



USDA Professional Standards – Summary

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Rationale

- The principal benefit of this proposed rule is to ensure that key school nutrition personnel are meeting minimum professional standards in order to adequately perform the duties and responsibilities of their position.

HHFKA (Healthy Hunger Free Kids Act)– Section 306

Section 306 directs the Secretary to:

- Establish a program of mandatory education, training and certification for all school nutrition directors responsible for the management of a school food authority.
- Require that each local educational agency or school food authority ensure that local nutrition personnel complete annual training and receive annual certification.
- Establish criteria and standards for States to use in selection for State agency directors with responsibility for the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and the School Breakfast Program (SBP)
- Require each State to provide at least annual training in administrative practices to local educational agency and school nutritional personnel.

School Nutrition State Agency Directors

State directors of school nutrition programs include those individuals at the State agency level with responsibility for oversight of the NSLP and SBP.

State directors of distributing agencies include those individuals at the State agency level with responsibility for the distribution of USDA Foods in schools under 7 CFR part 250.

USDA will establish criteria & standards for States to use.

- Criteria and standards for NEW hires
- Current employees grandfathered

School Nutrition Directors

Local individuals directly responsible for the management of the day-to-day operations of school nutrition programs for all participating schools under the jurisdiction of the school food authority.

- USDA will establish:
 - Education, training and certification requirements
 - Training criteria to maintain certification

School Nutrition Program Managers

Individuals directly responsible for the management of the day-to-day operations of school nutrition programs for a participating school(s).

- USDA will establish:
 - Certification requirements
 - Annual continuing education requirements

School Nutrition Program Staff

- Individuals without managerial responsibilities who are involved in routine operations of school nutrition programs for a participating school(s).
 - This may include, for example, those individuals who prepare and serve meals, process transactions at the point of service, and review free/reduced price applications.

**If an individual possesses responsibilities for more than one of these positions, the higher level position requirements will apply.*

Minimum Standards

- The professional standards proposed in this rule represent minimum standards that State agencies, school food authorities and local school nutrition personnel would be required to meet.

Implementation & LEA definition

- Beginning July 1, 2015, all school nutrition program directors hired must meet minimum educational requirements.
 - FNS has categorized the minimum educational requirements into four distinct local educational agency (LEA) sizes.
 - 2,499 students or less
 - Between 2,500 and 9,999 students
 - Between 10,000 and 24,999 students
 - 25,000 or more students
- *If a director is responsible for multiple school food authorities, he/she will be required to comply with the educational standards for the total enrollment of the LEAs he or she oversees.

Summary of School Nutrition Program Director Proposed Professional Standards by Local Education Agency Size

Minimum Requirements for Directors	Student Enrollment 2,499 or less	Student Enrollment 2,500-9,999	Student Enrollment 10,000-24,999	Student Enrollment 25,000 or more
<p>Minimum Education Standards (required) <i>(new directors only)</i></p>	<p>Bachelor's degree, or equivalent educational experience, with academic major or concentration in food and nutrition, food service management, dietetics, family and consumer sciences, nutrition education, culinary arts, business, or a related field.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Bachelor's degree, or equivalent educational experience, with any academic major or area of concentration, <u>and</u> a State recognized certificate in food and nutrition, food service management, dietetics, family and consumer sciences, nutrition education, culinary arts, or business;</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Associate's degree, or equivalent educational experience, with academic major or concentration in food and nutrition, food service management, dietetics, family and consumer science, nutrition education, culinary arts, business, or a related field: <u>and</u> at least one year of relevant experience;</p> <p>OR</p> <p>High school diploma (or GED) <u>and</u> 5 years of relevant experience in school nutrition programs.</p>	<p>Bachelor's degree, or equivalent educational experience, with academic major or concentration in food and nutrition, food service management, dietetics, family and consumer sciences, nutrition education, culinary arts, business, or a related field.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Bachelor's degree, or equivalent educational experience, with any academic major or area of concentration, <u>and</u> a State recognized certificate in food and nutrition, food service management, dietetics, family and consumer sciences, nutrition education, culinary arts, or business;</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Associate's degree, or equivalent educational experience, with academic major or concentration in food and nutrition, food service management, dietetics, family and consumer science, nutrition education, culinary arts, business, or a related field: <u>and</u> at least one year of relevant experience;</p>	<p>Bachelor's degree, or equivalent educational experience, with academic major or concentration in food and nutrition, food service management, dietetics, family and consumer sciences, nutrition education, culinary arts, business, or a related field.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Bachelor's degree, or equivalent educational experience, with any academic major or area of concentration, <u>and</u> a State recognized certificate in food and nutrition, food service management, dietetics, family and consumer sciences, nutrition education, culinary arts, or business;</p>	<p>Same requirements as for 10,000-24,999</p>

Summary of School Nutrition Program Director Proposed Professional Standards by Local Education Agency Size, con't



