

Coalition of Food Protection Task Forces Best Practices Manual



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2 BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

2.1 What is the purpose of the Coalition of Food Protection Task Forces Best Practices?

The purpose of this best practices document is to provide food protection task force (FPTF) stakeholders with information to help build, maintain, and continuously improve the quality of their task force. Food protection task forces play a vital role in our nationally integrated food safety system. They accomplish this by enhancing and promoting foodborne illness prevention, intervention, and response education and outreach activities that benefit consumers and our food industries.

Successful task forces protect public health through reduction of foodborne illness and consumer injury by contributing to food safety system integration, communication, and collaboration. State and District of Columbia food regulatory programs, the United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food Safety and Inspection Services (FSIS) have supported task forces for a number of years to promote food safety education and voluntary compliance with regulations aimed at protecting the public from foodborne illness.

The Coalition of Food Protection Task Forces (CFPTF), comprised of representatives from each state task force, FDA, and FSIS, contributed to this document in collaboration with other subject matter experts (SMEs) representing local, state, and federal regulatory agencies, and academia.

While there are many food safety and inspection resources, there are few guidance documents targeted towards task force members themselves. This document will help food safety stakeholders build new or strengthen existing task forces and inspire them to leverage their wealth of knowledge as SMEs with other task forces and food safety stakeholders, nationally and globally.

The CFPTF welcomes your feedback and recommendations to enhance future revisions of the CFPTF Best Practices Manual as we grow and learn from each other. Comments can be sent to odp.feedback@fda.hhs.gov.

2.2 What is a Food Protection Task Force?

A FPTF is usually established by a state food regulatory agency to address specific issues and conditions that may result in foodborne illness or injury, whether intentional or unintentional. The FDA Office of Domestic Partnerships identified 41 state FPTFs in 2020. As of 2025 there are 40 state FPTFs, 23 are funded and 17 are unfunded. The FDA Office of Domestic Partnerships offers a Flexible Funding Model (FFM) cooperative agreement with a FPTF funding track to support convening food safety related meetings with government, industry, academia, and consumer stakeholders. Meetings funded as part of the FFM FPTF track aim to foster communication, cooperation, and collaboration within the states among

state, local, federal, and tribal human and animal food protection, public health, agriculture, and regulatory agencies.

Stakeholders in a FPTF may represent:

- local, state, tribal, and federal regulatory and public health officials
- members of the food industry and their associations
- food safety consultants
- members of academia who represent a diverse group of educators, learners, and learning environments
- consumer organizations
- law enforcement

All members contribute various perspectives and resources related to foodborne illness prevention, intervention, and response. By working together, the FPTF members help to identify high priority food safety issues within their jurisdiction and find solutions to protect the food supply and public health.

2.3 Outcomes associated with a strong and effective Food Protection Task Force

Task forces that conduct education and outreach for the food industry can promote voluntary compliance with human and animal food laws and regulations. Food regulatory officials are often heard saying “educate before you regulate” when referring to a key step in the successful implementation of the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA).

Foodborne illness prevention is a cornerstone of FSMA. Task forces can provide food safety education and exchange of information with consumers and food workers to help improve compliance with the rules and prevent human and animal foodborne illness outbreaks.

Food regulatory programs committed to continuous improvement are enrolled in program standards that require them to conduct education and outreach activities with targeted audiences. Programs can use their task forces to improve food safety in their jurisdiction by helping them implement short and long-term prevention strategies to stop, control, and prevent foodborne illness and food contamination.

A strong FPTF can also help improve local, state, federal, and multi-jurisdictional human and animal food emergency detection, response, and post-response systems. These systems can be improved by focusing on preparedness, building strong communication channels and establishing relationships with key players before food-related incidents occur.

2.4 Importance of Food Protection Task Forces

Food safety is a core public health issue even though the domestic food supply is among the safest in the world. With today’s far-reaching and complex food supply chain, there is an increasing need to find more effective solutions to better protect consumers by preventing intentional and

unintentional food contamination.

Consumers rely on food regulatory programs to collaborate and provide efficient and cost-effective services. High functioning regulatory programs work closely with industry, other regulatory programs, and food safety stakeholders to create an intelligent and integrated risk-based food safety system.

A state FPTF is uniquely positioned as a convener of regional stakeholders in food safety and can be an effective solution within the greater national food protection framework. An increasingly globalized food supply chain, changes in consumer dietary patterns, and industry practices require continual updates to current food protection strategies. The success of this cooperation can result in greater awareness of potential vulnerabilities and the creation of more effective prevention programs which can improve our ability to respond more quickly to foodborne illness outbreaks.

Task force partnerships can help support federal food safety and animal health initiatives.

The FDA Human Foods Program (HFP) FY 2025 Priority Deliverables reiterate the importance of strengthening our regulatory partners through collaborative public health programs and mutual reliance. Task force partnerships support the FDA HFP's mission to protect and promote the health and wellness of people through science-based approaches to prevent foodborne illness, reduce diet-related chronic disease and ensure chemicals in food are safe. Task forces also support the FDA's Office of Inspections and Investigations (OII) mission to conduct rigorous, transparent, and science-based inspections and investigations, providing real-time evidence and insight essential in empowering fact-based regulatory decisions to protect public health. The FDA State task forces provide the FDA's field staff with an opportunity to enhance integration, leverage resources, and improve information sharing with their local, state, and other federal partners.

3 WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF YOUR FOOD PROTECTION TASK FORCE?

3.1 What is the vision and mission of the task force?

Food protection task forces work best when everyone engages for a common purpose or goal. Working closely with stakeholder members to identify the jurisdiction's greatest food safety problems and challenges will help a task force to identify its purpose and priorities. Risk-based evidence (such as national, regional and state foodborne illnesses, recalls, compliance, and food surveillance data) as well as new statutory mandates can be used to identify potential opportunities for improvement or innovation in a state's food safety system. It can also contribute to the development of the vision and mission statements to guide a task force's activities.

Task forces are often formed with a specific goal in mind based on a

program's authority and/or funding requirements. Activities may focus on prevention, intervention, or food emergency preparedness and surveillance. For example:

- Prevention activities consist of sharing new regulatory information with industry and developing food safety education materials for use in outreach activities.
- Intervention activities include promoting voluntary compliance based on inspection, sampling, and enforcement outcomes.
- Preparedness activities may involve development of statewide emergency contact lists, tabletop exercises, communication drills, and readiness assessments for various scenarios. Focus on food emergency surveillance includes improving detection and response communication and coordination.
- Task forces can also choose to address a combination of these goals.

If problems or challenges are not well defined, or the purpose of a task force is unclear, task forces tend to lose membership and engagement and may unintentionally fade into nonexistence. Task forces must identify common priorities (which can be built upon with additional ad hoc groups or committees) to focus on activities related to targeted audiences.

