

DEHS Directors' Meeting: 06 November 2025

[Meeting recording available](#)

Next conference call 05 February 2026 1:00-2:30PM ET

<u>Area</u>	<u>Representative</u>	<u>Area</u>	<u>Representative</u>
Alaska:	<i>Not on call</i>	Navajo:	Brian Johnson/Helena Shannon
Albuquerque:	Kimberly Smith	Oklahoma:	Danny Walters
Bemidji:	Tim Duffy	Phoenix:	Dave Cramer
Billings:	Darcy Merchant	Portland:	<i>Not on call</i>
California:	<i>Not on call</i>	Tucson:	Valeria Wyatt
Great Plains:	Tim Wildcat		
Nashville:	Charles Woodlee		
Environmental Health Support Center: Jeff Dickson			
DEHS HQ: Matt Albright; Sam Frank; Brian Hroch; Molly Madson; Stephen Piontkowski; Andrea Tsatoke			

1. Welcome and Update (Matt Albright)

- a. IHS Organizational Realignment
 - i. Nothing decided yet
 - ii. DEHS & OEHE provided input to agency leadership
- b. Billet Revisions
 - i. Led by DCPS for all categories in agency
 - ii. DEHS HQ proposed revised billets in unified approach w OEHE ENGs (e.g. same cascading language from HQ to SU)
 - iii. Streamlines number of billets to enable all positions to fit under one of the revised billets & comports with ENG/OEHE unified approach
- c. Force Management
 - i. Led by DCPS
 - ii. When USPHS applicants boarded but need to secure position, IHS can place them into a vacancy
 - iii. DEHS tried to place one in October, but candidate not interested in available locations
 - iv. DEHS needs to adopt a streamlined approach on how to track vacancies to allow more efficient placement of candidates
- d. CC Officer positions only
 - i. Led by DCPS
 - ii. Pilot of process ongoing
 - iii. Guidance to be shared when pilot complete
 - iv. Possible to advertise vacancies for COs only
 - v. Consider being placed on [Commissioned Corps Officers-Vacancy Announcements listserv](#)

- e. DEHS Annual Meeting 2026
 - i. 05-07 May 2026
 - ii. Denver, CO
 - iii. Hotel: Hilton Garden Inn nearly secured
 - iv. Agenda: ongoing w planning team
 - v. Identify Protégé
 - vi. Request for list of participants forthcoming
- f. Federal Occupational Health EH Services
 - i. Support through IAA
 - Need 7600A
 - Contract work thru 7600B (GT&C) between Area & FOH
 - ii. 4 COs, 28 Civil Service
 - iii. Costs vary depending on experience of employee
 - REHS = \$150-200 / hr
 - FOH invoices agency for travel
 - Negotiated when entering 7600B
 - iv. Services offered
 - Environmental Health Specialists / Sanitarians (registered or certified, all levels, entry to 10+ years' experience)
 - Industrial Hygienists (certified and non-certified)
 - Certified Safety Professionals
 - Fire Protection Engineers
 - Hazardous Materials Managers and Technicians
 - Certified Health Physicists
 - Environmental Microbiologists
 - Ergonomists and Safety & Health Specialists

2. Area Highlights

- a. Alaska – *Not on call* (updates submitted via email)
 - i. Typhoon Halong that affected 49 villages in western Alaska
- b. Albuquerque
 - i. Staffing
 - LT Katherine Miller PCS to USCG on 07 November
 - One vacancy forthcoming
 - ii. [IHS Travel - Required PA Approval Process](#)
 - Trying to understand new process
 - How it impacts staff
 - How it impacts ability to provide direct services
 - iii. IEH
 - Mock survey work ongoing

- c. Bemidji
 - i. Challenges
 - Hiring process
 - Actions on selections made in January 2025 to October still pending
 - [IHS Travel - Required PA Approval Process](#)
 - Trying to understand new process
 - How it impacts staff
 - How it impacts ability to provide direct services
 - OSHA inspections at OEHE field offices
 - OEHE/GSA compliant
 - Building owner not implementing corrective actions
 - GSA prepared to withhold paying rent until deficiencies corrected
- d. Billings
 - i. EH
 - Lay Vaccination program
 - Humane Society of Western Montana interested
 - ii. IP
 - Crow Tribe Traffic Safety Coalition entered next phase
 - Reservation-wide traffic law survey to be sent out to the general public
- e. California – *Not on call*
- f. Great Plains
 - i. Pow Wow season over
 - ii. Conducting school surveys
 - iii. Conduct GBB report reviews at Area
 - iv. Jonathan Lewis, Area Safety Officer, detailed to Pine Ridge
 - v. Severe injury data pull ongoing & may be complete by end-of-year
 - vi. Staffing
 - Vacancy at Belcourt office
 - Vacancies outside OEHE challenging b/c DEHS asked to provide coverage
- g. Nashville
 - i. Staffing
 - CAPT Woodlee retirement
 - End of May 2026
 - Terminal leave prior to that
 - Trying to backfill position to allow overlap
 - Focusing on DEHS work
 - Making process to support 3rd EH position
 - ii. TIPCAP – helping tribes prepare applications

