Food Safety and Sanitation Program Information Management System Replacement	**FY2025 Request:**	**$300,000**
	Reference No:	**AMD 65181**

AP/AL: Appropriation	**Project Type:** Information Technology / Systems / Communication
Category: Health/Human Services	**Recipient:** NA
Location: Statewide	**House District:** Statewide (HD 1 - 40)
Impact House District: Statewide (HD 1 - 40)	**Contact:** DeeAnn Fetko
Estimated Project Dates: 07/01/2024 - 06/30/2029	**Contact Phone:** (907)269-7659

Brief Summary and Statement of Need:

The department requests funds to replace the current Food Safety and Sanitation (FSS) program information management system (IMS) because the system is outdated and becoming unsupportable. The current IMS that FSS utilizes, USAFoodSafety, is being discontinued and will no longer be supported by the developer in 2025. In anticipation of this, the Association of Food and Drug Officials (AFDO) collaborated with states to develop an evolved system that improves resiliency, functionality, and agility, and meets the needs of Alaska. The result is the System of Agriculture, Food, Health, E-inspection, and Registration (SAFHER).

Funding:	FY2025	FY2026	FY2027	FY2028	FY2029	FY2030	Total
1004 Gen Fund	$300,000						$300,000
Total:	$300,000	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$300,000

☐ State Match Required	☐ One-Time Project	☐ Phased - new	☐ Phased - underway	☐ Ongoing
0% = Minimum State Match % Required	☑ Amendment	☐ Mental Health Bill		

Operating & Maintenance Costs:

	Amount	Staff
Project Development:	0	0
Ongoing Operating:	0	0
One-Time Startup:	0	
Totals:	0	0

Prior Funding History / Additional Information:

This reliable and cost-effective IMS will meet the complex process and compliance requirements associated with FSS permitting, inspections, complaints, facility inventory, data management, and required Food and Drug Administration data exchange to support industry and protect consumer safety. There are no known alternatives meeting FSS requirements, and SAFHER costs less than the cost of developing an in-house solution.

Project Description/Justification:
Background
Information management is critical to an effective, efficient food safety regulatory public health program. Currently, the Food Safety and Sanitation program utilizes USA Food Safety (USAFS), an information management system to manage inspection, complaint, and facility inventory information and data critical to the program's operation. USAFS supports the management of the complex processes and compliance requirements associated with permitting and inspecting food and public facilities and has allowed the program to almost completely eliminate paper files, intelligently allocate resources, and report performance data. USAFS has become outdated and will soon become unsupportable. The System for Agriculture, Food, Health, E-inspection, and Registration (SAFHER) solution will replace USAFS and is a resilient platform for supporting regulatory programs. It is characterized by a simplified core structure and improved overall functionality.

How SAFHER was developed
Alaska actively participated in the development and design of SAFHER with the Association of Food and Drug Officials (AFDO) along with 20 other states. Alaska's use of USAFS and SAFHER is a great example of government at its best, leveraging its relationships and technology to realize programmatic efficiencies and increase program effectiveness. FDA invested $18 million in grant funding to support the development, implementation, and maintenance of SAFHER, greatly reducing costs to states.

What SAFHER will do
SAFHER retains all prior reporting functions necessary to meet federal requirements and will also address all program functional components, including notifications, licensing, renewals, complaints, inspections, and enforcement, supporting all the critical work in protecting the public.

The benefits are great and far-reaching, allowing the Food Safety and Sanitation program to better serve Alaskan stakeholders, including permit holders and the public. Some specific improvements include:
- Customers in the regulated community will experience an improved platform that will integrate and streamline their application, permitting, and payment processes into one system.
- Customers will be able to view their regulatory records through their own online profile.
- Incorporated planning tools will reduce Environmental Health Officer time in the office, freeing them to work with permit holders in the field.
- With the ability for states to independently configure programs, forms, fields, and workflows, the SAFHER platform will support the work performed today while allowing for the agility to make modifications specific to Alaska, saving time and money.
- Improved data collection will enhance reporting, critical to program performance reporting, collaboration, and federal grant compliance.
- The cost structure of SAFHER allows states to develop and share functionality, resulting in long-term cost savings.

What will happen without SAFHER funding
An information management system is essential to the Food Safety and Sanitation program's ability to serve Alaskans. The risks of not funding SAFHER include the loss of gains in efficiency, functionality, and data sharing made possible with USAFS. It will also cause work stoppage when the system sunsets. Without a functional system, the food safety program will not be able to complete the important work of supporting the health and safety of all Alaskans. A one-time UGF increment is requested to prevent this from happening.