

Keys to Excellence:

Standards of Practice for Nutrition Integrity



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^tNote: Websites listed under each of the resource sections were up-to-date at the time of publication.

Preface



Keys to Excellence: Standards of Practice for Nutrition Integrity is an initiative of the School Nutrition Association (SNA) designed to assist schools achieve nutrition integrity goals at the administrative, management, and operational levels. This tool, through its standards of practice and indicators, defines national standards for quality programs and provides a framework for continuous program review, evaluation, and improvement. The **Keys to Excellence** are also the basis for the 4 Key Areas in USDA's Professional Standards for School Nutrition Programs Personnel launched in July 2015.

The **Keys to Excellence** was extensively field-tested in schools within 52 districts during the 1994-1995 school year. The information they provided was the basis for making numerous revisions in this completed document. The latest revision was completed in August 2017 after thorough review by SNA's Professional Development Committee and Nutrition and Research Committees.

A model school nutrition policy, developed by SNA in 1992, has been endorsed by many state agencies and numerous allied professional organizations. SNA encourages schools to endorse this policy and to develop goals and strategies that address the core concepts provided in this model.

Achieving nutrition integrity means taking a comprehensive approach to program planning, management, and operations. It also means integrating nutrition into the total educational program of the school. This includes addressing the environments in which meals are served, nutrition education in the classroom and cafeteria, parent and teacher involvement, training school nutrition personnel, and school policies that enhance the effectiveness of the program.

We believe you will find *Keys to Excellence: Standards of Practice for Nutrition Integrity* a useful and realistic tool. Its purpose is to assist you in providing quality programs and nutrition education for students in our nations' schools. It is also a helpful resource to reference when preparing for the SNS Credentialing Exam.

Guidelines for Use



The purpose of *Keys to Excellence: Standards of Practice for Nutrition Integrity* is to help your school nutrition program achieve nutrition integrity.

The standards of practice are identified for each of the four (4) Key Areas:

- Nutrition, Nutrition Education, and Physical Activity
- Operations
- Administration
- Marketing and Communications

Several indicators are listed for each standard of practice. The indicators identify specific activities to help programs achieve a standard of practice.

This tool may be used voluntarily by schools to review, evaluate, and improve the quality of their school nutrition program. This is a non-competitive tool and process. The information collected may be kept confidential within the school or school district. This is not intended for an external review or audit process.

Getting Started

Study each Key Area of this tool. Discuss this information with administrators, school nutrition personnel, and other key individuals within your school or school district.

Review Your Program

Using this tool, evaluate your program in any or all of the four Key Areas.

Set Priorities

Discuss the importance of this review with your administrators and co-workers. Together, select the Key Areas or Key Topics that need priority attention.

Start Planning

Develop a plan that identifies goals, sets timelines, and assigns responsibilities for taking steps toward achieving standards of practice in the Key Areas. Select representative teachers, administrators, parents, students, and school nutrition personnel to assist with the process. They will become your school nutrition team(s).

Monitor Progress

Meet with your school nutrition team(s) frequently to evaluate progress and keep the total school community, including parents, informed.

Evaluate Achievements

Evaluate improvements and monitor effectiveness. Develop a plan for routinely monitoring and evaluating your overall school nutrition program.

Continue the Process

Program review, evaluation, and improvement are part of a continuous process. As goals are achieved in one area, move ahead to another. Nutrition integrity is achieved through an ongoing commitment to program excellence by the total educational community.

Key Area: Nutrition, Nutrition Education & Physical Activity



Key Topic: Nutrition

Key Achievement A1:

The school nutrition program is designed to provide a model for healthy eating.

Best Practice A1.1:

School meals and snacks are planned and prepared to improve and sustain the health and well-being of all students and to contribute to the development of healthy eating habits.

Indicators:

- A1.1.1** School menus are analyzed for nutrient composition using USDA-approved software. Menus are revised and adjusted accordingly to meet nutrient standards.
 - A1.1.2** Planned menus offer a wide variety of fruit and vegetable choices and whole grain-rich foods.
 - A1.1.3** Students are provided milk choices according to Federal regulations.
 - A1.1.4** Afterschool Snacks and/or Suppers are planned to offer healthy food choices, especially fruits, vegetables (fresh when available), and whole grain-rich foods.
 - A1.1.5** The National School Breakfast Program is available to all students when endorsed by the local governing school board.
 - A1.1.6** School nutrition personnel collaborate with school staff, parents, physicians, and other health professionals to meet the special food and/or nutrition needs of children.
 - A1.1.7** School nutrition personnel are trained to prepare foods utilizing various cooking methods that retain/enhance the highest nutrient values.
 - A1.1.8** All schools are enrolled as USDA Team Nutrition Schools.
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Best Practice A1.2:

Competitive foods are planned and served to encourage healthy choices and comply with federal guidelines.

Indicators:

- A1.2.1** The district's Wellness Policy provides nutrition standards for competitive foods, reflecting the current Dietary Guidelines for Americans as well as federal, state and local nutrition regulations.
 - A1.2.2** Fruits and vegetables are priced to encourage students to select them and placed in a convenient location.
 - A1.2.3** Nutrition information is available for a la carte food and beverage items (e.g. on the program's website, on the line).
-

Best Practice A1.3:

The school nutrition program addresses competitive food issues to reflect the best interest of student health.

Indicators:

- A1.3.1** School nutrition personnel communicate any applicable federal, state and local competitive food rules to school administrators.
 - A1.3.2** Partnerships are developed with fundraising and/or student groups to reduce or eliminate competition with school meals.
 - A1.3.3** School nutrition personnel encourage classroom celebrations and events that meet nutritional goals and the district's Wellness Policy.
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Key Achievement A2:

The school nutrition program is actively involved in national, state and local programs that encourage the consumption of healthy foods.

Best Practice A2.1:

The school nutrition program participates in national, state or local initiatives to encourage students to consume healthy foods.

Indicators:

- A2.1.1** Schools have received a Healthier US School Challenge award and/or recognition as a Healthy Schools Program from the Alliance for a Healthier Generation.
 - A2.1.2** Where offered, schools have applied for or are participating in the USDA Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program.
 - A2.1.3** The USDA Afterschool Snack and/or Meal Programs are promoted.
 - A2.1.4** Schools are enrolled as Team Nutrition schools and strive to participate in state sponsored Team Nutrition grant opportunities.
-

Best Practice A2.2:

The school nutrition program participates in the Farm to School Program.

Indicators:

- A2.2.1** School nutrition personnel identify sources for local foods and include them in the menus.
 - A2.2.2** School nutrition personnel meet with local growers to discuss their needs, how the procurement process works, the delivery requirements needed, etc.
 - A2.2.3** School nutrition personnel receive training on the Farm to School program, food safety requirements, and how products will be used.
 - A2.2.4** Local media coverage for serving locally grown foods on the menu is pursued.
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Resources:

- Creative Ways to Boost Flavor with Less Sodium (USDA)
<https://healthymeals.fns.usda.gov/whatsshaking>
 - School Meals: Tools for Schools (USDA)
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/tools-schools>
 - Fruits and Vegetables Galore: Helping Kids Eat More (USDA)
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/fruits-vegetables-galore-helping-kids-eat-more>
 - How to enroll as a USDA Team Nutrition School (USDA)
<http://teamnutrition.usda.gov/team.html>
 - SNA Webinars
<http://schoolnutrition.org/Webinar/Archives/#nutrition>
 - Fruit and Vegetable Resources (USDA)
<http://healthymeals.nal.usda.gov/resource-library/fruit-and-vegetable-resources>
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Key Topic: Nutrition Education

Key Achievement A3:

School nutrition personnel are actively involved in nutrition education at the school level.

Best Practice A3.1:

The school nutrition program encourages and supports nutrition education.

Indicators:

- A3.1.1** Current, age-appropriate, science-based nutrition and nutrition education materials are recommended and promoted.
- A3.1.2** Nutrition education materials such as posters, displays, and bulletin boards are used on campus.
- A3.1.3** Meals and other foods and beverages served in the school cafeteria reinforce the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and other accurate nutrition messages.