Task forces should create a vision and mission statement, particularly if they are new or are struggling to find a common purpose. Existing task forces may also want to periodically review and update current mission statements to ensure they are operating in alignment with their desired goals and objectives. Timely and accurate mission and vision statements will enhance communication, collaboration, and decision making among stakeholders and guide allocation of resources for the task force.

3.2 What task force goals are being set to address food safety challenges?

Some examples of task force goals to help create that sense of unity or common purpose include (but are not limited to) the following:

Enhance Partnerships in an Integrated Food Safety System - Task forces can help raise awareness of each stakeholder's roles and responsibilities within and outside their jurisdiction in addition to building trust amongst the stakeholders. This can create a food safety community within a state that can help facilitate identification of creative solutions to protect public health and maintain consumer confidence in the food supply.

Gather Input on Proposed Laws and Regulations – Task forces can provide a valuable forum to collect and exchange input with rule makers on proposed legal provisions designed to protect public health and safety. Responsible

legislation developed with input from stakeholders helps ensure that all voices are heard. Consumers and SMEs should be given an opportunity to provide input to ensure regulations are based on current science, are feasible, and are practical for industry to implement and regulatory programs to enforce.

Educate Stakeholders on New Laws and Regulations – Promoting voluntary compliance prior to initiating necessary enforcement actions is a cost-effective approach to protecting public health. Educating food safety stakeholders on new laws and regulations such as FSMA and its implementing regulations or newly adopted retail food codes is essential to promote voluntary compliance. With scientific advancements, regulations will always need to be periodically updated. Most jurisdictions are required to conduct outreach to impacted businesses when promulgating new regulations. A state task force can provide a forum for this outreach and ultimately sponsor training for food businesses and regulatory partners to promote voluntary compliance with new regulations. The task force also provides the opportunity to gather industry feedback about educational needs as well as feedback on the effectiveness of outreach activities.

Provide Technical Assistance – Emerging pathogens, modern laboratory methods, and information technology have all helped to improve detection, investigation, and recognition of contributing factors and antecedents necessary to fuel prevention efforts. Task forces can help businesses better understand how the food regulatory safety system works while highlighting important food safety risks. This can assist businesses in achieving voluntary compliance with changing regulations and help them proactively respond to signals of a food-related incident when they arise.

Educate Consumers – Many task forces recognize the need to promote safe food handling practices by consumers to minimize the risk of contamination. New food trends, greater interest in nutrition, the role of the diet in disease prevention, and safe food choices for high-risk populations are just some of the topics being addressed by task forces in their respective communities.

Enhance Human and Animal Food Emergency Response Preparedness – Regulatory programs responsible for responding to reports of human and animal food-related incidents, such as illness outbreaks, can use task forces for increased communication and stakeholder partnerships. The task force may serve as a platform to communicate protocols during events, build trust and relationships with partners prior to (rather than during) emergency events, and improve communication channels to disseminate public information and recommendations for hazard mitigation in a timely manner. Some task forces have been established to help build a state's food emergency response plan, including procedures for continuity of operations, which addresses a variety of events including large foodborne illness

outbreaks, intentional contamination, and natural disasters. Other task forces conduct training and exercise drills with human and animal food response partners to identify opportunities for improved collaboration and response to events.

Discuss Food Safety Issues Related to Emerging Food Trends – Consumer eating habits and new food technology pose challenges that can be addressed by a task force. These include special processes (e.g., raw vegetable juices, kombucha, and cannabidiol (CBD) in food) as well as new food service delivery and distribution systems (e.g., unattended food establishments and food sold and delivered via e-commerce). Task force members can also share valuable information about emerging trends within their industries and the impacts those changes may have on food safety. Additionally, stakeholders can share knowledge and concerns as well as gather and develop best practices from fellow task force members to improve operational practices and help ensure food safety.

Promote Implementation of Intervention Strategies – Task forces play an important role in promoting the implementation of intervention strategies. An intervention strategy is a comprehensive set of activities, initiatives, or specific tools, implemented on the part of industry and/or regulators, designed to obtain immediate and/or long-term control of foodborne illness risk factors. Intervention strategies can also be used to assist operators with obtaining active managerial control. Active managerial control means the purposeful incorporation of specific actions or procedures by industry management into the operation of their business to attain control over foodborne illness risk factors. It embodies a preventive rather than reactive approach to food safety through a continuous system of monitoring and verification. Development and implementation of effective intervention strategies is an important deliverable in the FDA's New Era of Smarter Food Safety Blueprint.

4 WHO WILL BE PART OF YOUR FOOD PROTECTION TASK FORCE?

4.1 Who are your key partners?

Active members of FPTFs may include representatives from federal, state, tribal, and local government agencies, commodity groups, food related trade associations, multiple sizes of food producers and retailers; hospitality, retailer, grocers', and food processor associations, academia, and others who collectively work together to identify and address food protection issues. Federal agencies may include regional and local FDA and USDA personnel. State and local entities may include the Departments of Agriculture, Education, and Health. Industry members may be as diverse as the regulated community within the state. The Integrated Food Safety System "wheel" (*Figure 1*) may provide some insight into the potential partners to consider

when assembling a task force:

Integrated Food Safety System



4.2 Who are your subject matter experts?

Not every member of a task force needs to be a SME in all areas, however, it is a good practice to take stock of SMEs within the state, region, and even nationally to help achieve the group’s objectives and to identify gaps in membership.

Once a task force has established key objectives, it may be necessary to recruit new or ad hoc members that are needed by the group to support planned activities. Depending on the issue at hand, SMEs can range from members of academia for scientific research activities to growers providing information on specifics related to a commodity of interest. Subject matter expert resources are often available on the CFPTF website or via industry and regulatory association conferences and trainings.

4.3 How many members should a Food Protection Task Force have?

As indicated in the following two examples, food protection task force membership

numbers may vary from state to state.

- One state's task force has a state mandated number of 16 representatives, while other states have entirely voluntary participation. In one case, the Terms of Reference specify that the chair will be a member of the food industry or academia. Another task force also has a diverse membership, including several local county health departments, state and federal regulatory food safety agencies, academia, and industry associations.

4.4 How will you measure progress towards integration on your task force?

Integration efforts should be continuous and ongoing from year to year. Examples of integration efforts may include an annual roster review and periodic focused recruitment of additional sectors such as emergency management or cooperative extension specialists to participate and maintain representation at future meetings. Reviewing the FPTF's goals and objectives can also help ensure it is meeting its primary purposes through inclusion of a diverse membership that represents a wide range of food safety and food defense entities.

A diverse membership promotes communication, coordination, collaboration, mutual reliance, and continuous improvement of task force initiatives.

