

Notice of Participation

This document identifies the agency/program and personnel participating in the National Environmental Assessment Reporting System (NEARS).

NEARS is a surveillance program through the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) National Center for Environmental Health to capture environmental causes of foodborne illness outbreaks. In April 2014, agencies/programs participating in NEARS are asked to begin reporting all foodborne illness outbreak environmental assessment data into the NEARS. Information collected through NEARS will be used to

- Establish a detailed characterization of food vehicles and monitor food vehicle trends,
- Identify and monitor contributing factors and their environmental antecedents,
- Provide a basis for hypothesis generation regarding factors that may support foodborne outbreak events, and
- Guide planning, implementation, and evaluation of food safety programs

Food safety programs and the food industry will thereby have information to guide the planning, implementation, and evaluation of foodborne illness prevention activities. NEARS highly encourages state participation. Agencies/programs that choose to participate must identify <u>one</u> **NEARS group administrator** who will be responsible for the following:

- Identifying and verifying all data collectors entering NEARS data for the agency/program
- Monitoring, verifying, and approving all data entered into NEARS for the agency/program
- Serving as NEARS group point of contact (POC) for agencies/programs to CDC

NEARS group administrators are encouraged to complete CDC's free e-Learning on Environmental Assessment of Foodborne Illness Outbreaks.

Printed Name of NEARS Group Administrator: ______

Title: _____

Agency: ______



NEARS Data Collectors

Data collectors will be responsible for entering all environmental assessment data related to the foodborne illness outbreak. The data entered will then be reviewed and approved for submission to CDC by the NEARS group administrator. The person who enters data into NEARS may be the environmental health specialists who conducted the environmental assessments during a foodborne illness outbreak and/or another person assigned by the agency/program to enter environmental assessment data related to the outbreak.

NEARS data collectors will

- Be knowledgeable and familiar with outbreak investigation(s) entered into NEARS.
- Collaboratively work with epidemiological and laboratory agencies/programs to collect applicable outbreak data.
- Input and verify all data entered into NEARS.

NEARS data collectors are encouraged to complete CDC's free e-Learning on Environmental Assessment of Foodborne Illness Outbreaks.

Please list all data collectors. (There is no limit on the number of agency/program data collectors.)

Name	Title	Agency	Phone	E-mail	Completion of Environmental Assessment Training (Y/N)



Name	Title	Agency	Phone	E-mail	Completion of Environmental Assessment Training (Y/N)

Agencies/programs may participate in NEARS <u>only</u> after obtaining acknowledgment from a relevant agency official (e.g., Food Safety Director). This document should be used to obtain such acknowledgment and should be submitted by e-mail to <u>NEARS@cdc.gov</u> after completion.

Printed Name of State Acknowledging Official: _____

Title: _____

Agency/Program: ______



This document serves as an agreement of participation of (agency/program)
______ in the National Voluntary Environmental Assessment Information
System (NEARS) of the National Center for Environmental Health, Centers for Disease Control and
Prevention (CDC).

I further understand that (agency/program)	is solely responsible
for the accuracy of data submitted and entered into NEARS. In addition, data en	tered into NEARS can be
used at the discretion of CDC. However, data requests made outside of the parti	icipating
agency/program (e.g., other federal, state, and local agencies, academia, etc.) ca	an be shared upon
written consent of (agency/program)	

Signature _____

Date _____

NOTE: The agency/program <u>must</u> inform CDC in writing if the NEARS group administrator or any data collector(s) no longer needs access to NEARS within 3 business days of the event. Additionally, all NEARS users <u>must</u> notify CDC of lost or compromised passwords immediately. These notifications can be received via telephone or email.