Posted: 1/15/2016

From: CNDPartnerWeb@fns.usda.gov
To: Dana Dauzat
Subject: Guide to Professional Standards for School Nutrition Programs
Date: Thursday, January 14, 2016 9:42:07 AM

Team Nutrition is pleased to announce the release of the Guide to Professional Standards for School Nutrition Programs. Intended to help State agencies, school food authorities, and school nutrition professionals understand and apply the March 2015 professional standards, this Guide contains information for meeting both the training and hiring standards of the final rule.

We encourage you to promote this new resource to SFAs by contacting your Regional Nutritionist for a promotional email.

The Guide to Professional Standards for School Nutrition Programs is one of several resources that FNS has developed in support of the July 2015 implementation of the professional standards final rule. Together with the final rule summary flyer, promotional brochure, and training tracker tool, this Guide can assist stakeholders of school nutrition programs understand and support the important work accomplished every school day in providing safe and healthy meals to students.

USDA

United States Department of Agriculture

Guide to Professional Standards *for* School Nutrition Programs

TEAM NUTRITION • USDA

U.S. Department of Agriculture • Food and Nutrition Service
January 2016 • FNS-303

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination against its customers, employees, and applicants for employment on the bases of race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, gender identity, religion, reprisal and, where applicable, political beliefs, marital status, familial or parental status, sexual orientation, or if all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program, or protected genetic information in employment or in any program or activity conducted or funded by the Department. (Not all prohibited bases will apply to all programs and/or employment activities.)

If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the **USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form**, found online at **http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html**, or at any USDA office, or call (866) 632-9992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter to us by mail at U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, by fax (202) 690-7442 or email at **program.intake@usda.gov**.

Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, or have speech disabilities and wish to file either an EEO or program complaint please contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339 or (800) 845-6136 (in Spanish).

Persons with disabilities who wish to file a program complaint, please see information above on how to contact us by mail directly or by email. If you require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) please contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD).

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Table of Contents

Introduction 2

Standards for School Nutrition Employees: Directors, Managers, and Staff 3
- Job Categories 3
- Training Standards 3
  - Training Topics by Key Areas 5
  - Record Keeping Requirements 7
  - Training Details for Each Job Category 7
- Hiring Standards for New School Nutrition Program Directors 11
  - Enrollment Categories 11

State Agency Standards 13
- Training Standards 13
  - Annual Training Requirements 13
  - Training and Guidance for SFAs 14
- Hiring Standards 14
  - Minimum Criteria 14
  - Guidance on SFA Hiring Standards 15

Conclusion 16

Glossary 16

Links to Additional Resources 18
- Appendix A. SFA Director's Guide to Professional Standards 19
- Appendix B. Manager's Guide to Professional Standards for Training 21
- Appendix C. Staff Guide to Professional Standards for Training 23

Introduction

The Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (HHFKA) requires the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to create professional standards for State and local school nutrition program personnel. The purpose of this guide is to help you learn about these standards and find useful resources. Local school program personnel should be sure to refer to the final rule and consult with their State agency (SA) if they have specific questions. Similarly, SAs should consult their USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) Regional Office with any questions regarding professional standards.

The training and hiring professional standards have a simple goal. They help ensure the success of the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP). The standards:

- Assist SAs and School Food Authorities (SFAs) in recruiting, hiring, training, and retaining qualified school nutrition staff.
- Enhance the image of school nutrition professionals and their influence in the community.
- Build skills and empower staff to lead and efficiently operate school nutrition programs.

Standards for School Nutrition Employees: Directors, Managers, and Staff

Professional standards apply to all school nutrition employees, whether the SFA operates the school nutrition program or contracts with a food service management company. SFA-level compliance with the professional standards will now be included as a part of the Administrative Review (AR). This section explains job categories, training standards (annual requirements, topics, and recordkeeping) for all employees, and hiring standards for new directors. Additionally, you will find valuable training resources.

Job Categories

Professional standards vary by three job categories: directors, managers, and staff. At the local level, there are many different job titles of individuals who perform similar duties. The definitions below are general enough to cover most local school nutrition program employees and can be used to determine their job category:

- **Directors** plan, administer, implement, monitor, and evaluate all district-wide aspects of school nutrition programs. Regardless of its size, an SFA typically only has one director.
- **Managers** have direct responsibility for the day-to-day operations at one or more schools.
- **Staff** prepare and serve meals, process transactions at point of service, and review the free/reduced price applications, along with other routine work. Typically, staff do not have management responsibilities.

The appendixes include reproducible handouts for each job category. You may want to use these need-to-know summaries with your employees as well as administrators. They are also available as separate downloadable files at **http://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/professional-standards**.

