

## Appendix A. School Food Authority Director’s Guide to Professional Standards

New professional standards require annual training for all program staff and hiring standards for new directors. Part of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010, these Federal standards became effective July 1, 2015. The goal of the standards is to help you and your staff maintain or acquire the knowledge and skills needed to successfully manage and operate school meal programs.

### Annual Minimum Required Training Hours for Directors, Managers, and School Staff

The first year (July 1, 2015- June 30, 2016) training requirements are lower:  
Director – 8 hours;  
Manager – 6 hours;  
All staff – 4 hours.

Position	Defined As	Annual Hours*
Director	Responsible for managing school nutrition programs for all schools under an SFA	12
Manager	In charge of the operations of a site (or several sites)	10
Staff	Works 20 or more hours weekly in direct program support	6
Part-time Staff	Works less than 20 hours per week in direct program support	4

\*If hired on or after January 1, only half of the required hours for that school year are required.

### What Qualifies as Training?

Training should apply to an employee’s work duties. In addition to your own training, you should plan to assist your managers and staff with training. Consider these options for job-specific training:

- ▶ Online courses
- ▶ Structured, on-the-job training
- ▶ In-service training
- ▶ Local school nutrition organization educational events
- ▶ State agency-sponsored training
- ▶ Training you conduct for staff
- ▶ Meetings sponsored by foodservice partners (vendors and commodity groups), including exhibits (as allowed by your State agency)
- ▶ College courses with job-specific content

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A full 60 minutes of training counts as 1 training hour. You can include shorter time periods. For example, four 15-minute in-service training sessions equal 1 training hour. Not all activities will count toward training – they must be job-specific.

Your State agency (SA) provides guidance on using funds from the non-profit school foodservice account for training. Many costs are allowable expenses.

Training records are now part of the Administrative Review. Be sure to record annual staff training and keep on file for 3 years plus the current school year. Open audits require different record-retention periods. Check with your SA for guidance. USDA offers an optional software tool to track training for you and your staff. Find the tool online at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/professional-standards>.

Check with your SA to see if it allows a flexible 2-year period to complete the training hours. If so, be sure you and your staff complete some training each year (July 1-June 30) and meet the total number of hours needed for 2 years.

### **What Are the Hiring Standards for New Directors?**

The standards also include hiring minimums for new directors based on student enrollment levels. If you are a director hired before July 1, 2015, the new hiring standards do not apply. This is still true if you change director jobs but stay in the same or lower student enrollment category. However, if you change director jobs and move to an LEA with a higher enrollment category, the hiring standards will apply.

### **Where Do I Find More Information?**

Looking for free and low-cost training? USDA maintains an online searchable library of trainings at <http://professionalstandards.nal.usda.gov>. Additionally, your SA must offer at least 18 hours of free training each year, so contact your SA and/or check out their Web site for more information on State-sponsored training.

You can read more details, including hiring standards for new directors, in the *Guide to Professional Standards for School Nutrition Programs* [http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/ps\\_guide.pdf](http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/ps_guide.pdf), the FAQs [http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/cn/ps\\_faqs.pdf](http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/cn/ps_faqs.pdf), and several other helpful resources at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/professional-standards>.