The task force should ensure that the right food safety stakeholders are at the table to help define and solve identified food safety system issues. Representatives should be knowledgeable and able to communicate the concerns of their constituency. Gaps in membership can hinder sharing of key data and recommendations which ultimately impact task force outcomes.

4.5 How will you recruit new members to promote a diverse task force?

Several state task forces conduct outreach through dedicated FPTF websites. The sites provide background information on the task force's mission and membership, and invite others to participate. These websites can be found through the CFPTF website:

<https://www.foodprotectiontaskforce.com/state-task-force/>.

Other task forces recruit new members at their state's annual trade and commodity association conferences by providing informational materials at their agency's booth or including a slide about the task force in presentations, panels, and other updates during the trade shows and conferences.

Another way to generate interest in the task force is by sharing task force meeting invitations broadly to any active multiagency/external food and agriculture workgroups or committees your agency is involved with, like a state food law update workgroup.

5 WHAT ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE WILL YOUR TASK FORCE USE?

5.1 What are the roles and responsibilities of the task force members?

Task force members should be able to:

- Objectively convey information that is consistent with the organization they represent;
- Have a broad working knowledge of the agency or industry they represent and its public health responsibilities;
- Contribute to the development of task force strategies, objectives, and goals;
- Be prepared for, attend, and actively participate in a majority of meetings; and
- Have the bandwidth to follow through with individual assignments, projects, or subcommittee activities.

Some roles and responsibilities may differ within the task force. For instance, the task force may have a chair responsible for certain duties, such as recruitment, membership, meeting logistics, developing program agendas, presiding over meetings, etc. Other task forces may have subcommittees where the committee chairs are ultimately responsible for the completion of assigned projects and reporting back to the larger task force.

Other named positions within the task force can include the roles of secretary, treasurer, and member-at-large. The role of secretary may be filled by an administrative position appointed by the organizing agency. This secretary position may record and produce minutes for the task force, arrange the meetings, and post required meeting notices. The treasurer position may assist in obtaining meeting spaces if contracts are required, as well as assist with the financial reporting on grant deliverables. Members-at-large may provide a broader perspective to a voting body that might be comprised largely of regulatory agencies.

5.2 How will leadership be determined?

Task force leaders should have the ability to direct a combination of members who may share a common purpose, but have differing expertise, ideas, and goals.

Leadership (i.e., a chair, steering committee, or board-like structure) may be elected or appointed depending on the task force by-laws or other governing documents, including state statute. Operating and procedural guidelines may be developed. A task force may be able to successfully operate without governing documents, depending on the needs of the FPTF and its membership.

Some task forces have developed a chair position that rotates through various participating agencies. This offers a fresh perspective and allows the current chair to bring in new networks of professionals to the task force.

Task forces might also consider co-chairs in the event a chair cannot be present for a meeting. Some task forces include a co-chair from academia or industry to provide a non-regulatory perspective and a wider span of contacts and/or networking experience. A rotation of leadership may be good for the task force, providing an opportunity for others to engage and a chance for more input at that leadership level.

5.3 Do you need a steering committee?

A large task force may benefit from the strategic direction, decision-making, and support that a steering committee can provide. If the task force has membership capable of making high level policy decisions, a steering committee may not be necessary.

One state has an advisory board comprised of staff from the FDA district office, USDA FSIS, and management from the state Departments of Agriculture, Health, and the public health laboratory. The advisory board members are non-voting members that are available to counsel the FPTF and provide guidance. The advisory board members are responsible for relaying information to the proper authority for vetting prior to communication and distribution to the public at large. Other states have variations of this type of structure with a steering committee providing oversight.

5.4 What meeting facilitation and training skills are necessary for your task force?

The FPTF can serve as a forum to discuss and take action on various topics related to food safety and defense. As such, FPTF meetings should be run with a spirit of collaboration and mutual respect amongst those involved. Effective facilitation and training skills can help support this process:

- Facilitation skills
 - Possess organizational skills, including ability to keep the task force on-task, and following a set agenda (consider meeting ground rules, such as one person speaks at a time, everyone listens and respects one another, etc.).
 - Develop a structure that allows for open discussion and consensus building so everyone's ideas can be heard and everyone is involved in the meeting.
 - Implement project management, including the clarification of roles and responsibilities of members involved in task force meetings and exercises.
 - Identify meeting strategies to best help the task force achieve its goals and objectives.
 - Use of icebreakers and other exercises to engage group members and help members get to know one another.
 - Evaluate task force meeting/activity processes (what is working, what is not working, what could be improved, etc.).
 - Ensure outcomes/action items from the meeting are

- documented and shared with the group.
- Consider how certain outcomes should be shared with a larger audience, possibly through a task force’s website and/or through the CFPTF website.
- Training skills
 - Assess learning styles among the meeting group.
 - Utilize advanced research skills to produce quality products.
 - Adapt to the unexpected, including audience and group dynamics, environment (i.e., facility and events such as weather), and changes to speaker availability.
 - Show enthusiasm for learning, especially with the adult learner.
 - Demonstrate event planning and oversight abilities to ensure the location, environment, and scheduling are conducive to learning.
 - Being a strong public speaker, or willingness to reach out to those who are for assistance; often there will be a need to set the tone of the meeting and perform introductions or moderation.
 - Possess strong verbal and written communication skills to ensure messages are clear and concise.
 - Gain technology skills to help run the technology needed to ensure a smooth meeting (audio, video, and web-conferencing software such as Zoom and Microsoft Teams).

Training for these skills is available on-line through various vendors. For example, the Association of Food and Drug Officials (AFDO) has free professional development and skills training available for food safety professionals at <http://www.afdo.org/AFDO-professional-training/>.

6 HOW WILL YOUR FOOD PROTECTION TASK FORCE OPERATE?

Task forces across the country vary in the way they carry out routine operations based on their current needs, restrictions, and activities that need to be accomplished. Asking the following questions may assist in determining how to best structure a task force for a specific jurisdiction’s needs:

6.1 How does your task force identify and prioritize problems and challenges that will be addressed with available resources?

Many task forces identify and prioritize issues at scheduled meetings by providing an opportunity for each representative agency/organization to present updates and concerns. Routine updates and discussion items can also be provided to the chair or steering committee ahead of time through a “call for agenda items.”

The task force should also provide an avenue to report on critical events that are too urgent to wait for a scheduled meeting (e.g., email blast, e-newsletter, or virtual meeting). Prioritization can be established through group consensus.

6.2 How will your task force make decisions?

6.2.1 Does the task force have a process in place to address group dynamics and consensus building?

By-laws or terms of reference should contain a section on decision-making and consensus building. For example, one State Terms of Reference states “Decisions will be reached based upon a consensus of the members.” Determining which attendees to a FPTF meeting will make decisions is also important. Will the FPTF have designated voting members from each of the various attending/invited groups (i.e., one person per organization), or will all present in the room be part of the decision process, even if multiple persons are present from one agency?