- A3.1.4** Nutrition messages are shared with parents using available media resources such as printed menus and newsletters, social media, school websites, school cable stations, parent meetings, and school board presentations.
 - A3.1.5** School nutrition personnel serve as a resource for nutrition activities through kitchen tours, food demonstrations, tasting parties, and/or participating in classroom nutrition education activities.
 - A3.1.6** School nutrition personnel prompt students to choose fruits and vegetables.
 - A3.1.7** Nutrition education programs promoted by the school nutrition program are evaluated for effectiveness.
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Best Practice A3.2:

The school dining area serves as a dynamic nutrition learning center where students are engaged in healthy eating.

Indicators:

- A3.2.1** Professional, easy to read graphics are used to display the menus and to assist students in making healthy choices.
 - A3.2.2** Nutrition education materials, whether print or digital, are displayed and updated frequently in the dining area.
 - A3.2.3** Students are introduced to a variety of new and ethnic foods through planned menus, tasting tables, and featured foods.
 - A3.2.4** School nutrition personnel engage the entire school as well as community partners in dining room nutrition promotions.
 - A3.2.5** Local celebrities, elected officials, school board members, and legislators are invited to participate in the school meal program by helping to serve students, eating with the students, participating in a social media video promoting school meals, etc.
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Key Achievement A4:

All school nutrition personnel receive training in basic nutrition and/or nutrition education through SNA webinars, SNA conferences or activities, the Institute of Child Nutrition Institute (ICN), State Agencies, and/or other nutrition training programs.

Best Practice A4.1:

The school nutrition program ensures that school nutrition personnel receive training that meet USDA's Professional Standards for School Nutrition Program Personnel.

Indicators:

- A4.1.1** All school nutrition personnel attend a basic nutrition class or have access to online nutrition educational materials. Staff are encouraged towards obtaining the SNA Certificate in School Nutrition or the SNS Credential.
- A4.1.2** The school nutrition program applies for available funds to provide nutrition/nutrition education training for school nutrition personnel.
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Key Achievement A5:

The school nutrition program participates in activities to increase nutrition awareness and wellness among the school community.

Best Practice A5.1:

The school nutrition program provides opportunities for the community to learn how school meals are a model for healthy eating.

Indicators:

- A5.1.1** Collaboration with local nutrition and cooking professionals to offer nutrition and/or cooking workshops for the community is encouraged.
- A5.1.2** Consumer-sized versions of the recipes used in the school meals program are published.
-

Best Practice A5.2:

The school nutrition program is engaged in wellness activities in the schools and community.

Indicators:

- A5.2.1** Wellness activities are promoted on the school website, with social media, and/or with other promotional techniques.
- A5.2.2** The school nutrition program and/or the local school nutrition association offer personal wellness activities for the school nutrition personnel and encourage participation in them.
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Resources:

- Nutrition 101 (ICN)
<http://www.nfsmi.org/ResourceOverview.aspx?ID=90>
- School Meals: Tools for Schools (USDA)
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/tools-schools>
- Nutrition Voyage (USDA)
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/nutrition-voyage-quest-be-our-best>
- School Meals Grants (USDA)
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/grants.htm>

- School Nutrition Operations Report (SNA)
<https://schoolnutrition.org/Research/>
- Serving Up MyPlate: A Yummy Curriculum (USDA)
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/serving-myplate-yummy-curriculum>
- USDA's Best Practice Sharing Center (USDA)
<http://healthymeals.nal.usda.gov/best-practices>
- Local School Wellness Policies (CDC)
<https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/npao/wellness.htm>

Key Topic: Physical Activity

Key Achievement A6:

The school nutrition program encourages physical activity opportunities in all grades.

Best Practice A6.1:

The school nutrition program supports physical activity programs such as Fuel-up to Play 60, the Presidential Active Lifestyle Award, and/or the physical activity components of other initiatives.

Indicators:

- A6.1.1** School nutrition personnel support participation in local, state or national physical activity programs for students.
- A6.1.2** Marketing strategies to promote physical activities in the school and the community are used.

Resources:

- Healthier US School Challenge (USDA)
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/hussc/training-and-technical-assistance>
- Super Tracker for Physical Activity (USDA)
<https://www.supertracker.usda.gov/default.aspx>
- Healthy Schools: Physical Education and Physical Activity (CDC)
<https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/physicalactivity/index.htm>
- Fuel Up to Play 60 Tools: Physical Activity
https://www.fueluptoplay60.com/tools#tab_why-physical-activity

Key Area: Operations



Key Topic: Menu Planning

Key Achievement B1:

Menus are planned to meet the current Dietary Guidelines for Americans, to follow USDA guidelines and operational goals, and to ensure student acceptance.

Best Practice B1.1:

Cycle menus for all reimbursable meal programs are used to direct school nutrition operations.

Indicators:

- B1.1.1** The menu planning system includes, but is not limited to, costing, portion-planning for each age group, forecasting, nutrient analysis, variety, local foods, and preferences.
- B1.1.2** Cycle menus are used to forecast USDA Food orders and food bids.
- B1.1.3** Cycle menus are planned to maximize use of USDA Foods.
- B1.1.4** Participation history and production records are used in selecting menu components.
- B1.1.5** The availability and skill level of labor is considered when planning menus.
- B1.1.6** Non-program food offerings are included in the menu planning process.
- B1.1.7** A menu planning team is established and includes feedback from constituents including, but not limited to, school nutrition staff, students, school wellness team members, and other school staff.
- B1.1.8** Menus for children with special food needs are planned collaboratively with school staff, parents, physicians, and other health professionals as appropriate.
- B1.1.9** Menus are planned with an understanding of the production capacity, availability of equipment, supplies, and the design of the facility.

Best Practice B1.2:

Student preferences are considered when planning menus.

Indicators:

- B1.2.1** Students are included in panels and/or committees used to select products and/or plan menus.
 - B1.2.2** Menus are designed to accommodate flavor, texture, and service preferences of students.
 - B1.2.3** School nutrition personnel solicit feedback from students about meal choices.
 - B1.2.4** School nutrition personnel are trained and encouraged to monitor plate waste.
 - B1.2.5** Menu choices take into account the lifestyle (such as vegetarian), local, cultural and religious preferences of students as well as choices for students with special food needs.
 - B1.2.6** Offer vs. serve is available to students at all grade levels.
 - B1.2.7** Students, parents, and other stakeholders are encouraged to provide feedback on the menu (e.g., via e-mail, suggestion boxes, comment cards, surveys, website, social media).
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Best Practice B1.3:

All recipes used in the school nutrition program are standardized.

Indicators:

- B1.3.1** School nutrition personnel are trained to follow standardized recipes and to calculate quantities prepared based upon forecasting data.
 - B1.3.2** A master file (hard copy or electronic) of standardized recipes is maintained and used.
 - B1.3.3** A system is in place that allows school nutrition personnel to easily identify which standardized recipe to use, the number of servings to prepare, and how to record these details in the daily Production Record.
 - B1.3.4** Standardized recipes include, but are not limited to, information such as ingredients, preparation instructions, portions for each grade level, critical control points, yield, and an analysis of key nutrients.
 - B1.3.5** Updated recipes are tested and evaluated by school nutrition personnel and students.
 - B1.3.6** Information about the nutrient content of meals and food is communicated to the school community.
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Resources:

- School Meals: Tools for Schools (USDA)
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/tools-schools>
- Administrative Review Manual (USDA)
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/nslp/administrative-review-manual-forms-and-tools>
Be sure to check your state specific Administrative Review Manual
- Best Practice Guide for Increasing High School Student Participation and Satisfaction in the National School Lunch Program (ICN)
<http://www.nfsmi.org/ResourceOverview.aspx?ID=328>
- Breakfast in the Classroom Resource Center (SNA)
<https://schoolnutrition.org/SNF/BIC/>
- Healthier US School Challenge (USDA)
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/hussc/healthierus-school-challenge-application-materials>
- Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (USDA)
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/healthy-hunger-free-kids-act>
- The Healthy Meals Resource System (USDA)
<http://healthymeals.nal.usda.gov/>
- Healthy Snacks and School Meals (Alliance for a Healthier Generation)
<http://www.healthiergeneration.org/schools.aspx?id=3294>
- Helping Child Nutrition Professionals Communicate Effectively with the Families of Special Needs Children (ICN)
<http://www.nfsmi.org/ResourceOverview.aspx?ID=283>
- Meal Pattern Resource Center (SNA – Member only access)
<https://schoolnutrition.org/mealpattern/>
- Measuring Success with Standardized Recipes (ICN)
<http://www.nfsmi.org/ResourceOverview.aspx?ID=88>
- Salad Bars in School Nutrition Programs – Webinar (ICN)
<http://nfsmi.org/ResourceOverview.aspx?ID=407>
- Sample Menus for Summer Foodservice Programs (USDA)
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/sfsp/sfsp-meals-and-snacks>
- USDA Recipes (ICN)
<http://www.nfsmi.org/Templates/TemplateDefault.aspx?q=cEIEPTeWmQ>
- School Food & Nutrition Service Management for the 21st Century, 6th Edition.
[Pannell-Martin, D., & Boettger, J. \(2014\)](#)
- SNA Webinars
<http://schoolnutrition.org/Webinar/Archives/#operations>

Key Topic: Procurement & Inventory Management

Key Achievement B2:

Ethical and effective procurement practices ensure securing the best prices and the most accurate quantities, while utilizing high quality and safe ingredients and products.

