases with exposures to establishments regulated by EHS are entered into the division's permitting software system, Accela Automation (Figure 8). Foodborne illness data are reviewed during the weekly meetings to detect trends and possible contributing factors using the Accela Automation reporting function. These data are also analyzed on an annual basis and compiled in the WCHD Annual Disease Summary (Appendix L). Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the release of the 2019 and 2020 Annual Disease Summaries have been delayed. However, staff is currently in the process of compiling results for the 2019 and 2020 reports.

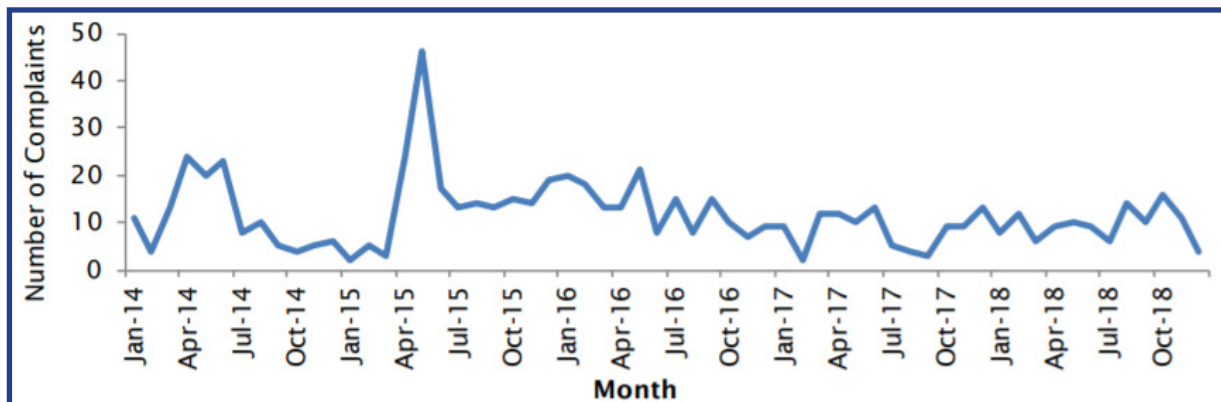


Figure 8. Foodborne Illness Complaints Received by Month, 2014 - 2018

Additionally, the program received a grant from the CDC and administered by the National Environmental Health Association to enroll in the National Environmental Assessment Reporting System (NEARS). Participation in NEARS will enhance the program's ability to collect data on environmental assessments and review trends related to environmental assessments.

The Food Safety Program has conducted a self-assessment and determined that Standard 5 – Foodborne Illness and Food Defense Preparedness and Response has been met and a verification audit was conducted in 2020 to confirm the criteria of the standard has been met.

Compliance and Enforcement

The WCHD uses a risk-based control system to identify violations that have a greater risk of contributing to foodborne disease. This system is divided into two categories, Critical Violation and Non-critical Violations. Critical violations are provisions of the food establishment regulations, that are observed to be out of compliance and are considered one of the five FDA foodborne illness risk factors or public health interventions. Non-critical violations are provisions of the regulations that are important factors in general sanitation, operational controls, general maintenance, and facility design, but do not directly have the potential to cause foodborne disease.

The WCHD food establishment rating system is based on the number of critical violations observed in the establishment during the inspection:

Pass (Green):

- Establishment having no more than one critical violation observed during the inspection. Critical violations shall be corrected during the inspection.
- Establishments with non-critical violations noted on the Good Retail Practices section of the food establishment inspection report form.

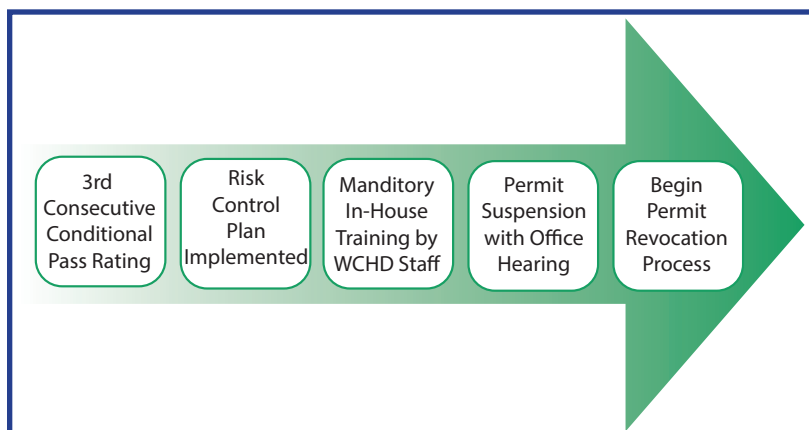
Conditional Pass (Yellow):

- Establishments having two or more critical violations observed during the inspection. Critical violations shall be corrected or mitigated during the inspection. A reinspection shall be conducted within 24 to 72 hours to verify critical violation(s) remain corrected.

Closed (Red):

- If a critical violation exists that cannot be corrected or mitigated during the inspection, a substantial health hazard exists, or if it is determined that there is a risk of imminent danger to the public, the health permit is suspended and the establishment must immediately cease foodservice operations until the health permit is reinstated by the WCHD.

In 2019, the Food Safety Program implemented a step-by-step uniform compliance and enforcement program with the goal of providing consistent guidance for staff to achieve long-term compliance and control of foodborne illness risk factors (Appendix M). The program includes written procedures and comprehensive flowcharts to guide staff down progressive enforcement and intervention routes when establishments consistently receive Conditional Pass ratings or receive repeat critical violations (Figure 9). The WCHD prefers to resolve compliance issues through education and collaboration with food establishment operators. These mechanisms are reflected in the use of risk control plans and in-house training provided by WCHD staff that focus on the out of control risk factors. In situations where these intervention methods are not effective, permit suspension is implemented with the requirement for key establishment personnel to attend an office hearing with WCHD staff and management to discuss conditions for permit reinstatement. If after the office hearing the food establishment operator is unable



to achieve compliance, the program will move forward with steps for permit revocation.

The Food Safety Program will begin procedures to assess effectiveness and to ensure the program is meeting the benchmark of 80% compliance of the sampled food establishments. Our desired outcome is to build an effective and consistent enforcement program that will also gain long-term compliance with the regulatory requirements.

Figure 9. Compliance and Enforcement Process

Communication and Information Exchange

The WCHD Food Safety Program actively participates in industry and consumer interactions and educational outreach. In October 2016, the program conducted a self-assessment of Standard 7 – Industry and Community Relations and determined the criteria were met. This was confirmed through a verification audit in January 2017.

Two staff members participate in monthly Nevada Food Safety Task Force meetings. The Nevada Food Safety Task Force is comprised of Nevada industry and regulatory professionals, as well as academia and consumer groups who are actively involved in food safety education and promoting food safety defense across the state.