Training Standards

School nutrition directors not only have their own annual training requirements, but also oversee training for managers and staff. Many SFAs have been providing training at or near the annual levels in the standards. As you implement the standards, keep in mind these key points:

- The number of annual training hours required each year varies by job category (see Table 1 on p. 4).
- Training must be job-specific and intended to help employees perform their duties well.
- Training is measured in hours, and may include shorter time periods. USDA suggests at least 15 minutes per training segment.
- Training needs are best assessed by an employee in consultation with his or her manager, director, or State agency. The USDA does not approve or require specific training programs.

Training Standards (continued)

- Training may be obtained in many ways: in person, online, local meetings, webinars, conferences, etc.
- A variety of free and low-cost training resources and formats are available.
- USDA provides an optional Training Tracker Tool to help document completed training.
- The SA reviews training documentation during the AR.

The first year (July 1, 2015-June 30, 2016) training requirements are lower:

Director – 8 hours;

Manager – 6 hours;

All staff – 4 hours.

Table 1: Summary of Required Minimum Training for School Nutrition Employees

Job Category	Annual Requirements*
Directors	12 hours
Managers	10 hours
Staff	6 hours
Part-Time Staff (working less than 20 hours per week)	4 hours
Mid-year hires in all categories (January 1, or later)	One-half of training requirement for each job category

*Annual requirements apply to the 12 months between July 1 and June 30.

Training Topics by Key Areas

Use the USDA's list of suggested job-specific training topics to guide your choices. The topics align with four key areas: nutrition, operations, administration, and communications/marketing. To help link training topics to key areas, the first number of each training topic's 4-digit code corresponds with that of the key area's codes, as indicated below.

Table 2: Training Topics by Key Areas

Key Areas	Training Topics
Nutrition – 1000	Menu Planning (1100) Nutrition Education (1200) General Nutrition (1300)
Operations – 2000	Food Production (2100) Serving Food (2200) Cashier and Point of Service (2300) Purchasing/Procurement (2400) Receiving and Storage (2500) Food Safety and Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) (2600)
Administration – 3000	Free and Reduced-Price Meal Benefits (3100) Program Management (3200) Financial Management (3300) Human Resources and Staff Training (3400) Facilities and Equipment Planning (3500)
Communications and Marketing – 4000	Communications and Marketing (4100)

See the FNS Professional Standards Web site for suggested learning objectives for each training topic:

http://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/professional-standards

Where To Find Training

Training opportunities abound. Here is a short list to get you started. Many of these choices are free or offered at a low cost. Some training costs may not be an allowable expense from the nonprofit school food service account. Check with your SA if you have any questions about specific training you want to fund through your program.

- USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS): The USDA FNS online library of available trainings is updated regularly. You can search by key areas, topics, type of training, and more. **http://professionalstandards.nal.usda.gov**
- Institute of Child Nutrition (ICN): The ICN offers free training, both online and in person. You can also download and use its resources for in-service training. **http://www.theicn.org**
- State Agency (SA): Your SA will make at least 18 hours of training available to SFAs each year as part of the standards. Check with your SA about training options available.
- Professional Organizations: Professional organizations are another option for training. Attend local chapter activities and, when possible, participate in State or national meetings.
- Local In-Service Training: Rely on experts within your own SFA, SA, or community. For example, invite district experts to provide 15-minute mini-lessons on various topics each month as part of staff meetings. Or, organize a special training session with an outside speaker, such a local Registered Dietitian/Nutritionist (RD/RDN) or your kitchen equipment representative.
- Foodservice Suppliers: Check out training sessions sponsored by companies and trade groups. See if events offered by manufacturers, distributors, and brokers or commodity-promotion groups meet your training needs.
- Exhibits at Conferences: At the discretion of your SA, you and your staff may count up to 2 hours of exhibits toward annual training time as long as they are relevant to core training topics. The Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) located at **http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/cn/ps_faqs.pdf** provide more detail on how to acquire training hours through exhibits. Consult your SA for guidance.
- Other Resources: Universities and community colleges are other training options. College courses can count when the course meets job-specific needs. Also, Cooperative Extension or non-profit groups in your State or community may offer related training programs.

Record Keeping Requirements

The regulation does not specify the kind of records that must be kept. Records that list the employee name, employer/school, training title, topic/objectives, training source, dates, and total training hours would be appropriate to demonstrate compliance with training requirements. Records must be maintained and made available to the SA upon request. You may keep the records electronically in a local database, in paper files, or through the USDA Training Tracking Tool. If your SA allows a 2-year period to complete training, keep in mind the following:

- Some training hours must be completed each year.
- An employee's annual training requirements for one year may be met with hours in excess of the annual requirement from either the immediately previous or immediately subsequent training year.