Advisory boards or steering committees may provide counsel and guidance for specific areas of focus, projects, or responsibilities the task force aims to accomplish.

6.3 How will membership contact information be shared and updated?

Having a membership list helps to ensure effective communication of task force information to food safety stakeholders within a state or region. This not only helps with communications related to task force work, but creates a resource for task force members to call upon with specific food protection and defense questions.

Contact information is listed on several task force websites. This information may also be shared via email. This information should be updated on a regular basis when there are changes to membership, or at least annually.

Many task forces have their websites designed with a back-end member portal (also accessible through FoodSHIELD). This is another avenue for members to keep their contact information up to date, network with each other, and share potentially sensitive information or resources that would not be appropriate for formal website sharing.

A strong FPTF can also help improve local, state, federal and multi-jurisdictional human and animal food emergency surveillance, response and post-response systems by focusing on preparedness, building strong communication channels, and establishing relationships with key players before food-related incidents occur.



6.4 How will meetings be scheduled and conducted to meet the needs of your members?

Many task forces schedule routine meetings (e.g., bi-monthly or quarterly). A forum for member or representative organization updates and concerns may be provided, or presentations on selected topics important to the task force may be scheduled. Meetings should be flexible and structured to provide the most benefit to its members. Meeting lengths may be extended to provide the opportunity for a tour of a facility related to food/agriculture safety, defense, or a combination.

6.4.1 Will your task force meet face-to-face and/or virtual?

While face-to-face meetings may be the most desirable for relationship building, certain events or geographic distance of task force members may dictate virtual meetings. Regardless, the task force should offer members the capability to join meetings virtually in order to leverage the maximum participation of its stakeholders. Virtual meetings may be recorded and later made available to members and/or posted to the task force website. Use of recordings should be discussed prior to hosting the meeting. Certain presentations may or may not be appropriate for sharing publicly, and meeting coordinators may wish to have presenters confirm the ability to share presentation materials in advance.

6.4.2 What IT resources are available to support and facilitate communication and collaboration?

Technology capabilities and available resources and tools should be identified prior to each meeting (and may change with availability of funds,

new software, tools, etc.). Resources might include phone and/or video conferencing products (such as microphones, web cameras, software [WebEx, Zoom, GoToMeeting, Microsoft Teams], etc.). Internet access with a strong Wi-Fi signal may be critical for the meeting, especially for virtual presentations. Ensuring a stable connection may be more problematic with the use of virtual meeting platforms. Having a tech savvy task force member or IT support is recommended when hosting a virtual meeting.



6.5 How will task force projects be managed?

6.5.1 Who will be responsible for managing task force projects?

Some task forces have committees to address specific tasks to accomplish the mission of the task force and capitalize on the experience and expertise of the membership. Here are some examples:

- Minnesota uses subcommittees, which are generated as needed, based on the mission statement for the task force. Each subcommittee has a chair who reports out on activities and actionable items at each bi-monthly meeting and provides a written summary for the meeting minutes.
- Washington State also has the ability to create committees based on projects and action items identified by its members. When no committees are active, the task force serves as a forum for sharing regulatory updates, training, and food safety/defense best practices.

Subcommittees may focus on areas such as:

- Training and education for members
- Emerging issues (local, regional, national, global)
- Outreach/marketing/communication
- Legislative advocacy

- Food innovation
- Regulatory enforcement and compliance
- Budget/finance

Some examples of specific issues committees from various task forces have been formed to address include: Recall Audit Improvement, Laboratory, and Emergency Response. Some task forces have specific projects that require a short-term committee structure to be formed around it, such as a conference planning, poster presentation and research competition, new logo design, or even nomination of new officers. Members of the committee should have expertise in the committee's focus area.

6.5.2 How does your task force communicate objectives, resources, tasks, and timeframes needed to accomplish its work?

Communication of the task force's work and accomplishments is an important component of its essential workings. This allows for clear understanding of the tasks to be accomplished as well as marketing of the task force's activities to gather new interest and participation.

The Virginia Food Protection Task Force has committees formed by its Executive Board to accomplish the mission of the task force and capitalize on the experience and expertise of the membership. Any member of the task force may suggest the formation of a committee; the Executive Board is charged with approving the committee formation; and the Vice-Chair is tasked with communication and coordination of all committees.

The use of meeting minutes is important to ensure continuity. Distribution to all stakeholders in a timely fashion allows those not present to stay informed and provides a reminder of action items. An individual (such as the secretary or scribe) should be identified ahead of time in case presenters or other participants have questions or need to provide additional materials for sharing with the members after the meeting. This may also be accomplished through recordings in the case of virtual meetings.

The Texas Food Safety and Defense Task Force provides a forum to discuss food safety and security issues along the farm to fork continuum with a primary focus on Texas. This maintains an open dialogue with all partners in food safety and defense to promote an efficient food safety system in Texas that maximizes the protection of public health. One topic for a meeting was Emergency Management and Preparedness, which included a round table discussion about the pertinent issues and challenges being faced by each of their respective organizations.

6.5.3 How will action items, project plans, and meeting documentation be managed?

Depending on the task force, a website may be a useful tool for documentation of activities.

A task force website can be a platform for storing meeting agendas, meeting minutes, and sharing presentations and resources developed by subcommittees. FoodSHIELD also has document storage capabilities, including those of a sensitive nature for sharing only within the FPTF membership. A public facing website offers the task force increased marketing opportunities and outreach with the public, stakeholders, and partner agencies.

The same public websites may also include a member-only portal such as the Task Force Portal in CoreSHIELD for storage of documents other resources that wish to be secured. Domestic food regulatory programs have free access to the Task Force Portal, which allows them and their non-regulatory members access to work group management tools similarly found in FoodSHIELD.

For tracking progress on specific projects and maintaining completed work in a shared and accessible environment, task forces may wish to look into IT platforms such as Microsoft Teams, SharePoint, or similar document management/project management software, to ensure that projects move forward, expectations on tasks are clear, and deadlines are met.

6.6 How and what types of information will the task force be sharing?

Task forces share different information on their websites, including task force governing documents, meeting agendas, and meeting minutes.

The Iowa Food Protection Task Force provides presentations and handouts pertaining to the meetings they have scheduled. Topics from one of their meeting included:

- Assessment of Midwest Growers' Needs for Compliance with the Food Safety Modernization Act Produce Safety Rule
- The Produce Safety Rule and Produce Inspections
- Cyclospora
- Hemp/Cannabis Discussion

The presentation from Iowa shows some of the interaction between task forces, demonstrating that ideas from other areas of the country may be beneficial as a resource for another task force. Some task forces also have conferences, and the material from these conferences can commonly be found on their websites.

