

USDA Professional Standards for School Nutrition Program Personnel - Training

The USDA has established minimum professional standard requirements for school nutrition professionals who manage and operate the National School Lunch and Breakfast programs. The goal is to ensure that school nutrition personnel have the knowledge, training and tools needed to operate School Nutrition Programs (SNP) successfully. These requirements are based on three levels of job duties with increasing hours of training needed for positions with greater responsibility. Required training topic areas will vary according to position and job requirements.

Position Descriptions and Annual Training Requirements

Job Category	Description	Annual Requirement
School Nutrition Program DIRECTOR	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 (SFA). Every SFA must designate a single person as the director.*	At least 12** hours annually
School Nutrition Program MANAGER	Those individuals directly responsible for the management of the day-to-day operations of school food service for a participating school/schools	At least 10 hours annually
School Nutrition Program STAFF	Those individuals, without managerial responsibilities, involved in day-to-day operations of school food service for a participating school/schools that work 20 hours or more in the school nutrition program	At least 6 hours annually
School Nutrition Program PART-TIME STAFF	Those individuals, without managerial responsibilities, involved in day-to-day operations of school food service for a participating school/schools that work less than 20 hours per week in the school nutrition program	At least 4 hours annually

* The person designated as program director MUST be an employee of the district; the director cannot be an employee of a Food Service Management company for purposes of meeting these requirements. If the Food Service Management company performs the majority of these duties, there still must be someone at the district who is deemed responsible for oversight of these activities to fulfill the director role.

** Under USDA Professional Standards requirements, new directors must additionally complete 8 hours food safety training either within 5 years prior or within 30 days of hire

- Annual requirements apply to the 12 months between July 1 and June 30.
- Any excess training hours from a school year can be used to meet either the previous or the following year's requirements.
- Employees hired January 1 or later are only required to complete half the number of hours for the year.
- Training topics must be job-specific and intended to help employees perform their duties well.
- A person who provides support to, but is not specifically involved in, the operation of the school nutrition program is not required to meet the training standards. However, they should receive job-specific training needed to perform tasks effectively and in compliance with program regulations.

Tracking and Documentation of Training

The SFA is responsible for documenting staff training. Compliance with training requirements will be evaluated during the administrative review. A complete training tracker for each employee involved in the school nutrition program is sufficient documentation. While training certificates are helpful, they are not required. At minimum the tracking tool used should document the following information:

- ✓ Employee name
- ✓ Job category (director, manager, staff)
- ✓ Title of training
- ✓ Training provider
- ✓ Date completed
- ✓ Creditable training time
- ✓ Professional Standards Learning Objective*

USDA Professional Standards Tracker Tool

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Service web-based Professional Standards Training Tracker Tool is designed to assist School Nutrition Professionals in keeping track of their annually required training hours.

Features include:

- ⇒ Ability for managers to enter training for multiple employees
- ⇒ Run reports
- ⇒ Shows how many hours taken & how many remaining hours are needed to meet the annual requirement
- ⇒ Auto-populates trainings from the USDA Professional Standards Database
- ⇒ Ability to upload supporting documents
- ⇒ Reward badges to recognize progress

Visit <https://pstrainingtracker.fns.usda.gov/> to start tracking your training hours today!

*The [Learning Objectives](#) can be found on the USDA Professional Standards website. Visit <https://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/professional-standards> for more information.

What are Some Good Resources to Find Training?

Illinois State Board of Education

Resources, Webinars, and Workshops

<https://www.isbe.net/Pages/Nutrition-and-Wellness-Resources.aspx>

USDA Team Nutrition

The Team Nutrition initiative offers a variety of resources, including downloadable materials and webinars to support training needs.

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn>

Institute of Child Nutrition

Online and in-person training resources (free or at low-cost) are available.

<https://theicn.org/>

Free, self-paced online courses are also available through the Institute of Child Nutrition eLearning Portal.

<https://theicn.docebosaa.com/learn>

USDA Professional Standards Training Database

More than 500 free or low-cost training resources in a variety of formats are available.

<https://professionalstandards.fns.usda.gov/>

University of Illinois Extension

Free online and on-site trainings for school nutrition employees. Courses include interactive modules, webinar-style recorded presentations, and video compilations.

<https://schoolnutrition.extension.illinois.edu/>

Additional opportunities for training resources include professional associations, commercial vendors, and in-house training sessions. Just be sure that training topics are relevant and specifically pertain to the school nutrition program.

USDA Training Hours — Does it Count?

When determining if a training will count toward meeting the USDA annual training requirement – ask yourself:

- ⇒ Is it relevant to the school nutrition programs? Does it focus on the day-to-day management and operation of the school nutrition programs? The best way to tell if it is relevant is to reference the [USDA list of training topics, key areas, and learning objectives](#)
- ⇒ Is it job-specific for the employee’s role in the school nutrition program and intended to help them perform their duties well?

Below are some examples which help illustrate how to determine whether a training is acceptable toward meeting USDA’s Professional Standards requirements.

ACCEPTABLE

toward meeting USDA annual training hours

✓ Annual Civil Rights Training

Civil rights training contributes to proper administration of the Program if it covers topics that are relevant for school nutrition program employees, such as the civil rights provision in §210.23(b) of the NSLP regulations, the FNS Instruction 783-2, meal substitutions for medical or other special dietary needs, and issues that may limit equal access to school meals.

✓ Food Safety Training

Food safety training can count toward the annual training requirement. Although, one exception to this is the 8 hours required upon hire of a new director which must be completed separately from the 12 hour annual training requirement in the first year of employment.

✓ Food Show Exhibit (up to 2 hours)

Time spent on miscellaneous activities where information, materials, or equipment relative to the core training topics is provided or displayed may count toward no more than two hours of annual training.

NOT ACCEPTABLE

toward meeting USDA annual training hours

☒ Sexual Harassment Training

Sexual harassment training is a general training required of all employees and is not specific to operations of the school nutrition programs.

☒ Active Shooter Training

Active shooter training is an important component of a school-wide safety initiative. However, this training isn’t specific to the day-to-day management and operation of the school nutrition programs.

☒ Bullying Prevention Training

Bullying prevention training is not specifically relevant to the operation of the school nutrition programs. Although it can be useful in the course of working with children in a school setting, it must be specific to the school nutrition programs to count towards the USDA training hours requirement.

Helpful Hint: Remember, not all employer required trainings will necessarily count toward meeting the USDA school nutrition programs training requirements.

Resources

USDA Professional Standards Webpage

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

ISBE Nutrition and Professional Standards Webpage

<https://www.isbe.net/Pages/Nutrition-Standards.aspx>

Regulations

[Final Rule: Professional Standards for School Nutrition Programs Personnel as Required by the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010](#)

[Correction to Final Rule](#)

[Final Rule Summary flyer](#)

[Final Rule: Hiring Flexibility under Professional Standards](#)

Training

[Learning Objectives](#)

[Training Topics](#)

[Database of Professional Standards Trainings](#)

[The Web-based Professional Standards Training Tracker 2.0](#)

[Webinar, June 6, 2018- Professional Standards Training Tracker Tool 2.0: Enhancements for Training Tracking Success!](#)

Technical Assistance and Guidance Materials

[Professional Standards Brochure](#)

[Frequently Asked Questions \(SP 05-2020\)](#)

[Final Rule Summary Flyer](#)

For questions regarding this topic send an email to
ISBE Nutrition Department at cnp@isbe.net



Illinois
State Board of
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