

**Austin Public Health
Health Wise Quarterly**
Brought to you by the friendly staff at your
Environmental Health Services Division

New Mobile Application Walk-in Hours

We are excited to announce that we are now reviewing mobile food applications five days a week, Monday through Friday 7:45 a.m. through 3:30 p.m. Appointments are no longer required.

For more information on mobile food vending permits please visit our website at

<http://austintexas.gov/departments/mobile-food-vendors>.



UPCOMING OFFICE CLOSURES

2023 City of Austin Official Holidays

- **Veterans Day- Friday, November 10**
- **Thanksgiving Day- Thursday, November 23**
- **Thanksgiving Friday- Friday, November 24**
- **Christmas Eve- Monday, December 25**
- **Christmas Day- Tuesday, December 26**
- **New Years Day 2024- Monday, January 1**

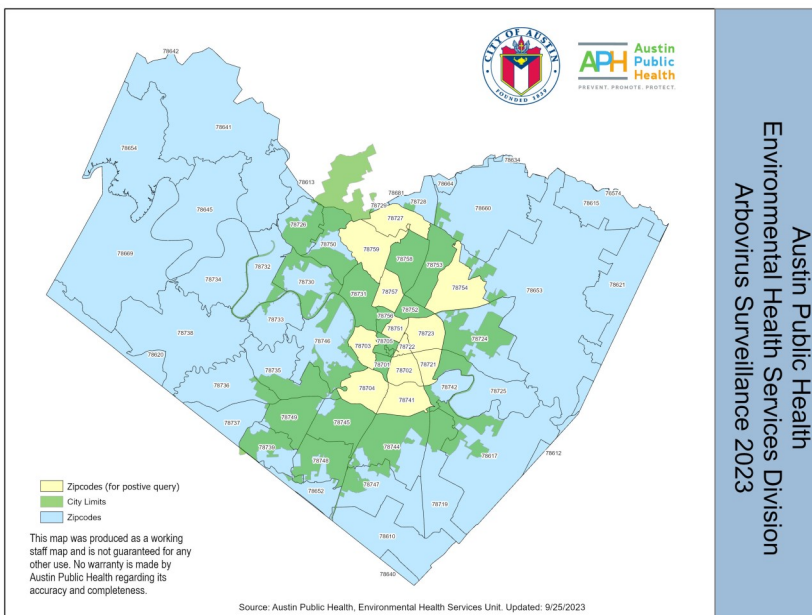


Fight the Bite Day and Night with the Four Ds:

- **Dusk and dawn:** Although different species of mosquitos are active at different times of day, the species that spread West Nile Virus are most active between dusk and dawn.
- **Dress:** Wear pants and long sleeves when you are outside. Wear light-colored, loose-fitting clothing; mosquito repellent clothing is also available.
- **DEET:** Apply insect repellent that contains DEET. Read and follow label instructions. Spray both exposed skin and clothing with repellent.
- **Drain:** Get rid of standing water in your yard and neighborhood. Old tires, flowerpots, clogged rain gutters, birdbaths and wading pools can be breeding sites for mosquitos.

To report a mosquito problem, call 3-1-1 or complete a [Service Request online](#).

APH is seeing an increase in mosquito activity in the Austin/Travis County area with several traps testing positive for West Nile Virus this season. There has been 1 confirmed human case reported by the state.



Mosquitoes are present in Central Texas year-round, but the population is largest and most active from May through November. During this period, Austin Public Health monitors the population and tests for mosquito-borne viruses. Those that carry West Nile Virus (WNV) are of particular concern.

The Arbovirus Map highlights Austin/Travis County zip codes where one or more mosquito traps test positive for West Nile Virus

New Food Manager Registration Updates:

Due to the passage of **Senate Bill 577**, local health departments will **no longer require registration** of food manager certificates. Effective 9/1/2023, Environmental Health Services will not accept applications for food manager registrations. **Per 2017 FDA Food Code 2-101 and 2-102**, continue to display a state **Certified Food Protection Manager Certificate** in a prominent location. A **Person-In-Charge** must be present during all hours of operation and must have a certified food manager from a state approved course.