Documentation of professional standards training is now part of the AR, so while it is ideal for individual staff members to keep track of their own training, you must ensure it is available for SA review. Whichever record keeping method you use, keep training records for 3 years plus the current school year. Open audits require different record retention periods. Check with your SA for guidance.

Training Details for Each Job Category

Directors help determine topics that may apply to all staff, such as food safety training. Provide training that matches staff duties, for example:

- Free and reduced-price meal applications training for program clerical staff and managers
- On-the-job in-service training using new equipment for food production staff

Use training as an opportunity to reinforce the skills of your managers and staff. Share your staff's successes district-wide. Training shows the school community that ***your staff are professionals,*** and students enjoy knowing that adults are "in school," too!

While training that focuses on the day-to-day management and operation of the school nutrition programs is encouraged for directors and mangers, time spent training other staff can count as training hours as well.

Let's take a closer look at training for each job category. In this section, you will find examples for different training scenarios.

School Nutrition Program Director

As a director, you need a minimum of ***12 hours of training annually***. Here are some examples of how directors can meet or exceed training requirements.

In situations where the school manager also performs the duties of a director, the manager must meet the professional standards as a director. Check with your State agency for more information.

Director Jessica is from a small rural school district of 1,200 enrolled students.	***Director Stephen*** works in a school district with 5,000 enrolled students.	***Director Leticia*** oversees a district with 57,000 enrolled students.
Attends online courses using the district computer lab, 4 hours Completes State-sponsored training, 4 hours Attends local conference sessions, 4 hours	Completes college course with job-specific content; 1 credit equals 15 hours	Develops and provides training to staff, 8 hours personal training Attends job-specific national conference sessions, 10 hours
12 hours total	15 hours total*	18 hours total*

*If authorized by your State agency, hours in excess of the minimum in one year may be applied to either the immediately previous or immediately subsequent year.

School Nutrition Program Managers

School nutrition program managers will focus on their own training but may also be responsible for training staff. Managers need ***10 hours of training annually***. Managers may help with recordkeeping for both themselves and their staff. Here are examples of how managers can meet or exceed the training hours:

Manager Amy operates a small rural school cafeteria.	***Manager Chris*** works in a small district and has cooking duties in addition to managing the kitchen.	***Manager Gabriella*** oversees production in a kitchen that also produces meals for three satellite locations for a large district.
Completes a monthly online or webinar course offered by her State agency, the Institute of Child Nutrition (ICN), and/or her professional organization, 5 hours Attends 30 minutes of monthly training provided by director at 10 manager meetings, 5 hours	Attends a basic nutrition course through the ICN, 8 hours Completes online culinary classes from the ICN, 3 hours	Trains her staff on food safety standard operating procedures (SOPs) for food production and transportation, 4 hours Attends a regional conference for 8 hours of job-specific sessions plus 1 hour of State-approved exhibits, 9 hours
10 hours total	11 hours total*	13 hours total*

*If authorized by your State agency, hours in excess of the minimum in one year may be applied to either the immediately previous or immediately subsequent year.

School Nutrition Program Staff

Everyone involved with school meals needs training, whether full-time or part-time. With good reason: staff's daily work is the closest to the customer, the students. Training helps them to know what to do and how to do it.

Staff who regularly work 20 hours per week or more in school nutrition programs need at least ***6 hours of training annually***. In addition to keeping district records, you should encourage staff to keep their own training records. They may want to provide proof of training should they change schools or districts or keep a back-up to your tracking method.

Here are some examples of how different program staff can meet or exceed the training requirements:

Cook Daryl prepares and serves food in a large school district.	***Cashier Shandra*** was hired in February to work at the Point of Service (POS), so only needs half of required hours.	***Clerical Worker Brittany*** processes meal applications and provides administrative support in the school nutrition office.
Attends a food safety refresher course at the beginning of the school year provided by his director, 2 hours Attends four 15-minute manager's in-service training sessions for using the district's new production record and standardized recipes, 1 hour Completes a State agency-sponsored knife skills class, 3 hours	Completes online course for reimbursable meals, breakfast and lunch, 1 hour Completes self-paced training module on how to operate the POS equipment, 1 hour Attends a customer service class at a local conference, 1 hour	Attends three webinars offered by the SA on free and reduced meal applications, claims, and other administrative duties, 3 hours Completes a training on the software system the district uses for application processing, 2 hours Attends a district business office training session on invoice and payments procedures, 2 hours
6 hours total	3 hours total	7 hours total*

*If authorized by your State agency, hours in excess of the minimum in one year may be applied to either the immediately previous or immediately subsequent year.

Part-Time Staff

Staff working less than 20 hours per week need ***4 hours of training annually***. While the SFA must maintain copies of completed training, staff should also keep personal copies.

