

## **CHAPTER 8- Professional Standards for school nutrition professionals**

Professional Standards for school nutrition professionals is a key provision of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (HHFKA). The [final rule](#), “Professional Standards for State and Local School Nutrition Programs Personnel as required by the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010,” took effect 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 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. Required training topic areas will vary according to position and job requirements. The final rule:

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

Each LEA that operates the NSLP and/or SBP must meet the requirements of the Professional Standards for State and Local School Nutrition Programs Personnel rule. These standards ensure school nutrition personnel have the knowledge and training they need to plan, prepare and purchase healthy products to create nutritious, safe, and enjoyable school meals.

### **HIRING STANDARDS for New School Nutrition Program Directors:**

- Standards apply to new hires beginning July 1, 2015; current directors are exempt from meeting the hiring standards
- Definition of “Director” is not based on named title, but rather role and responsibilities
- Minimum Education Standards for new directors: based on student enrollment
- Training Requirement: At least eight hours food safety training in the past five years or within 30 days of hiring
- If a director moves to a new LEA, the director would need to meet hiring requirements based on enrollment at the new LEA

**TRAINING REQUIREMENTS for All School Nutrition Program Employees:**

Requirements set by job category – job category definitions defined by job role and responsibilities, rather than title

**Director:** Individual(s) directly responsible for the management of the day to day operations of the school nutrition programs for all participating schools under the jurisdiction of the school food authority

**Manager:** Individual(s) directly responsible for the day to day operations of the school nutrition programs for a participating school(s)

**School Nutrition program staff:** Individual(s) without managerial responsibilities who are involved in routine operations of the school nutrition programs for a participating school(s); may include individuals who prepare and serve meals, process transactions at point of service, and review the free/reduced price applications

- ✓ Yearly requirements (School Year)
  - Directors: ≥ 12 hrs
  - Managers: ≥ 10 hrs
  - All other staff: ≥ 6 hrs
  - Part time staff: ≥ 4 hrs
  
- ✓ If hired January 1<sup>st</sup> or later, an employee may only complete half of the required training hours for that school year
  
- ✓ Training is required to be in one of the four Professional Standards Key Areas. Each Key Area is further defined by Key Topics and specific training subjects with objectives to assist in planning and tracking training

**Key Areas**

**Nutrition - 1000**

Menu planning  
 Nutrition education  
 General nutrition

**Operations - 2000**

Food production  
 Serving food  
 Cashier and point of service  
 Purchasing/Procurement  
 Receiving and storage  
 Food safety and HACCP

**Administration – 3000**

Free and reduced price meal benefits  
 Program management  
 Financial management  
 Human resources and staff training  
 Facilities and equipment planning

**Communications/Marketing - 4000**

Communications and marketing

- Training hours in excess of the requirement may be carried over to the immediate subsequent school year

**Record keeping requirements:**

- Director is responsible for demonstrating that the LEA is in compliance during the Administrative Review
- Tracking tool should identify the school year the training applies to
- USDA created a tool to assist in tracking staff training:

**References and resources, including USDA Tool:**

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

Reference  
For Professional Standards for all School  
Nutrition Programs  
(Free or low cost trainings)

- Department of Education

<http://www.arkansased.gov/divisions/human-resources-educator-effectiveness-and-licensure/child-nutrition-unit/training>

- USDA library of trainings  
<https://professionalstandards.fns.usda.gov/>
- Online course
- On the job training
- Local School Nutrition organization training events
- State Agency sponsored classes
- Meeting sponsored by food service partners
- College Course with job specific content
- The institute of Child Nutrition [www.nfsmi.org](http://www.nfsmi.org)