- iii. [IHS Travel - Required PA Approval Process](#)
 - Trying to understand new process
 - How it impacts staff
 - How it impacts ability to provide direct services
- iv. OEHE enhanced fiscal management continues & should be beneficial to DEHS
- h. Navajo
 - i. Staffing
 - Shiprock staff covering Kayenta
 - Navajo Nation Food Sanitation program able to improve staffing
 - Vacancy announcements forthcoming
 - Area DEHS Director
 - Area DEHS Deputy Director
 - Fort Defiance District EHO
 - Many Farms District EHOs
 - Unsure how OHR open continuous strategy will be utilized
 - ii. EH
 - Hantavirus case investigations near Gallup & Shiprock
 - iii. Area budget formulation meeting next week
 - Environmental Health made it on the top ten list
- i. Oklahoma City
 - i. Staff doing great job providing services where there are vacancies
 - ii. Claremore Indian Hospital assumption by the Cherokee Nation took effect 01 October 1
 - Working closely with them, doing some close out
 - Because of that, we received 4 personnel OEHE (2 engineers, engineer tech, BioMed Tech
 - BioMed falls under our Division
 - iii. Environmental Surveillance Performance Measure
 - Met w District EHOs last week
 - Increased trainings; may host large event in spring 2026
 - iv. Area OEHE succession planning occurring
 - OEHE Director retiring August 2026
 - v. Area budget formulation meeting in November
- j. Phoenix
 - i. Staffing
 - GS 7/9/11 EHS vacancies in Hopi and Ft. Duchesne
 - GS 12/05 EH Consultant in Show Low, AZ
 - GS 13 06 DEHO in Show Low, AZ
 - CDR Snyder PCS to EHSC soon; waiting on orders; LCDR George Chung will be Acting DEHO

- ii. EH
 - Special Event Season in Tempe: Spooktacular, Panda Fest, Taste of AZ
 - Activated COOP Plan for PAO Paint and Carpet Project
 - Tribe asked us to inspect a non-tribal business on Fee Land within reservation boundary
- iii. IP
 - Manuscript on Firearm Storage Cabinets w BMJ; publication likely early 2026
 - TIPCAP applications expected from 10 sites
 - Resolved longstanding data issue with the state of Nevada; this will support TIPCAP applications
 - 4 new CPS Technicians
 - Presenting at Firearm Safety Conference at Arizona State University
- iv. IEH
 - Partnered w EHSC to host Ambulatory Healthcare Fundamentals of Safety course (23 attendees)
 - New medical physicist contract awarded to West Physics, Atlanta, GA
 - John and Landon to take Lead Paint Inspector Training to improve response to EBLL
 - Emergency notification contract awarded to Everbridge; should allow targeted mass communication
 -
- k. Portland – *Not on call*
- l. Tucson
 - i. Staffing
 - Vacancy forthcoming due to employee's acceptance of another position
 - ii. EH
 - Increase in healthy homes work
 - Pascua Yaqui expressed interest in updating food code
 - Conducting food handler trainings for mass gatherings
- m. EHSC
 - i. Healthy Homes Assessment Principles – first course is happening this week in ABQ; Scheduling two trainings for next year – Portland, Great Plains
 - ii. Competency Model – working with the PHF, goal is to release at the beginning of next year
 - iii. Training schedule – working to build out 6+ months in advance
 - iv. CDR Sarah Snyder is coming onboard as the IVP Consultant
 - v. Needs Assessment – will be sending out early next week

3. HQ Announcements

a. Injury prevention (Molly Madson)

i. Fellowship [2025-2026 cohort]

- Field course: 19-24 October 2025; Tucson
- Symposium: 16-17 June 2026; Rockville, MD
- Please ensure fellowship mentors are fulfilling their obligations

ii. [2025 Rick Smith Injury Prevention Award](#)