Best Practice B2.1:

Procurement procedures are developed to comply with federal, state and local purchasing rules and to support the operational goals of the school nutrition program.

Indicators:

- B2.1.1** The school nutrition program may be part of a cooperative/group purchasing organization if it benefits the district.
 - B2.1.2** Appropriate resources (e.g. attending SNA conferences, meeting with other school nutrition personnel, meeting with industry, product testing/screening, product comparisons) are used to gather information on potential purchases.
 - B2.1.3** Bid documents include detailed product and vendor specifications. Vendors are evaluated and consideration on selection is based upon their Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points (HACCP), their Food Defense Plan, and/or Good Manufacturing Practices (GMPs) as well as their ability to comply with bid specifications
 - B2.1.4** Menu cycles and school profiles describing the school nutrition program are shared with vendors to assist in meeting procurement needs.
 - B2.1.5** Procurement procedures are monitored and evaluated to determine effectiveness and compliance.
 - B2.1.6** School nutrition site personnel are trained to order, receive, and store products according to procurement procedures.
 - B2.1.7** Purchasing methods, specifications and conditions are reviewed, evaluated, and updated on a routine basis.
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Best Practice B2.2:

Procurement decisions are made after an objective evaluation of bids/quotes.

Indicators:

- B2.2.1** The bid analysis process for technology products considers factors such as specifications, technical support, training availability, maintenance and service availability, cost of upgrades, total cost, etc.
- B2.2.2** The bid review and analysis process is conducted and verified by more than one person.

B2.2.3 Bids and quotes are evaluated, and purchase recommendations are made following federal, state and local regulations.

B2.2.4 Procurement procedures are developed and monitored for school nutrition sites to order, receive, and store products.

Best Practice B2.3:

Guidelines are developed for selecting and procuring equipment in order to accomplish the operational goals of the school nutrition program.

Indicators:

B2.3.1 The school nutrition program equipment needs are identified through the strategic plan process or needs assessment.

B2.3.2 School nutrition management seeks information from the manufacturers' representatives or foodservice consultants to assist in identifying equipment best suited for the facility and operational needs of the program.

B2.3.3 Equipment selections are based upon the appropriateness for the facility as well as both the short and long-term needs of the operation of the school nutrition program.

Key Achievement B3:

A well-managed receiving and inventory system is in place.

Best Practice B3.1:

School nutrition personnel are trained to follow written delivery procedures and policies.

Indicators:

B3.1.1 Vendor delivery requirements address product quality indicators (e.g. temperature upon delivery, packaging, etc.), cleanliness of truck, time of deliveries, quantity, and substitutions.

B3.1.2 Products are received following written policies and procedures, assuring the products received match the delivery requirements and written specifications.

B3.1.3 Procedures are in place for returning and crediting unacceptable merchandise and for accepting authorized substitutions.

B3.1.4 School nutrition employees document delivery problems.

B3.1.5 Policies and procedures are regularly reviewed and updated as needed.

Best Practice B3.2:

Inventory control procedures are written and established to control costs and maintain quality.

Indicators:

- B3.2.1** Par values are used to establish a maximum and minimum quantity of selected staples to keep on-hand.
 - B3.2.2** Automated or manual inventory systems are in place.
 - B3.2.3** Site inventory levels are monitored monthly and corrective action is taken when needed.
 - B3.2.4** Product codes or Global Trade Item Number (GTIN) and lot numbers are required in inventory records.
 - B3.2.5** A physical inventory is taken on the last working day of each month at all sites.
 - B3.2.6** Food in storage is accurately labeled and dated.
 - B3.2.7** First-in, first-out (FIFO) inventory rotation is used.
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Best Practice B3.3:

The school nutrition program's receiving and storage areas are equipped and organized to manage inventory.

Indicators:

- B3.3.1** Thermometers and proper equipment, such as carts, are available.
 - B3.3.2** Product specifications, including product codes, are available.
 - B3.3.3** Written receiving procedures are available, and school nutrition personnel have been trained in their use.
 - B3.3.4** Storage areas are temperature controlled, properly maintained, well-ventilated, and adequately supplied and secured.
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Resources:

- Equipment Purchasing and Facility Design for School Nutrition Programs (ICN)
<http://nfsmi-web01.nfsmi.olemiss.edu/ResourceOverview.aspx?ID=273>
- School Meals: Tools for Schools (USDA)
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/tools-schools>
- Food Buying Guide for School Meal Programs (USDA, ICN)
<http://fbg.nfsmi.org/>
- Inventory Management and Tracking Reference Guide (ICN)
<http://www.nfsmi.org/ResourceOverview.aspx?ID=431>
- Forecasting the Procurement of Foods
<http://www.nfsmi.org/ResourceOverview.aspx?ID=619>

- Utilizing the Cafeteria as a Classroom (ICN)
<http://www.nfsmi.org/ResourceOverview.aspx?ID=463>
- Solving the Procurement Puzzle: Managing the Complexities of Doing Business in K-12 Foodservice (SNA)
http://schoolnutrition.org/uploadedFiles/Resources_and_Research/Operations/WhitePaper-SolvingtheProcurementPuzzle.pdf
- Simplify Bidding (Alliance for a Healthier Generation)
https://www.healthiergeneration.org/take_action/schools/breakfast_and_lunch/purchasing/
- School Food & Nutrition Service Management for the 21st Century, 6th Edition.
[Pannell-Martin, D., & Boettger, J. \(2014\).](#)
- SNA Webinars
<http://schoolnutrition.org/Webinar/Archives/#operations>

Key Topic: Food Production and Service

Key Achievement B4:

Management procedures assure the production and service of safe, high quality foods to all students.

Best Practice B4.1:

A system is in place to ensure high standards for quality food production.

Indicators:

- B4.1.1** Safe and efficient work methods are planned to maximize school nutrition program productivity.
- B4.1.2** Work schedule guidelines and productivity benchmarks, such as meals per labor hour, are developed and implemented to meet operational goals.
- B4.1.3** Work schedules are reviewed, evaluated, and revised as participation and programs change.
- B4.1.4** School nutrition managers are trained in food production, work simplification techniques, and forecasting procedures.
- B4.1.5** The most effective production system is selected for each school nutrition site based upon space, equipment, etc.
- B4.1.6** Food quality standards are developed to assist school nutrition personnel in evaluating menu items prior to service.
- B4.1.7** Current and up-to-date training materials are used to train school nutrition personnel on food production and work simplification techniques.
- B4.1.8** The school nutrition manager ensures that the appropriate quantity of food is prepared.
- B4.1.9** Procedures are developed and implemented for the proper care, preventive maintenance, and repair of equipment.

Best Practice B4.2:

Procedures are established for maintaining required daily food production records at each school nutrition site.

Indicators:

- B4.2.1** Production records are developed to match menus.
 - B4.2.2** Production records are completed prior to and following meal service.
 - B4.2.3** Production records are completed with standardized recipe number, product codes, or Global Trade Item Numbers (GTIN) and lot numbers.
 - B4.2.4** Portion sizes and serving utensils are specified on menus and/or production records.
 - B4.2.5** End-point cooking temperatures, when taken, are recorded on production records.
 - B4.2.6** School nutrition personnel are trained to complete production records.
 - B4.2.7** Product substitutions are recorded on production records.
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Best Practice B4.3:

School nutrition personnel are trained in culinary techniques and food production.

