

# APPLICATION FORM

**Foodborne Illness Systems Project**  
NACCHO must receive applications by July 15, 2005.

Local Health Department: La Crosse County Health Department  
Street address: 300 4th Street North  
City/State/Zip: La Crosse, WI 54601  
Telephone: 608-785-9872  
Fax: 608-785-9846  
Name of contact person: Al Graewin  
E-mail for contact person: agraewin.al@co.la-crosse.wi.us  
Job title for contact person: Manager, Health Education  
Health department director: Doug Mormann, MPH  
E-mail for health department director: mormann.doug@co.la-crosse.wi.us  
Amount of funding requested: \$30,000.00

Population served by food safety program:	<u>Urban</u>	Rural
Population size of jurisdiction:	<50,000	<u>50,000-199,999</u>
	200,000- 1 million	> 1 million

***Please complete this form and send to NACCHO along with your written proposal (see RFP) and budget request.***

***The written proposal should consider and address the following:***

Problem Statement Focus Area (list gaps or barriers that you plan to address):  
Project Description:  
Measurable Outcome(s):  
Collaborations:  
Transferability/Benefit to Other LPHAs:  
Resources Required:

***The proposal should also include a project timeline and a budget. (please note the timeline and the budget are considered attachments and do not count towards the 5 page maximum).***

## **Foodborne Illness Systems Demonstration Project**

### **La Crosse County Health Department**

#### **La Crosse, WI**

Foodborne illness surveillance is complicated by several factors. First among the factors is underreporting. Although foodborne illnesses can be severe or even fatal, milder cases are often not detected through routine surveillance.<sup>1</sup> Data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)<sup>1</sup> and the La Crosse County Health Department (LCHD) field experience<sup>2</sup> finds there is a gap in the perception among licensed food establishment operators as to how to handle complaints from customers who become ill after eating food from their establishment.

According to a CDC FoodNet study of foodborne disease outbreaks, (FBDO) in 1998-99, "At least 66% of the outbreaks were associated with restaurants and an additional 9% were associated with catered events."<sup>3</sup> Anecdotal evidence indicates that when people become ill with gastrointestinal illness, they often associate it with the last commercially prepared meal they ate. The food service managers, when confronted by a customer, will often go on the defensive and refuse to deal with the problem rather than calling the health department for epidemiologic assistance. Even businesses that do call the health department often fail to return the case reports. Employees and managers who are properly trained to respond to foodborne illness complaints will be more likely to contact the local public health agency (LPHA) to aid in the investigation of the incident and improve surveillance.

In 2004, LCHD had 16<sup>2</sup> reported incidents for 307 businesses. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture Food Safety and Inspection Service, only 1%-5% of the total foodborne cases are reported.<sup>4</sup>

To increase the response rate for reporting foodborne illness, LCHD plans to develop a standalone course. The course will originally be delivered by a professional health educator directly to licensed food establishment operators in the La Crosse area. After initial evaluation of this course LCHD will change the format to a multimedia, online course to be disseminated to other LPHAs. This will develop knowledge and motivation in the following ways:

1. The program will alter the beliefs of the managers to look at the LPHA as an ally in this process rather than an adversary. The food establishment's "person in charge" is required to demonstrate food safety knowledge, take "active managerial control" by passing this knowledge along to all staff, according to the Wisconsin Food Code.<sup>5</sup>
2. This course would prepare restaurant, grocery, deli, and catering managers to deal with customer complaints of foodborne illness in a productive and positive manner. As stated in the opening sentence of this application,

underreporting of foodborne illness is the primary concern. LCHD believes most managers want to respond appropriately, but are unsure of exactly what to do. The legacy effect would be to stop foodborne outbreaks earlier, provide better epidemiologic data, improve surveillance, and to help move the country toward its Healthy People 2010 goal of reducing foodborne illness 25% by 2010. While all commercial food preparation businesses are bound by state code, most LPHA's feel that a good working relationship is an effective means of controlling foodborne disease outbreaks. Ultimately, business is motivated by economics and fears the profit losses a foodborne disease outbreak would cause. Bad press, either through the media or by word of mouth can be devastating to a business. The course will stress the advantages to be gained by having a good working relationship with the LPHA. By stating that the business takes the customer's complaint seriously and that the health department will be called, the customer's mind can be put at ease and a potential public relations problem can be averted.

3. A food service establishment aware of how public health can help will turn to the LPHA when confronted with a suspected foodborne illness complaint.

This 45 minute course will educate restaurant, grocery deli, and catering managers on techniques for dealing with suspected foodborne illness cases, preserving evidence and how to deal most effectively with complaints. The course will incorporate the following topics:

- Types of organisms causing foodborne illness
- Developing a written plan
- Maintaining the quality of evidence when suspect food is returned to the establishment
- Dealing with an upset customer, obtaining information on the suspect food and those exposed
- A call tree with information on health department contacts to call
- Reporting to the public health agency
- A certificate of accomplishment to be granted upon completion.
- A display certificate to be mounted in public view
- A response checklist, for distribution to employees, is to be included as part of the course.