Consider these examples of how to meet or exceed the training needs of part-time staff:

Server Maria works during lunch service only.	***Server/Dishwasher Kevin*** serves lunch and works in the dish room.	***Breakfast in Classroom Worker Shannon*** works only in the breakfast program.
Attends the district's summer workshop that includes refresher training and updates on food safety, production records, and customer service, 6 hours	Attends cleaning/sanitation training specific to the serving line and dish room, 2 hours Completes a self-paced training module on cleaning and sanitizing large equipment, 1 hour Attends two 30-minute on-the-job training sessions on lunch reimbursement criteria and promoting healthy choices to students, 1 hour	Completes a training module for food safety, 1 hour Takes online breakfast reimbursement criteria and production records courses, 2 hours Completes on-the-job training module for the breakfast program, 1 hour
6 hour total*	4 hours total	4 hours total

*If authorized by your State agency, hours in excess of the minimum in one year may be applied to either the immediately previous or immediately subsequent year.

Hiring Standards for New School Nutrition Program Directors

The professional standards also include minimum hiring criteria for new school nutrition program directors. The hiring standards affect directors hired on or after July 1, 2015. Directors hired prior to July 1, 2015:

- Can remain in their current positions without meeting the hiring standards
- May fill a new director position for the same LEA enrollment category or smaller without meeting the hiring standards
- Must meet the hiring standards for the larger LEA enrollment category when applying for a director position within that enrollment category

Enrollment Categories

Hiring standards are grouped into three LEA enrollment categories (See Figure 1):

- 2,499 or less
- 2,500 to 9,999
- 10,000 or more

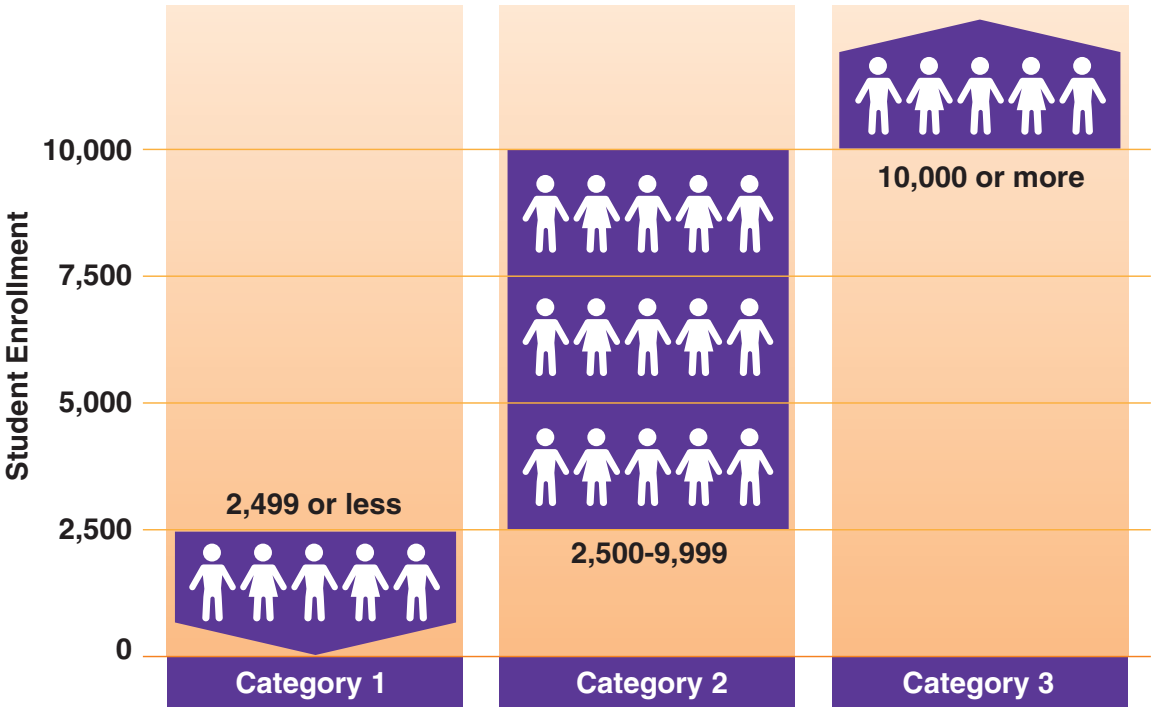

Figure 1: Local Educational Agency (LEA) Student Enrollment Categories

Hiring criteria depend on LEA enrollment size (see Table 3 on p. 12). As enrollment increases, program demands and complexity follow. Thus, minimum requirements are higher for LEAs with enrollments of 10,000 or more students than for smaller districts. At all enrollment categories, the standards encourage directors with the minimum educational degree to pursue advanced coursework toward the next higher degree in a related field. Consult your SA on guidance for any special or unique hiring situations.