A note about information disclosure: Task force members must follow their

public information sharing laws, regulations, policies, and procedures to ensure that they do not release confidential commercial information, ongoing investigation information, or trade secrets during task force meetings or on task force websites. When unsure if information can be released to the task force or the public, members should always obtain approval before sharing potentially sensitive information. This will prevent breaches that can harm the credibility and integrity of work being conducted by a task force. Such breaches may also result in civil and criminal penalties and/or loss of funding.

7 HOW WILL YOUR FOOD PROTECTION TASK FORCE PROVIDE EDUCATION AND OUTREACH AND SHARE ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND LESSONS LEARNED?

7.1 What are the education and outreach needs for the task force?

The education and outreach needs for the task force should be identified and prioritized. This can be accomplished through a subcommittee and/or as an objective or standing agenda item at routinely scheduled task force meetings.

7.2 How often will the task force meet or facilitate education and outreach?

Task forces meet at different intervals. Some task forces may have minimum meeting requirements associated with statutory mandates or funding mechanisms. While a national, regional, or state emergency may impact a task force's meeting schedule, most task forces have an established schedule. Some previous examples of meetings and education events include:

- Alaska meets four times per year. Planning for a conference had to be placed on hold due to an emergency response event.
- Florida meets bi-annually. The task force has met virtually due to an ongoing emergency response event.
- Georgia meets biannually with stakeholder updates and educational presentations and an annual educational conference.
- Iowa meets biannually with educational presentations.
- North Carolina meets every other month, with an annual education conference.
- Rhode Island meets annually with a training conference.
 - From their task force documents: The education and outreach subcommittee can establish training and outreach events and update the FPTF on activities at routine scheduled meetings.
- South Carolina meets quarterly on the first Tuesday of March, June, September, and December. They have also provided training sessions on preventive controls for human and animal food and an annual conference.

States may include presentations as part of the task force meeting, while

others provide training as part of a conference, or focus on offering virtual resources:

- Michigan developed a website for Emergency Management Resources which includes different trainings/courses in topics such as:
 - Environmental assessment and sampling
 - Traceback and recall
 - Foodborne outbreak response
 - Multi-jurisdictional foodborne outbreaks (routine and non-routine)

The Michigan resources are located at:

<https://mi.foodprotectiontaskforce.com/resources/emergency-management-resources/>

- Minnesota has handouts for training on their task force website and the presentation are posted as YouTube videos. This information can be found at: <https://mn.foodprotectiontaskforce.com/training/>.
- Washington D.C. provided training for food service staff of District of Columbia Public Schools, covering basic food safety and defense concepts such as foodborne illness risk factors and good manufacturing practices. They also hold an annual DC Food Safety and Defense Conference, “a one-day meeting and educational event that brings together regulators, industry, and consumers.” This event focuses on the food safety and defense aspects of the food service community based on overall food safety inspection reports, observations, and input from industry and regulators. Presentations are often conducted by federal and the district’s regulators, as well as industry partners.
- Tennessee offers conferences to provide interaction with its stakeholders. Brochures are available on their website along with YouTube videos from the conferences:
<http://www.foodsafetytaskforce.org/resources.php>.
- Washington State ensures that a standing agenda item includes stakeholder updates in a “roundtable” format to ensure that attendees have an opportunity to discuss pressing food safety and protection matters at hand. Guest speakers covering emerging topics are usually included in the agenda as well (e.g., PFAS [Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances], media engagement).

Some state task forces work to develop products to enhance their food safety response activities. For example, the Washington State Task Force published its Food Emergency Response Plan (FERP) and a Food Emergency Response Resource Guide. The FERP summarizes multi-agency roles and responsibilities related to all-hazards human and animal food emergency response in the state. The plan also contains resources that may be useful for planning for or responding to a food emergency. It includes items developed by the task force, as well as some previously developed by others with ready-

to-use tools and links to other resources. This information can be found at: <https://wa.foodprotectiontaskforce.com/resources/washington-state-food-emergency-response-resource-guide/>.

During emergency response events, such as during the COVID-19 pandemic, messages may be developed to rapidly send out information highlighting key elements of the emergency and the impacts on businesses. With the ability to send out potentially thousands of messages/alerts, the Iowa Food Safety Task Force sent out 4 alerts within 3 months via voice call, email, and text. Messages to license holders about COVID-19 and its impact on their business were sent to up to 20,000 recipients, and 99 counties in Iowa. These included messages to facilities re-opening with restrictions.

Some task forces have held joint educational meetings with their Rapid Response Teams (RRT), even combining a quarterly meeting with a RRT tabletop exercise.

7.3 Will the task forces participate in regional and national food safety and defense association meetings?

Participants of task forces often meet at other association meetings, such as:

- Association of American Feed Control Officials (AAFCO)
- Association of Food and Drug Officials (AFDO) and its regional affiliates
- Rapid Response Team and Manufactured Food Regulatory Program Alliance (MFRPA) annual meetings.

Other opportunities for task force members to interact and even host impromptu sessions include the InFORM bi-annual meetings, National Association of County and City Officials (NACCHO), National Environmental Health Associations (NEHA) and their affiliates' conferences, and more. Task forces may also use these events as platforms to present their purpose and mission, to share information with additional stakeholders, and potentially garner new members.

Members of the South Carolina Food Safety Task Force attended task force meetings in other states (Texas and North Carolina) and the annual North Carolina Food Safety Conference. Additionally, members attended the North Carolina Food Safety and Defense Task Force meeting in Raleigh, NC to promote the South Carolina task force and discuss industry updates, specifically CBD oil in food products. One member attended the Texas Food Protection Task Force Meeting in Austin, Texas to gain insight on how other task forces conduct meetings and provide feedback to the South Carolina task force.

Foodborne illness prevention is a cornerstone of FSMA. Task forces can

provide food safety education and distribute information to consumers and food workers to help prevent human and animal foodborne illness and contamination. Food regulatory programs committed to continuous improvement are enrolled in program standards that require them to conduct education and outreach activities with targeted audiences. Programs can use their task forces to improve food safety in their jurisdiction by helping them implement short and long-term prevention strategies to stop, control, and prevent foodborne illness and food contamination.

A strong FPTF can also help improve human and animal food emergency surveillance, response, and post-response systems by focusing on preparedness, building strong communication channels, and establishing relationships with key players before food-related incidents occur.

AFDO produced a podcast called “Got Task Force?” in 2019. A former member of Iowa’s Food Protection Task Force and a Manufactured Food Regulatory Program Standards Coordinator and RRT Specialist in Michigan discusses the value of task forces:

<https://afdoaudio.podbean.com/e/got-task-force/>

7.4 Will the task force participate and contribute to industry trade group associations, meetings, or publications?

AFDO, NEHA, NACCHO, and related groups, and on-line publications provide a platform for publication and sharing of information between regulatory agencies and industry trade group associations. A task force might consider inviting industry trade group associations to participate in task force meetings and conversely, task forces may request to be invited to industry trade group association meetings.

