

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) established minimum professional standards requirements for school nutrition professionals who manage and operate the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP). The standards, outlined in the two Final Rules: *Professional Standards for State and Local School Nutrition Programs Personnel* and the *Hiring Flexibility under Professional Standards*, set annual training requirements for all school nutrition professionals as well as minimum education and work experience standards for new State and local school nutrition directors. 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.



Professional Standards:

ASSIST State agencies and School Food Authorities (SFAs) with recruiting, hiring, training, and retaining qualified school nutrition professionals.

ENHANCE the image of school nutrition professionals and their influence in the community.

BUILD skills and empower school nutrition professionals to operate nutrition programs that comply with Federal meal pattern requirements, meet food safety standards, and exceed the expectations of students, parents, and the local community.

What Should School Food Authorities Do?

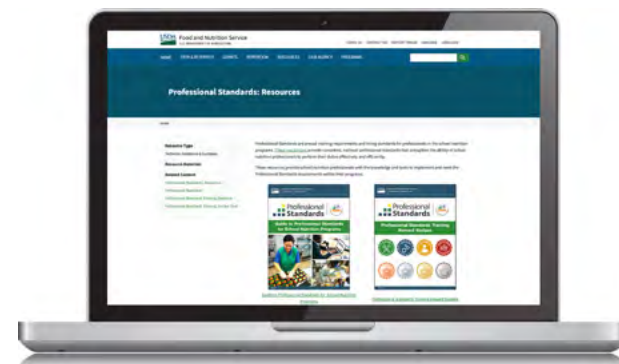
- KNOW** the Professional Standards requirements.
- INFORM** your District's leadership of the standards to ensure hiring and training requirements are met.
- ASSESS** your organization's hiring and training needs.
- REVIEW** the Professional Standards Resources website to find training and other tools to help you and your staff meet the requirements (<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/professional-standards-resources>).
- TRACK** completed training using the Professional Standards Training Tracker Tool (PSTTT).

What Should State Agencies Do?

- KNOW** the Professional Standards requirements.
- INFORM** your School Nutrition Directors of the standards so they can ensure their staff meet the training requirements.
- ASSESS** your organization's hiring and training needs.
- REVIEW** the Professional Standards Resources website to find training and other tools to help you meet the requirements (<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/professional-standards-resources>).
- PROVIDE** a minimum of 18 hours of training to school food authorities each year.
- TRACK** completed training using the Professional Standards Training Tracker Tool (PSTTT).


Quick Reference

- Professional Standards for School Nutrition Professionals <https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/professional-standards>
- Professional Standards for School Nutrition Professionals Summary of Updates Flyer <https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/professional-standards-summary-updates-flyer>
- Team Nutrition's Professional Standards Resources webpage <https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/professional-standards-resources>
- Guide to Professional Standards for School Nutrition Programs <https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/guide-professional-standards-school-nutrition-programs>
- Professional Standards Training Reward Badges <https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/professional-standards-training-reward-badges>
- Professional Standards Training Tracker Tool (PSTTT) <https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/professional-standards-training-tracker-tool>
- Professional Standards Training Database <https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/professional-standards-training-database>



For More Information

Program operators should direct any questions concerning this brochure to their State agency. State agencies with questions should contact the appropriate FNS Regional Office.

 Check out the Team Nutrition website for other helpful resources and tools!

 [@TeamNutrition](https://www.teamnutrition.usda.gov)
[TeamNutrition.usda.gov](https://www.teamnutrition.usda.gov)



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Professional Standards

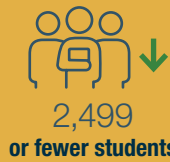
For School Nutrition Professionals



Professional Standards Requirements for School Nutrition Program Professionals

Hiring Standards for New School Nutrition Program Directors

The hiring standards for School Food Authority (SFA) Directors are based on the size of their Local Educational Agency (LEA):



Professional Standards Requirements for State Agency Directors

Hiring Standards for New State Directors

The hiring standards for State Directors are based on education; knowledge and experience; and skills and abilities.



Team Nutrition's Professional Standards Resources

Team Nutrition provides a number of resources pertaining to Professional Standards for School Nutrition Professionals that are easily accessible at <https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/professional-standards-resources>.

Guide to Professional Standards for School Nutrition Programs



The Guide to Professional Standards for School Nutrition Programs is a central resource that comprehensively outlines the required USDA Professional Standards for State and local school nutrition program professionals who manage and operate the NSLP and SBP. It supports school nutrition professionals in ensuring they have the knowledge, training, and tools they need to ensure the success of the NSLP and SBP.



Visit <https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/guide-professional-standards-school-nutrition-programs>.

Professional Standards Training Database

The USDA Professional Standards Training Database allows school nutrition professionals to search for training that meets their learning needs. The website provides direct access to a wide range of free and low-cost trainings in a variety of formats. Each training listing contains information about the training, how to access the training, learning objectives, and more.



Visit <https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/professional-standards-training-database>.

Training Standards

Job Category	Annual Training Requirements ¹
All Directors	At least 12 hours of annual continuing education/training. This requirement is in addition to the food safety training required in the first year of employment.
All Managers	At least 10 hours of annual continuing education/training.
All Other Staff (Work 20 hours or more per week)	At least 6 hours of annual continuing education/training.
Part-Time Staff (Work less than 20 hours per week)	At least 4 hours of annual continuing education/training, regardless of the number of part-time hours worked.

¹ Annual training requirements apply to the 12 months between July 1 and June 30. **NOTE:** If hired January 1st or later, an employee must only complete half the required training hours.

Training Standards

Job Category	Annual Training Requirements ¹
State Director of School Nutrition Programs ^{2,3}	At least 15 hours of annual continuing education/training.
State Director of Distributing Agencies ³	At least 15 hours of annual continuing education/training.

¹ Annual training requirements apply to the 12 months between July 1 and June 30. **NOTE:** If hired January 1st or later, an employee must only complete half the required training hours.
² State agency directors must also PROVIDE a minimum of 18 hours of training to school food authorities each year.
³ State agency directors must PROVIDE or ensure State agency staff receive annual continuing education/training.

For more information on training and hiring standards, see the **Professional Standards Summary of Updates Flyer** at <https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/professional-standards-summary-updates-flyer> or visit the Professional Standards for School Nutrition Professionals website at <https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/professional-standards>.



Professional Standards Training Reward Badges

The updated Guide also introduces training reward badges – a fun way to promote training and recognize staff who have completed their annual training requirements. See Appendix D of the Guide or the Professional Standards Training Reward Badges packet for more information on how to incorporate training reward badges into your program.



Visit <https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/professional-standards-training-reward-badges>.

Professional Standards Training Tracker Tool

The USDA Child Nutrition Programs' Professional Standards Training Tracker Tool (PSTTT) is designed to assist school nutrition professionals in keeping track of their annual training hours. The PSTTT is a free, web-based tool which provides easy navigation and user-friendly, timesaving features.



Visit <https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/professional-standards-training-tracker-tool>.