Indicators:

- B4.3.1** School nutrition personnel follow the basic principles of food preparation, consistently prepare quality food products, and are trained to follow food production and service standards of practice as outlined in the Food Safety Plan
 - B4.3.2** Food is prepared by cooking small batches every 30 minutes or before each serving period when possible.
 - B4.3.3** Appropriate portion control procedures are in place.
 - B4.3.4** An on-going training program for food production and service is implemented, documented, and revised as needed.
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Key Achievement B5:

A student-centered environment, conducive to healthy eating habits and social interaction, is provided.

Best Practice B5.1:

The dining and serving areas are customer-friendly and serve as learning laboratories.

Indicators:

- B5.1.1** Policies and procedures are followed to ensure clean and sanitary serving and dining areas.
 - B5.1.2** Dining areas have enough space and seating for the students.
 - B5.1.3** Serving and dining area displays promote healthy choices and are neat, attractive, and changed regularly.
 - B5.1.4** Students are involved in the selection of decorations, colors, music, etc. for the dining area.
 - B5.1.5** Tasting samples of new items are offered to students as they enter the serving line or are passed around the dining room as they are eating.
 - B5.1.6** Tables and seating arrangements encourage social interaction, and the tables and chairs are the right size and height for the students.
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Best Practice B5.2:

Service options and line architecture are designed to encourage healthy choices and minimize the time students wait to be served.

Indicators:

- B5.2.1** Menu options are clearly posted before the point of service in prominent locations.
 - B5.2.2** Concepts such as self-service, food courts, kiosks, food bars, vending machines, and scramble system serving stations are used as appropriate.
 - B5.2.3** Individual portions, point of sale marketing, self-serve, and student education activities are planned to reduce the time it takes to serve students.
 - B5.2.4** Serving lines are organized to encourage healthy choices.
 - B5.2.5** School nutrition personnel are trained on the meal pattern and Offer vs. Serve requirements.
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Best Practice B5.3:

School nutrition personnel excel at customer service.

Indicators:

- B5.3.1** Customer service training is provided at least annually.

B5.3.2 Quality customer service standards are established and practiced by the school nutrition personnel.

B5.3.3 Customer feedback is used to improve customer service.

Resources:

- Culinary Techniques For Healthy School Meals (ICN)
<http://www.nfsmi.org/ResourceOverview.aspx?ID=266>
 - Food Service Assistant – You Are Important (ICN)
<http://www.nfsmi.org/Templates/TemplateDefault.aspx?q=cEIEPTE3Ng>
 - Meal Appeal – Attracting Customers (USDA)
http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/meal_appeal.pdf
 - Measuring Success with Standardized Recipes (ICN)
<http://www.nfsmi.org/ResourceOverview.aspx?ID=88>
 - No Time to Train (ICN)
<http://www.nfsmi.org/ResourceOverview.aspx?ID=256>
 - Practical Skills for Preparing Quality Meals: A Five Step Process – 2010 BLT (ICN)
<http://www.nfsmi.org/ResourceOverview.aspx?ID=375>
 - Professional Standards for School Nutrition Professionals (USDA)
<http://professionalstandards.nal.usda.gov/>
 - School Food & Nutrition Service Management for the 21st Century, 6th Edition.
[Pannell-Martin, D., & Boettger, J. \(2014\).](#)
 - SNA Webinars
<http://schoolnutrition.org/Webinar/Archives/#operations>
-

Key Topic: Food Defense, Safety, and Sanitation

Key Achievement B6:

An environment for safe and secure food and worker safety is maintained.

Best Practice B6.1:

School nutrition program personnel follow strict food safety and food defense practices.

Indicators:

B6.1.1 A copy of each school's Food Safety Plan, as well as state and local sanitation and food safety regulations, is on file in the district office and at each school site.

B6.1.2 Routine food safety and sanitation inspections are conducted, and the reports are visibly posted and available to stakeholders upon request.

B6.1.3 All school nutrition personnel attend trainings to update their knowledge of safe food handling practices.

- B6.1.4** At minimum, the onsite manager is certified in food safety through a recognized training program.
 - B6.1.5** School nutrition personnel are encouraged to participate in food safety certification programs.
 - B6.1.6** Emergency procedures and practices for food recalls and foodborne illnesses are developed, maintained, reviewed, and updated regularly.
 - B6.1.7** Communication procedures for food defense, safety, and sanitation issues are established.
-

Best Practice B6.2:

Procedures are in place and accessible to school nutrition personnel to ensure a safe working environment.

Indicators:

- B6.2.1** In each kitchen, there is a written worker safety plan detailing the requirements and standards for the selection and use of chemicals and hazardous materials, the prevention of injuries, fire and emergency procedures, and how to handle bloodborne pathogens.
 - B6.2.2** A needs based safety training program is developed, implemented, maintained, and documented on the proper use, cleaning and sanitizing of foodservice equipment, the use of fire extinguishers, the use of chemicals, hazardous materials and equipment, and safety guidelines for workplace injury prevention and injury response reporting.
 - B6.2.3** A procedure for reporting, investigating, and correcting the causes of accidents is developed, implemented, and updated regularly.
 - B6.2.4** School nutrition personnel participate in school fire, emergency, and disaster plans.
 - B6.2.5** School nutrition personnel are trained in the basic principles of First Aid and how to prevent the transfer of body fluid pathogens.
 - B6.2.6** A First Aid kit is readily accessible to all school nutrition personnel.
 - B6.2.7** Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) are kept up-to-date, are readily accessible and school nutrition personnel are trained to use them.
 - B6.2.8** The school nutrition program is in compliance with health and safety regulations established by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) as well as federal, state and local governments.
 - B6.2.9** Integrated pest management best practices are in place district-wide.
-

Best Practice B6.3:

Policies and procedures are in place for handling food allergies.

Indicators:

- B6.3.1** School nutrition personnel in each kitchen are trained to follow established food allergy policies and procedures.
 - B6.3.2** School kitchens are organized to avoid cross-contamination.
 - B6.3.3** A communication plan is developed with families and key school employees so that school nutrition personnel can identify students with food allergies at the point of service.
 - B6.3.4** Emergency response plans for dealing with a food allergy crisis are developed and evaluated annually.
 - B6.3.5** Product ingredient information is available to identify potential allergens.
-

Best Practice B6.4:

An emergency and/or disaster plan is in place to address emergency and disaster situations.

Indicators:

- B6.4.1** The plan outlines the roles and functions of the school nutrition personnel in the event of a crisis.
 - B6.4.2** The food and supply items that will be available for use at each school nutrition site in an emergency is pre-determined.
 - B6.4.3** First Aid training is provided to school nutrition personnel.
 - B6.4.4** An emergency feeding plan is developed, and school nutrition personnel are trained to implement the plan.
 - B6.4.5** A communication plan is in place for contacting appropriate federal, state and local officials on the use of USDA Foods for disaster relief as well as other issues.
 - B6.4.6** The plan includes how food, supplies, and equipment might be secured from outside organizations during the crisis.
 - B6.4.7** The school nutrition plan is aligned with the school district plan.
-

Resources:

- Food Allergy Fact Sheets (ICN)
<http://www.nfsmi.org/ResourceOverview.aspx?ID=452>
- Food Allergy Research & Education (FARE)
<http://www.foodallergy.org>
- The Facts That Separate Food Allergy and Food Intolerance (ICN)
<http://www.nfsmi.org/documentlibraryfiles/PDF/20101004013748.pdf>