Please see our **Food Manager/Food Handler** link under **Food Safety Programs** below for more information.

Food Manager Requirements

Austin/Travis County Health and Human Services Department
FOOD MANAGER CERTIFICATE



Awarded to _____

for having met all of the requirements prescribed by Section 6-4-63 of the City of Austin, Code of Ordinances including successful completion of a food management examination that has been approved by the Texas Department of State Health Services.

_____	_____
Date	Health Authority
_____	_____
Certificate Number	
_____	_____
Expiration Date	Instructor

Attention: Mobile Food Vendors

There is a Fire Department Fee Update!

The Austin Fire Department (AFD) has reduced the Mobile Food Vendor Fire Inspection fee and Fire Re-Inspection fee to \$200.00 per inspection.

For more information please visit their website using the QR code or link below.



<https://www.austintexas.gov/page/fire-mobile-vending>



Off Season To Do List For Pool Operators

It is that time of year for kids of all ages begin to go back to school and work. Pool operators may feel that they get a break too because the pool on their property does not need as much attention after the summer months are over. This is not entirely true; a pool is required to be properly maintained throughout the entire year.

Some items to think about during the off season:

- ★ Make sure you walk your pool fence enclosure to inspect for any opening greater than 4 inches, such as missing pickets or erosion of the ground beneath the fence
- ★ Make sure your fence gates self-close and self-latch
- ★ Make sure your pool chemistry is within proper range and you can see the drains at the bottom
- ★ Make sure your safety equipment is present and in good condition for future use



Take steps to help keep *Legionella* and other bacteria from growing in hot tubs/spas

Extended closures of hot tubs/spas could create conditions favorable to *Legionella* and other bacterial growth in the hot tub/spa if:

They are in a public aquatic facility that will be closed for weeks or months, and

A qualified operator is unable to maintain water quality during the closure. Check for existing regulations and guidelines from your local or state regulatory agency before using these recommendations. They do not replace:

- ★ Existing regulations or guidelines from your local or state regulatory agency or
- ★ Consultation with a service company or the company or engineer that designed the aquatic facility.

For more information:

[CDC Model Aquatic Health Code](#)

[Legionella Infections](#) | [Healthy Swimming](#) | [Healthy Water](#) | [CDC](#)

[Legionella and Hot Tubs/Spas \(cdc.gov\)](#)

Check the [EHSD Pool website](#) for more information.

**It's time
for your
flu shot!**



Influenza (flu) is a very contagious respiratory illness that affects millions of people every flu season. Most people will have mild illness, but some cases can result in hospitalization or even death. Children and people 65 years and older are more likely to get sick from the flu. While people with asthma, diabetes heart disease and those who are pregnant are at higher risk of flu complications, getting an annual flu vaccine is the best way to protect our community and our loved ones from the flu.

Flu Symptoms:

- Fever or chills
- Cough, sore throat
- Runny or congested nose
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- Fatigue
- Some people may have vomiting and diarrhea– this is more common in children

Flu Vaccination

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that anyone six months of age and older should be vaccinated for the flu every flu season. High-risk individuals include:

- Adults 65 years and older Children younger than 5 years
- Pregnant women
- People with chronic medical conditions
- Health care workers
- Individuals who live with an/or care for high-risk individuals

Where to Get Vaccinated

Flu shots are available at [Shots for Tots/Big Shots](#) clinics for children who are uninsured or Medicaid recipients, and for uninsured adults. Cost of the flu vaccine is \$25 for adults, \$10 for children, and free for children with Medicaid. For an appointment, please call **512-972-5520**.

You can also visit [Vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov) to find a location with flu vaccines near you.

