

NEHA NEWS

New Policy Statement Approved to Support the Profession

In January 2023, the Board of Directors of the National Environmental Health Association (NEHA) approved an update policy statement on the Registered Environmental Health Specialist/Registered Sanitarian (REHS/RS) credential. Environmental health programs carried out by REHS/RS credentialed individuals, as well as other credentialed personnel, serve to prevent illness, injury, and death. Credentialed personnel within these programs work to improve the health and quality of life of people living in their communities. Their services prevent adverse health outcomes and help communities prepare for, respond to, and recover from disease outbreaks and disasters.

NEHA supports the credentialing of the environmental health workforce, in particular people who earn the REHS/RS credential. This credential is recognized in many states and the District of Columbia. Additionally, some jurisdictions have local environmental health credential programs that are required for the practice of environmental health.

A credentialed environmental health workforce is essential to meet the demands required of federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial environmental health agencies. As such, NEHA supports the following:

- Health is the basis of prosperity in every community.
- Safe food, safe drinking water, clean air, safe sewage disposal, emergency response, and healthy living and workplace environments are basic necessities for communities.
- Assuring health equity and a healthy living environment requires a workforce of well trained and technically competent environmental health specialists and sanitarians who are credentialed.
- Environmental health agencies and industry partners should strive to attract and retain credentialed and trained environmental health professionals to provide capacity and quality in their environmental health programs.

The policy statement was drafted by the NEHA Credentialing Committee and NEHA staff. The policy will sunset in January 2026. Visit www.neha.org/policy to view the full statement, as well as other policy statements on body art, climate change, food safety, preparedness, vector control, water quality, and more.

NEHA Staff Profiles

As part of tradition, we feature new staff members in the *Journal* around the time of their 1-year anniversary. These profiles give you an opportunity to get to know our staff better and to learn more about the great programs and activities going on in your association. This month we are pleased to introduce you to three NEHA staff members. Contact information for all NEHA staff can be found on pages 44 and 45.



Joetta DeFrancesco

I joined the NEHA Entrepreneurial Zone team in April 2022 as the Retail Program Standards coordinator working on the NEHA-FDA Retail Flexible Funding Model (RFFM) Grant Program. Coming from a state regulatory agency, I was excited to begin work as the importance of this grant program and the impact of the funds are well understood.

My role here involves supporting grantees to aid in the successful completion of their grant work. This support can be anything from reviewing grant reports to developing guidance to aiding jurisdictions in meeting the Voluntary National Retail Food Regulatory Program Standards or reaching out to our stakeholders to share information. It is a job I not only enjoy but also get the pleasure of working with a remarkable group of professionals to help improve food safety nationwide.

My background includes 14 years with a state regulatory agency, most recently running retail quality assurance and training with a team that was responsible for all aspects of the training and certification process for all new inspection staff. Prior to working for the state, I spent over 20 years working in both restaurant and private club food service operations. Additionally, I have taught as an adjunct instructor for both business and hospitality courses.

When not working for NEHA you can find me gardening, spending time with friends and family, taking my camper on adventures, or enjoying countless other hobbies.



Adrienne Gothard

After I received my undergraduate degree in nutrition and dietetics from the University of Northern Colorado, I began my professional career as a clinical dietitian in an acute care hospital. During my 10 years at the hospital, I wore many hats while providing nutritional care to patients in clinical and food services. I greatly enjoyed being

able to care for patients and serve as a leader in the nutrition department. I realized, however, that I wanted to be part of preventing disease, not just treating it.

This realization led me to begin graduate studies in public health. I started my journey with NEHA as an intern while I was finishing up my master of public health from the University of Nebraska Medical Center. From the moment I started, I knew that NEHA was an organization where I could really see myself thriving and making a difference. I was hired full time in April 2022 to assume the role of internship coordinator for the National Environmental Public Health Internship Program. I love getting to work with students who are passionate about environmental health and connecting them with

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opportunities that help them grow. Through their passion and experiences, I get to learn more about the world of environmental health.

I am a Colorado native and I love the life that I have built for myself here with the help of my husky named Finn. My favorite things to do are travel, go boating or camping with friends, and play any type of game—especially volleyball and yard games. My ideal day includes the company of friends or family, good food, and a small dose of friendly competition!



Elizabeth Grenier

I am a senior project coordinator at NEHA. I primarily support our events but also assist with other projects. I oversee and coordinate all of the planning and logistics for our Retail Program Standards Symposium (RPSS). I work closely with all of the teams that are involved, including content and education, marketing, and the NEHA-FDA

RFFM Grant Program leadership. My job is to ensure nothing is overlooked so that we produce a seamless and thorough event. I also provide support to our Annual Educational Conference & Exhibition. I handle all presenter and moderator logistics and communications, as well as provide any additional assistance to overall

conference planning and on-site support. Additionally, I assist with other NEHA-sponsored meetings and events, as needed. Lastly, I support the NEHA-FDA RFFM Grant Program in various capacities.

I am passionate about planning events and all of the logistical aspects that are involved in producing an event. I love that my efforts lead to an experiential product that provides a space and purpose for others. Additionally, I really enjoy that every event is different, held in a new location, produced with diverse elements, and with different needs and new challenges. So each day is exciting and unique. I look forward to planning more events—possibly larger or more complex—to further engage our audience.