In addition to statewide involvement with industry and consumer groups, the WCHD Food Safety Program attends local events, speaks at local schools and colleges, and holds free food safety workshops for local industry and consumer groups. Examples of workshop topics held over the six-year application review period include education on the no bare hand contact with ready-to-eat foods provision, information on the WCHD food establishment rating system and associated field guide, workshops on proposed amendments to the food establishment regulations, information on the results of the 2017 Baseline Risk Factor Study, employee health and hygiene workshop, HACCP and Special Processes workshops, and information on the laws and regulations regarding service animals in food establishments.

The WCHD collaborated with the Nevada Disability Advocacy & Law Center, Canine Companions for Independence, the Nevada Restaurant Association, and the Retail Association of Nevada to develop the service animal workshop that included segments on each agency's role in the issue. The success of this partnership led to an invitation to present at the Nevada Food Safety Task Force and Nevada Environmental Health Association Annual Conference in 2017, and to the development of a service animal window cling that can be seen in food establishments throughout Northern Nevada (Appendix N).

Over the last several years, The Food Safety Program developed electronic approaches to communicate and maintains a food safety email list for industry and consumers to send food safety information, announcements, newsletters and surveys to subscribers. Social media and radio advertisements are additional communication mechanisms used by the program to inform the public of important food safety related activities. In 2018, the program developed an online [Resource Library](#) that includes various food safety guidance documents, equipment/temperature monitoring logs, example operating procedures, FAQ handouts, brochures, and posters that were translated to Spanish and Chinese using AFDO grant funding (Appendix O).

In addition to the [WashoeEats website](#) where food establishment inspection information is posted, the program worked with internal technology staff and a mobile app developer to produce the WashoeEats mobile app. The app allows users to search food establishment inspection results by business name and location, save establishments to a favorites list, display a map of nearby establishments with color-coded pins showing inspection ratings, and file a complaint for a specific location. In 2019, the program won the 2019 Washoe County Impact Award for Effective Communications for the development of the WashoeEats mobile app.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the program will utilize grant funding from the NACCHO Mentorship Program to purchase video equipment to develop food safety education videos for food establishment operators and to aid in the development of virtual workshops in lieu of in-person workshops. This will ensure the same level of community outreach and communication is maintained.



WCHD Staff Public Outreach Event

Program Resources

The WCHD EHS division is responsible for conducting over 4,500 food establishment inspections each year. In addition to food establishment inspections, the division is also responsible for conducting over 1,980 inspections per year of the other EHS permit types including schools, childcares, public accommodations, mobile home/RV parks, public bathing facilities, and invasive body decorating establishments. In 2020, the Nevada State Legislature held a special session and passed a bill requiring EHS staff to inspect large public accommodation facilities and casino resorts for compliance with COVID-19 directives. This new program has added an additional 60 annual inspections to the EHS workload. These inspections will be required until the COVID-19 positivity rate decreases to a rate determined by the legislature.

The division has a total of 21 staff members assigned to complete over 6,480 annual inspections. Each inspector spends 50 percent of their time conducting permitted establishments inspections and the other 50 percent of their time is devoted to work in the various EHS subprograms. Therefore, each staff member is responsible for completing over 300 inspections, as well as any follow-up inspections, complaint investigations and foodborne illness or injury complaint investigations. Table 3 provides a summary of overall EHS resources.

Title	Staff Assigned	Responsibilities
Environmental Health Services Division Director	1	Oversee EHS Division
Environmental Health Services Supervisor	4	Supervise EHS Seniors and EHS Field Staff
Senior Environmental Health Specialist	7	Oversee various EHS Programs and training
Environmental Health Specialist	21	Complete permitted facilities inspections (including retail food and temporary food vendors), complaints, and plan review
Licensed Engineer	1	Manage EHS civil engineering projects
Administrative Assistant	1	Supervises all administrative support staff
Administrative Support Staff	6	Process all payments, permit applications, public information requests, complaints, and initial customer inquiries
Total EHS Staff	41	

Table 3. Overview of EHS Staff Resources

The program budget provides the necessary resources for adequate inspection equipment including thermocouples, min/max waterproof thermometer, TempRite high temperature dish machine adhesive labels, chemical test strips, alcohol wipes, pH meters, and flashlights. Each inspector is assigned an iPhone with Wi-Fi hotspot and photo app, and a field tablet to enter inspection results into the Accela Mobile Office electronic permitting system. The program also supplies vehicles to inspectors using a motor-pool vehicle check-out system.

The WCHD has also been successful in obtaining grant funding from FDA Cooperative Agreements, AFDO and FDA Retail Program Standards grants, and the NACCHO Mentorship program to supplement the program budget during the six-year application period. The grant funding has enabled the program to provide on-going training opportunities and has aided in the development of outreach educational materials to support the risk-based retail food safety program.

The program does not currently meet Standard 8 – Program Support and Resources due to the high ratio of FTE to inspections accomplished. An evaluation of the staffing levels required to support a risk-based retail food safety program will be conducted in 2022 as part of a Division wide time study and fee analysis.

Program Evaluation and Reducing Foodborne Illness Risk Factors

The Food Safety Program completed a baseline risk factor study on the occurrence of the five foodborne illness risk factors in June 2017 (Appendix P). The study was conducted using assessment criteria based on the 2013 FDA Food Code and the program used FDA models, methodology and forms with results entered into the Food-SHIELD database. Industry segments surveyed included senior independent living establishments, K-12 school kitchens, fast food restaurants, full-service restaurants, and retail deli departments.

Results from the study helped the program identify food preparation practices and employee behaviors most in need of priority attention. The most frequent risk factors observed out of compliance across all industry segments were poor personal hygiene and improper holding time and temperature (Figure 10).

Although food allergen awareness is not a foodborne illness risk factor, food allergens have become an emerging concern in retail food establishments across the nation. Results of the baseline risk factor study indicated full-service and fast-food restaurants and, surprisingly, senior independent living establishments in Washoe County had the highest percentage of out of compliance observations related to employee food allergen awareness.

