

Professional Standards for School Nutrition Program Employees

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 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.

Key Learning Areas:

All training will fit into one of these categories:

- Nutrition
- Operations
- Administration
- Communications & Marketing
- Additional topics if required by Secretary of USDA

Required Training for School Nutrition Program Employees (All Local Educational Agencies)

Directors

- School year 2015-16 ONLY: at least 8 hours of annual continuing education/training
- Beginning school year 2016-17: 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.

Other staff

- School year 2015-16 ONLY: at least 4 hours of annual continuing education/training
- Beginning school year 2016-17: at least 6 hours of annual continuing education/training

Managers

- School year 2015-16 ONLY: at least 6 hours of annual continuing education/training
- Beginning school year 2016-17: at least 10 hours of annual continuing education/training

Part-time staff (work less than 20 hours per week)

- Each year: at least 4 hours of annual continuing education/training, regardless of the number of part-time hours worked

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- When one person is both the director and manager, the higher standards must be met.
 - School year 2015-16: Training received three months prior to July 1, 2015, counts toward the first year's training requirements for all school food authority personnel.
 - If hired Jan. 1 or later, an employee need only complete half of the required training hours.
 - Find a database of training options at <http://professionalstandards.nal.usda.gov/>. Training is available in a variety of formats and from different sources.
 - Districts determine in which categories employees need training.
 - Documentation of individual training must be maintained at the school food authority.
 - Providing/receiving training is an allowable use of the nonprofit school food service account.

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.

Minimum Requirement for Directors	Student Enrollment 2,499 or less	Student Enrollment 2,500-9,999	Student Enrollment 10,000 or more
Minimum Education Standards	Bachelor's degree, or equivalent educational experience, with academic major in specific areas;* OR Bachelor's degree in any academic major <u>and</u> state-recognized certificate for school nutrition directors; OR Associate's degree or equivalent educational experience, with academic major in specific areas,* <u>and</u> at least one year of relevant school nutrition program experience; OR High school diploma (or GED) <u>and</u> 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 of experience.)	Bachelor's degree, or equivalent educational experience, with academic major in specific areas;* OR Bachelor's degree in any academic major <u>and</u> state-recognized certificate for school nutrition directors; OR Bachelor's degree in any academic major <u>and</u> at least two years of relevant school nutrition program experience; OR Associate's degree or equivalent educational experience, with academic major in specific areas,* <u>and</u> at least two years of relevant school nutrition program experience.	Bachelor's degree, or equivalent educational experience, with academic major in specific areas;* OR Bachelor's degree in any academic major <u>and</u> state-recognized certificate for school nutrition directors; OR Bachelor's degree in any academic major <u>and</u> at least five years of experience in management of school nutrition programs.
Minimum Prior Training Standards	An employee must complete at least eight hours of food safety training not more than five years prior to his or her starting date or within 30 days of his or her starting date.		

***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.

- School food authorities may hire a director that meets the employment requirements in place prior to July 1, 2015, if the vacancy is advertised prior to July 1.
- For very small local education agencies (less than 500 students), the South Dakota Department of Education has discretion to approve the hiring of a director that has a high school diploma but less than three years of experience.
- Find the final regulation and additional information at <http://professionalstandards.nal.usda.gov/>.

Definitions:

School nutrition program directors are those individuals directly responsible for the management of the day-to-day operations of school food service for all participating schools under the jurisdiction of the school food authority.

School nutrition program managers are those individuals directly responsible for the management of the day-to-day operations of school food service for a participating school(s).

School nutrition program staff are those individuals, without managerial responsibilities, involved in the day-to-day operations of school food service for a participating school(s).