



## Professional Standards NDE - Nutrition Services FAQ



### 1. How many hours of continuing education/training are required for school food service employees each year?

The amount of training required for employees is dependent upon the employee's daily job functions for the assigned position, not the local position title (head cook, food service manager, etc.). All SFAs participating in the Child Nutrition Programs are required to identify the individual acting in the capacity of the school nutrition program director.

The following position descriptions determine the training requirements each employee is required to have each year. These definitions apply whether or not a food service management company operates a School Food Authority (SFA).

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| <b>Program Director</b>                                   | The individual who is directly responsible for the management of the day-to-day operations of school food service for all participating schools under the jurisdiction of the SFA. This definition also applies to those SFAs with just one school. Each SFA is required to identify the individual acting in the capacity of the school nutrition program director. In many instances across the state, the person fulfilling the responsibilities of this position will have a different title such as food service manager. |
| <b>Program Managers</b>                                   | The individual who is directly responsible for the management of the day-to-day operations of school food service for a participating school under the direction of the Program Director.  |
| <b>Program Staff</b>                                      | Those individuals without managerial responsibilities who are involved in day-to-day operations of school food service for a participating school. This includes employees who prepare and serve meals and process transactions at point of service.   |
| <b>Vended Site Director/Manager (onsite meal service)</b> | The individual who is directly responsible for the management of the day-to-day operations of school food service for a site that receives vended meals from another SFA/vendor.   |
| <b>Vended Program Staff</b>                               | Those individuals without managerial responsibilities who are involved in day-to-day operations of school food service for a site that receives vended meals from another SFA/entity. This includes employees who serve meals and process transactions at point of service.  |

The following table provides specific information regarding the required hours of continuing education/training for each position.

| Annual Training Requirements                       |                |
|--|----------------|
| Title  | Required Hours |
| Program Directors                                  | 12 hours       |
| Program Managers                                   | 10 hours       |
| Program Staff (20 or more hours per week)          | 6 hours        |
| Program Staff (less than 20 hours per week)        | 4 hours        |
| <b> </b>   |                |
| Vended Site Director/Manager (onsite meal service) | 10 hours       |
| Vended Site Staff (20 or more hours per week)      | 6 hours        |
| Vended Site Staff (less than 20 hours per week)    | 4 hours        |

**2. What are the training requirements for volunteers, substitutes, teachers, paraeducators and others who perform tasks for the school meals program but are not considered to be full time or part-time staff?**

Volunteers, substitutes, teachers, paraeducators and students who perform tasks for the school lunch program do not have to meet the annual training requirements. However, it is highly recommended as a best practice that full-time substitutes follow the training requirements for full-time staff. It is also highly recommended that part-time substitutes and volunteers who are involved in the school meals program on a regular basis receive training each year in the area in which they work. USDA strongly encourages health and safety training for all individuals involved in food handling.

**3. What are the training requirements for program staff that provide support for the school meals program for a short period of time each school year?**

The USDA states that office staff members that process free and reduced-price meal applications or that provide other support for the school meals program for a short period of time during the school year are not required to meet the annual training standards. However, these individuals should receive adequate training specific to the task they will perform.

**4. Several individuals process the point of service (POS) transactions during each meal period. Because they work with the school meals program for a short period of time on a weekly basis and perform just one task, are they required to meet the annual training standards?**

Performing POS transactions requires that the individual can correctly identify a reimbursable meal and is a very important part of the school meals program. These individuals do not have to meet the annual training standards; however, it is very important they receive training for the task they perform. Point of Service (POS) training is included within the annual School Food Service training offered each summer. Reviewing this training every year is recommended as a best practice.

### **5. What counts as training under “self-directed training”?**

Interactive training is encouraged; however, other types of training are acceptable. The act of reading a chapter in a book or article in a magazine by itself does not count toward the training requirements. Self-directed training must involve information articles that include a self-administered quiz. These types of training articles are available on the School Nutrition Association website for members.

### **6. Does training on security procedures, building operations, and school safety count toward the annual training standards?**

No. Only training that pertains to administration and operation of the school meals program counts toward the training standards.

### **7. Does attending a food show count toward the training standards?**

Attending a food show can count for no more than two hours of training per year.

### **8. Do motivational lectures or presentations on proper lifting techniques presented by health practitioners count toward the training standards?**

A presentation by a motivational speaker does not count toward training requirements; however, presentations that address customer service, communication and teambuilding can be counted. Presentations that cover the topics of safe lifting, ergonomics, etc. also count toward the requirements. Professional Standards Code 3450 – Employee Health, Safety and Wellness should be used when recording training hours for presentations on safe lifting, ergonomics, etc. Presentations on wellness or stress management cannot be counted.

### **9. Are training materials available in Spanish?**

Yes, training materials are available in Spanish through the Institute of Child Nutrition (ICM):

- [ICN español](#)
- [ICN - iLearn](#)

The Food Allergy Book and Stomach Bug Book are both available in Spanish and can be found on the USDA Food and Nutrition Service Food Safety Resources page at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/food-safety/food-safety-resources>.

**10. For a Local Education Agency (LEA) with less than 500 students, the State agency may approve a candidate who meets the educational standards but has less than the required 3 years of experience. Additionally, as of July 1, 2024 the State agency may approve the hiring of an individual to serve as the school nutrition program director in a medium or large LEA, if they have 10 or more years of school nutrition experience but do not hold a bachelor's or an associate's degree. Is there a specific procedure to request approval for hiring exceptions?**

These situations will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Please contact Kayte Partch, Director of Nutrition Services, at [Kayte.Partch@nebraska.gov](mailto:Kayte.Partch@nebraska.gov) or 402-560-8187 for more information.

**11. Professional Standards training topics are divided into four categories: Nutrition, Operations, Administration, and Communications and Marketing. Are food service employees required to obtain training in each of the four categories regardless of their job duties?**

No, it's not mandatory that all employees receive training from all four categories. Training should be relevant to the employee's job duties.

**12. Are temporary or "acting" school nutrition program directors expected to meet the annual training standards?**

School nutrition program directors in a temporary or "acting" position are required to meet the annual training standards only if they are expected to be in the position more than 90 days.