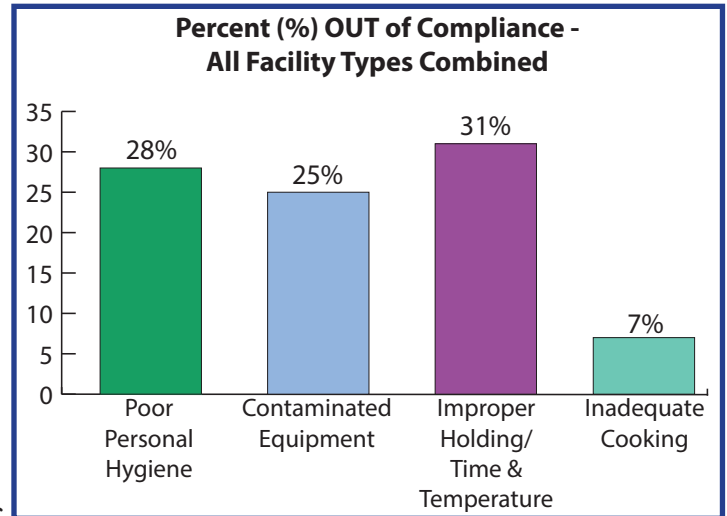


Figure 10. Most Frequent Risk Factors Out Of Compliance



Figure 11. Allergen Awareness Poster

The Food Safety Program has been implementing targeted intervention strategies designed to address the risk factors identified in the study. Some examples of intervention strategies (Appendix Q) include adoption of food establishment regulations consistent with the most current version of the FDA Food Code to include allergen awareness for the person-in-charge (previous versions of the regulation did not include this provision); allergen awareness posters in both English and Spanish (Figure 11); additional resources on the [Resource Library](#) website to include example procedures for cold holding, date marking, and hand washing; targeted media and social media campaigns to address personal hygiene and hand washing; emphasis on the risk factors most observed out of compliance during routine inspections; and an internal employee contest to design a date marking brochure (Figure 12) and magnet for food establishment operators.



Figure 12. Date Marking Cartoon

Due to the implementation of these strategies, the Food Safety Program anticipates a reduction in the occurrence of foodborne illness risk factors and hopes to fully meet Standard 9 – Program Assessments once our next data collection is completed in 2022.

Part III. Challenges, Objectives, Measurements, & Achievements

Challenge 1: Too Big to be Small and Too Small to be Big in the Biggest Little City



City of Reno Downtown Skyline

One of the biggest challenges faced by WCHD over the years is how to allocate program resources to ensure Washoe County establishments are receiving quality inspections and EHS staff are consistently applying regulatory requirements and policies across all establishments. We have struggled with the generalist versus specialist concept and often use the phrase “too big to be small and too small to be big” when referring to our jurisdiction. Prior to 2016, EHS division staff operated as specialists with dedicated staff assigned to each EHS program area. Due to economic growth, the resulting increase in permitted food establishments, and the need to balance workloads, the division re-organized and currently operates under a generalist concept as

described in Part II, Program Resources (pg. 2). With more staff conducting food inspections, some of whom have never been assigned to the program, the division was concerned inspection quality would decrease and consistency would be difficult to control. The following objectives were developed to resolve these challenges.

Revamp Food Safety Training Program

As mentioned in Part II, Training Program (pg. 5), the Food Safety Program developed a comprehensive training program for staff assigned to the program. As depicted in Figure 13, the progress for this objective is measured in the percent conformance with Standard 2 criteria over the years.

Quality Control

The training program defined inspection standards and gave staff the tools to successfully complete their job. The Food Safety Program then recognized the need to consistently measure performance to ensure a high level of inspection quality is maintained. Detail on the QA Program can be found in Part II, Quality Assurance Program (pg. 7). The QA Program is ongoing and will be evaluated after each 18-month period with targeted intervention strategies developed to address any inspection deficiencies observed during the QA cycle. Progress is measured using the percent of Standard 4 criteria met over the last several years.

Communication and Staff Engagement

With the shift to a generalist structure, the EHS management team worked to ensure management is engaged in food safety related issues, supportive of food establishment inspection staff, and communicates expectations consistently. This was accomplished through the following methods: implementation of monthly program specific staff meetings to discuss trends noted during inspection report reviews; review of Accela Automation data reports on proper inspection report marking, documentation, and adherence to the compliance and enforcement policy; field standardization of management staff; all Supervisors participating in Standard 4 field evaluation inspections; and one-on-one meetings between managers and staff to discuss results of inspection audits. As a result of these efforts at the management level, overall staff engagement and buy-in has been noticed.

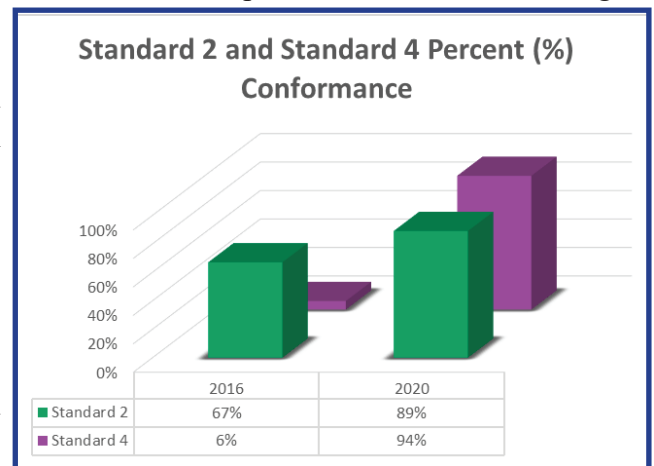


Figure 13. Progress Toward Standard 2 & 4

Challenge 2: Industry and Community Engagement

Prior to the six-year application period, the WCHD did little to engage the community and measured program success by the number of annual inspections conducted rather than the impact those inspections had on public health outcomes. During the Program Standards Strategic Planning Workshop in 2015, our Retail Food Specialist challenged us to think about whether we wanted to be a regulatory agency with a public health component, versus a public health agency with a regulatory component. We decided we wanted to be a public health agency and have been working to engage industry and the community on our efforts to reduce the occurrence of foodborne illness risk factors in our community. The following objectives were developed to achieve this goal.

Education First

While the Food Safety Program has always emphasized education when addressing violations and the resulting corrective actions, there was not a consistent method to accomplish this goal. Over the last six years, the program has established and executed the following approaches to emphasize active managerial control in food establishments through education:

- A risk-based inspection approach and rating system that emphasizes control of foodborne illness risk factors including enforcement for long-term control in establishments (pg. 6 & 9)
- Development of educational outreach materials (pg. 10)
- Workshops and training opportunities that include industry and the general public (pg. 5 & 10)
- QA Program performance measures for staff consistency (pg. 7)

Progress for this goal is measured using the level of conformance with Standards 2, 3, 6 and 7 (Figure 14).