- Food Safety Basics (ICN)
<http://www.theicn.org/ResourceOverview.aspx?ID=467>
- Behavior Based Food Safety Posters (Kansas State University)
<http://cnsafefood.k-state.edu/resources/food-safety-posters/>
- Employee Health and Personal Hygiene for Child Nutrition Professionals (ICN)
<http://www.theicn.org/documentlibraryfiles/PDF/20160801032821.pdf>
- Equipment Safety for Food Workers
http://www.mafoodsafetyeducation.info/fs_work/teaching_tips.html
- Food Safety Fact Sheet (ICN)
<http://www.nfsmi.org/ResourceOverview.aspx?ID=109>
- Food Safety Standard Operating Procedures (ICN)
<http://www.nfsmi.org/ResourceOverview.aspx?ID=75>
- Guidance for School Food Authorities: Developing a School Food Safety Program Based on the Process Approach to HACCP Principles (USDA)
<http://www.nfsmi.org/documentlibraryfiles/PDF/20080220092722.pdf>
- Handbook for Children with Special Food and Nutrition Needs (ICN)
<http://nfsmi-web01.nfsmi.olemiss.edu/documentlibraryfiles/PDF/20080213015556.pdf>
- Produce Safety University - A One Week Training Course (USDA)
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/fns/safety/psu.htm>
- Food Safety in Schools (ICN)
<http://www.nfsmi.org/ResourceOverview.aspx?ID=327>
- ServSafe (National Restaurant Association)
<http://www.servsafe.com/>
- Serving Up Science: The Path to Safe Food in Schools (Kansas State University)
<http://cnsafefood.k-state.edu/resources/serving-up-science>
- Thermometer Information Resource (ICN)
<http://nfsmi.org/ResourceOverview.aspx?ID=113>
- Using Equipment Safely and Efficiently (ICN)
<http://nfsmi.org/ResourceOverview.aspx?ID=116>
- Wash Your Hands: Educating the School Community (ICN)
<http://nfsmi.org/ResourceOverview.aspx?ID=118>
- Emergency Readiness Plan (ICN)
<http://www.nfsmi.org/ResourceOverview.aspx?ID=61>
- A Biosecurity Checklist for School Foodservice Programs (USDA; ICN)
<http://foodbiosecurity.nfsmi.org/index.php>
- Understanding Food Allergies (National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases)
<http://www.niaid.nih.gov/topics/foodallergy/Pages/default.aspx>
- SNA Webinars
<http://schoolnutrition.org/Webinar/Archives/#operations>

Key Topic: Environmental Practices

Key Achievement B7:

An environmentally responsible school nutrition program is established.

Best Practice B7.1:

An energy and water management plan is developed to conserve energy and water.

Indicators:

- B7.1.1** Energy audits are conducted in the kitchen, and goals to reduce energy use are set.
 - B7.1.2** School nutrition personnel are trained to reduce energy and water consumption.
 - B7.1.3** An equipment start-up and shut-down schedule is implemented in the kitchen.
 - B7.1.4** School nutrition personnel provide input for ways to reduce the use of energy and water.
 - B7.1.5** Water-saving plumbing fixtures are installed.
 - B7.1.6** A schedule for care and preventative maintenance for equipment is developed and implemented.
-

Best Practice B7.2:

Procurement procedures that promote an environmentally responsible school nutrition program are developed.

Indicators:

- B7.2.1** Equipment purchases are energy and water efficient and best-suited for the facility and the school nutrition program.
 - B7.2.2** Procurement guidelines are followed for environmentally responsible products (e.g. recycled materials and source reduction packaging).
 - B7.2.3** Environmentally friendly initiatives are analyzed for cost-effectiveness.
-

Best Practice B7.3:

A waste management and recycling program is in place.

Indicators:

- B7.3.1** Recycling bins and cans are placed in key locations to encourage recycling practices.
- B7.3.2** An area to store recyclables is convenient to the kitchen.
- B7.3.3** School nutrition personnel are trained to recycle cardboard, tin, and other commonly used materials in the kitchen.

B7.3.4

The students and school community are involved in organizing and implementing recycling and waste management programs.

Resources:

- Equipment Purchasing and Facility Design for School Nutrition Programs (ICN)
<http://nfsmi-web01.nfsmi.olemiss.edu/ResourceOverview.aspx?ID=273>
- Greening the School Nutrition Scene: A National Study Examining Green/Environmental Conservation Practices and Barriers in School Nutrition Programs (ICN)
<http://www.nfsmi.org/ResourceOverview.aspx?ID=479>
- Inventory Management and Tracking Reference Guide (ICN)
<http://www.nfsmi.org/ResourceOverview.aspx?ID=431>
- Orientation to School Nutrition Management (ICN)
<http://www.nfsmi.org/ResourceOverview.aspx?ID=464>
- Standard Operating Procedures for Power, Water, and Gas Disruptions (ICN)
<http://www.nfsmi.org/documentlibraryfiles/PDF/20080208102619.pdf>
- SNA Webinars
<http://schoolnutrition.org/Webinar/Archives/#operations>

Key Area: Administration



Key Topic: School Nutrition Program Management

Key Achievement C1:

The school nutrition program's goals and sound business practices provide the basis for planning.

Best Practice C1.1:

The school nutrition program has a mission statement and conducts strategic planning on a regular basis.

Indicators:

- C1.1.1** The mission statement reflects, as the purpose of the program, the integral part that the school nutrition program plays in overall academic success.
- C1.1.2** Strategic planning is conducted to identify the issues facing the school nutrition program that need to be addressed.
- C1.1.3** Strategies and action items are developed to address the issues.
- C1.1.4** Representative school nutrition personnel from all levels are involved in strategic planning.
- C1.1.5** The strategic plan is written and communicated to school nutrition personnel as well as to stakeholders in the school community.

Best Practice C1.2:

The school nutrition program has written short- and long-term goals that reflect the strategic plan and focus on program improvement.

Indicators:

- C1.2.1** Goals are identified for the current year as well as the next 2-3 years, and they are consistent with the goals of the school district.
- C1.2.2** Specific objectives and actions are identified.
- C1.2.3** A written schedule or timeline for accomplishing goals is determined.
- C1.2.4** School nutrition personnel and assigned responsibilities are identified for each objective.
- C1.2.5** Progress in achieving the goals is evaluated, and adjustments are made as needed.

C1.2.6 The goals along with the progress and evaluation are communicated to all school nutrition personnel and district administrators on a regular basis.

Best Practice C1.3:

Written policies and procedures address key topics of operations and are implemented to ensure effective operation of the school nutrition program.

Indicators:

- C1.3.1** Written policies and procedures encompass key topics of operations and federal, state and local regulations, including but not limited to: nutrition, nutrition education, accommodation of children with special food and nutrition needs, meal charges, food safety and security, financial management, production and service, procurement, receiving and storage, emergency readiness, recalls and wellness.
 - C1.3.2** Written policies and procedures are reviewed annually and revised as needed.
 - C1.3.3** Current policies and procedures are communicated, and relevant ones are available to all stakeholders in the school community.
 - C1.3.4** School nutrition management personnel stay informed on changes in federal, state and local regulations and adjust policies and procedures as necessary.
 - C1.3.5** Training for school nutrition personnel encompasses changes and updates to policies and procedures.
-

Key Achievement C2:

The school nutrition program works in concert with the school community to maintain a healthy school environment.

Best Practice C2.1:

School nutrition personnel are included as partners in the education of children.

Indicators:

- C2.1.1** School nutrition personnel are part of health- or nutrition-related committees.
 - C2.1.2** The organization chart for the district and/or school site includes school nutrition personnel.
 - C2.1.3** School nutrition program services are marketed at school and district events.
 - C2.1.4** School nutrition personnel are included in district in-service and other training programs.
-

Best Practice C2.2:

Meal schedules and operational procedures are planned to meet the food, nutrition, health, and social needs of students.

Indicators:

- C2.2.1** Meal service is evaluated at all school sites to ensure students have adequate time to eat based on current research and benchmarks.
 - C2.2.2** School schedules allow all students access to school meals.
 - C2.2.3** "Recess Before Lunch" is discussed with site-based educators and evaluated as a meal schedule option.
 - C2.2.4** School nutrition personnel meet regularly with site-based administrators to review meal schedules.
 - C2.2.5** Hand washing/sanitizing areas are in close proximity to the serving and dining area.
-

Key Achievement C3:

Facilities are planned to ensure the operational needs of the school nutrition program are met.

Best Practice C3.1:

School nutrition personnel are actively involved in planning facilities that support the operational goals of the program.