One example of industry collaboration is the Georgia Food Safety and Defense Task Force meeting that was co-hosted with the Georgia Association of Food Protection (GAFP). The GAFP, a state affiliate of the International Association for Food Protection, consists of over 400 food safety professionals from industry, government, and academia throughout Georgia. Over 100 people attended the event held at a local brewery, which included a tour at the conclusion of the meeting. The meeting included a task force organized panel on a Romaine lettuce *E. coli* O157:H7 outbreak in 2017-2018; this was the first time the GAFP had included any type of outbreak related panel in one of its meetings. The GAFP had also never heard about the task force, so this was a source of new members from the industry and regulatory programs.

State food safety programs that do not have a FPTF may be invited to participate in an industry-hosted task force. California is a good example of

this where regulators found it better to come to the industry table after the *E. coli* O157:H7 outbreak in spinach in 2006. This task force was facilitated through the California Leafy Greens Products Handler Marketing Agreement (LGMA; <https://lgma.ca.gov/>) to work towards assuring safe leafy greens and provide confidence in the food safety programs. A commodity specific food safety guideline was first created in 2007 for the production and harvest of lettuce and leafy greens. This guideline has been continuously updated through an amendment process and a Leafy Green Food Safety Task Force managed by the Western Growers Association (LGMA Food Safety Practices/Metrics).

The Delmarva (Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia) Task Force is another example of an industry-led task force formed to address unique environmental and food safety issues on the Delmarva Peninsula. The Delmarva Farmers Union came together with industry leadership to address a series of regionally related outbreaks spanning several years. Working with industry hastened learning and understanding of production, harvesting, and distribution of produce in that specific geographic area.

Food safety regulators can become valuable members of an industry led task force, especially in the areas of manufactured food and produce.

7.5 How will the task force celebrate success stories and lessons learned with stakeholders?

Sharing success stories and lessons learned with grant providers and other task forces is especially useful for providing food safety stakeholders with tangible benefits of the FPTF, and providing good publicity for the task force itself. Having success stories provides leadership with the information it needs to ensure commitment, funding, and ongoing support of the task force's mission. Some task forces have specific education and outreach subcommittees or workgroups to support this type of goal.

The Coalition of Food Protection Task Forces and state food protection task force websites are web-based platforms that help share task force success stories from around the country. The following are a couple of examples:



Figure 2: Virginia Department of Health Hepatitis A media image

One story describes the partnership between the Virginia Food Protection Task Force, the Virginia Department of Health, and the Virginia RRT with Pandora Radio to develop a Hepatitis A Pandora Radio Campaign. The “Audio Everywhere” product reached the target audience by weaving the recorded audio advertisement seamlessly into the listening experience between songs and podcasts. The Mobile Display product worked by displaying a media image linked to a webpage when a listener interacts with their device (Figure 2). The team calculated measurable results to gauge the success of the outreach and education campaign.



2019 Food Safety Merit Award of Excellence

Director's Award Recipients

Figure 3: Washington D.C. Health Director's Certificate of Merit Award

The Washington D.C. task force presents the annual DC Health Director's Certificate of Merit Awards at its conference, recognizing DC Food Service establishments that do not exhibit any foodborne risk factors during routine inspections (Figure 3). Of the 6,500 food establishments in D.C., only a select few achieve this high award each year. Food operations demonstrate food safety excellence by having no risk factor violations, priority, or priority foundation violations on their most recent health inspection report. They must also have a certified food protection manager on site at all times during operation and adhere to strict employee health and hygiene policies and practices. The establishments must be open for at least 18 months to qualify for the award and must have undergone inspection one or twice (depending

on the business type) within the review period. Award winners vary from food trucks to specific chain restaurant locations, to large chain grocery stores, and even a government building snack bar.



Figure 4: Iowa Food Protection Task Force's – "Feeling Queasy? – Call It's Easy!" campaign

Iowa's Food Protection Task Force developed their "Ralph" campaign in 2016 (Figure 4). The "Feeling queasy? Call, it's easy!" promotion included a new, free hotline (844-IowaSic) for consumers to call to report potential cases of foodborne illness. The campaign made headlines on FoodSafetyNews.com, along with Iowa news outlets. A formal Facebook business account assists with ongoing outreach efforts. Within a year of the official launch, preliminary data indicated the state saw a 300 percent increase in the number of reports. Learn more about the campaign and read the corresponding press release at <https://ia.foodprotectiontaskforce.com/>. This example highlights the ways in which Iowa's task force identified a food safety related public health need within the community, addressed it, and promoted it in the news to garner exposure.

Press releases to promote activities and special projects/products are a great way to share updates with the public and gain free publicity if the media release is picked up by local news outlets that cover the communities within a state's task force reach.

7.6 What support for education and training can the Coalition of Food Protection Task Forces provide to a task force?

FDA provides funding to state task forces via cooperative agreements. In addition, FDA provides technical support to state task forces via the CFPTF comprised of both funded and unfunded food protection task forces. FDA also provides funding to FoodSHIELD to promote integration amongst task force communities. The CFPTF web site

<https://www.foodprotectiontaskforce.com/>) provides food safety and other resources targeted to state task forces to strengthen communication and collaboration amongst their members as well as other task force stakeholders nationwide. State task forces can use the CFPTF content and links provided for their own task forces. They can also connect with other state task forces to learn about what they are doing or share their own products and services.

The CFPTF supports task force education and outreach via online quarterly meetings and in the development of best practice guidance. The CFPTF also supports a Task Force portal, which is a web-based platform for the task force community to promote communication and collaboration.

7.6.1 Task force website development and support

Through an FDA grant with the Association of Food and Drug Officials (AFDO), support is provided to help maintain and develop public websites and secure collaboration space for the CFPTF and individual state task forces. Through these public websites, task forces can share public events and improve information sharing and networking. Mobile applications can also be built as part of this grant.

7.6.2 Task force portal in FoodSHIELD

The Task Force portals are similar to FoodSHIELD (<https://www.foodshield.org/>), which is a web-based platform that can be used by membership only within the state and national food protection task force community to communicate and share information within and among task forces and other task force stakeholders in the CFPTF. While FoodSHIELD membership is limited to regulatory programs for security purposes, the Task Force portal gives access to non-regulatory task force members such as industry and academia partners to promote collaboration, communication, and information sharing in a secure, online environment.