- Nominations due to [CDR Molly Madson](#) by 06 February 2026

iii. Reimbursement for IP devices



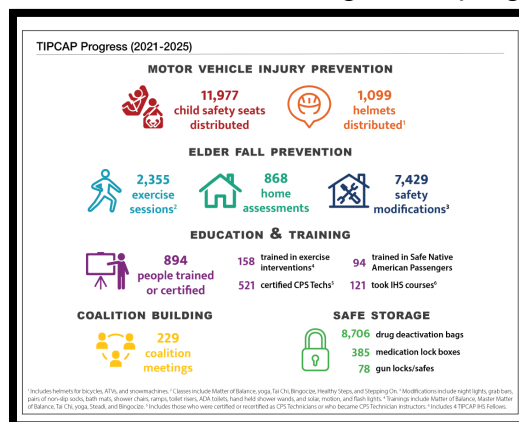
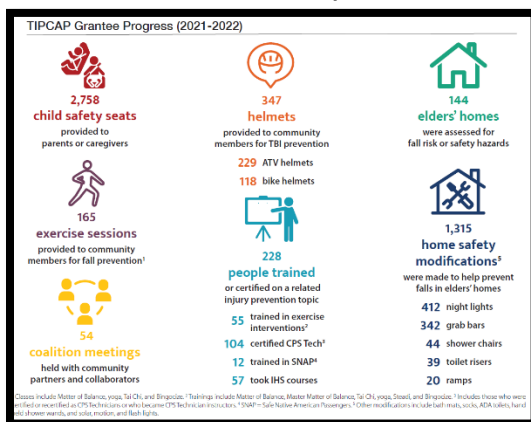
iv. Manuscript assistance available if needed; inquire w CDR Madson

v. National Conference on AI/AN Injury and Violence Prevention

- Planning to host in summer 2026

vi. TIPCAP (Andrea Tsatoke)

- Hosted office hours 14 October
- Newsletter articles due 31 October
- No Cost Extensions (NCEs) due 31 October
- Closeout reports due 01 March 2026 or after NCE
- See posters below for illustration of TIPCAP grantee progress

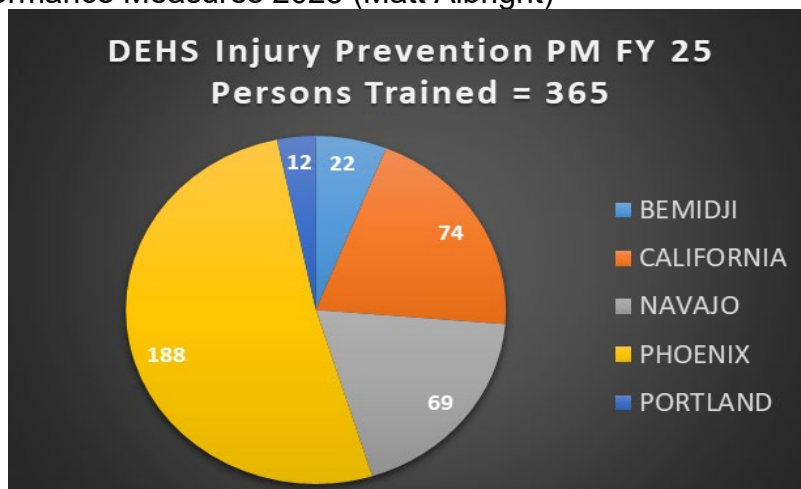


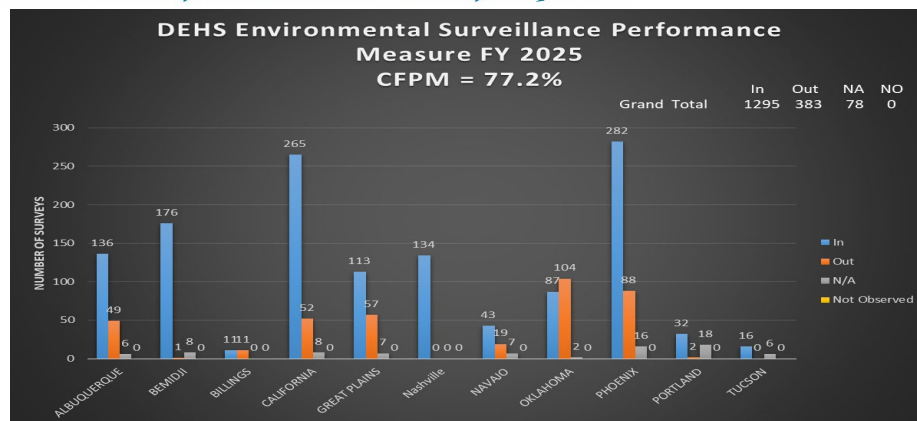
• Notice of Funding Opportunity 2026-2030