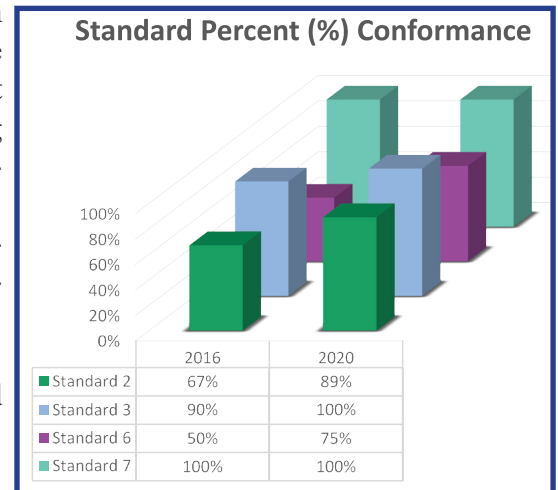


Figure 14. Progress Toward Standards 2, 3, 6 & 7

Shift in Messaging

The WCHD Food Safety Program reformed the message communicated to upper management and policy makers. Instead of communicating outputs (number of annual inspections conducted), the program has shifted to measuring outcomes, (reduction of foodborne illness risk factors). Objectives that helped the program realize this change include the 2017 baseline risk factor study and the successful incorporation of the reduction of foodborne illness risk factors as a goal in the WCHD strategic plan. The program anticipates a measurable reduction in the occurrence of foodborne illness risk factors after the completion of the next data collection period in 2022.

Recognition of Outstanding Achievements



Figure 15. Excellence in Food Safety Awards Logo

To recognize food establishment for their accomplishments rather than their deficiencies, the Food Safety program developed The Excellence in Food Safety Awards (The Awards) in 2020. The Awards were created to recognize food facilities that exceed established requirements and demonstrate a commitment to long-term food safety. Participation encourages facilities to publicize their food safety record and assists in employee team building and awareness of food safety practices. By hosting The Awards, the WCHD has fostered a more collaborative working relationship with the food service industry. The 2020 inaugural award was given to the winning establishment during the January 2021 District Board of Health meeting. Winning facilities receive an award certificate, award logo window cling, digital award logo (Figure 15), and recognition on the WashoeEats app to acknowledge their dedication and achievement of maintaining the highest standards of food safety in our community.

Challenge 3: Tracking Emerging Food Handling Practices

The Reno area restaurant scene has experienced significant growth over last several years. Due to the growth of the local food movement, more advanced educational techniques among culinary professionals, and specific flavor and texture preferences have burst onto the scene. Many establishments are conducting specialized food processes that require HACCP plans and/or code waivers that may include fermentation, acidification, reduced oxygen packaging, cook-chill, and sous vide. In many cases, inspectors often fail to identify these processes or are intimidated by terms such as “HACCP” and “waivers.” Often, HACCP processes may either be suspended, leaving the establishment operator frustrated, or allowed to continue with no food safety controls, leaving the public at risk. Over the last six years, the Food Safety Program has established the following objectives to promote food safety controls and to prevent illness associated with these processes.

Development of HACCP Team

As described in Part II, HACCP Principles (pg. 6), the Food Safety Program developed a procedure to identify, review, validate, verify, and approve food preparation activities requiring a HACCP plan and/or waiver request (Appendix G). The program actively works to ensure staff is knowledgeable on emerging specialized food preparation processes and is trained to identify these processes during establishment inspections. In addition to attending the Nevada Food Safety Task Force conferences, the FDA Pacific Region Retail Food Seminars, and the AFDO Annual Education Conferences, the program used grant funding to bring specialized training to the WCHD. Specialized training included the North Carolina State Retail HACCP Validation and Verification course and Brian Nummer’s Retail Fermented Foods course. Additionally, many staff members attended the FD312 Special Processes at Retail course in 2020.



Example of Food Requiring a HACCP Plan

In 2015, the Food Safety Program developed a HACCP team comprised of the Food Safety Program Senior, staff assigned to the program, and the inspector assigned to the specific facility. A written policy describing how the HACCP team would review and approve HACCP plans and requests for waivers was also developed. The team currently meets with operators interested in conducting processes requiring HACCP plans and/or waivers prior to HACCP plan development to review the food preparation process and provide the operator with [resources necessary](#) to complete the written HACCP plan. Once the written plan is approved, the team conducts a verification inspection to ensure the processes are being conducted in conformance with the approved plan. Upon verification, the team issues a final approval for the written plan and process. The HACCP or waiver process is reviewed for continued conformance during subsequent routine inspections. Since the inception of the HACCP review process, the program has noted an increase in food establishment operators taking a proactive approach to ensure safe food handling practices are in place prior to application of the process.

Obtaining Information on Food Handling Processes Upfront

The plan review process is an opportunity to prepare and discuss proper food handling techniques that will facilitate the success of the food establishment and help the facility stay in compliance over time. In 2018, the WCHD developed a comprehensive Food Establishment Review Application (Appendix R) that requires operators to list proposed equipment, mechanical and plumbing systems, floor plans, food preparation processes, and menu items. The application is consistent with procedures in the CFP document, Plan Review for Food Establishments 2016. In 2019, the program began using this application for all new facilities including those going into existing buildings not requiring plan review. The application process has helped establishments identify potential problems, and complications can be identified before costly purchases, installation and construction occurs.

Part IV. Program Longevity

The Food Safety Program plans to continue to build the foundation of the Health District's Retail Food Safety Program and make our program sustainable. This will be accomplished through the program's long-term goal of meeting the Program Standards and the Washoe County District Board of Health strategic plan. The strategic plan includes the goal of reducing the occurrence of foodborne illness risk factors in our community and meeting all nine Program Standards.

The WCHD was awarded accreditation by the Public Health Accreditation Board in August 2019, a milestone accomplishment that shows that we meet or exceed the rigorous standards established by the Public Health Accreditation Board. Accreditation affirms our commitment to continuous quality improvement to meet our community's needs and demonstrates our accountability and credibility to everyone with whom we work. Like public health accreditation, the Program Standards serve as a continuous improvement system that provides a framework for our program within which the active managerial control of the risk factors can best be realized.

The Food Safety Program has set lofty goals for 2021 and the next decade. The work done in the last six years helped lay the foundation for great success. It is our hope that with the support of our District Board of Health, staff, food establishment industry, and the community, we can continue this positive momentum into the next decade and continue to protect and enhance the well-being and quality of life for all in Washoe County.



