



PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

FOR ALL SCHOOL NUTRITION
PROGRAM EMPLOYEES



PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

Professional Standards for the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs include minimum education requirements for school nutrition directors as well as annual training standards for all school staff. These standards raise the profile of the profession, reduce risks in the food operation, ensure that personnel have the knowledge they need to serve healthy products and create nutritious and enjoyable school meals.

TRAINING STANDARDS

FOR ALL EMPLOYEES

CONTINUING EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Both must fall under one or more of the following categories:

1. **Nutrition**
2. **Operation**
3. **Administration**
4. **Communication/Marketing**

Contracting entities (CEs) may determine which training courses within these categories best meet their professional development needs.

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has given CEs the flexibility to complete training within a one-year to two-year range. If a CE adopts the two-year range, each staff person must complete some training in each year and the CE must retain documentation for all training.

TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

- Training from USDA, Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) and the Education Service Centers (ESC) are available at no cost to CE employees.
- School nutrition funds may be used to pay for the continuing education and training; however, the cost of college credits incurred by an individual to meet the hiring professional standards is not an allowable cost.

RECORD RETENTION

- CEs must retain documentation of professional standards training and continuing education for all staff.
- CEs must retain documentation showing the program director's experience and education or showing that the director was hired before July 1, 2015.



HIGHLIGHTS OF THE MINIMUM TRAINING STANDARDS FOR SCHOOL NUTRITION PROGRAM EMPLOYEES

- Continuing education/annual training standards apply to all employees
- The number of **TRAINING HOURS** varies for four staffing levels:

STAFFING LEVEL	TRAINING HOURS
DIRECTOR	12
MANAGER	10
ALL OTHER STAFF	6
PART-TIME STAFF (working less than 20 hours per week)	4

- Contact your State agency for additional information and flexibilities.

TRAINING IS KEY!





TRAINING RESOURCES

In addition to USDA, TDA and regional ESC training opportunities, sources for nutrition program-related education include:

- In-house training
- Nutrition conferences
- Nutrition focused vendors
- Nutrition organizations

For more training resources visit www.SquareMeals.org/NSLP and click on the “Resources” tab.

It is the CE’s responsibility to ensure that all continuing education and training focus on nutrition program related topics and are conducted by knowledgeable sources.

HIRING STANDARDS FOR NEW SCHOOL NUTRITION PROGRAM DIRECTORS

Newly hired program directors must meet **minimum** education requirements that vary depending on student enrollment.

- **10,000 students or more**
Bachelor's degree in any academic major and at least 5 years of experience in management of school nutrition programs
- **2,500-9,999 students**
Associate's degree or equivalent educational experience with academic major in specific areas and at least 2 years of relevant school nutrition program experience
- **2,499 or fewer students**
High school diploma or general education development (GED) and at least 3 years of relevant experience in school nutrition programs. TDA may approve a waiver to substitute paid or unpaid food service experience for school nutrition experience.
- **CEs with fewer than 500 students** TDA may approve a waiver for a candidate that meets the educational standard but has less than 3 years of experience

Visit [SquareMeals.org/NSLP](https://www.squaremeals.org/NSLP) and navigate to the ARM Section 27, Professional Standards or contact your Education Service Center.



TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
COMMISSIONER SID MILLER

This product was funded by USDA.
This institution is an equal opportunity provider.



Food and Nutrition Division
National School Lunch Program



Updated 1/12/2021
www.SquareMeals.org