

Local Health Departments Keep Food Safer

Foodborne illness affects 48 million Americans every year, resulting in 128,000 hospitalizations and 3,000 deaths. Local health departments are an essential part of the process that ensures that food is safe to eat at home, community events, in restaurants, and in schools. Local health professionals work with state, local, and national partners to prevent, identify, and respond to outbreaks of foodborne illness.

Many local health departments have diminished capacity due to budget pressures on state and local governments. This means there are fewer inspectors and trained food service professionals to identify risks and prevent foodborne illness.

To keep the public food supply safe, NACCHO recommends the following in FY2015:

Food and Drug Administration

Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition

FY2014: \$883 million | **FY2015 President:** \$903 million

FY2015 NACCHO Request: \$903 million

The Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition (CFSAN) supports partnerships at the local, state and federal level to protect consumers from, and quickly respond to foodborne illness outbreaks. CFSAN also oversees the foods safety training program which helps to maintain uniform standards in food inspection and the retail food safety initiative which provides best practices for employees in restaurants, schools, hospitals, nursing homes and other public places.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*

*Figures include Working Capital Fund

Food Safety

FY2014: \$40 million | **FY2015 President:** \$50 million

FY2015 NACCHO Request: \$54 million

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) investigates outbreaks of foodborne illness that cross state lines and finds the source of disease. This increase in funding will enable CDC to improve outbreak and response timeliness and help address deficits in local capacity to prevent and stop illness. In 2013, CDC investigated more than 220 clusters of illness caused by E. coli, Salmonella, Listeria and other bacteria. CDC also helped identify the source of more than 35 foodborne disease outbreaks that involved 15 recalls of contaminated food items.



Local health departments inspect restaurants, schools, daycare centers, hospitals, grocery stores, and some food manufacturing plants to ensure safe food handling practices and sanitary conditions.

CDC has strong partnerships with state and local health departments and federal regulatory agencies...to ensure a robust national food safety system.

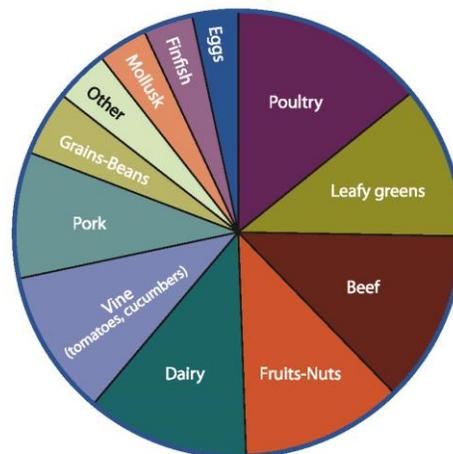
*National Center for Emerging and Zoonotic Infectious Diseases:
Our Work, Our Stories
February 2013*

Local Health Departments Work with Partners to Protect the Food Supply

The George Washington University report, “Stronger Partnership for Safer Food,” highlights the efforts of local health departments to protect the health of their communities through:

- **Retail and food service licensing and inspections.** Local health departments use licensing and inspections to reduce the risk of contamination in retail food facilities. According to the Association of Food and Drug Officials, local health departments conducted over three quarters of a million inspections (760,749) in 2009.
- **Food retail facility trainings and technical assistance.** Local health departments are responsible for training and certifying food safety managers at grocery stores, restaurants, and mobile food unit operations. They offer trainings in multiple languages and formats to meet the training needs of food handlers.
- **Frontline surveillance.** Local health departments are often the first to receive and respond to reports of potential foodborne illness outbreaks and food safety related consumer complaints at the local level.
- **Outbreak response and recall efforts.** Local health departments respond to outbreaks, participate in recall efforts, and communicate with the public about outbreaks and recalls. A foodborne disease outbreak on average requires 15% of a local health department’s entire staff in addition to the staff whose primary responsibility is foodborne outbreak response.
- **Public education and outreach.** Local health departments utilize varied marketing and outreach techniques to educate the public on the importance of food safe practices.

Foods that caused 1,000 foodborne disease outbreaks, 2006–2011*



**There were 1,011 outbreaks and 25,200 illnesses reported.*
Foodborne Disease Outbreak Surveillance System, 2012

The **National Association of County and City Health Officials** is the voice of the approximately 2,800 local health departments across the country. These city, county, metropolitan, district, and tribal departments work every day to ensure the safety of the water we drink, the food we eat, and the air we breathe.

For more information, go to www.naccho.org/topics/environmental/foodsafety/index.cfm.

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