Table 3: Minimum Hiring Standards for New School Food Authority (SFA) Nutrition Directors

Local Educational Agency (LEA) Student Enrollment Categories	Category 1 2,499 or less	Category 2 2,500-9,999	Category 3 10,000 or more
Minimum Education Standards	Bachelor's Degree* in specific/related major** (experience preferred, not required)	Bachelor's Degree* in specific/related major** (experience preferred, not required)	Bachelor's Degree* in specific/related major** (experience preferred, not required)
	OR	**OR**	**OR**
	Bachelor's Degree* in any major *AND* State-recognized certificate for school nutrition program directors	Bachelor's Degree* in any major *AND* State-recognized certificate for school nutrition program directors	Bachelor's Degree* in any major *AND* State-recognized certificate for school nutrition program directors
	OR	**OR**	**OR**
	Bachelor's Degree* in any major *AND* **1 year** of relevant school nutrition experience	Bachelor's Degree* in any major *AND* **2 years** of relevant school nutrition experience	Bachelor's Degree* in any major *AND* **5 years** of school nutrition program management
	OR	**OR**	
	Associate's Degree* in specific/related major** *AND* **1 year** of relevant school nutrition experience	Associate's Degree* in specific/related major** *AND* **2 years** of relevant school nutrition experience	
	OR		
	High School Diploma (or GED) *AND* **3 years*** ** of relevant school nutrition experience		
Food Safety Training	At least 8 hours within 5 years prior to or within 30 days of start date		

*Or equivalent educational experience; consult your State agency for more information.

**Specific/related major: Academic major or concentration in food and nutrition, foodservice management, dietetics, family and consumer sciences, nutrition education, culinary arts, business, or a related field.

***For LEA enrollments less than 500, the State agency may approve the hire of a candidate with a high school diploma (or GED) and less than the required years of experience, if the best qualified candidate.

State Agency Standards

Training Standards

State-level directors of school nutrition programs and distributing agencies (State directors) provide leadership in school nutrition. Exact job titles may vary State to State; however, the contributions to statewide school nutrition success are similar. Regardless of job title, training and hiring standards apply to those with State-level administrative responsibilities for the NSLP, SBP, and the distribution of USDA Foods. Compliance with training and hiring standards will be assessed as part of the Management Evaluation (ME).

If you are a State director, you have more than one interest in training. Besides your own training, you must provide or ensure State agency staff receives annual continuing education/training. If you direct school nutrition programs, you must provide training opportunities for SFAs.

Annual Training Requirements

As a State director, you need at least 15 hours of training each year. Be sure to track your annual training hours and retain records for 3 years plus the current school year. Open audits require different record-retention periods. Check with your USDA FNS Regional Office for guidance.

In some States, one director covers both school nutrition and food distribution. In these instances, the annual training requirement remains 15 hours. In other States, oversight of food distribution reside outside of school nutrition programs. In these cases, the person with program oversight must meet the annual training requirements for the State director of distributing agencies.

Key areas and training topics are the same as those for SFAs (see p. 5). FNS may specify additional topics and hours annually as necessary.

While the standards do not specify annual training requirements for State staff, State directors must ensure adequate training to perform duties associated with school nutrition programs.

The State director of school nutrition programs must ensure at least 18 hours of State-sponsored training is available to SFAs annually. (The distributing agency director does not have this additional requirement.) Many of the State agency's costs to provide training for staff and SFAs are allowable through the State Administrative Expense (SAE) fund. The SA may offer a variety of training formats, including:

- Conference calls
- Webinars
- Seminars
- Classes developed by the SA and/or other groups

Training and Guidance for SFAs

Based on past Administrative Reviews, or surveys taken in your State, you may be aware of the most important training needs of your SFAs. Refer to these training topics and their related behavioral objectives when planning training.

SFAs will look to the SA for specific recordkeeping information. SA staff will review training records as part of the AR. States may give SFAs a 2-year period to complete the training hours. If this flexibility is offered, SFAs need to ensure that:

- Some training hours must be completed each year;
- An employee's annual training requirements for one year may be met with hours in excess of the annual requirement from either the immediately previous or immediately subsequent training year.

Hiring Standards

In addition to training, the standards also establish minimum hiring criteria for State directors hired on or after July 1, 2015 (see Table 4 on p. 15). Be sure to share this section with State-level human resources and personnel staff.

All State directors in their position prior to July 1, 2015, can remain in their positions; the hiring standards apply to new directors only. Directors of distributing agencies must also meet the hiring standards to become a new State director of school nutrition programs. The standards encourage current State directors to work toward achieving the minimum hiring requirements.