In conjunction with the release of the course, LCHD, using its own funds and local media connections, will simultaneously launch a media educational campaign on proper food handling.

The course will originally be developed to be presented by a health educator. LCHD will partner with the Western Wisconsin Technical College (WWTC) Culinary Management program using their facilities for filming and using their instructors to help in course development. After the course has been fully developed and field tested, it will be filmed and stored as a digital online file hosted on the La Crosse County website. Other partners will include the Wisconsin Environmental Health Association (WEHA), and the

Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services Division of Food Safety and Recreational Licensing. WEHA is looking into integrating portions of this course into the WEHA Restaurant Manager's Recertification Program. LCHD food safety staff is already working with John Archer, State of Wisconsin Department of Public Health food-borne disease epidemiologist, who will serve as consultant to review the curricula that LCHD will develop.

Festival Foods will collaborate with LCHD as an advisory business partner. Festival Foods is a nine-store grocery retail food chain, employing 1,400 people, headquartered in La Crosse County. Also partnering on this project will be the local La Crosse County grocers and restaurant owners association.

**Measurable Outcome(s):**

**Goal 1**

LCHD will develop a reproducible foodborne illness response course for restaurant, grocery deli, and catering managers.

**Objectives:**

1. By April, 2006 LCHD will develop a foodborne illness response course including a course curriculum manual for restaurant, grocery deli, and catering managers.

**Goal 2**

LCHD will implement the foodborne illness response course to restaurant, grocery deli, and catering managers

**Objectives:**

1. By December, 2006, ninety-five (95) La Crosse county licensed food establishment operators will have received training.
2. By December, 2006, LCHD will evaluate all managers by pre and post test survey data collection to determine knowledge, attitude, and behavior changes from implementation of the foodborne illness response course training.

**Evaluation Activities:**

1. Evaluate managers for increased response to customer complaints.
  2. Evaluate managers who have developed a written plan.
  3. Evaluate managers reporting mechanism for reporting to the LPHA.
3. Increase the number of reported complaints by licensed food establishment operators in La Crosse County from 16<sup>2</sup> to 80.

### **Goal 3**

The course will be made available by La Crosse County Information Services on its web site for dissemination to other LPHAs.

#### **Objectives:**

1. By December, 2006 LCHD will develop the foodborne illness response course in a multimedia format for dissemination to other LPHAs.

### **Goal 4**

4. Key findings from the Foodborne Illness Demonstration Project will be submitted for publishing in the WEHA and other journals.

La Crosse County, Wisconsin is located 150 miles southeast of Minneapolis, Minnesota on the Mississippi river. The La Crosse County Health Department is a full service Health Department with 67 employees and a FY 2005 budget of \$4.22 million. LCHD is a level III rated health department, the highest rating achievable in Wisconsin and serves a mix of urban/rural areas with a population of 107,120. LCHD currently manages 35 grants from private, state, and national sources totaling \$3,000,000.

LCHD staff work in Environmental Health, Laboratory, Public and Home Care Nursing, Nutrition, Communicable Disease investigation, Health Education and Bio-Terrorism. Many of the staff serve on statewide organizations and LCHD has worksite arrangements for students with the University of Wisconsin, La Crosse, Viterbo University, and Western Wisconsin Technical College. LCHD has a double journal entry system and is audited on an annual basis.

All six of LCHD's sanitarians are Wisconsin Registered Sanitarians and one has been certified by the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture in Standardization of the Wisconsin Food Code. LCHD also has a staff of five health educators who run Safe Communities Traffic Safety Programs, Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI) educational programs, tobacco cessation programs, and other educational programs as needed. LCHD has offered safe food handling courses in the past and under an earlier grant LCHD ran a meat thermometer distribution program.

LCHD has developed, produced and distributed five videos/DVDs. One of these, Hmong Against Big Tobacco (HABIT) Smoking Cessation, delivered in Hmong, has been distributed to 30 states and to Guam, Palau, the Marshall Islands, and Saipan. Other LCHD health education staff has experience in producing forklift safety videos.

Project evaluation will be done in-house by Derek Moore, MPH the LCHD staff epidemiologist, who recently was awarded a grant to present at the Yale conference on Community Actions to Prevent Chronic Diseases (CAPCoD). Derek is a member of the Oxford Health Alliance.

Course assembly and presentation will be done by Anne Winegarden, MPH, CHES, a health educator with LCHD since September 2003. Anne has extensive experience in

small group presentations such as Sexually Transmitted Infections and LCHD employee health seminars.