Additional Flu Prevention

In addition to getting the flu shot, take these actions to prevent the flu:

- Avoid others who are sick
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap is unavailable
- Cough and sneeze into your sleeve or into a tissue
- Avoid touching your nose, mouth, and eyes
- Stay home if you are sick
- Clean and disinfect surfaces that may be contaminated with flu

Additional Resources

- ⇒ For more information about flu at the state level, please visit the [Texas Department of State Health Services' website](#).
- ⇒ For more information about flu at the national level, please visit the [CDC's website](#).
- ⇒ Check out our [Flu Social Media Toolkit](#) with messages in English, Spanish, Vietnamese and Simplified Chinese. Please download social media graphics for diverse populations [here](#).

Welcome our new EHSD Staff!

"Intelligence without ambition is a bird without wings." – Salvador Dali



Veronica Colosky: Environmental Health Officer

Veronica has been with Austin Public Health for 4 years and recently moved to Environmental Health Services from WIC. She grew up in New Braunfels and graduated from Texas State University with a Bachelor's of Science in Nutrition and Dietetics. Veronica has spent some time in the food industry while attending The Art Institute of Austin's Culinary program, being a baker in a bakery and serving at a local restaurant in New Braunfels. She enjoys being creative and getting her hands dirty by working with her houseplants, fishing, camping, hiking and painting.



Katherine Dalpiaz: Environmental Health Officer

Katie is a native Texan who moved to Austin from Chicago in 2011. She earned her degree in Nutrition and Foods with a concentration in Dietetics from Texas State University. Before joining EHSD, Katie worked as Nutrition Services Manager and Health Services Manager for early childhood education programs around the Austin area. In her free time, Katie enjoys training for marathons and cooking new dishes.



Vanessa Gorlick: Environmental Health Officer

Vanessa is originally from San Antonio and recently graduated from Barrett the Honors College at Arizona State University. She received a Bachelor's of Science in Conservation Biology with a minor in Film and Media Production and a certificate in Business Entrepreneurship and Innovation. Her hobbies include watching movies, vintage shopping, taking photographs, and traveling. She has been enjoying learning about public health in the wonderful city of Austin and is excited to be part of the EHSD team.



Stephen LaFuente: Customer Service Representative Supervisor

Stephen is our new Customer Service Supervisor. He is new to the division but not the city. He received his Bachelor's in Business Management from Western Governors University. Stephen worked as a Customer Service Senior for 12 years with Austin Energy (AE). There, he performed cash audits, till and payment reconciliation, and cash handling training for new hires. He has also revised and developed standards of operations for daily business processes and other duties. Prior to AE, he worked with DPS and in the retail industry where he acquired financial experience handling funds in the hundreds of thousands to millions of dollars. Overall, Stephen comes to us with 30 years of customer service, financial, and leadership experience. Stephen loves traveling, U.T. Longhorns football, music, family movie and game nights, and sharing meals with loved ones and friends.



Nicole Mullane: Environmental Health Officer

Nicole is a born and raised Austinite. She is a graduate of the University of Texas Austin where she obtained a degree in Biology with a focus on ecology. Between graduating college and working for APH, she worked in Washington state fulfilling environmental restoration and environmental assessment contracts. Some of the more interesting projects she got the opportunity to work on in WA include endangered butterfly surveys, prescribed burns, and spawn depositions surveys throughout the Puget Sound. In the cooler months she enjoys exploring the outdoors as much as she can. For the remaining 9 months of the year, she avoids the Texas heat and enjoys crocheting and other arts and crafts in buildings with an AC.



Justin Padilla: Environmental Health Officer

Justin was born and raised in Hollywood, Florida. He made the move to Austin with his family in 2012. He received his Bachelor's of Science in Health Science Studies from Baylor University in 2014. Prior to joining Austin Public Health (APH), Justin acquired valuable experience in the food industry, working as a bartender and a restaurant manager. During his off-hours from APH, he dedicates time in officiating high school football with the Austin Football Chapter and hiking with his dog around the beautiful city.



