

## **2024 EHFC Award**

### **Nominee Letter.**

August 1, 2024.

### **Olha Ostafiichuk- Public Health Inspector- Renfrew County and District Health Unit.**

I am nominating Olha Ostafiichuk for the Food safety award for organizing an excellent project of food handler training and information session for Ukrainian community in the City of Ottawa.

I am public health inspector with the city of Ottawa, and work in an equity diverse community where English is not their first language. I understand the challenges of communicating legislative requirements to achieve food safety compliance.

Olha organized and presented five sessions of food handler in-person training, over a 3-month period from February to April 2024 to 120 attendees of which majority are new immigrants. She simplified and translated the O.reg 49317 in Ukrainian language while removing cultural barrier that sometimes causes conflicts in food handling practices.

She demonstrated great presentation skills, collaborative expertise by involving Ottawa public health inspectors to participate in the information sessions. In addition to her full-time position, she dedicated time to provide food handler training with certification components, ensuring 120 food handlers became certified and achieved compliance according to the food safety regulation.

Having a grounded knowledge of food safety by food handlers reduces occurrence of food borne illness and minimize health care cost, loss of income and improves overall health.

Olha has contributed to promoting health, collaborated with other health unit and outside agencies in her achievements, and has supported new immigrants in Canada.

I am confident that Olha would be a worthy recipient of the 2024 EHFC award. Her exceptional work ethic, dedication to public health for the benefit of residents of Ontario and Canada has made her an outstanding candidate. [REDACTED]

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you require further information.

Yours truly,

Valerie Abolarinde

Public Health Inspector CIPHI(C)

Dear Award Committee,

I am pleased to nominate Olha Ostafiichuk for the Food Safety Award in recognition of her outstanding contribution to food safety education. Through her initiative to provide free Food Safety Courses in Ukrainian for newly arrived individuals in Ottawa fleeing the war in Ukraine, Olha has addressed a crucial gap in our community. Her courses not only provided essential certification and education on Canadian food safety standards and legal requirements but also enhanced employment prospects, facilitated networking and integration into Canadian society.

Before Olha's initiative, there were no free Food Safety courses available through a health unit in Ottawa, nor were there any courses offered online or in-person in Ukrainian. This left many Ukrainian newcomers fleeing the war in Ukraine without the necessary knowledge to be confident and compliant food handlers in Canada. Olha, driven by her commitment to public education and passion for food safety, organized these courses on her personal time. Her place of employment, the Renfrew County and District Health Unit, has agreed to issue Food Handlers' Certificates to people who pass the food safety exam upon completion of Olha's course in Ottawa which she was supposed to conduct on her free time off work. Olha translated the Ministry's curriculum and exam into Ukrainian. She enriched the learning experience by sharing her inspection insights, emphasizing Canadian food safety norms, and incorporating visual aids to support effective learning.

Over the course of five sessions, Olha successfully certified 120 individuals. Her collaboration with multiple community agencies, including Ottawa Public Health, Ukrainian Credit Union, Ukrainian Canadian Social Services, and Employment Ontario, further enriched the program. Participants benefited from a complementary free lunch, direct interactions with Ottawa Public Health inspectors attending the course to answer questions specific to Ottawa and were provided with an opportunity to get familiar with Employment Ontario's free services and could get enrolled into their program helping to find jobs. Olha's initiative has significantly empowered Ottawa community by equipping more individuals with the knowledge and confidence to handle food safely and pursue employment opportunities. Participants' feedback was very rewarding describing the program as an interesting course and a true eye opener. Many participants have already secured employment upon completion of the course and cooperation with Employment Ontario.

The courses, held on Saturdays from 9:00 to 21:00, were extended beyond standard durations to accommodate the specific needs of Ukrainian participants, including in-depth inquiries about Canadian food safety practices and additional features such as Q&A sessions with Ottawa inspectors, Employment Ontario consultations, and lunches. Looking ahead, Olha is planning more courses in Ukrainian for the upcoming fall. Her dream is to develop her own food safety course one day.

In conclusion, Olha Ostafiichuk's initiative was an important project helping to promote food safety in the community and support people in need of social integration and employment. Olha's commitment to public education and food safety popularization truly embodies the spirit of the Food Safety Award, and I believe she deserves to be nominated.

Thank you for considering this nomination.

Sincerely,

Lena Jensen , CPHI(C)