

Continuing Excellence in 2025!

Now with 5 years under our belt, we're excited to get started for our sixth year of the 6-month Produce Safety Immersion Program in 2025! Back by popular demand, the Program will include two in-person trips with activities, multiple collaboration and networking opportunities, and a curriculum that covers the fundamental concepts core to produce safety excellence. Additionally, there will be a formal Graduation Ceremony held on the show floor at the Global Produce and Floral Show in Anaheim, CA. Lastly, we will introduce new pathways for post-graduation engagement for this and all past cohorts. With the generous support of our sponsors, we continue to offer the program at a reduced rate of US\$5995 per person.

Participant Expectations and Responsibilities

The purpose of the Produce Safety Immersion Program is to further develop produce safety professionals who are early in their careers. Ten to twenty promising produce safety professionals will benefit from instruction, experiences, and mentoring through this program. This document provides more details about the program and outlines the expectations of participants. Questions can be directed to Alison Saltzmann at asaltzmann@freshproduce.com

1. Who does the program target?

- a. This program focuses on professional development for early career produce safety professionals who are eager to learn the fundamentals of produce safety and expand their professional network.

2. What is the time commitment?

- a. The program begins in April and concludes after The Global Produce and Floral Show (GPFS) in October.
- b. Over the course of six months, participants should plan to spend approximately 3 weeks participating in immersion experiences, depending on the extent to which they take advantage of optional enrichment activities.
- c. Participants will travel to two in-person meetings during the program. The first will be to The Washington Conference which will take place this year from June 9-11, 2025 (plus one day for Immersion Program tours on June 12th) and the second for the Global Produce and Floral Show October 16-18, 2025 in Anaheim, CA.
- d. Throughout the program, participants are expected to participate in virtual education sessions (format includes webinars, "hang out", peer presentations, etc.), with an average of two events per month covering topics indicated on the tentative schedule. A pre-read may be required (no more than 1 hour each) for some meetings/webinars. Participants will also present their team project during the Global Produce and Floral Show which will take place this year in Anaheim on October 16-18.
- e. Each participant will complete one team project to demonstrate their teamwork and critical thinking skills. Participants will work together with one other immersion participant to present a short research report, which will require 5-8 hours of preparation. The team presentations will be given halfway through the program and participants will receive feedback from their mentors and peers.
- f. Participants are also encouraged to set aside additional time each month to connect with their assigned mentor.

3. Do I need to participate in all activities?

- a. Yes, full participation is required, with the exception of optional networking and enrichment activities (approximately 1 optional opportunity per quarter).

4. What is the fee?

- a. The fee is US\$5995 and includes:
 - Registration and hotel accommodations for the 2025 Washington Conference, as well as transportation to scheduled activities.
 - Registration and hotel accommodations for the 2025 Global Produce and Floral Show, as well as transportation to scheduled activities.
 - Participation in ten virtual sessions
 - *NOTE: Participants will be responsible for their own transportation and other travel expenses related to the trips.*
- b. The fee must be paid prior to the beginning of the Class Six launch in April 2025.

5. Will a specific mentor be assigned to me?

- a. We will pair you with one mentor who will also support the team presentation. We encourage you to also develop relationships with all mentors to further grow your network.
- b. Participants will also be assigned a “peer connection” from the Immersion Program Alumni group to provide informal guidance, support, and a different perspective of the produce industry.

6. Can I participate more than once?

- a. No, however, plans to develop an advanced program for those who have completed the Produce Safety Immersion Program or who are further along in their careers is currently under review so stay tuned!

7. What happens if a participant changes jobs?

- a. Participants are welcome to complete the program regardless of employment. Refunds will not be provided due to change in employment. It is the responsibility of the participant to work with employers to determine how to re-allocate the program fee.

8. Is there a limit to the number of participants allowed from an individual company?

- a. No, applicants are judged on their own merit, so there is no restriction on the number of applicants from a single company.

9. Is participation limited to participants in the United States?

- a. No, participation is not limited to individuals in the United States; however, the program is delivered in English, virtual sessions are generally held between 11 am – 6 pm Eastern (New York) time, and the participants must be able to travel to the US for the in-person sessions.