- [NOFO](#) closes 13 November

- EHSC Office Hours 20 August
- Webinar (~50 participants)
- Tools & template on [TIPCAP website](#)
 - Added User Population Guidance Document
- Evaluation Advisory Contract posted for Indian small businesses
- b. Institutional EH (Brian Hroch)
 - i. Annual meeting
 - 05-08 August 2026, Minneapolis, MN
 - Follows American Society for Health Care Engineering conference
 - ii. IEH Workforce Development
 - USUHS IEH Residency
 - 2026 Academic Year
 - Application window closes 17 November 2026
 - Filed-based Residency
 - 2026 Academic Year: making revisions & planning to announce
 - iii. Professional development
 - SOFR Office Hours held monthly
 - Fundamentals of Hospital and Ambulatory Safety Management
 - FY25/26
 - Completed: Reno & Portland
 - Accreditation 360 in development
 - Competency development for SOFRs & IEHOs
 - iv. IH Protocols
 - Calvert, Collins, Cook, Kates, Murga, Strauss, Hroch
 - In progress
 - Nitrous oxide
 - v. Safety management
 - Safe Patient Handling & Mobility (complete)
 - Hansen, Hiles, Hroch
 - HFAC/OEHE A/E Design Guide updated
 - vi. Staffing management
 - IEH position templates, including PDs, other HR documents
 - Hroch, Lewelling, Murga, Peaches, Williams, need a lead
 - SOFR position templates, including PDs, other HR documents
 - Hansen, Hroch, Lewelling, Murga, Peaches, Williams, need a lead
 - i. EC/LS Dashboard Development & Pilot Testing (in progress)
 - Conner, Franks, Hroch, Wiggins, Woodlee, Williams
 - Areas: BE; BI; GP; NV

- ii. PCRA/ICRA 2.0 (new for 2026)
 - PCRA - Pre-Construction Risk Assessment
 - ICRA - Infection Control Risk Assessment
 - Cook, Box, Conner, Denherder, Fish, Franks, Strauss, [Bryan] Reed
- iii. I-STAR
 - Hroch, Franks, Woodlee
 - RL6 migration & rollout
- iv. Accreditation readiness
 - EC/LS Workgroup
 - Conner, Cook, Franks, Hansen, Hroch, Murga, Peaches, Williams, Woodlee
 - National Council of Healthcare Safety and Engineering Professionals (NCHSEP)
- v. Water Management Sprint Workgroup
 - Franks, Calvert, Conner, Cook, Hroch, Peaches, Williams
 - Managed by OQ
- vii. Survey for EHS Healthy Homes and IEH IEQ/IAQ
 - Hickey, Hroch, Conner w input from DEHS & IEH reviewers
 - Instruments, references, & resources
 - Current & recommendations for standardization
 - Due 12 November 2025
 - See email from Brian for details & link to survey
- c. Performance Measures 2025 (Matt Albright)





- d. Performance Measures 2026-2030 (Matt Albright)
 - i. Will use same measures as last 5-year cycle
 - Percentage of Food Establishments with a Certified Food Protection Manager (target 75%)
 - Number of People Trained in IP (target 450)
 - ii. Guidance documents will be finalized soon and distributed
- e. DEHS Awards 2025
 - i. [2025 Environmental Health Specialist of the Year](#)
 - Nominations due to [CAPT Stephen R. Piontkowski](#) by 06 January 2026
 - ii. [2025 Gary J. Gefroh Health and Safety Award](#)
 - Nominations due to [Brian Hroch](#) by 06 February 2026
 - iii. [2025 Rick Smith Injury Prevention Award](#)
 - Nominations due to [CDR Molly Madson](#) by 06 February 2026
- f. Miscellaneous (Stephen Piontkowski)

See emails sent to Area DEHS Directors for details

 - i. COSTEP & [Civil Service] EH Externs
 - Selection & placement ongoing
 - ii. 31 December
 - Staffing report
 - Photo contest pics
 - iii. 06 January
 - EH Specialist of the Year Award nominations
 - iv. 30 January
 - Area description
 - Posters
 - v. 06 February
 - Gefroh Health & Safety Award nominations
 - Smith Injury Prevention Award nominations

- g. Reminders (Stephen Piontkowski)
 - i. Take great pics
 - DEHS photo contest
 - EHOs in Action Photo Book
 - ii. Area DEHS & Week-in-Review
 - Submissions
 - Email to ihspublicaffairsstaff@ihs.gov
 - Due Thursdays by 1300 ET
 - January: Alaska
 - February: Albuquerque
 - March: Bemidji
 - April: Billings
 - May: California
 - June: Great Plains
 - July: Nashville
 - August: Navajo
 - September: Oklahoma City
 - October: Phoenix
 - November: Portland
 - December: Tucson
- h. DEHS IT Applications (Sam Frank)
 - i. NDECI enhancements
 - Now live in production and available for use
 - New Patients sheet and Emergency Department visit data
 - ii. WebEHRS Aquatic Establishments
 - Classification updates underway
 - Area data merge starting soon
 - New eSurvey & MAHC checklist updates in development; will provide more user friendly interface & streamlined data entry

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