Indicators:

- C3.1.1** School nutrition personnel are part of the planning team for new buildings and renovations.
 - C3.1.2** School nutrition personnel give input for design enhancements to improve workflow and service systems.
 - C3.1.3** A profile describing the school nutrition program is created to guide the planning team in designing an effective and efficient operation.
 - C3.1.4** A needs assessment of the school nutrition program is used to guide new construction and/or renovation projects.
 - C3.1.5** Serving and dining areas conform to local, state, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and OSHA regulations.
-

Key Achievement C4:

A comprehensive technology program is established to achieve the operational goals of the school nutrition program.

Best Practice C4.1:

The school nutrition program uses information technology to enhance its efficiency and effectiveness.

Indicators:

- C4.1.1** An evaluation of available technology and information systems is conducted to determine appropriate hardware and software for the school nutrition program.
 - C4.1.2** Software and hardware integrate with the technology infrastructure of the school district.
 - C4.1.3** An evaluation is conducted to determine the best approach to technical support (outsourcing, in-house, or vendor provided).
 - C4.1.4** A training program for school nutrition personnel is established to ensure efficient operation and understanding of the technology and information systems.
 - C4.1.5** Technology and information systems are used to tabulate data and to generate and submit reports.
 - C4.1.6** Contingency plans are developed for use in the event of hardware and/or software failure.
 - C4.1.7** New technology and information systems, such as electronic scanning systems and biometrics, are evaluated for practicality of use in the program as they become available.
 - C4.1.8** Procedures are established for proper care and maintenance of hardware and software systems.
 - C4.1.9** Training on appropriate technology security protocols is established and in place.
-

Resources:

- Equipment Purchasing and Facility Design for School Nutrition Programs (ICN)
<http://nfsmi-web01.nfsmi.olemiss.edu/ResourceOverview.aspx?ID=273>
- *Meet My New TBF (Tech Best Friend)* (School Nutrition magazine January 2014)
<http://mydigimag.rrd.com/publication/?i=190078&p=18>
- *Ready, Aim...What's YOUR Target* (School Nutrition magazine October 2014)
<http://mydigimag.rrd.com/publication/?i=227872&p=36>
- School Food & Nutrition Service Management for the 21st Century, 6th Edition.
[Pannell-Martin, D., & Boettger, J. \(2014\).](#)
- Orientation to School Nutrition Management (ICN)
<http://www.nfsmi.org/ResourceOverview.aspx?ID=464>
- SNA Presentation Library (SNA)
<https://schoolnutrition.org/presentations/>

- SNA Resource Center (SNA)
<https://schoolnutrition.org/resources/>
 - SNA Webinars
<http://schoolnutrition.org/Webinar/Archives/#admin>
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Key Topic: Financial Management

Key Achievement C5:

Financial statements for the school nutrition program are prepared and comply with federal, state and local reporting requirements, adhere to generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP), and are used to record, interpret, and analyze financial data.

Best Practice C5.1:

Budgets are prepared that reflect the school nutrition program's financial goals and desired financial outcomes.

Indicators:

- C5.1.1** Budget preparation includes input from district business officials and site-level school nutrition personnel.
 - C5.1.2** Projected annual budget is reconciled routinely with revenue and expenditure performance. Variances are justified and adjustments are made as necessary.
-

Best Practice C5.2:

Statement of Revenue and Expenditures (Profit and Loss Statement) is prepared on a monthly basis for the department level and for each school nutrition serving site.

Indicators:

- C5.2.1** Statements are analyzed to determine if there is sufficient revenue to cover expenditures.
 - C5.2.2** Action is taken if there is a net deficit at the department and/or any individual school nutrition program site.
 - C5.2.3** School nutrition program site level Revenue and Expenditures Reports are distributed.
 - C5.2.4** Statements are used as tools to facilitate financial management decisions.
-

Key Achievement C6:

Financial management practices are established and reviewed on an ongoing basis to maximize revenue and control costs.

Best Practice C6.1:

All expenditure categories are analyzed monthly and adjustments are made to control operational costs and maintain a financially sound program.

Indicators:

- C6.1.1** Meals Per Labor Hour (MPLH) standards are established and used to assign labor hours and control labor costs.
 - C6.1.2** The total cost to produce a meal is calculated and compared to the revenue generated for the same meal category.
 - C6.1.3** Goals are set for food and labor costs as a percentage of revenue (operating ratios) and are compared on a regular basis to actual data.
 - C6.1.4** Food costs are controlled by implementing procedures such as standardized recipes and portion control.
-

Best Practice C6.2:

All revenue categories are analyzed monthly to ensure that program expenditures are covered.

Indicators:

- C6.2.1** Prices for meals and non-program foods are determined based on ensuring compliance with current federal regulations.
 - C6.2.2** Data on participation rates for each school nutrition program site is tabulated and used to determine target areas for additional sources of income.
 - C6.2.3** Programs such as catering, contract meals, vending, and other meal initiatives are evaluated for their potential as additional sources of revenue.
-

Key Achievement C7:

Guidelines are developed that ensure financial accountability and compliance with federal, state and local regulations.

Best Practice C7.1:

Internal controls assure financial accountability.

Indicators:

- C7.1.1** Written procedures are established for collecting, reconciling, depositing, and disbursing funds (e.g. cross-referencing file claim to actual reimbursements).
- C7.1.2** A system is developed for archiving financial records following federal, state and local regulations.

- C7.1.3** Financial management software is used to enhance financial reporting and accountability.
- C7.1.4** The school nutrition program strives to maintain a cash balance equivalent to three (3) months operating expenses as allowed by federal regulations.
-

Best Practice C7.2:

Financial guidelines and practices are communicated to all school nutrition personnel.

Indicators:

- C7.2.1** Financial goals and outcomes are presented.
- C7.2.2** School nutrition personnel at the school site level receive training on controlling costs and revenue generation.
- C7.2.3** School nutrition personnel at the school site level are encouraged to develop and implement practices to increase revenue and control costs.
- C7.2.4** The school nutrition program's financial performance is presented and discussed at regularly assigned meetings for site nutrition management personnel.
- C7.2.5** Written procedures are reviewed to establish direct and indirect costs following federal, state and local regulations.
-

Resources:

- Financial Management: A Course for School Nutrition Directors (ICN)
<http://www.nfsmi.org/ResourceOverview.aspx?ID=63>
 - School Meals: Tools for Schools (USDA)
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/tools-schools>
 - Indirect Cost Guidance (USDA)
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/indirect-cost-guidance>
 - Nonprogram Food Tool (Calculator) (USDA)
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/guidance-paid-lunch-equity-and-revenue-nonprogram-foods>
 - Paid Lunch Equity Calculations and Tools (USDA)
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/paid-lunch-equity-school-year-2016-2017-calculations-and-tool>
 - School Food & Nutrition Service Management for the 21st Century, 6th Edition.
[Pannell-Martin, D., & Boettger, J. \(2014\).](#)
 - School Meals Grants (USDA)
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/grants.htm>
 - SNA Resource Center
<https://schoolnutrition.org/resources/>
 - SNA Presentation Library
<https://schoolnutrition.org/presentations/>
 - SNA Webinars
<http://schoolnutrition.org/Webinar/Archives/#admin>
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Key Topic: Human Resources

Key Achievement C8:

School nutrition personnel meet or exceed minimum USDA Professional Standards for School Nutrition Programs and are qualified to implement the goals of the school nutrition program.

Best Practice C8.1:

A process is developed and implemented for recruiting and hiring qualified personnel that is in compliance with district procedures and labor laws.

Indicators:

- C8.1.1** Written policies and procedures for recruiting, interviewing, and hiring qualified personnel are implemented.
 - C8.1.2** The recruiting and hiring procedure is reviewed and revised periodically.
 - C8.1.3** Job descriptions for all positions in the school nutrition program are developed and made available to all personnel.
 - C8.1.4** A personnel handbook is developed and distributed to all school nutrition personnel and contains information such as key contact information, information on the nutrition program, district and department regulations, policies and procedures, and local, state and national professional association involvement.
-

Best Practice C8.2:

Staffing is planned and allocated according to operational needs.