Minimum Criteria

State director positions require a minimum education level of a bachelor's degree. See the information below Table 4 on page 15 for specifics on degree majors.

For States where one individual is responsible for both programs, the school nutrition program standards apply. The Federal requirements are minimums. A SA may add criteria, such as years of relevant program experience, to these hiring standards.

Table 4: Minimum Hiring Standards for New State Directors

Minimum Requirements for State Directors	School Nutrition Program	Distributing Agency
Minimum Education Standards	Bachelor's Degree with related major*	Bachelor's Degree with any major
Knowledge & Experience	Extensive relevant knowledge and experience in areas such as institutional foodservice operations, management, business, and/or nutrition education.	
Skills & Abilities	Additional abilities and skills needed to lead, manage, and supervise people to support the mission of school nutrition programs.	
State Requirements	State agencies may have requirements in addition to these hiring minimums.	

*Related majors include food and nutrition, foodservice management, dietetics, family and consumer sciences, nutrition education, culinary arts, business, or a related field. For information on equivalent educational experience, check with your USDA FNS Regional Office.

Guidance on SFA Hiring Standards

State directors of school nutrition programs must fully understand the hiring standards for SFA-level directors. In some situations, SAs will review any unique circumstances and provide guidance. For example, for districts with enrollments of under 500 students, SAs may authorize the selection of an SFA-level director who meets education requirements but does not have 3 years of relevant school nutrition experience.

Conclusion

The professional standards for all local school nutrition employees and State directors help ensure a capable workforce. Tiered training requirements were developed to match the needs of employees. Hiring standards for new local program directors assist local districts in recruiting and hiring qualified leaders. Hiring standards for new State-level directors ensure that leadership at all levels is prepared to meet program challenges. Both the State agencies and USDA provide support and resources to the SFAs to meet training and hiring standards. Most importantly, professional standards help all schools to provide safe, nourishing meals that model and foster wise food choices in children today for a healthier tomorrow.

Glossary

Administrative Review (AR) means the comprehensive evaluation of school meal programs by State agencies (SAs) of School Food Authorities (SFAs) participating in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program. The AR includes both Critical and General Areas of Review.

Allowable and non-allowable training expenses pertain to costs associated with training that are allowable or not allowable uses of the nonprofit school food service account (schools) or State Administrative Expenses (SAE) funds (State agencies). Director, manager, and staff training is an allowable use of the nonprofit school food service account. SAE funds may be used for training SA staff and SFAs through a variety of training formats. States may contract or partner with other organizations (ICN, State Nutrition Association, etc.) to provide training. College tuition and expenses to help a newly hired director meet hiring requirements are not allowable expenses.

Equivalent educational experience refers to college credits completed by an individual who does not possess a bachelor's or an associate's degree. For example, to meet the hiring standard of an associate's degree, a person would be expected to have at least 60 college credits, which is generally the number of credits required by a college or university to confer an associate's degree.

Food Service Management Company (FSMC) means a commercial enterprise or a nonprofit organization that acts on behalf of a School Food Authority (SFA) by managing or directing any aspect of the school meal program(s) and must meet applicable program requirements. The SFA must request documentation from the FSMC to show compliance with the annual training standards.

Institute of Child Nutrition (ICN), formerly known as the National Food Service Management Institute, is the only federally funded national center dedicated to applied research, education and training, and technical assistance for child nutrition programs.

Key Areas of professional standards are suggested training categories developed by the USDA to better organize training. The four key areas are Nutrition, Operations, Administration, and Communications/Marketing. Each key area has several topics and specific training subjects.

Learning Objectives describe what participants should know or be able to do at the end of training.

Local Educational Agency (LEA) means a public board of education or other public or private nonprofit authority legally constituted within a State having administrative control of schools.

Management Evaluation (ME) means a periodic assessment of the accomplishment of program objectives and compliance assessment of State agency and local program operations, including compliance efficiency, effectiveness, and quality of service, that results in a report that indicates review findings, observations, and noteworthy initiatives.

Mid-year hire means a person who is hired later in the school year, typically January 1 or later.

Part-time staff, as related to professional standards, means staff working less than 20 hours per week. Part-time staff must have at least 4 hours of training annually. Staff working less than 40 hours weekly may be considered part-time by the SFA. However, staff regularly working 20 hours or more weekly must complete at least 6 hours of training annually.

School Food Authority (SFA) means the governing body responsible for the administration of one or more schools and with the legal authority to operate the school nutrition program therein or be otherwise approved to operate this program by FNS.

School nutrition program director plans, administers, implements, monitors, and evaluates all district-wide aspects of a school nutrition program. Regardless of its size, an SFA typically only has one director.

School nutrition program manager is directly responsible for the day-to-day operations of school nutrition programs for one participating school or group of schools within a larger SFA.