I graduated from California Polytechnic State University, Pomona, with my bachelor's of science in international business and marketing management. I have had a diverse professional experience, which I think has prepared me for the role I am currently in. I have worked in hotel hospitality in various capacities, which has given me a great deal of understanding of hotel operations, contracts, and food and beverage—all integral elements for events. I have also worked at the university level, which has provided a wealth of knowledge in the world of grants, grant cycles, and reporting. The NEHA-FDA RFFM Grant Program is a federally-funded program that supplements the RPSS. Producing an event within the parameters of a grant brings on a whole new set of challenges that must be understood before you can start planning.

**Find Your People.
Find Your Training.
Find Your Resources.**

Join our environmental health community. It is the only community of people who truly understand what it means to do what you do every day to protect the health of our communities.

Join us today. Your people are waiting.

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Additionally, I have worked with various organizations planning meetings and events—everything from corporate, promotional, charitable, and social events. I have a diverse background that is based in events and have had the opportunity to find processes that work well when producing an event.

Outside of my professional career, I enjoy traveling, dancing, live music, trying new foods, spending time with my family, and my cats.

Recognize Excellence With a NEHA Award

We know that we do not join the environmental health profession to get rich. We can, however, honor the good work of our colleagues by recognizing and celebrating them with an environmental health award from NEHA. Please consider nominating a colleague for their work to protect and support your communities. Awards will be presented at the NEHA 2023 Annual Educational Conference & Exhibition in New Orleans, Louisiana, on July 31–August 3.

While awards may not have monetary value to the awardee, they acknowledge the contribution to the success of your organization and the profession, which also boosts morale and motivation. More information about the awards and the nomination and application processes can be found at www.neha.org/awards.

- **Walter S. Mangold Award:** The Mangold Award is our most prestigious honor and recognizes an individual for exceptional contributions to the advancement of the environmental health profession. The deadline for nominations is May 15.
- **Joe Beck Educational Contribution Award:** The Beck Award recognizes an individual or team for an educational contribution designed for the advancement of environmental health professionals through instruction or development of an educational or training tool. The deadline to submit an application is May 15.
- **Dr. Bailus Walker, Jr. Diversity and Inclusion Awareness Award:** The Diversity Award honors an individual or group that has made significant achievements in the development or enhancement of a more culturally diverse, inclusive, and competent environment. The deadline to submit an application is May 15.
- **Walter F. Snyder Award:** The Snyder Award honors an individual for outstanding accomplishments in environmental and public health protection. The award is presented in partnership with NSF. The nomination deadline is May 1.

American Indian and Alaska Native Resources

NEHA has compiled an online resource webpage of tool kits and guides that can be used to help support American Indian and Alaska Native environmental health agencies. The following is a list of funding opportunities, educational resources, and programmatic support provided on the webpage at www.neha.org/ai-an-toolkits.

- **Tribal Lead Guidebook:** From the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA), this guidebook provides tribal communities an educational tool to discuss potential lead exposure and promote in-home activities that parents, grandparents, childcare providers, and others can do to reduce childhood lead exposure.

- **Disaster Response Tool Kit:** From the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the Tribal Mitigation Planning Handbook is a tool for tribal governments to use in developing a mitigation plan that meets the requirements of Title 44. It focuses on practical approaches for how tribal governments can build mitigation plans that reduce long-term risk from natural hazards.
- **Community Health Assessment for Public Health Accreditation Guide and Tool Kit:** From the Inter-Tribal Council of Arizona, this resource provides support for tribal leaders, health professionals, and community members in the planning and implementation of community health accreditations.
- **American Indian and Alaska Native Environmental Health Recognition Awards:** From NEHA, these awards are an opportunity for leaders in tribal environmental health to showcase the important work they do to protect the health of their communities.
- **Resource Guide for American Indians and Alaska Natives:** From the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), this resource guide provides a summary of USDA programs available to tribal leaders and residents, 1994 land-grant colleges and universities, businesses, and nongovernmental organizations.
- **Tribal Environmental Health Research:** From the U.S. EPA, this resource discusses outcomes and results of tribal environmental health research from U.S. EPA-funded grants over the past decade. This research has yielded data, tools, products, methods, and knowledge that can help better define and reduce the health risks of tribal populations, protect natural resources essential to cultural and spiritual practices, and encourage ecological knowledge and tribal practices of protecting and preserving the Earth for future generations.
- **Guidebook for Developing Tribal Water Quality Standards:** From the National Tribal Water Council, this guidebook focuses on the fundamental element of any water quality management program—water quality standards.
- **Strengthening Environmental Health Programs and Services in Your Tribal Community:** From the Division of Environmental Health Services within the Indian Health Service, this tool kit can assist tribal communities in developing and implementing environmental health programs. The goal of the tool kit is to provide a set of resources to assess and strengthen environmental health programs and services to support a comprehensive, integrated approach to environmental health. The second goal is to clearly identify and support operational standards for a governmental environmental health system.
- **Tribal Green Building Tool Kit:** From the U.S. EPA, this tool kit is designed to help tribal officials, community members, planners, developers, and architects develop and adopt building codes to support green building practices. 🌱