Gertie Pierre: Environmental Health Supervisor

Gertie is originally from Haiti and moved to Austin a year ago from New York City where she worked as an environmental health supervisor leading the training unit. She received a Bachelor's of Science in Biology and Master of Public Health at the CUNY Graduate School of Public Health and Health Policy in New York. In her spare time, she enjoys working out, traveling, a good thriller and learning about fragrances. She is excited to continue her Public Health journey with the EHSD team and is looking forward to getting a furry friend and exploring Austin.



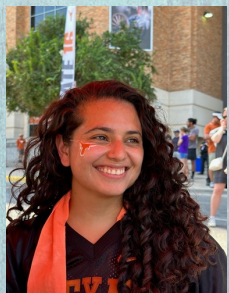
Gabrielle Ramos: Environmental Health Officer

Gabby was born and raised in Houston, TX. She is a Texas State University alumna, where she received a Bachelor's in Nutrition and Dietetics. Upon graduation, she moved to Austin, TX and began her career with Austin Public Health as a Nutrition Counselor for pregnant/breastfeeding moms and children. She now works as an Environmental Health Officer. Gabby enjoys reading, full moons, cooking, and going on hot girl walks. In her true Scorpio nature, she loves being near bodies of water. She is thrilled to be a new addition to EHSD.



Taylor Sawyer: Environmental Health Officer

Taylor Sawyer, originally from Southwest Michigan, now resides in Austin, Texas. He graduated from Western Michigan University "Go Broncos" and began his public health career in January 2017. Currently, he is an Environmental Health Officer in the Consumer Health Unit. In his free time, he enjoys sports like lacrosse, frisbee, and kickball with his dog Robot, as well as yoga, group workouts, coed volleyball, and motorcycle rides.



Dory Villegas: Customer Service Representative

Dory brings 13 years of customer service experience as a Medical Assistant to our team. She successfully transitioned into a new role in Accounts Receivable, where she eventually became a Team Lead. Her positions in this domain have enabled her abilities in working efficiently, problem-solving, and instilled a strong attention to detail.

Dory attended Virginia College of Austin where she obtained her certification for her role as a Medical Assistant. She is also a part time student at ACC exploring paths to help shape her future career goals.

Dory makes time for self-improvement, embraces lifestyle changes, and likes to dive into her hobbies like working out, art, DIY crafts, and travel.



Congratulations to promoted EHSD staff!

If you do the work you get rewarded. There are no shortcuts in life." – Michael Jordan



Michael Bland: Environmental Health Supervisor

Michael was born in New Orleans and eventually ended up in Austin Texas in 1996. He graduated from Colorado State University with a degree in Psychology/Biology. Michael's first real job was at Advanced Micro Devices in 1996 until 2001 when he started with the City of Austin at the Davis Water Treatment Plant, then finally arriving at APH as a EHO I in 2006. Over the last seventeen years he has been promoted through the ranks and is currently a EHO Supervisor. In Michael's spare time, he likes to use his metal detector searching for hidden treasures, ballroom dancing with his wife and attending chainsaw ice sculpture classes. And of course he and his wife love to take their two dogs, Sherlock and Dood, on walks.



Joe Castelan: Administrative Manager

Joe is an Austin native and Army veteran. He holds a Bachelor's Degree in History and Political Science from the University of Texas at Austin, along with a Master's in Public Administration from Texas State University. His customer service career began in the restaurant industry, later expanding into insurance, security, and mortgage services. In 2013, he joined the City of Austin's Austin Water Utility, where he honed his customer service, administration, and financial skills while pursuing his master's degree. He also gained municipal government experience through an internship with the City of Buda City Manager's Office.



Catherine Cruz: Environmental Health Officer III

Catherine has worked with Environmental Health Services since December 2019. She has learned so much about environmental health in that time! Catherine has a Bachelor of Science in Public Health from the University of Texas at Austin. She is currently attending the University of Texas Health Science Center, working on a Masters of Public Health. In her free time, she enjoys running, yoga, and baking banana bread.



