

FDA Announces a Change of Grantee Institution for the *Building an Integrated Food Safety System Online Research and Collaboration Development* (FoodSHIELD) Cooperative Agreement Program.

Constituent Update

October 29, 2021

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is pleased to announce the transfer of the *Building an Integrated Food Safety System Online Research and Collaboration Development* (FoodSHIELD) cooperative agreement to the Association of Food and Drug Officials (AFDO). This cooperative agreement will continue to serve as a critical Federal, State, Local, Tribal, Territorial collaboration and research tool enabling the planning and implementation of a secure and collaborative online system. The FDA would also like to thank The University of Minnesota's Food Protection and Defense Institute (FPDI) for its tremendous accomplishments in the development, maintenance and continuous improvements to the FoodSHIELD portal.

Barbara Cassens, Director of FDA's Office of Partnerships offered the following comments on the transfer of the grant from FPDI to AFDO: "Protection of the nation's food supply is a responsibility that is shared across all levels of government. This cooperative agreement supports an Integrated Food Safety System (IFSS) by providing a central location for resource and information sharing between State, Local, Territorial, Tribal (SLTT) and federal food safety partners. The FDA looks forward to continuing this cooperative agreement with AFDO in our efforts to protect public health."

AFDO will receive up to \$4.8 million over four years to directly support the Agency's efforts to build an Integrated Food Safety System by supporting the FoodSHIELD portal, a collaborative web-based system for communication, coordination, education, and training among the nation's food and agriculture sectors.

"AFDO continues to partner with State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial food safety agencies and the FDA to assist these key stakeholders in achieving the food safety needs of their programs," says Steven Mandernach, AFDO executive director. "AFDO's engagement in FoodSHIELD dates back to the inception of the project as a key stakeholder/supporter that advocated for and provided key feedback on the initial project. AFDO has a long-term relationship with the key information technology (IT) partner who had developed the FoodSHIELD platform, allowing for ongoing consistency and a streamlined leadership transition."

The ability to share information with various levels of security is necessary to protect public health and build strong regulatory programs. The FoodSHIELD portal allows for leveraging of resources by all food safety partners, such as best practices, risk factor studies, outbreak information, and training materials, to advance food safety and protect public health.

“FoodSHIELD is a “mission critical” portal with approximately 20,000 users. AFDO’s work in other information technology projects allows for leveraging resources and best practices into a larger IT portfolio. This centralized online environment houses databases of current information for regulatory agencies, laboratories, and role-based contacts where information risks are controlled and mitigated,” says Mandernach.

FoodSHIELD remains a central location for sharing information on food protection issues, tools, and resources with food safety partners. Secure portals for members of specific workgroups will continue to allow agencies to share non-public information related to emergency response activities, agency policies and procedures, best practices, and training. This enhanced collaboration has resulted in greater awareness of potential vulnerabilities, the creation of more effective prevention programs, new surveillance systems, and the ability to respond more quickly to outbreaks of foodborne illness.

For additional information, please email the Office of Partnerships in FDA’s Office of Regulatory Affairs at OP.Feedback@fda.hhs.gov.