### **Lab Capabilities**

The county has a fully staffed and equipped Level III health department environmental lab. The lab is certified by the US Department of Agriculture and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. It offers in-kind use of lab space, refrigeration, microscopes, etc. The LCHD lab is a public health lab whose range of services involves microbiological and or chemical analysis of ground water, surface water, food and human clinical specimens.

### **Resources Required:**

LCHD will contribute the following resources, course development, subject matter experts, video equipment, website hosting and administration.

LCHD will cooperate with the Western Wisconsin Technical College Culinary Management Program for facilities use and possibly, students as actors.

### **Transferability/Benefit to Other Local Public Health Agencies:**

The course LCDH proposes to develop will be a stand-alone course. This course will be made available to all Wisconsin LPHA's and any other LPHA for use in training commercial and institutional food handlers in the proper procedures for responding to food related illness complaints. The information in it will help the country move toward its Health People 2010 goals.

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<sup>1</sup>Mead et al. "Food Related Illness and Death in the United States." Emerging Infectious Diseases Vol.5.No.5 (1999): Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Atlanta, Georgia, USA

<sup>2</sup> La Crosse County Health Department, Internal sources, 2003

<sup>3</sup>Jones et al. "Limitations to Successful Investigation and Reporting of Foodborne Outbreaks: An analysis of Foodborne Disease Outbreaks in Foodnet Catchment Areas 1998-1999." Clinical Infectious Disease Vol 38 (1999): S297-S302.

<sup>4</sup> U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food Safety and Inspection Service, Report to Congress, FoodNet: An Active Surveillance System for Bacterial Foodborne Diseases in the United States, April 1998, p. 3

<sup>5</sup> <http://weha.net/home/docs/foodmanagerweha.pdf>, Accessed June 29, 2005

**NACCHO Foodborne Illness Systems Demonstration Project**

**La Crosse County Health Department**

**Project Timeline**

**July 11, 2005**

January 2006	February 2006	March 2006	April 2006	May 2006	June 2006
Project research and gather materials	Course development	Course development	Pilot presentations of course Course evaluations and modifications	Present course	Present course Final modifications
July 2006	August 2006	September 2006	October 2006	November 2006	December 2006
Present course	Present course	Present course DVD filming	Present course Editing	Present course Editing	Present course Evaluation, publication, and dissemination

**Budget**

**La Crosse County Health Department  
La Crosse, Wisconsin  
The La Crosse County Health Department Foodborne Illness Systems Improvement  
Program**

July 11, 2005

Proposed invoice of work  
(Based on 12-Month Budget)

**A. Direct Salaries and Wages**

**Personnel**

**Total \$22,000**

<b>Position Title and Name</b>	<b>Annual Salary</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Months</b>	<b>Amount Requested</b>
HEALTH EDUCATOR I ANNE WINEGARDEN, MPH	\$40,287	40%	12	\$16,400

**Justification**

**Health Educator I  
Anne Winegarden**

Anne Winegarden, MPH, CHES has been an educator with the La Crosse County Health Department since September 2003. Her areas of responsibility include, the LCHD employee health program, adult health screening, childhood injury prevention, traffic safety, HIV testing and education, and Sexually Transmitted Infection education. Anne has extensive experience in small group presentations. Should this grant be funded she will commit to becoming a Wisconsin Department of Health ServSafe® Manager Certification Instructor.

**B. Direct Staffing Fringe Benefits**

**Fringe Benefits**

**Total \$5,600**

34% of Total Direct Staff Salaries = Fringe Benefits



**C. Equipment****Total \$ 0**

Item Requested	How Many	Unit Cost	Amount	Purchase
0			0	

**Justification**

LCHD is requesting no equipment for this project, LCHD and Western Wisconsin Technical College have the video taping and editing equipment necessary to produce and deliver this course.

**D. Supplies****Total \$2,000**

Item Requested	How Many	Unit cost	Amount	Purchase
DVD reproduction costs and labels Includes course printed materials			\$2,000.00	Throughout the year

**Justification**

1. Blank DVD's for recording along with labels and production costs

**E. Travel: Mileage within La Crosse County****Total \$350**

864 miles X \$.405 per mile

**Original Request****Total \$300**

Cost of ServSafe® Instructor Certification \$300

**Justification**

This training will guarantee our course presentation will dovetail perfectly with ServSafe® principles.

**F. Other****Total \$2,350****Western Wisconsin Technical College****\$1,800**

**Justification**

These funds will be used for facility support, WWTC culinary management kitchen facilities, production studio, and editing facilities. It will also cover consultation from WWTC staff.

**Evaluation Consult Fee** **\$350**

**Justification**

Derek Moore, MPH in house epidemiologist, consultation fee for questionnaire development and results evaluation.

**Grant Specific Postage** **\$200**

**Justification**

1. Bulk mailing of course announcements to licensed food facilities biannually (307 facilities)

**Indirect Costs @ 10%** **\$3,000**

**Grand Total Requested** **\$30,000**