Minimum Requirements for Directors	Student Enrollment 2,499 or less	Student Enrollment 2,500-9,999	Student Enrollment 10,000-24,999	Student Enrollment 25,000 or more
<p>Minimum Education Standards (preferred) <i>(new directors only)</i></p>	<p>Directors hired without an associate's degree are strongly encouraged to work toward attaining associate's degree upon hiring.</p>	<p>Directors hired without a bachelor's degree are strongly encouraged to work toward attaining bachelor's degree upon hiring.</p>	<p>Master's degree, or willingness to work toward master's degree, preferred.</p> <p>At least one year of management experience, preferably in school nutrition, strongly recommended.</p> <p>At least 3 credit hours at the university level in food service management plus at least 3 credit hours in nutritional sciences at time of hiring strongly preferred.</p>	<p>Master's degree or willingness to work toward master's degree, preferred.</p> <p>At least one year of management experience, preferably in school nutrition, strongly recommended.</p> <p>At least 3 credit hours at the university level in food service management plus at least 3 credit hours in nutritional sciences at time of hiring strongly preferred.</p>
<p>Minimum Prior Training Standards (required) <i>(new directors only)</i></p>	<p>At least 8 hours of food safety training is required either 3 years prior to their starting date or completed within 30 days of employee's starting date.</p>			

General Training/Education Requirements for Directors, Managers and Staff

- The FNS certificate program would consist of four core areas: nutrition, operations, administration, and communications/marketing.
- Additional training topics would be contingent upon position title and/or job function.
- It is anticipated that all school nutrition programs staff positions that involve the handling of food would receive food safety training.

Summary of Proposed Required Minimum Training/Education Standards, for All LEA Sizes

New and Current Directors	<p>Each year, at least 15 hours of annual continuing education/training.</p> <p>Includes topics such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Administrative practices (including training in application, certification, verification, meal counting, and mail claiming procedures)• Any other appropriate topics as determined by FNS. <p>This required continuing education/training is in addition to the food safety training required in the first year of employment.</p>
New and Current Managers	<p>Each year, at least 12 hours of annual continuing education/training.</p> <p>Includes topics such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Administrative practices (including training in application, certification, verification, meal counting, and mail claiming procedures)• The identification of reimbursable meals at the point of service• Nutrition, health and safety standards• Other topics, as specified by FNS
New and Current Staff (other than the director and managers) that work an average of at least 20 hours per week	<p>Each year, at least 8 hours of annual continuing education/training.</p> <p>Includes topics such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Free and reduced price eligibility• Application, certification, and verification procedures• The identification of reimbursable meals at the point of service• Nutrition, health and safety standards• Other topics, as specified by FNS

Use of School Nutrition Program Funds for Training Costs

- Providing training to school nutrition program staff is an allowable use of the nonprofit school food service account.
- However, the proposed rule would specifically exclude as an allowable cost, any costs incurred by an individual to meet the educational criteria necessary to be hired as a new school nutrition program director, as proposed in 210.30(b)(1).
 - For example, the school food authority cannot use nonprofit school food service funds to pay the costs of an existing employee to take college-level classes.

School Food Authority Oversight

- Proposed 210.30(g) would require each school food authority to maintain a recordkeeping system that annually documents compliance with the professional standard requirements for all school nutrition program employees.
- At a minimum, the school food authority would review employee education/training progress periodically throughout the year and certify employee compliance no later than the end of each school year.
- Specifically, the State agency would be required to ensure that the school food authority complies with the professional standards for school nutrition program directors, managers and personnel established in 210.30.

School Nutrition Program Professional Standards (State Directors)

Title	Hiring Standards	Training Standards
State Directors of School Nutrition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New hires would be required to possess 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. • New directors would be required to possess extensive relevant knowledge and experience in areas such as institutional food service operations, management, business, and/or nutrition education. • FNS highly recommends that State directors of school nutrition programs have experience in three or more of these four areas. • A master's degree is also recommended. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must complete a minimum of 15 hours of continuing education/training in core areas appropriate to the areas of responsibility and may include: nutrition, operations, administration, and communications/marketing. • Any additional hours and topics would be specified by FNS on an annual basis, as necessary. • Training that is conducted by a State director may <u>not</u> be credited toward part of his/her own annual education/training requirement.
State Directors of Distributing Agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New hires would be required to possess a bachelor's degree with an academic major in any area. • New directors would be required to possess extensive relevant knowledge and experience in areas such as institutional food service operations, management, business, and/or nutrition education. 	Same as State Directors of School Nutrition

The proposed rule would establish criteria and standards for the hiring of individuals as State agency directors and would therefore apply only to those State agency directors hired after July 1, 2015. Incumbents would not be affected. However, annual continuing education/training is proposed to apply to all current and new State directors of school nutrition, as well as State directors of distributing agencies.

Deadline for Comment Submission

- The deadline to submit comments is April 7, 2014
- Comments can be submitted in writing to:
Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, OMB
Attention: Desk Officer for FNS
Washington, DC 20503
- Please also send a copy of your comments to:
Lynn Rodgers-Kuperman, Chief
Program Analysis and Monitoring Branch
Child Nutrition Division
3101 Park Center Drive
Alexandria, VA 22302