Each task force has their own portal, which has a web address linked to their state. It allows for custom branding, images, and color scheme to reflect the unique attributes of each state. Communications from each state task force portal is similarly branded with task force logos. Web meetings such as Zoom and Teams will also be shown in the Task Force branding for a complete experience.

Any member of a state task force can access their state portal to create their own workgroup for collaboration. Workgroups can be made public to all members or kept private for use by only work group members or teams. State task forces can store and share documents, create meetings using Zoom Gov, and facilitate communication and interactive collaboration.

Internal communication tools include emailing and text messaging.

Multiple workgroup types are being created, with more as needs are defined. Collaboration Workgroups focus on document sharing, meetings, and messaging. Response Workgroups include documents, meetings, SecureSend, FAQs (frequently asked questions), links, messaging, web forms, and alerts. Project Workgroups include document library, project manager, meetings, calendar, and discussions.

Workgroups are meant to be unique to each, allowing an administrator to choose from 20 different modules to help groups reach their objectives. The Task Force IT team can also create custom workgroups for a task force to create specific rules for activities. Examples include always inviting certain members to each new group, requiring a series of data points with each document upload, or customizing security.

Task Force portal applications can be used to facilitate collaboration. For example, the SecureSend application allows sharing of large documents such as PowerPoint presentations and educational brochures that may be too large to email.

Available task force portal applications include:

- Alerts
- Documents Libraries
- Links / FAQs
- Photos
- Video Gallery
- Calendars
- Meetings & Scheduling Support
- Project Management
- Training Manager
- Newsletter Manager
- Virtual/In Person Event Management
- Survey/Web Data Entry Forms Manager
- Online Databases
- Workgroups

The Task Force portal now includes analytics to support reporting on activities from their state task force across all workgroups. Specific workgroups can independently access reports on their activities to highlight successes of each workgroup; the Task Force IT team can enable specific reports that may be uniquely needed for each project.

7.6.3 Coalition of Food Protection Task Forces website

The CFPTF website (<https://www.foodprotectiontaskforce.com/>) includes:

- a central repository for links to the state task forces websites

(<https://www.foodprotectiontaskforce.com/state-task-force/>)

- an event listing
- resources on food protection
- public policy
- stakeholder food safety education conferences and events
- task force tools
- and a resource library

Sliding banners on the home page feature current news and task force success stories.

7.7 How can task force members take a leadership role in the Coalition of Food Protection Task Forces?

7.7.1 Advisory Committee

Task force members can provide leadership and direction for the CFPTF by being a member of the Advisory Committee. The Advisory Committee consists of representatives from both the FDA and funded state representatives.

7.7.2 Ad hoc work group projects

Task forces members may be asked to help with ad hoc workgroup projects to benefit the CFPTF as a whole.

7.7.2.1 Coalition of Food Protection Task Force Best Practices document

Task force members play a vital role in supporting each other with the development of best practices and guidance materials. This best practice document was prepared by a workgroup consisting of state task force representatives, FDA partners, and AFDO, with the intent to support the development and continuous improvement of state task forces and improve communication and leveraging of task force resources. The vision is that this document will be periodically reviewed and updated by a standing work group of task force SMEs, as task force best practices continue to evolve.

7.7.2.2 Quarterly meeting planning

Task force members can facilitate education and outreach meetings for the CFPTF. The CFPTF provides support to state task forces, including direct financial support for funded task forces. The CFPTF aims to meet with interested stakeholders through quarterly virtual meetings/webinars. Task forces (both funded and unfunded) are provided an opportunity to facilitate the quarterly calls, presenting success stories of their own task force, or

recruiting another state's task force or SME to present on topics of interest. The FDA Office of Domestic Partnerships provides planning and administrative support for these meetings. These meetings may also include information for funded states, such as reporting deadlines, deliverables, etc.

7.7.3 Coalition of Food Protection Task Forces website workgroup

Task force members have the opportunity to provide input to the [CFPTF website](#). The workgroup typically meets bi-weekly to continuously improve the CFPTF website and task force portal functionality and to address needed website content. Members can help identify new topics and events for the website such as projects, outreach, and training.

8 HOW WILL YOUR TASK FORCE PROGRESS AND CONTINUOUSLY IMPROVE?

8.1 How will the task force evaluate education and outreach?

8.1.1 Task force activity evaluations

8.1.1.1 To ensure the most effective and efficient use of everyone's resources, it is recommended that task forces consider periodically evaluating their education and outreach activities to identify strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for improvement of their strategies and the materials used to reach their targeted audience.

8.1.2 Surveys

Meshing education goals for the audience and the task force is important so that the expectations of the activity are met by both. One task force provided evaluation results obtained from a public workshop on packaging and labeling. Feedback from attendees was generally positive as evidenced by the event evaluations and the comments from the workshop coordinator. A survey is a valuable feedback mechanism to gather this type of input, to help plan future meetings and understand the areas for improvement.

8.2 How will the task force periodically assess and communicate their activities, outcomes, and opportunities for improvement?

Evaluations can and should be periodically performed on the task force's activities. The evaluation or assessment should identify gaps and areas for enhancement to ensure continual improvement. Assessing gaps (e.g., Does the task force have a web site? Is one needed? Who is the audience (public or members only?)) can be performed by questioning the group when meeting or through simple surveys, executed through the FoodSHIELD platform.

8.2.1 What performance measures will the group use to assess progress?

Performance measures should be agreed upon and measured to assess progress towards task force goals and grant deliverables, if grant funded. Measurement of the success of individual activities, such as meetings or conferences, might include program attendance and the number of different partners/stakeholders represented.

Success outcomes, such as the results of task force activities, are also important. For example:

- Washington State purchased a portable virtual conference kit to provide remote access to task force meetings. As a result, there was increased attendance at meetings, especially by those partners who were not able to travel across the state to attend in-person.
- Virginia's Pandora Hepatitis A broadcast increased awareness and produced measurable results. Virginia identified one of their greatest successes was interagency collaboration.
- Another example of reportable outcomes might include the completion of a tabletop exercise. The outcomes can include answering the questions: What was learned, is there an after-action report to share, did it result in writing up guidance or result in education/outreach, etc.?

If a purpose of the task force has been mandated, reviewing the mandate and setting performance measures around them would be beneficial when reporting on the progress that the task force has made in the given reporting period. If subgroups/committees have been established within the task force, review of the subcommittees' objectives and progress on each objective could serve as a measurable outcome.