School nutrition program staff is involved in the operation of the meal program for a participating school, but does not have managerial responsibilities, such as planning and supervision. The training standards for a program staff person are job-specific, but they may take training that prepares them to assume managerial duties in the future.

School year pertains to the academic year, typically July 1-June 30.

State-level director of distributing agency is responsible for the distribution of USDA Foods at the State level.

State-level school nutrition program director is responsible for the administration of the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program at the State level.

State-level staff work in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program, or USDA Foods distribution at the State level.

Training hour is equal to 60 minutes of actual training time. Smaller increments of time can be accumulated to achieve required training hours for each job category. USDA suggests at least 15 minutes per training segment. For example, if a training agenda sets aside an hour for a training activity, but includes a 10-minute break, only 50 minutes contributes to annual training requirements.

Training Topics pertain to relevant program subject matter within each key area. For example, under the key area of Nutrition, training topics include menu planning, nutrition education, and general nutrition.

Training Tracker Tool is an optional, free, recordkeeping software tool available from the USDA at **http://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/professional-standards**.

Links to Additional Resources

U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, School Meals Professionals Standards

http://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/professional-standards

Includes links to a variety of useful resources related to professional standards, including:

- Final Rule Summary Flyer (Professional Standards for All School Nutrition Professionals: Summary of the Final Rule Effective July 1, 2015)
- Professional Standards for School Nutrition Employees Brochure
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Key Learning Areas, Objectives, Topics
- Downloadable Training Tracker Tool
- Job Description Template (link to ICN)
- Database of Professional Standards Trainings
- Latest News
- Final Rule

U.S. Department of Agriculture, National Agricultural Library, Professional Standards for School Nutrition Professionals

http://professionalstandards.nal.usda.gov

Allows school nutrition staff to search for training that meets their learning needs. Each listing contains information about the training, including contacts, dates, learning objectives covered, and more.

Institute of Child Nutrition, University of Mississippi

http://www.theicn.org

Offers a variety of free training, both online and in person to help school nutrition professionals meet the standards.

Appendix A. School Food Authority Director's Guide to Professional Standards

New professional standards require annual training for all program staff and hiring standards for new directors. Part of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010, these Federal standards became effective July 1, 2015. The goal of the standards is to help you and your staff maintain or acquire the knowledge and skills needed to successfully manage and operate school meal programs.

The first year (July 1, 2015-June 30, 2016) training requirements are lower:

Director – 8 hours;

Manager – 6 hours;

All staff – 4 hours.

Annual Minimum Required Training Hours for Directors, Managers, and School Staff

Position	Defined As	Annual Hours*
Director	Responsible for managing school nutrition programs for all schools under an SFA	12
Manager	In charge of the operations of a site (or several sites)	10
Staff	Works 20 or more hours weekly in direct program support	6
Part-time Staff	Works less than 20 hours per week in direct program support	4

*If hired on or after January 1, only half of the required hours for that school year are required.

What Qualifies as Training?

Training should apply to an employee's work duties. In addition to your own training, you should plan to assist your managers and staff with training. Consider these options for job-specific training:

- Online courses
- Structured, on-the-job training
- In-service training
- Local school nutrition organization educational events
- State agency-sponsored training
- Training you conduct for staff
- Meetings sponsored by foodservice partners (vendors and commodity groups), including exhibits (as allowed by your State agency)
- College courses with job-specific content

A full 60 minutes of training counts as 1 training hour. You can include shorter time periods. For example, four 15-minute in-service training sessions equal 1 training hour. Not all activities will count toward training – they must be job-specific.

Your State agency (SA) provides guidance on using funds from the non-profit school foodservice account for training. Many costs are allowable expenses.

Training records are now part of the Administrative Review. Be sure to record annual staff training and keep on file for 3 years plus the current school year. Open audits require different record-retention periods. Check with your SA for guidance. USDA offers an optional software tool to track training for you and your staff. Find the tool online at **http://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/professional-standards**.

Check with your SA to see if it allows a flexible 2-year period to complete the training hours. If so, be sure you and your staff complete some training each year (July 1-June 30) and meet the total number of hours needed for 2 years.

What Are the Hiring Standards for New Directors?

The standards also include hiring minimums for new directors based on student enrollment levels. If you are a director hired before July 1, 2015, the new hiring standards do not apply. This is still true if you change director jobs but stay in the same or lower student enrollment category. However, if you change director jobs and move to an LEA with a higher enrollment category, the hiring standards will apply.

Where Do I Find More Information?

Looking for free and low-cost training? USDA maintains an online searchable library of trainings at **http://professionalstandards.nal.usda.gov**. Additionally, your SA must offer at least 18 hours of free training each year, so contact your SA and/or check out their Web site for more information on State-sponsored training.