WCHD Environmental Services Staff

Part V. Contact Information and Permission

Kevin Dick
Washoe County Health District
1001 East 9th Street
Reno, NV 89512
775-328-2434

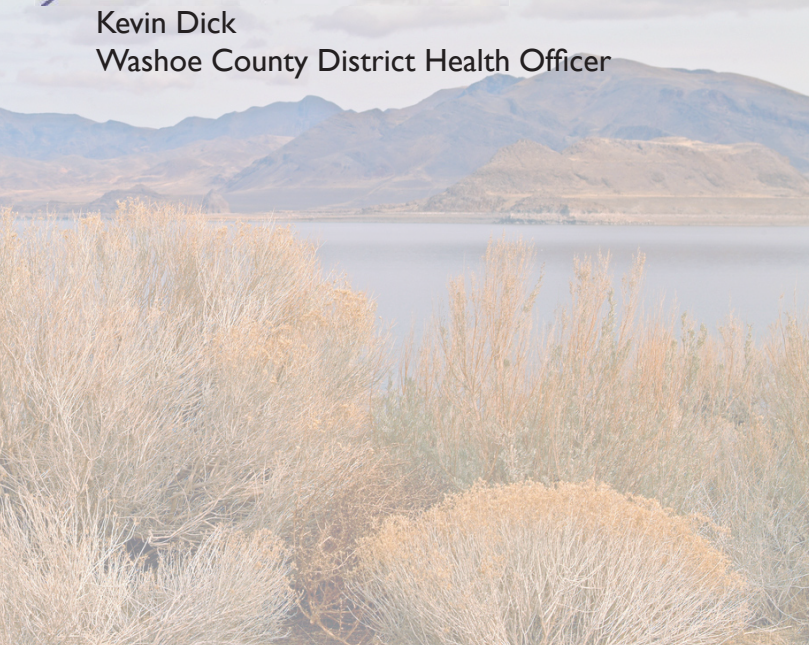
kdick@washoecounty.us

Washoe County Health District grants permission to the Foodservice Packaging Institute to place this Crum-bine Award application on www.crumbineaward.com.

Sincerely,



Kevin Dick
Washoe County District Health Officer





February 11, 2021

Samuel J. Crumbine Consumer Protection Award Jury
c/o The National Association of County and City Health Officials
1201 Eye Street, NW, 4th Floor
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Jury Members,

On behalf of BJ's Nevada Barbecue Co. I would like to recommend the Washoe County Health Department for the 2021 Samuel J. Crumbine Consumer Protection Award.

My name is Jay Rathmann, and I am the business owner and Executive Chef of BJ's Nevada Barbecue Co. in Sparks, Nevada. I sit on many boards in our community. I am the local chapter President of the American Culinary Association; I also sit on the Washoe County School District "Committee for Careers and Technical Education" board. I am well versed with working alongside and in conjunction with the Washoe County Health Department (WCHD) creating positive and efficient relationships in our community. My business uses multiple processes like HACCP, Cook and Chill, ROP, Curing, Fermentation in our day-to-day restaurant, catering and special event operations.

I have had the privilege working with the WCHD for over 30 years. Attending multiple public educational classes put on by the department in HACCP, Fermentation, Serve Safe, Etc. I have had nothing but a positive and completely professional relationship when working with WCHD. The WCHD is continually leading our community in public and professional education seminars on topics pertaining to Health, Food Safety and Education. I am fortunate to have a fantastic relationship with our local health department when it comes to HACCP management and verification techniques. We partnered with the WCHD to allow new department employees to visit our facility and have hands on HACCP inspections to allow employees to participate in real world scenarios pertaining to specific procedures. Forming this relationship was positive for both the regulatory agency and our industry. This is just one example of the high standards and steps the department is taking to involve themselves to help ensure better food safety, documentation of procedures and identification of risk factors that are known to reduce foodborne illness in our industry. This relationship allows department employees to relay actual on job training and information to other businesses in our community and help proliferate the communication of information. Anytime there is an opportunity to discuss topics of interest related to food safety, planning, or evaluating procedures the WCHD has always been

extremely proactive. During the Covid-19 pandemic their response to setting up discussions or zoom meetings for discussions of topics has been nothing short of exemplary.

WCHD dedication and commitment to food safety along with the continuing education, safety and wellbeing to the citizens and businesses of Washoe county is why I think they are deserving of the 2021 Samuel J. Crumbine Consumer Protection Award.

Thank you, for your consideration,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jay Rathmann', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Jay Rathmann CEC, CCA, WCEC
Owner, Executive Chef
Bj's Nevada Barbecue Co.
80 East Victorian Ave. Sparks, NV 89431
775-355-1010 / jay@bjsbbq.com



February 25, 2021

Samuel J. Crumbine Consumer Protection Award Jury
c/o The National Association of County and City Health Officials
1201 Eye Street, NW, 4th Floor
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Crumbine Award Jury Members:

The Washoe County Health District, Environmental Health Services Division is applying for the Samuel J. Crumbine Consumer Protection Award for Excellence in Food Protection at the Local Level, and I am pleased to submit this testimonial letter on behalf of the Southern Nevada Health District (SNHD), Environmental Health Division, who was honored to receive the award in 1998 and, most recently, in 2020.

The Washoe County Health District is the agency of jurisdiction for Washoe County, Nevada, and is the home to our sister city, Reno, Nevada. As such, we share common goals and are in frequent communication and collaboration with them regarding issues that not only effect Nevada, but the practice of environmental health in general and food safety specifically nationwide.

Notable achievements in our food safety partnership include:

- Participation in the NACCHO Mentorship program as a mentee to SNHD during the 2016-2017 Cohort 6 period.
- Coordination to complete verification audits and other achievements that demonstrate meeting the Voluntary National Retail Food Regulatory Program Standards (the Standards).
 - SNHD Regulatory Support Office completed verification audits of Standard 3 and Standard 5 for Washoe County Health District in 2019.
 - Washoe County Health District completed an audit for SNHD for Standard 5 on September 13, 2019 and November 17, 2020.
- Ongoing coordination regarding unpermitted food vendors, cottage food operators, the use of CBD in food, and other current topics and events.
- Joint participation in training opportunities such as the Nevada Environmental Health Association's Annual Conference, Special Processes courses, FDA courses such as FD218 and FD312, and the North Carolina State University HACCP coursework.

Washoe County Health District is a trusted partner in food safety. We rely on each other for advice to produce the best food safety outcomes possible for the state of Nevada and our respective jurisdictions. It is clear to us that Washoe County Health District has the achievements necessary to be the next holder of this honor. If I can provide any additional information in support of the Washoe County Health District's application, please contact me at 702-759-1693 or saxton@SNHD.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Chris Saxton', is placed below the 'Sincerely,' text.

Chris Saxton, MPH-EH, REHS
Director of Environmental Health
Southern Nevada Health District

Environmental Health Division
280 S. Decatur Blvd. | P.O. Box 3902 | Las Vegas, NV 89127
(702) 759-0500 | www.SNHD.info



February 17, 2021

Samuel J. Crumbine Consumer Protection Award Jury
c/o The National Association of County and City Health Officials
1201 Eye Street, NW, 4th Floor
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Crumbine Award Jury Members,

It is with great honor that I recommend the Washoe County Health District, Environmental Health Division for the Samuel J. Crumbine Consumer Protection Award in excellence of food protection at the local level. I am pleased to provide the following examples that highlight their excellence of service, commitment to quality care, and their true dedication to work with us as a team. The following examples demonstrate the character of service:

COVID TIMES

- The WCHD has always been a great partner during our many renovations, guiding us to provide safe facilities for public use. They worked with us to find realistic ways of implementing Covid guidelines, while continually keeping our business and financial needs in mind. This allowed us to provide a safe facility for our customers, associates and owners.
- WCHD inspectors and team members have been kind and helpful, establishing a solid and trusted business relationship with us.
- The WCHD provided recommendations and guidance on how, as a hotel, we can improve the safety of our colleagues and guests.
- The WCHD team is always prompt to answer any questions we may have regarding new regulations. It is a great comfort to know they are there if we need anything.
- The WCHD team has been incredible about promptly informing us about new regulations, updates and changes to COVID 19 policies.
- The WCHD will continue to be an important resource for our hotel and county as we navigate through COVID -19.