Jaemi Duran: Environmental Health Officer III

Jaemi was raised in Pasadena, TX. She attended the University of Texas at Austin, where she obtained her Bachelor's in Nutrition. She has worked for Austin Public Health for 5 years, starting at WIC and transferring to Environmental Health Services Division (EHSD), where she has been promoted to senior. She is happy to now be a part of the EHSD Special Permitting Unit. In her spare time, she enjoys hiking, traveling, spending time outdoors and checking out new restaurants in the city.



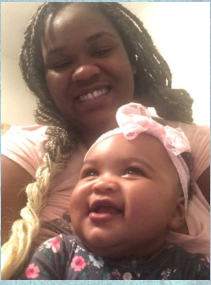
Theresa Giudice: Environmental Health Supervisor

Theresa has worked as an Environmental Health Specialist with Austin Public Health for 13 years. She graduated from Arizona State University with a degree in Food & Nutrition. Theresa loves spending time outdoors either hiking, paddle boarding or working in her garden. She loves experimenting with food and especially food from her garden. Theresa looks forward to learning and growing with the EHSD team.



Khanh Le: Environmental Health Supervisor

Khanh is a UT Alumna with a Nutrition major. He likes puppies, kittens, and almost all flavors of ice cream. Cherry Garcia? Yes, please. Current favorite show is "Only Murders In The Building". Selena Gomez, Martin Short, and Steve Martin are so good together. Did you know that Selena Gomez is a Spurs fan? He is too. Go Spurs Go!



Delencia McGraw: Customer Service Representative Senior

Delencia is an OG Austinite who graduated from Pflugerville High School. She earned an Associates in Arts degree from Houston Community College and plans to finish her bachelors in the near future. She has over 15 years of experience in the Customer Service. In her free time she likes to spend time with her family, read and travel.



Michelle Mellor: Environmental Health Supervisor

Michelle has worked for Austin Public Health in the Environmental Health Services Division for over 11 years. She attended Illinois State University where she received a bachelor's degree in Environmental Health. Michelle loves listening to music, being outdoors, and spending time with her family. She is happy to take on her new role as Environmental Health Supervisor over the Special Permitting Unit.



Nicole Ramsey: Environmental Health Officer III

Nicole was born and raised in Queens, NY. She received a Bachelors of Science in marketing from Rutgers's Business School in 2007 and an Associates in Applied Science in Veterinary Technology from Austin Community College in 2017. Upon ending an 11 year career in animal welfare, Nicole joined Environmental Health Services in 2019. She worked in Consumer Health and then County, while patiently waiting for an opportunity to join Environmental Vector Control where she is now an EHO III. She currently lives in Elgin, is married to a Texan and has two children. They enjoy live music, riding motorcycles, vanning, camping and hanging by the river.



Brandi Walker: Environmental Health Officer III

Brandi has worked with Austin Public Health for 9 years. She is a graduate of Texas Woman's University. Where she received a degree in Foods in Nutrition with a minor in Science. In her free time, Brandi loves spending time outdoors and attending concerts. She is looking forward to her new role as a Environmental Health Officer III.



Carolina Zertuche: Environmental Health Officer III

Carolina graduated from St. Mary's University in San Antonio, TX with a Bachelor of Science degree in Biochemistry. Her experience includes food safety and quality assurance in manufacturing. She is the current president elect for the Central Texas Chapter of Texas Environmental Health Association, and is excited to take on the new role as president later this month. Carolina was recently promoted to an Environmental Health Officer III as lead trainer and responsible for training new sanitarians. She is currently working with the EHS team on the FDA Voluntary National Retail Food Regulatory Program Standards, focusing on Standard 2: Trained Regulatory Staff. Outside of work, Carolina enjoys kayaking, hiking and anything dog related, including volunteering for local dog rescues.

Additional EHSD Staff:

- **Sarah Anguiano:** *New Hire as a Customer Service Representative*
- **Aubbrie Aufdenkamp:** *Promoted to Customer Service Representative Senior*
- **Nyla Davis:** *Environmental Health Officer III moved to Plan Review*
- **Jaime Martinez:** *Promoted to Customer Service Representative Supervisor*
- **Laura Plascencio:** *New Hire as a Customer Service Representative Senior*

Congratulations to promoted Program Managers!