Indicators:

- C8.2.1** A staffing plan is developed based on factors such as delivery systems, participation, facilities, and services provided.
 - C8.2.2** Meals Per Labor Hour standards are utilized in staffing assignments.
 - C8.2.3** A contingency staffing plan is developed to ensure effective operations when vacancies occur.
-

Best Practice C8.3:

School nutrition management personnel review and recommend salary and benefits that are competitive and equitable. (When labor unions are in place, some of the following indicators may not apply).

Indicators:

- C8.3.1** Salary and benefit scales are determined based on area market analysis.
- C8.3.2** Wage and salary scales are reviewed at least annually, and this information is made available to all school nutrition personnel.
- C8.3.3** A plan for salary increases is developed and made available to all school nutrition personnel.

- C8.3.4** When possible, compensation incentives are provided for obtaining and/or renewing the SNA Certificate in School Nutrition and SNS Credentialing, as well as completion of school nutrition program training classes.
- C8.3.5** All decisions regarding salaries and benefits are coordinated with labor unions when applicable.
-

Best Practice C8.4:

Orientation and training that enhances learning and improves job skills are available to all school nutrition personnel.

Indicators:

- C8.4.1** Training and staff development opportunities are provided based on personnel needs, regulations, program and nutrition trends, local issues and certification requirements.
- C8.4.2** School nutrition personnel are included in training opportunities offered to other district personnel as appropriate.
- C8.4.3** As part of their orientation process, school nutrition personnel and nutrition educators receive basic sanitation training prior to starting work in the kitchens.
- C8.4.4** Opportunities to attend educational programs and professional meetings are encouraged, and costs are covered by the school nutrition program when possible.
- C8.4.5** A variety of group and individual training methods are used such as in-classroom trainings, interactive online classes, webinars, videos of conference sessions, and School Nutrition magazine "To Your Credit" articles.
- C8.4.6** An orientation program is developed that introduces new school nutrition personnel to the program's mission, requirements, and goals.
- C8.4.7** School nutrition personnel are trained on ethics and ethical best practices in school nutrition.
- C8.4.8** A system for evaluating the effectiveness of the training program is developed and modified as needed.
- C8.4.9** A system for mentoring and/or management training is used for succession planning.
-

Best Practice C8.5:

Performance standards and a formal evaluation and disciplinary system are developed that comply with federal, state and district regulations, as well as union contracts, if applicable.

Indicators:

- C8.5.1** Written policies and procedures encompassing topics such as evaluation, grievance, and discipline are implemented, communicated, reviewed regularly, and revised as needed.

- C8.5.2** Individual employee records are maintained according to district policy and labor union laws to provide information for use in evaluation, promotion, counseling, and termination and are kept confidential.
- C8.5.3** All school nutrition personnel are evaluated in writing at least annually or as determined by the district or union contract.
- C8.5.4** Personnel who conduct performance appraisals are trained in the evaluation process.
- C8.5.5** Human resource decisions follow due process as established by the school district.
- C8.5.6** Conflict resolution, negotiation, and problem-solving techniques are used when dealing with school nutrition personnel issues.
- C8.5.7** A system to monitor and track the incidence of on-the-job injuries is established, and this information is linked to training and evaluations.
-

Best Practice C8.6:

A system for addressing retention, promotion, recognition, and motivation is implemented and communicated to all school nutrition personnel.

Indicators:

- C8.6.1** A procedure is established for school nutrition personnel to provide feedback for improving productivity and morale.
- C8.6.2** Opportunities are available for school nutrition personnel to provide input and become involved with new initiatives, product and recipe testing, committees, training others, and contests.
- C8.6.3** An awards and recognition program is established for outstanding performance.
- C8.6.4** Meetings and other open channels of communication are conducted regularly with school nutrition personnel.
- C8.6.5** To communicate to and among school nutrition personnel, a variety of communication channels, such as bulletin boards, email, newsletters and the website, is used.
-

Resources:

- Building Human Resource Management Skills – Management Skills for Success (ICN)
<http://www.nfsmi.org/ResourceOverview.aspx?ID=51>
- Competencies, Knowledge and Skills for School Nutrition Positions (ICN)
 - a. For District-Level School Nutrition Professionals:
<http://www.nfsmi.org/ResourceOverview.aspx?ID=284>
 - b. For Effective School Nutrition Assistants/Technicians:
<http://www.nfsmi.org/ResourceOverview.aspx?ID=130>
 - c. For Effective School Nutrition Managers:
<http://www.nfsmi.org/ResourceOverview.aspx?ID=131>
- School Food & Nutrition Service Management for the 21st Century, 6th Edition.
[Pannell-Martin, D., & Boettger, J. \(2014\).](#)

- SNA Resource Center
<https://schoolnutrition.org/resources/>
- SNA Presentation Library
<https://schoolnutrition.org/presentations/>
- SNA Webinars
<http://schoolnutrition.org/Webinar/Archives/#admin>
- Tools for Hiring Successful School Foodservice Assistants (ICN)
<http://www.nfsmi.org/documentlibraryfiles/PDF/20080225104925.pdf>
- Professional Standards Training Guidelines
<http://schoolnutrition.org/Cert/USDAProfessionalStandards/>
- Job Description Template for CNP Director/Supervisor/Administrator
<http://www.nfsmi.org/ResourceOverview.aspx?ID=161>

Key Topic: Program Accountability

Key Achievement C9:

A system is established to ensure regulatory accountability of the school nutrition program.

Best Practice C9.1:

The school nutrition program meets all Child Nutrition Program regulations.

Indicators:

- C9.1.1** School nutrition personnel know current federal, state and local regulations and policies and keep informed on updates and revisions.
- C9.1.2** The most current Administrative Review indicates compliance with federal regulations; all problem areas have been addressed; and the Report of Findings is shared with district administrators and school nutrition personnel.
- C9.1.3** A system for internal audits and reviews is established to evaluate the performance of the school nutrition program and identify and control problems.

Best Practice C9.2:

The school nutrition program has established a system for student eligibility determination that complies with federal regulations.

Indicators:

- C9.2.1** All applications for meal benefits are correctly approved and verified.
- C9.2.2** The school nutrition program complies with the requirements of direct certification.
- C9.2.3** The release of eligibility information is monitored and complies with federal and state regulations regarding disclosure.
- C9.2.4** A system for records retention following state and federal regulation is established.

Best Practice C9.3:

A system is established for data collection and record keeping that ensures compliance with federal, state and local regulations and policies.

Indicators:

- C9.3.1** The method to collect meal counts at the point of service is reliable and provides accurate data in a timely manner.
 - C9.3.2** A system is developed to maintain accurate and appropriate records for the required length of time.
 - C9.3.3** An effective system is established for preparing and submitting reports.
-

Best Practice C9.4:

School nutrition management personnel ensure that the local board of education has adopted a written school wellness policy that complies with the provisions of the federal regulation.

Indicators:

- C9.4.1** School nutrition management personnel provide information to appropriate district administrators regarding the wellness policy requirements and updates.
 - C9.4.2** School nutrition management personnel provide leadership and guidance and coordinate efforts to establish procedures to implement requirements.
 - C9.4.3** School nutrition management personnel provide leadership to ensure the school community is informed of the local school wellness policy.
 - C9.4.4** School nutrition management personnel develop guidelines for implementing the components of the local school wellness policy that are pertinent to the school nutrition program.
-

Best Practice C9.5:

A school food safety plan for the preparation and service of meals is developed and implemented in compliance with federal law.

