Professional Standards for ALL School Nutrition Program Employees

Summary of the Final Rule Effective July 1, 2015

USDA has established minimum professional standards requirements for school nutrition professionals who manage and operate the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs.

The standards, another key provision of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (HHFKA), aim to institute minimum education standards for new State and local school nutrition directors as well as annual training standards for all school nutrition professionals. These new standards will ensure school nutrition personnel have the knowledge, training and tools they need to plan, prepare, and purchase healthy products to create nutritious, safe, and enjoyable school meals. This final rule will:

- Create minimum hiring standards for new school food authority (SFA) directors based on a school district's size;
- Establish minimum hiring standards for new State directors of school nutrition programs and State directors of distributing agencies; and
- Require minimum annual training for all new and current school nutrition professionals.

A comprehensive Professional Standards website provides a database of training options. School nutrition staff can search for training that meets their learning needs in one easy-to-use location: **http://professionalstandards.nal.usda.gov/**

Hiring Standards for NEW State Directors

	State Director of School Nutrition Programs	State Director of Distributing Agencies
Education	A Bachelor's degree with an academic major in areas including food and nutrition, food service management, dietetics, family and consumer sciences, nutrition education, culinary arts, business, or a related field.	A Bachelor's degree with any major.
Knowledge & Experience	Extensive relevant knowledge and experience in areas such as institutional food service 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.	

Training Requirements for ALL State Agency Directors

State Director of School Nutrition Programs	State Director of Distributing Agencies
Each year, at least **15** hours of annual continuing education/ training.	Each year, at least **15** hours of annual continuing education/ training.
Must PROVIDE or ensure that State agency staff receives annual continuing education/training.	Must PROVIDE, or ensure that State food distribution staff receives annual continuing education/training.*
Must also PROVIDE a minimum of **18** hours of training to SFAs each year.*	

**Training is an approved use of State Administrative Expenses (SAE) funds and a variety of training formats are allowed. States may use contractors or partner with other organizations (School Nutrition Association and National Food Service Management Institute, etc.) to provide training.*

Hiring Standards for NEW School Nutrition Program Directors

New directors — those hired on or after July 1, 2015 — are subject to the new education requirements below. Existing directors will be grandfathered in their current positions as well as in the Student Enrollment category where they currently are working. (School Nutrition Program Directors are the individuals responsible for the operation of school nutriton programs for all schools under the local educational agency (LEA)).

Minimum Requirements for Directors	Student Enrollment 2,499 or less	Student Enrollment 2,500-9,999	Student Enrollment 10,000 or more
Minimum Education Standards See the final rule for additional **preferred** educational standards for new directors	Bachelor's degree, or equivalent educational experience, with academic major in specific areas;* **OR** Bachelor's degree in any academic major, and State-recognized certificate for school nutrition directors; **OR** Associate's degree or equivalent educational experience, with academic major in specific areas,* and at least one year of relevant school nutrition programs experience; **OR** High school diploma (or GED) and at least three years of relevant experience in school nutrition programs. (LEAs with less than 500 students: State agency may approve a candidate that meets the educational standards but has less than three years experience.)	Bachelor's degree, or equivalent educational experience, with academic major in specific areas;* **OR** Bachelor's degree in any academic major, and State-recognized certificate for school nutrition directors; **OR** Bachelor's degree in any academic major and at least two years of relevant school nutrition programs experience; **OR** Associate's degree or equivalent educational experience, with academic major in specific areas,* and at least two years of relevant school nutrition programs experience.	Bachelor's degree, or equivalent educational experience, with academic major in specific areas;* **OR** Bachelor's degree in any academic major, and State-recognized certificate for school nutrition directors; **OR** Bachelor's degree in any academic major and at least five years experience in management of school nutrition programs. * Specific majors/areas of concentration: food and nutrition, food service management, dietetics, family and consumer sciences, nutrition education, culinary arts, business, or a related field.
Minimum Prior Training Standards	At least eight hours of food safety training is required either not more than five years prior to their starting date or completed within 30 days of the employee's start date.		

Required Training for ALL School Nutrition Program Employees (All Local Educational Agency Sizes)

All Directors:	**For School Year 2015-2016 ONLY: at least 8 hours of annual continuing education/training.** Beginning school year 2016-2017: at least 12 hours of annual continuing education/training. This required continuing education/training is in addition to the food safety training required in the first year of employment.
All Managers:	**For School Year 2015-2016 ONLY: at least 6 hours of annual continuing education/training.** Beginning school year 2016-2017: at least 10 hours of annual continuing education/training.
All Other Staff:	**For School Year 2015-2016 ONLY: at least 4 hours of annual continuing education/training.** Beginning school year 2016-2017: at least 6 hours of annual continuing education/training.
Part-Time Staff (Work <20 hours per week)	Each year, at least 4 hours of annual continuing education/training, regardless of the number of part-time hours worked.

Note: If hired January 1 or later, an employee must only complete half of the above required training hours.

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