Todd Mers: Environmental Health Program Manager II

Todd Mers and his family are originally from Columbus, Ohio. He made the move to the Austin area in the autumn of 2019. Todd graduated with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Environment and Natural Resources from Ohio State University. He is a Registered Professional Sanitarian accredited by the State of Texas and has an impressive 29-year career in the Environmental and Consumer Health sectors. Todd commenced his role as an Environmental Health Supervisor with the Austin Public Health/Environmental Health Services Food Program in May 2020. By the summer of 2021, he had assumed the role of Interim Public Health Program Manager for the division, and in February of this year, he officially became the division's Public Health Program Manager.

Todd, along with his wife and family, presently live in Lampasas, Texas.



Andrew Thompson: Environmental Health Program Manager II

Andy graduated from Texas Tech University in 2009 and began his career at the City of Lubbock Health Department in 2008. He transitioned to Austin Public Health in September 2010, starting as an EHO II and steadily climbing the ranks to become a Program Manager II. Andy is passionate about his work with the City and the chances it provides to contribute to the community.

Andy is engaged to be married, has a wiener dog named Frank, likes to play music and spend time with friends.

*Start by doing what's necessary; then do what's possible;
and suddenly you are doing the impossible."*

- Francis of Assisi

New APH Division Chief of Environmental Health Services Division!

We are pleased to announce Marcel Elizondo has been selected as the Division Chief for Environmental Health Services, effective March 27th, 2023.

Marcel has over 20 years of management and supervisory experience in municipal government. Marcel has an extensive background in the administration of environmental health programs, City Council and Travis County Commissioner's Court support, state regulation enforcement, and legislative reviews. Previously, Marcel served as Public Health Program Manager II and Environmental Health Supervisor for Austin Public Health's Environmental Health Services Division.

Marcel Elizondo holds a Masters of Public Health from the Texas A&M Health Science Center and a B. A. degree in Biology from The University of Texas at Austin. Marcel holds a Registered Professional Sanitarian license with the State of Texas and has served as the former president of the Central Texas Environmental Health Association chapter. He has also been a guest lecturer on food safety at the University of Texas at Austin.

Please join us in congratulating Marcel in his new role with the Department.



Fall 2023



Happy Holidays!

-From the Environmental Health Services Team



Environmental Health Services Division's Facebook Group

Be a member of our group and stay up to date! Look for us on Facebook –
ATX Environmental Health.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/atxenvironmentalhealth>

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICES DIVISION CUSTOMER WALK IN HOURS



Lobby Hours Rutherford Lane Campus 1520 Rutherford Lane 7:45 am to 3:30 pm.

Planning Development Center 6310 Wilhelmina Delco Drive Electronic Submissions ONLY

Mobile Vending Physical Permitting Inspections Rutherford Lane Campus

1520 Rutherford Lane 8:00 AM – 11:00AM Tuesday and Thursday by Appointment ONLY



EHSD partners with Austin 3-1-1 to handle all citizen complaints and environmental investigations. To request services, get general assistance or submit a citizen complaint, dial 3-1-1 or 512-974-2000 if you are calling from outside the Austin service area.

If you feel an inspection issue or complaint investigation has not been satisfactorily addressed, or to speak with a manager regarding administrative issues, please call us directly at 512-978-0300 between the hours of 7:45AM - 4:45PM Monday Friday.

Mailing Address: EHSD Post Office Box 142529, Austin, TX 78714

Physical Address: Rutherford Lane Campus 1520 Rutherford Lane Building 1 Suite 205 Austin, TX 78754

Email Address: EHSD.service@austintexas.gov

Web Address: <http://www.austintexas.gov/department/ehsd>

Feedback: Please complete our online survey to help us better serve our customers: www.surveymonkey.com/s/EHSDSurvey

For the latest newsletter, visit [HealthWise Newsletters](#) | [AustinTexas.gov](#)



Fall 2023