As shown in Table 1, North Carolina's task force is mandated by Executive Order Number 38, with the following requirements (three of the four are included in the table below); suggestions for thoughts on performance measures are given on the right:

Table 1:

| Specification within the Executive Order | Suggestions for performance measures |
|---|---|
| <p>Partner with state and federal agencies to conduct focused studies of the vulnerability of the State's food system to criminal and terrorist acts, and make recommendations regarding the following issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● improving safety and security of the food supply system ● reducing terrorism threat measures ● improving food safety and defense mitigation and response plans ● implementing or coordinating training for key stakeholders in the State's food supply system | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What agencies/number of agencies make up the task force? 2. Are there any gaps in this task force that need to be filled? 3. If so, how, and when will they be filled? Who will be the lead for this project? 4. Has a study of vulnerability of the State's food system to criminal and terrorist acts been conducted? If yes, describe the activity. 5. If not, are there plans or what progress has been made to this activity? 6. If yes, what recommendations are being made for the issues presented? 7. If recommendations have been made, what is the progress on those recommendations for the individual issues? |
| <p>Recommend legislation needed to improve the ability of State departments and agencies to protect the safety and defense of the State's food supply and the agricultural industry base, including legislation to protect sensitive and proprietary information of the State's food supply system, safety and defense vulnerability information, and defense plans that, if compromised, would heighten the exposure of the State's food supply system to criminal or terrorist acts.</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What agencies/number of agencies make up the task force? 2. Are there any gaps in this task force that need to be filled? 3. If so, how, and when will they be filled? Who will be the lead for this project? 4. Has a study of vulnerability of the State's food system to criminal and terrorist acts been conducted? If yes, describe the activity. 5. If not, are there plans or what progress has been made to this activity? 6. If yes, what recommendations are being made for the issues presented? 7. If recommendations have been made, what is the progress on those recommendations for the individual issues? |
| <p>Prepare an annual report no later than the 15th of December each year that includes any recommendations or proposals for changes in laws, rules, and programs that the Task Force determines to be appropriate to enhance food safety and defense in the State.</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Has the annual report for the latest year been prepared and submitted consistent with the cooperative agreement cycle? 2. If not, what are the reasons and how can this be accomplished for the coming year. 3. If it has, has there been a response to the recommendations? 4. Have these responses been reported to the members of the task force? 5. Have any recommendations or proposals been implemented or planned to be implemented? |

8.2.2 How will grant deliverable reporting be coordinated and managed where required for funding?

Grant funding to support food safety education and outreach activities, such as FPTFs, are often available from federal agencies such as FDA and from professional associations such as AFDO and National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA), which help disseminate the funding.

Many state task forces currently operate with grant funding awarded to their local and state regulatory programs. The principal investigator (PI) identified in an award is legally responsible and obligated to submit progress reports that address the status of deliverables required in their Notice of Funding Opportunity Announcement (NOFO) and Notice of Awards (NOA). Failure to submit progress reports may result in loss of funding or impact future funding opportunities.

While not always possible, it is beneficial for the PI and/or their task force administrators to clearly identify and communicate performance criteria in funding opportunities with their members for input on the application. Members can help identify specific goals and objectives to strengthen the application. Getting letters of support from key partners is also helpful, particularly when the program is applying for large amounts of funding.

Once awarded funds, a PI may delegate task force administration to someone else in their program or organization to carry out the deliverables. It is a good idea to review all deliverables as soon as possible to ensure that all parties understand the deliverables and can plan their activities accordingly.

If the PI or task force administrator is working with an external key partner such as academia to report on deliverables, the specific deliverable information, any required templates, and submission deadlines should be clearly communicated so that the PI can submit the report on time and in accordance with instructions in their award.

8.3 How frequently should a task force review and update their mission, vision, and goals?

The following questions should be asked:

- Are your task force mission and vision statements still relevant?
- Are the goals being met and still applicable?

The task force mission, vision, and goals should be reviewed periodically and refreshed if necessary. There may be clear triggers for change, such as changes in agency leadership, task force priorities, or goals that have (or have not) been met. Updating the task force mission, vision, and/or goals helps to keep the task force relevant to its membership and pertinent to current issues in food safety and food defense.

Be sure to communicate the process and the outcome of any updates to all interested parties.

8.4 How will the task force keep content and membership fresh and relevant?

Several task forces continuously update their website with new content, including meeting agendas, minutes, and presentations.

The following are two examples of the Michigan task force's efforts to engage membership:

8.4.1 Survey distribution and evaluation

Surveys and evaluations allow a FPTF to gather feedback from the group about the meeting format, topics, speakers, areas for improvement, and other comments. For example, in 2018, after receiving limited input and feedback from stakeholders on task force needs, Michigan sent out an electronic survey. The survey inquired about preferred meeting length, preferred number of meetings, joint or independent meetings, meeting topics of interest, speaker suggestions, and meeting locations, as well as an opportunity to provide open-ended feedback. A total of 68 responses were provided to the survey. A debrief session was held to review survey results and determine how meetings could be adjusted to better fit the needs identified by stakeholders in the survey. Michigan now continues to use surveys to evaluate task force meeting successes, improvements, and encourage engagement.

8.4.2 Hosting a tour as part of the task force meeting to increase interest and participation

Michigan has seen an increase in FPTF attendance by rotating meeting locations around the state and including a food and agricultural tour in partnership with industry stakeholders. One example was a joint Food Safety Alliance and Food and Agriculture Protection and Defense Working Group hosted by Ilitch Holdings/Little Caesars Pizza in Detroit on October 23, 2018. The agenda included worker safety, homeland security, foodborne outbreaks, and response presentations. The meeting highlight was a tour of Little Caesars Arena, home of the Detroit Red Wings and Detroit Pistons. Attendees had the opportunity to tour the facility to learn about security measures, stadium design and daily security and safety operations.

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STATE TASK FORCES WEBSITES (AS OF 4/30/2025)

| State | Website |
|-------|---|
| AK | https://dec.alaska.gov/eh/fss/afptf/ |
| FL | https://www.fdacs.gov/About-Us/Advisory-Councils-and-Committees/Florida-Food-Safety-and-Food-Defense-Advisory-Council |
| GA | https://ga.foodprotectiontaskforce.com/ |
| IA | https://ia.foodprotectiontaskforce.com/ |
| KS | https://www.agriculture.ks.gov/divisions-programs/food-safety-and-lodging/food-protection-task-force |
| MA | https://www.mafoodsafetyeducation.info/ |
| MI | https://mi.foodprotectiontaskforce.com/ |
| MN | https://mn.foodprotectiontaskforce.com/ |
| NM | https://nm.foodprotectiontaskforce.com/about/ |
| NC | http://www.ncfoodsafetytaskforce.com/ |
| RI | https://ri.foodprotectiontaskforce.com/ |
| SC | https://agriculture.sc.gov/divisions/consumer-protection/food-safety-task-force/ |
| TN | http://www.foodsafetytaskforce.org/ |
| TX | https://tx.foodprotectiontaskforce.com/ |
| VA | https://www.pledgeforahealthyvirginia.com/ |
| WA | https://wa.foodprotectiontaskforce.com/ |