



Professional Standards

These standards ensure school nutrition professionals have the knowledge, training, and tools they need to plan, prepare, and purchase healthy food to create nutritious, safe, and enjoyable school meals. The additional final rule, Hiring Flexibility under Professional Standards, establishes flexibilities for hiring standards under the Professional Standards regulations.

| School Nutrition Program Position | Required Training Hours |
|--|--------------------------|
| Program Director This person oversees all aspects of the School Nutrition Program in their district. This includes administering, planning, directing, assessing, implementing, and evaluating the program. | 12 annual training hours |
| Program Manager Large districts that have a centralized kitchen and satellite kitchens often have a Program Manager for each satellite kitchen to oversee food production and service. | 10 annual training hours |
| Program Staff working \geq 20 hours/week. This is anyone that is employed to work in the School Nutrition Program. | 6 annual training hours |
| All Program Staff working $<$ 20 hours/week. | 4 annual training hours |
| All school staff involved with meal service & benefit issuance must complete annual civil rights training . All nutrition staff involved with purchasing food must take an annual procurement training . | |
| Any training that lasts 15 minutes or longer counts! “Teachable Moments” in your kitchen can be counted towards Professional Standards training hours. NOTE: If hired January 1st or later, an employee must only complete half of the required training hours. | |

Training for Professional Standards is categorized into these 4 Key Areas

- **Nutrition:** Menu Planning, Nutrition Education, General Nutrition. Example: Learn how to read the ingredients list to confirm a menu item is whole grain rich. Learn to plan menus to ensure meal pattern requirements are met.
- **Operations:** Food Production, Serving Food (offer vs serve), Cashier and Point of Service, Purchasing/Procurement, Receiving and Storage, Food Safety and HACCP. Example: Learn to correctly and efficiently serve food portions to meet all USDA school meal pattern requirements and plan for special diets.
- **Administration:** Free and Reduced Price Meal Benefits, Program Management, Financial Management, Human Resources and Staff Training, Facilities and Equipment Planning. Example: Learn to effectively certify, process, and verify free and reduced-price meal eligibility benefits, understand and apply Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) to eliminate administrative burden of school meal applications and be able to serve meals at no charge to students.
- **Communications and marketing:** Communications, Marketing. Example: Promote the child nutrition programs, empower school nutrition professionals to provide excellent customer service.

Documentation of training hours must be available for Administrative Review.

Professional Standards Training Tracking Tool is available here: <https://pstrainingtracker.fns.usda.gov/>

Learning Objectives & Training Topic Areas: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/professional-standards/training-objectives-topics>

Hiring Standards For New School Nutrition Program Directors

New directors — those hired on or after July 1, 2015 — are subject to the education requirements below. School Nutrition Program Directors are the individuals responsible for the operation of school nutrition programs for all schools under the local educational agency (LEA).

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| Minimum Prior Training Standards | All new School Food Service Directors are required to have: At least 8 hours of food safety training either not more than 5 years prior to their starting date or completed within 30 calendar days of employee's starting date. Maintain the Managers Food Safety Certificate on file. |
| Student Enrollment | Required Qualifications |
| ≥ 10,000 Students Billings Public Schools Great Falls Public Schools | Must have at least one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Bachelor's degree, or equivalent educational experience, with academic major in specific areas.* <input type="checkbox"/> Bachelor's degree in any academic major and at least 5 years experience in management of school nutrition programs. |
| 2,500-9,999 Students Belgrade Public Schools Bozeman Public Schools Butte Public Schools Helena Public Schools Kalispell Public Schools Missoula County Public Schools | Must have at least one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Bachelor's degree, or equivalent educational experience, with academic major in specific areas.* <input type="checkbox"/> Bachelor's degree in any academic major and at least 2 years of relevant experience in school nutrition programs. <input type="checkbox"/> Associate's degree or equivalent educational experience, with academic major in specific areas,* and at least 2 years of relevant experience in school nutrition programs. |
| ≤ 2,499 Students 51 Sponsors in Montana | Must have at least one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Bachelor's degree, or equivalent educational experience, with academic major in specific areas*. <input type="checkbox"/> Bachelor's degree in any academic major, and at least one year of relevant experience in school nutrition programs. <input type="checkbox"/> Associate's degree or equivalent educational experience, with academic major in specific areas,* and at least one year of relevant experience in school nutrition programs. <input type="checkbox"/> High school diploma (or GED) and at least 3 years of relevant experience in school nutrition programs. |
| < 500 Students 199 Sponsors in Montana | OPI School Nutrition Programs can approve a candidate who meets the educational standards as listed for schools with ≤ 2,499 students, but has less than 3 years of experience. |
| * 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. | |