

OSPI School Meal Programs Reference Sheet

Professional Standards

Each Local Education Agency (LEA) that operates the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and/or School Breakfast Program (SBP) must meet 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 all directors appointed after July 1, 2015. Those who were in the role of director prior to this date are exempted from meeting the hiring standards.
- Definition of “Director” is not based on named title, but rather role and responsibilities:
 - LEAs contracting with a Food Service Management Company (FSMC) must still maintain oversight and responsibility for the School Meal Programs. Thus, both LEA contact and FSMC staff person must meet the hiring and training standards for a director.
- **Updated March 2019**—Minimum Education Standards are based on student enrollment.
 - Consult the corrected Final Rule: Hiring Flexibility Under Professional Standards for specific education requirements.
- Training Requirement: At least eight hours of food safety training in the past five years or within 30 days of hire.
- If a director moves to a new LEA, the director must meet hiring requirements based on enrollment at the new LEA.

Training Requirements for All School Nutrition Program Employees

- Requirements are set by job category—job category definitions are 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 hours
 - Managers: ≥10 hours
 - All other staff: ≥6 hours
 - Part time staff: ≥4 hours
- If hired January 1 or later, an employee may only complete half of the required training hours for that school year.
- **Program directors are required to obtain 8 hours of food safety training every 5 years.**
- 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

Administration – 3000

Free and reduced-price meal benefits
Program Management
Financial Management
Human Resources and Staff Training
Facilities and Equipment Planning

Operations – 2000

Food Production
Serving Food
Cashier and Point-of-Service
Purchasing/Procurement
Receiving and Storage
Food Safety and HACCP

Communications/Marketing – 4000

Communication and Marketing

- Training hours in excess of the requirement may be carried over to the immediately following school year.

Recordkeeping Requirements

- Director is responsible for demonstrating that the LEA is in compliance during the Administrative Review.
- Tracking tools must include at a minimum:
 - Employee Information
 - Training hours completed
 - Key Areas, Training Topics, and Learning Objectives
 - [USDA Learning Objectives & Codes](#)

- The [USDA Professional Standards Tracking Tool](#) may be used to track staff training.

Resources

- [USDA Professional Standards webpage](#)
- [USDA Professional Standards Training Database](#)
- [ICN e-learning Portal](#)

Reference

- [SP 05-2020 Questions & Answers Regarding Professional Standards for State and Local School Nutrition Program Personnel](#)
- [Corrected Final Rule: Hiring Flexibility Under Professional Standards](#)

Acronym Reference

- LEA – Local Education Agency
- NSLP – National School Lunch Program
- OSPI – Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction
- SBP – School Breakfast Program
- SNA – School Nutrition Association
- SY – School Year
- USDA – United States Department of Agriculture