RENOVATION GUIDANCE

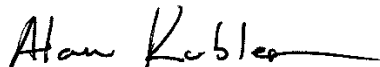
- The WCHD are supportive and always well educated about all our renovation projects.
- We have received very detailed and helpful specifics regarding current and future code requirements, therefore ensuring we design the most compliant Food Service Spaces.
- Working with WCHD has provided us the utmost confidence when presenting our building proposals to the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency for final approval.

TRAINING

- All restaurant inspections are conducted with genuine respect, focusing on potential situations while always working together as a team to provide solutions.
- Health Department representatives work with us to provide education in regards to food preparation and storage.
- The Food Protection Program is constantly evolving and it can be challenging to be aware of all current and revised standards and regulation, therefore we enjoy the support and training we receive from the WCHD to keep us current and in compliance.

The Hyatt Regency Lake Tahoe Resort, Spa and Casino recognizes the incredible service and commitment that the Washoe County Health District, Environmental Health Division provides our team, therefore it is our sincere honor to recommend them as deserving recipients for the Samuel J. Crumbine Consumer Protection Award.

Sincerely,



Alan Kubler
Executive Chef
Hyatt Regency Lake Tahoe Resort, Spa and Casino
111 Country Club Drive
Incline Village, NV
89451

PEPPERMILL RENO

February 18, 2021

Samuel J. Crumbine Consumer Protection Award Jury
c/o The National Association of County and City Health Officials
1201 Eye Street, NW, 4th Floor
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Crumbine Award Jury Members,

Over the last 15 years, the Peppermill Resort Casino has worked in partnership with the Washoe County Health Department to establish a very high standard for food safety. It is with great privilege that we write this letter of recommendation on their behalf.

The Washoe County Health District has conducted special training with our chefs to ensure the most up-to-date procedures and practices are in place. We have also worked with the WCHD's newest inspectors and hosted them on property for training purposes. Because of our resort's assorted kitchens and restaurants, inspectors are able to see a wide range of applications within one building.

Because of our alliance with the Health Department, the Peppermill has been able to develop a much more intense HACCP program with our commissary kitchen that includes ROP and Vacuum packaging for 2 of our properties. With our open channels of communication, we have also been able to consult on proper and safe procedures before we implement a new dining outlet or menu items.

Additionally, the Washoe County Health Department was an immense resource for the Peppermill in relation to our practices during the COVID-19 pandemic and always made themselves available for any questions or concerns.

We submit this application for the Washoe County Health District with the highest level of recommendation for their assistance and partnership throughout the years.

Sincerely,



Chef Michael Johnson
Executive Chef



Randolph County Public Health

Environmental Health

204 East Academy Street

Asheboro, NC 27203



Telephone (336) 318-6262

Fax (336) 318-6285

February 25, 2021

Samuel J. Crumbine Consumer Protection Award Jury
c/o The National Association of County and City Health Officials
1201 Eye Street, NW, 4th Floor
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Crumbine Award Jury Members:

The Washoe County Health District Division of Environmental Health Services is applying for the Samuel J. Crumbine Consumer Protection Award for Excellence in Food Protection at the Local Level, and I am pleased to submit this testimonial letter on behalf of Randolph County Public Health's Environmental Health program (hereafter referred to as RCPH).

RCPH is a county government agency that is responsible for the regulation of food and lodging establishments in Randolph County North Carolina. The mission of this agency is to preserve, protect and improve the health of the community by the collection and dissemination of health information, education and service programs aimed at the prevention of disease, protection of the environment, and improvement of the quality of life for our citizens.

RCPH enrolled in the Voluntary National Retail Food Regulatory Program Standards (VNRFRPS) in April of 2017 and since that time, has been working with NACCHO through the Mentorship Program to complete various projects in the Standards, most recently working towards completing the Standard 9 Risk Factor Study. This current cohort saw us paired with Washoe County Health District as our mentor. They were tasked with assisting us in the completion of our third and final year of our risk factor study. Although we are just a few months in to our current project efforts, the assistance, generosity and professionalism of the staff at Washoe County Health District has and continues to shine through and they have become an invaluable asset to the program here at RCPH.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a drastic impact on how programs like the NACCHO Mentorship Program typically operate, but that has not hindered the effectiveness of the partnership that now exists between Washoe County and RCPH. Washoe County Health District has set up monthly meetings via Microsoft Teams in which they have systematically walked us through our work plan for this cohort. Already, they have answered questions that we have had about our data collections and reporting, and have sent over technical documents that can assist us with not just our risk factor study data collections, but our routine inspections as well. They

are in the process of setting up a virtual site meeting between our county department and theirs, and if the monthly meetings are any indication, this meeting will be time well spent as we work to progress within the Program Standards.

Washoe County Health District has also sent a copy of their risk factor study final report so that we could use it as a guide in creating our own report at the end of the data collection cycle. This report is a technical document that requires a great deal of time and effort to assemble. For this reason, having another health district's report to pattern ours off of will save us many hours of work and will provide us with much needed structure as we look to convey our data in a way that is both thorough and at the same time, easy to understand. Based on the information that they provided us, we have been able to create a template for our final report and have started to work with their program through some of our more technical questions related to the reporting. With their help, RCPH hopes to be able to take the data from this study and to develop targeted intervention strategies that will lessen the occurrence of foodborne illness risk factors in our retail food establishments, thus creating a safer environment for the people of this county to dine in.

The staff members at Washoe County Health District have all be extremely personable and helpful, and it is immediately apparent that they place a high priority on the health and wellbeing of the population that they serve. This is evidenced by their work within the FDA Voluntary National Retail Food Regulatory Program Standards as well as in the NACCHO Mentorship Program. Their willingness to expand the effectiveness of their program through the Program Standards while simultaneously growing the capacities of other programs on a national level is truly aspirational. It is for this reason that I am happy to support their program in their bid for the Samuel Crumline Award for Excellence in Food Protection.

