

## Research Strategy

This research strategy is part of a 3-year collaborative project between the Conference for Food Protection and the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO). The content in this report provides a summary of the activities that the CFP research staff will be undertaking during the first year of the project. The application submitted to the FDA was approved for 3 years but funding was only provided for year 1.

### Specific Aim 1: Develop a national Food Code adoption strategy, including the Food Code Adoption Tool Kit

*Objective 1: Research, develop, and implement a national strategy for promoting full, complete adoption of the most recent FDA Food Code to state legislatures and state/local boards of health, working in collaboration with associations that have ties to these entities.*

#### Outcomes

In Year 1 of the project CFP will attend meetings of the Food Code Adoption Strategy workgroup, convene the Food Code Adoption Tool Kit workgroup meetings, provide SLTT retail food regulatory program, industry, consumer, and academic partners' perspective on Toolkits, resources, and strategies developed by the Workgroup, and use its communication channels to share information created by the workgroup with its membership.

### Specific Aim 2: Improve the regulatory approach, competency, and food safety culture in the regulatory community

*Objective 2A: Promote implementation of evidence-based recommendations to increase the application of risk-based inspection methods by SLTT retail food programs.*

#### Objective 2A Outcomes

- The major outcome of this objective is to compile a list of available training content for conducting risk-based inspections and review FDA course FD218 – Risk-based Inspections at Retail training course to identify strengths, weaknesses and gaps and recommend modifications to address barriers.

*Objective 2B: Research, identify, assess, and promote the standardized development of risk factor studies in SLTT retail food programs to reduce the occurrence of foodborne illness risk factors in retail and food service establishments.*

#### Objective 2B Outcomes

In Year 1, the major outcomes of this objective are to complete a needs assessment and identify gaps in current risk factor study training.

*Objective 2C: Maintain participation in the Retail Food Safety Advisory Group and continue efforts to provide stakeholder input into Collaborative projects.*

#### Objective 2C Outcomes

NACCHO and CFP will hold virtual meetings where members will provide feedback on Collaborative efforts and discuss other topics in retail food regulation.

**Specific Aim 3: Increase enrollment and active participation in and application of the Voluntary Retail Food Regulatory Program Standards (Program Standards) by state, local, tribal, and territorial retail food regulatory programs.**

*Objective 3A: Establish a SLTT Program Standards Network to help jurisdictions improve conformance with the standards and increase enrollment*

**Objective 3A Outcomes**

The major outcomes of this objective are to (1) identify and conduct an initial assessment of new Program Standards Network members; (2) formalize the Network, convene official meetings, and develop evaluation materials; and (3) an evaluation of the effectiveness of the Network(s) on active participation in and improved conformance with the Program Standards.

*Objective 3B: Evaluate the effectiveness of Program Standards Networks in improving conformance with the standards and increasing enrollment in the standards*

**Objective 3B Outcomes**

The major outcomes of this objective are to identify Program Standards Network leaders, including timelines of jurisdictions' engagement in the network for each state or region; collate information about jurisdiction participation in networks; and develop a comprehensive research plan.

**Specific Aim 4: Improve foodborne outbreak investigation methods**

*Objective 4A: Supporting the efforts of other Collaborative associations to reduce the occurrence of foodborne illness outbreaks and to promote active managerial control as a means of preventing outbreaks*

**Objective 4A Outcomes**

The major outcomes from this objective are to support and amplify the Collaborative's efforts to (1) improve foodborne illness outbreak investigations to reduce their occurrence and (2) promote and improve active managerial control to prevent foodborne illness outbreaks.

**Specific Aim 5: Increase number of establishments that have well-developed and implemented Food Safety Management Systems**

*Objective 5A: Research, develop, and promote strategies to improve industry Active Managerial Control at the retail level*

**Objective 5A Outcomes**

The major outcomes from this objective are to support and amplify the Collaborative's efforts to (1) improve foodborne illness outbreak investigations to reduce their occurrence and (2) promote and improve active managerial control to prevent foodborne illness outbreaks instead of responding to them

through attendance and active participation in Collaborative meetings and input and support for the Collaborative members' activities.

*Objective 5B: Advance the importance of facility and equipment design as preventative controls for retail food safety management in collaboration with retail industry trade organizations and/or national standards setting/accreditation bodies*

### **Objective 5B Outcomes**

By the end of Year 1, CFP will (1) work with the CFP FSMS Committee and will provide necessary resources needed to identify a complete listing of feasible solutions for overcoming barriers to the food industry of implementing a FSMS and (2) in partnership with NACCHO's Research & Evaluation team, will conduct an environmental scan of existing FSMS in use by the retail food industry, to include any foundational work completed by other members of the Collaborative.

*Objective 5C: Encourage the application of digital tools and incentives that prompt desired behaviors (e.g., handwashing) in collaboration with retail industry trade organizations and/or national standards setting/accreditation bodies*

### **Objective 5C Outcomes**

In Year 1, the major outcome from this objective is a draft guidance document on digital food safety systems for food establishments and regulatory authorities that establishes general best practice guidelines for digital food safety management systems.

*Objective 5D: Enhance existing manager certification and food handler education and training requirements – in collaboration with Food Safety Manager Certification bodies – to include adult learning principles designed to better influence human behavior*

### **Objective 5D Outcomes**

By the end of Year 1, CFP will (1) complete a literature review of adult learning principles and their application to human behavior in food safety; (2) with NACCHO, draft a report based on the key findings of the literature review; (3) work with the CFP Food Protection Manager Certification Committee to create Issues for the 2023 Biennial Meeting of the Conference for Food Protection; and (4) hold a focus group of food handlers to identify preferred learning styles and current sources of food safety information. This work will inform how adult learning principles can be and are employed to influence human behavior related to food safety. Representatives of the member organizations in the Collaborative will be asked to participate in this process whenever possible.

### **Specific Aim 6: Develop a strategy to enhance communication and better tell our story.**

*Objective 6: Implement strategies to promote availability and usage of best practices, tool kits, research and other information sharing among retail food safety stakeholders.*

### **Objective 6 Outcomes**

The major outcomes from this objective are to support and amplify the Collaborative's efforts to effectively communicate with retail food safety stakeholders by responding to the Collaboratives' requests and disseminating resulting resources to NACCHO and CFP members. To achieve this objective, NACCHO and CFP will use its communication resources to promote products and services of the Collaborative and make presentations as professional meetings.