You can read more details, including hiring standards for new directors, in the *Guide to Professional Standards for School Nutrition Programs* **http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/ps_guide.pdf**, the FAQs **http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/cn/ps_faqs.pdf**, and several other helpful resources at **http://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/professional-standards**.

Appendix B. Manager's Guide to Professional Standards for Training

All district-level school nutrition employees now have annual training requirements. These Federal standards went into effect July 1, 2015. The training goal is to help you and your staff maintain or acquire the knowledge and skills needed to successfully manage and operate school meal programs.

The first year (July 1, 2015-June 30, 2016) training requirements are lower:

Manager – 6 hours;

All staff – 4 hours.

Annual Minimum Required Training Hours for School Nutrition Managers and Staff

Position	Defined As	Annual Hours*
Manager	In charge of the operations of a site (or several sites)	10
Staff	Works 20 or more hours weekly in direct program support	6
Part-time Staff	Works less than 20 hours per week in direct program support	4

*If hired on or after January 1, only half of the required hours for that school year are required.

What Qualifies as Training?

Training should apply to an employee's work duties. In many cases, your director and school district will help you find training. They may also assist in identifying training for your staff. Consider these options for job-specific training:

- Online courses
- Structured, on-the-job training
- In-service training
- Local school nutrition organization educational events
- State agency-sponsored training
- Training you conduct for staff
- Meetings sponsored by foodservice partners (vendors and commodity groups), including exhibits (as allowed by your State agency)
- College courses with job-specific content

A full 60 minutes of training counts as 1 training hour. You can include shorter time periods. For example, four 15-minute in-service training sessions equal 1 training hour. Not all activities will count toward training – they must be job-specific. Ask your director for guidance.

Your director may ask you to help with recordkeeping. Training records are now part of the Administrative Review. Be sure to keep training records from online courses or other classes completed by you and your staff for a period determined by your director. USDA offers an optional tracking tool for training hours. Find the tool online at **http://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/professional-standards**.

Check with your director to see if your State agency allows a 2-year period to complete the training hours. If so, be sure to complete some training each year (July 1-June 30) and meet the total combined hours needed for 2 years.

Where Do I Find More Information?

Looking for free and low-cost training? USDA maintains an online searchable library of trainings at **http://professionalstandards.nal.usda.gov**. Whether you plan to continue to serve as manager or aspire to other positions within the school nutrition programs, training helps you perform effectively today, while preparing for tomorrow.

You can read more details, including hiring standards for new directors, in the *Guide to Professional Standards for School Nutrition Programs* **http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/ps_guide.pdf**, the FAQs **http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/cn/ps_faqs.pdf**, and several other helpful resources at **http://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/professional-standards**.

Appendix C. Staff Guide to Professional Standards for Training

School nutrition employees now have annual training requirements. These Federal standards went into effect July 1, 2015. The total hours of required annual training depends on your work schedule. The goal of training is to help you maintain or acquire the knowledge and skills needed to successfully operate school meal programs.

The first year (July 1, 2015-June 30, 2016) training requirements for all staff are 4 hours.

Position	Defined As	Annual Hours*
Staff	Works 20 or more hours weekly in direct program support	6
Part-Time Staff	Works less than 20 hours per week in direct program support	4

*If hired on or after January 1, only half of the required hours for that school year are required.

What Counts as Training?

Training should apply to your work duties. In many cases, your manager or director will provide training. Options for job-specific training include:

- Online courses
- On-the-job training
- In-service training
- Local school nutrition organization training events
- State agency-sponsored classes
- Meetings sponsored by foodservice partners (vendors and commodity groups), including exhibits (as allowed by your State agency)
- College courses with job-specific content

A full 60 minutes of training counts as 1 training hour. Shorter time periods can count, too. For example, four 15-minute in-service training sessions equal 1 training hour. Not all training activities will count; they must be job-specific. Check with your manager or director.

Your district needs to keep training records for all school nutrition employees. Your manager or director will tell you how to track and report your training. Be sure to keep your own training record in case you change schools or districts.

Check with your manager or director to find out if your State agency allows a 2-year period to complete the training hours. If so, be sure to complete some training each year (July 1-June 30) and meet the total combined hours needed for 2 years.

Where Do I Find More Information?

Looking for free and low-cost training? USDA maintains an online searchable library of trainings at **http://professionalstandards.nal.usda.gov**. Whether you plan to remain in your current position or aspire to other staff or managerial positions, training helps you perform effectively today and prepare for tomorrow.

Notes

U.S. Department of Agriculture
Food and Nutrition Service
FNS-303

This handbook is available to download from the Team Nutrition Resource Library at
http://www.teamnutrition.usda.gov/library/html