Sincerely,



Jaron Herring, REHS

Environmental Health F&L Supervisor
Randolph County Public Health
Environmental Health
204 East Academy Street
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Phone: 336-318-6270
Fax: 336-318-6265
Email: Jaron.Herring@randolphcountync.gov



MCHD ENVIRONMENTAL

453 Van Voorhis Rd Morgantown, WV 26505 Phone: 304-598-5131 Fax: 304-598-5122



Dear Samuel J. Crumbine Consumer Protection Award Committee,

It is with the upmost pleasure that the Monongalia County Health Department has been asked by the Washoe County Health District of Reno, NV to submit a testimonial letter on their behalf for consideration of this prestigious award. Washoe County Health District is comprised of a stellar team of exemplary professionals with whom the Monongalia County Health Department was paired with during NACCHO's Mentorship Program Cohort 9.

The Environmental Health Services of the Washoe County Health District led my Amber English and Michael Touhey provided invaluable guidance and knowledge to our team who had not pursued achieving conformance with the Retail Program Standards prior to December 2019. This was truly a perfect match for our Health Department as we conducted a Self-Assessment of our Retail food regulatory programs. I can honestly say that I was petrified when I was informed by my Sanitarian Supervisor that we were selected to undertake this process. I felt overwhelmed as I attempted to review the Standards on my own. During the first call with the Washoe County Health District, my fears were put to rest. The group was so excited to learn about our Health Department and were ready to get into the trenches with us as we began our journey. This extraordinary team of Environmental Health experts were available by phone or email whenever a question would arise during this process. They were openly willing to share documents, procedures and policies so that we did not have to start from scratch but additionally they were instrumental in providing the tools that I felt I needed to successfully complete the Self-Assessment. Washoe County Health Department is responsible for giving me the confidence to lead my team during Cohort10.

I want to close by talking about my Site visit to Reno in February 2020. I was nervous of meeting the Washoe group that first morning. I was not sure if I would have anything to offer them while I was on their turf. They made me feel like one of their team. I could see the pride that they all had in their Retail food regulatory program as I felt about mine. Their Food Safety training materials (i.e. posters and brochures) were second to none. They truly expressed interest in my thoughts about their programs and documents. Washoe County Health District team members took the time to provide a presentation on each Program standard and handed me hard copies of their documents. Amber English took the time to download all the documents onto a flash drive as well. They took interest in the use of HealthSpace to perform and store all inspections.

Washoe County Health District are leading experts in Food Safety. Their Food Safety program is a model by which all Health Departments should strive to achieve and I believe a compelling choice for the Samuel J. Crumbine Consumer Protection Award.

Cordially,

Jennifer Costolo-Michael, MS, RS

Environmental Health Specialist
Monongalia County Health Department
453 Van Voorhis Road
Morgantown, WV 26505
304-598-5131



**FOOD SAFETY
WORKS LLC**
Safe Food Saves Lives

P.O. Box 150307
Denver, CO 80215
720-681-1615

www.FoodSafetyWorksLLC.com

February 18, 2021

Dear Crumbine Award Committee,

I am pleased to contribute a Testimonial Letter on the behalf of the Washoe County Health District, Reno, NV, Environmental Health Services (WCHD), to the Crumbine Award Committee.

My background includes 17 years as a Retail Food Specialist, U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) with 33 years working for City, County, State, and Federal public health programs. My FDA Standardization is current and is recognized by the FDA for me to work with WCHD. I retired from the FDA September 2019.

I can vouch for the quality of the program based on my knowledge of and working with them.

My experiences with WCHD include the following:

- A. February 2020. Co-instructor. "Fermented Foods." Presented by Brian Nummer, Ph.D., Retail-Food Service Consortium. Fourteen hours on the Specialized Process, Fermentation, under the FDA and FDA Model Food Code. WCHD staff, including Program Manager, Supervisors and Food Safety Inspection Officers (FSIO), as well as food establishment operators, attended this two-day training.
- B. December 2020. Instructor. "Strategies to Focus Regulatory Inspections." Presented by Mario Seminara, R.S., Food Safety Works LLC. Eight hours on strategies and tools to focus regulatory inspections on the five CDC Risk Factors and five Food Code Interventions. WCHD "Standard Operating Procedure No. FS-18, Version V1, Effective 01/01/20" was reviewed and used during the class instruction. It is consistent with elements of focusing regulatory inspections. WCHD was successful in re-allocating grant funding approved and received, from the Association of Food and Drug Officials (AFDO), for Category 3-Training to have this training for WCHD FSIOs.
- C. Virtual FDA FD312 Special Processes. Co-Instructor, Mario Seminara, R.S. "Special Processes at Retail." Hosted by the National Environmental Health Association under the auspices of the Office of Training, Education and Development, FDA.
- D. In addition to the classroom and virtual training, WCHD has received a Retail Program Standards Cooperative Agreement through AFDO, Category 2-Moderate Projects. With concurrence from Office of State Cooperative Programs, Retail Foods Division, FDA, I will be conducting Standardization Inspections, as a qualified Training Standard as defined

in the "2021 Crumline Award Application Guidelines," of the WCHD FSIOs, including Supervisory personnel. The Standardization Inspections will be highly beneficial by using the *FDA Food Code*, Standardization Forms and Procedures. Additionally, the number of Standardization exercises per FSIO will meet the Standard 2, Trained Regulatory Staff, guidance contained in the Voluntary National Retail Food Regulatory Program Standards (RPS). This WCHD exercise will take place the month of June 2021 in Washoe County, NV. This month-long exercise will move the WCHD forward towards meeting the requirements of Standard 2 in the RPS.

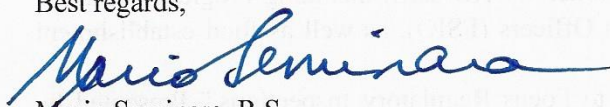
In summary, it is these referenced items that I have worked directly with and have pending work with WCHD leadership that shows they are taking-on much work to identify and reduce the out of compliance rate of the risk factors to reduce the incidence of foodborne illness within their jurisdiction. Upper Management has supported these efforts by providing WCHD budget funds to achieve this work. WCHD has also been successful in submitting project proposals and receiving grant funding through AFDO to make this work possible.

These are only some of their accomplishments of which I have direct knowledge. The support of Upper Management in securing funding and the awarding of competitive grant funding opportunities is evidence of the quality and forward track WCHD is on to increase public health to the benefit of their residents and visitors. I know that WCHD has adopted a continuous quality improvement model and would serve as a beacon to health departments nation-wide on what they have accomplished, their methods and what will be done in the future.

I support WCHD 100% to be the 2021 recipient of the prestigious Crumline Award.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimonial on their behalf. Please feel free to reach out to me if you have any questions or need additional information.

Best regards,



Mario Seminara, R.S.
Food Safety Consultant/Trainer
Owner, Food Safety Works LLC

Steve Sisolak
Governor
Richard Whitley, MS
Director



DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Division of Public and Behavioral Health
Helping people. It's who we are and what we do.



Lisa Sherych
Administrator
Ihsan Azzam, Ph.D., M.D.
Chief Medical Officer

February 9, 2021

Samuel J. Crumbine Consumer Protection Award Jury
c/o The National Association of County and City Health Officials
1201 Eye Street, NW, 4th Floor
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Crumbine Award Jury Members:

The Washoe County Health District (WCHD) is applying for the Samuel J. Crumbine Consumer Protection Award for Excellence in Food Protection at the Local Level. I am pleased to submit this testimonial letter on behalf of the Nevada Division of Public and Behavioral Health.

The Nevada Division of Public and Behavioral Health is the health authority for the State of Nevada. DPBH-EHS, is one of four health authorities providing services to 17 counties. Our state encompasses various communities from rural to urban with a wide range of public health programs. Our partnership with the WCHD involves developing and maintaining the public health infrastructure. Our programs work collaboratively to foster quality improvement, performance management, accountability, transparency, and capacity to deliver essential public health services.

The Washoe County Health District is the second-largest public health organization in the State of Nevada. Nearly a half-million persons live in the rapidly growing county. Their mission is to protect and enhance the well-being and quality of life for all in Washoe County.

I appreciate WCHD's Food Program working with the State Environmental Health program on a variety of issues. WCHD has a robust collaborative core of public health staff who regularly participate in open information exchange with the Division. Washoe County has applied for grants and spearheaded necessary training, made available locally, such as the North Carolina HACCP Course, the Special Processes at Retail, and Managing Employee Health Workshop. They have also worked on public outreach for guide dogs in retail, which is a widely recognized program in our communities. WCHD organized many statewide conference calls with all Food Programs in Nevada to discuss our shared challenges. This allows all the food programs to become aware of these issues and discuss them to have a consistent message on a new issues.

I look forward to hearing the recipients of the Crumbine Award. If I can provide any additional information supporting the WCHD application, please contact me at 775-687-7553 or thayes@health.nv.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Teresa Hayes".

Teresa Hayes, R.E.H.S
Environmental Health Program Manager 3



CARSON CITY, NEVADA
CONSOLIDATED MUNICIPALITY AND STATE CAPITAL

March 1, 2021

Samuel J. Crumbine Consumer Protection Award Jury
c/o The National Association of County and City Health Officials
1201 Eye Street, NW, 4th Floor
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Crumbine Award Jury Members:

It is with great pleasure to submit this testimonial letter on behalf of Carson City Health and Human Services (CCHHS), for the Washoe County Health District (WCHD) application for the Samuel J. Crumbine Consumer Protection Award for Excellence in Food Protection at the Local Level.

As Northern Nevada's largest health department WCHD has taken the lead to find innovative approaches to solving problems facing food protection in Northern Nevada.

WCHD has built a strong relationship with CCHHS by openly exchanging and collaborating information related to food protection and public health. WCHD has organized regional training opportunities – Managing Employee Health Workshop, NC State HACCP Course, and Brian Nummer Special Processes Course, that CCHHS staff has attend and through these class CCHHS has been able to improve process within our food protection program.

Over the past six years WCHD has been an active participant in the Voluntarily National Retail Food Regulatory Program Standards, consistently contributing ideas, solutions and sharing resources during Northern Nevada quarterly meetings.

WCHD accomplishments, dedication, commitment to food safety and public health and teamwork are all characteristics of an organization that is deserving of the Samuel J. Crubine Excellence in Food Protection Award.

Sincerely,

Dustin Boothe, REHS, MPH
Disease Control and Prevention Manager

Carson City Health & Human Services

900 East Long Street • Carson City, Nevada 89706 • (775) 887-2190 • Hearing Impaired–Use 711

Clinical Services (775) 887-2195 Fax: (775) 887-2192	Public Health Preparedness (775) 887-2190 Fax: (775) 887-2248	Human Services (775) 887-2110 Fax: (775) 887-2539	Disease Control & Prevention (775) 887-2190 Fax: (775) 887-2248	Chronic Disease Prevention & Health Promotion (775) 887-2190 Fax: (775) 887-2248
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The Samuel J. Crumbine Award Panel

March 9, 2021

To Whom This May Concern:

I am honored to support the nomination of the Washoe County Health District, (WCHD), Reno, NV for the Samuel J. Crumbine Consumer Protection Award. I have personally observed their professionalism, passion and dedication to retail food protection in Washoe county, Nevada over the past 6 years. Washoe County Health District leads their State in the FDA Voluntary National Retail Food Regulatory Program Standards as evidenced by their compliance with more individual standards than any other jurisdiction. They demonstrate excellence in every endeavor and positively impact retail food protection programs nationally. Although it is impossible to list all their contributions in this letter, I have chosen a few of those that I believe are most significant.

Washoe County Health District is a model food safety agency that is active in practicing and promoting the FDA Voluntary National Retail Program Standards. Specifically, they have accomplished the following:

1. Completed three full Self-Assessments of all nine of the program standards since initial enrollment in 2004 and are currently working on their fourth full Self-Assessment to be completed in 2021.
2. They've met and successfully passed verification audits of Retail Program Standards 1, 3, 5 and 7 during their current self-assessment cycle and have achieved significant progress in Standards 2,4,6,8 and 9.
3. They have worked closely and partnered with Southern Nevada Health District to meet common strategic objectives related to the Retail Program Standards.
4. They've participated in the NACCHO Program Standards Mentorship program as a Mentee in 2016.

5. They have served as a NACCHO mentor formally for 3 other jurisdictions since 2017, and informally mentored neighboring jurisdictions within the state of Nevada. The lessons learned and success they have achieved in the Retail Program Standards are consistently being shared with others.
6. Washoe County Health District actively participates in the Conference for Food Protection Committees and Councils.
7. They were selected as one of only 3 jurisdictions nationally to participate in the FDA/Food Protection Defense Institute Retail Risk Factor Pilot Study in 2020.
8. They have participated in the AFDO Retail Program Standards Grant program enabling them to achieve progress in the Retail Program Standards. Below are a few specific examples of projects they have completed:
 - a. They've used grant funds to increase knowledge of their staff by hosting the North Carolina State University HACCP at Retail Course and to send staff to FDA OTED face to face training courses year after year.
 - b. They've conducted sector specific risk factor data collections and implemented intervention strategies across their county.

Washoe County Health District is a model food safety program that is constantly improving and improvising to reduce foodborne illness in their jurisdiction. They assist other jurisdictions without hesitation by sharing their successes, experience through mentorship, conducting verification audits and actively participating in food protection seminars and conferences nationally. The contributions they have made and will continue to make in the future are an inspiration to food safety professionals everywhere.

Respectfully,



David H. Engelskirchen, CP-FS

Retail Food Specialist

US Food and Drug Administration, Office of State Cooperative Programs

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