Indicators:

- C9.5.1** School nutrition site personnel are trained on the components of the program and their responsibilities for implementation.
 - C9.5.2** A process is established to monitor, review, and improve the food safety plan.
 - C9.5.3** School nutrition management personnel coordinate with the local health department to ensure all school sites receive the minimum number of required food safety inspections as prescribed by federal and state regulations.
-

Resources:

- Administrative Review Manual (USDA)
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/nsfp/administrative-review-manual-forms-and-tools>

- School Meals: Tools for Schools (USDA)
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/tools-schools>
- Child Nutrition Act of 1966 (USDA)
http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/CNA_1966_12-13-10.pdf
- Community Eligibility Provision Resources (USDA)
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/community-eligibility-provision>
- Developing a School Food Safety Program (ICN)
<http://www.nfsmi.org/ResourceOverview.aspx?ID=57>
- Eligibility Manual for School Meals (USDA)
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/2014-edition-eligibility-manual-school-meals>
- Food Safety Resources (USDA)
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/food-safety/food-safety-resources>
- Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (USDA)
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/healthy-hunger-free-kids-act>
- Local School Wellness Policy (FNS USDA)
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Healthy/wellnesspolicy.html>
- Local Wellness Policy Resources (Team Nutrition USDA)
<http://healthymeals.nal.usda.gov/local-wellness-policy-resources>
- Meal Pattern Resource Center (SNA – Member only access)
<https://schoolnutrition.org/mealpattern/>
- Provision 1, 2, and 3 Resource (USDA)
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/provisions-1-2-and-3>
- Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act (USDA)
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/NSLA.pdf>
- School Food & Nutrition Service Management for the 21st Century, 6th Edition.
[Pannell-Martin, D., & Boettger, J. \(2014\).](#)
- SNA Presentation Library
<https://schoolnutrition.org/presentations/>
- SNA Resource Center
<https://schoolnutrition.org/resources/>
- SNA Webinars
<http://schoolnutrition.org/Webinar/Archives/#admin>

Key Area: Marketing & Communications



Key Topic: Marketing

Key Achievement D1:

A comprehensive marketing plan promotes participation in school meal programs.

Best Practice D1.1:

A marketing plan is developed and implemented using established marketing principles and techniques.

Indicators:

- D1.1.1** A school nutrition program mission statement is created and published.
 - D1.1.2** An analysis is conducted to identify the program's Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT analysis.)
 - D1.1.3** Objectives and strategies for the marketing plan are developed.
 - D1.1.4** The target audience(s) is identified.
 - D1.1.5** A budget is determined to fund the marketing plan and included as a line item in the school nutrition program budget.
 - D1.1.6** School nutrition personnel receive training on the marketing plan as well as tools to use for implementation.
 - D1.1.7** The marketing plan is evaluated on a regular basis and modified as needed.
-

Best Practice D1.2:

Reimbursable meals are promoted as the meal of choice.

Indicators:

- D1.2.1** The nutritional and economic advantages of school meals are promoted to stakeholders using a variety of communication channels.
 - D1.2.2** Reimbursable meals are more economically priced than non-program foods and are marketed as a better value.
 - D1.2.3** Food is merchandized and served efficiently to encourage the selection of reimbursable meals.
-

Best Practice D1.3:

The school nutrition program develops a branded concept for the program to enhance the visibility and benefit of school meals.

Indicators:

- D1.3.1** A consistent brand is developed and utilized in every school nutrition program across the district.
 - D1.3.2** School nutrition personnel determine which components of the branding program are feasible to implement such as distinct name, logo, message or tag line, packaging, signage, colors, and print materials.
 - D1.3.3** School nutrition personnel solicit support and assistance from students and teachers in arts and business classes, and other segments in the district, and also seek community support and assistance.
 - D1.3.4** A system for evaluation and continuous improvement of the branded concept is developed.
-

Key Achievement D2:

The school nutrition program is a resource for meeting the school and community's nutrition needs.

Best Practice D2.1:

School nutrition management personnel evaluate opportunities on an ongoing basis for extended programs to address school and community needs.

Indicators:

- D2.1.1** School nutrition management personnel, in collaboration with personnel at point-of-service, evaluate the needs of students for additional services such as expanded breakfast options, after school snack program, summer foodservice, supper program, vended reimbursable meals, and any other new initiatives as they become available.
- D2.1.2** School nutrition management personnel evaluate the needs of the community for additional services such as catering services, contract services, and adult and elderly meal programs.
- D2.1.3** An implementation plan is developed for the additional services. Program personnel seek approval and assistance from appropriate authorities as necessary.
- D2.1.4** The target audience(s) is identified.
- D2.1.5** The additional services are periodically evaluated for cost effectiveness and to determine if they continue to meet the needs of the targeted market. Modifications are made as necessary.

Key Achievement D3:

A public relations program is designed to promote and maintain a positive public image for the school nutrition program.

Best Practice D3.1:

School nutrition personnel advocate for the school nutrition program both within the school district and in the community.

Indicators:

- D3.1.1** School nutrition management personnel are considered the authority and spokespeople within the school community in matters relating to child nutrition.
- D3.1.2** The school nutrition program provides opportunities for personnel to receive ongoing training in marketing and communications.
- D3.1.3** School nutrition site-level personnel integrate themselves into their school community by supporting and participating in school activities.
- D3.1.4** School nutrition personnel promote school program goals and activities within the school community.
- D3.1.5** School nutrition personnel network with other school nutrition professionals to share best practices and receive training and skill enhancement.
- D3.1.6** The school nutrition program works with advisory groups and committees to inform and advocate for the school nutrition program.
- D3.1.7** The school nutrition program works with the district public information officer or other official spokesperson to provide content and develop press releases, other written communications and social media promotion about the school nutrition program.
- D3.1.8** School nutrition management personnel develop a relationship with the media to promote the school nutrition program in the community.
- D3.1.9** A plan of action is developed when there is a need to address unexpected media attention around school meals like recalls or negative national, state or local press/social media coverage.
- D3.1.10** Activities are planned and promoted for state and/or National School Lunch Week, National School Breakfast Week, School Nutrition Employee Appreciation Week, School Lunch Hero Day, National Nutrition Month, and other recognized celebrations.

Resources:

- Branding the School Nutrition Program: Building the Foodservice Personality (ICN)
<http://www.nfsmi.org/ResourceOverview.aspx?ID=403>
- Marketing Your School Nutrition Program (ICN)
<http://www.nfsmi.org/ResourceOverview.aspx?ID=415>

- Cafeteria Visits 101 (SNA)
http://schoolnutrition.org/uploadedFiles/Legislation_and_Policy/State_and_Local_Legislation_and_Regulations/cafeteria-visits-101.pdf
 - SNA Resource Center
<https://schoolnutrition.org/resources/>
 - SNA Webinars (SNA)
<http://schoolnutrition.org/Webinar/Archives/#marketing>
-

Key Topic: Communications

Key Achievement D4:

School nutrition personnel work with stakeholders in the community as well as local and state allied organizations to promote nutritious food, nutrition education, and physical activity.

Best Practice D4.1:

The school nutrition program works with the community and allied organizations to promote the importance of nutritious food, nutrition education, and physical activity for school age children.

Indicators:

- D4.1.1** School nutrition personnel provide information about the program to groups allied with schools, such as higher education institutions, parent teacher organizations, school board and principal organizations, dietetic associations, medical organizations, and any others in the community with an interest in the well-being of children.
 - D4.1.2** School nutrition personnel meet with groups allied with schools to encourage cooperative activities.
 - D4.1.3** School nutrition personnel represent the school nutrition program and participate in the development, implementation and evaluation of the school/district's wellness policy.
-

Best Practice D4.2:

The school nutrition program develops partnerships with industry and food service operations, both commercial and nonprofit, to support and promote the school nutrition program.

Indicators:

- D4.2.1** School nutrition personnel meet with industry and commercial and non-profit food service operations to share information about the program.
- D4.2.2** School nutrition personnel provide input to the foodservice industry on the development of products and services that will meet the program needs and advance the well-being of children.

D4.2.3 The school nutrition program invites industry representatives to visit schools, in accordance with district and/or school policy, to observe the program in operation and gather data regarding student needs and student response to various products and types of service.

D4.2.4 School nutrition personnel stay informed of and the program incorporates trends in commercial foodservice restaurants and nonprofit food service operations that are pertinent to the health and well-being of children.

Key Achievement D5:

The school nutrition program communicates the importance of the program to stakeholders in the school district.

Best Practice D5.1:

A system is established to communicate with all stakeholders in the school district about the contribution of the program to the educational performance of students.

Indicators:

D5.1.1 The school nutrition program reaches out to stakeholders such as teachers, principals, parents and office staff for support and assistance in promoting the benefits of the school nutrition program.

D5.1.2 School-level nutrition personnel are encouraged to form partnerships with site-based educators.

D5.1.3 The school nutrition program organizes opportunities such as food shows, tasting panels, and focus groups to engage students in program planning and to educate them on the role of good nutrition and healthy lifestyles.

D5.1.4 School nutrition personnel communicate to the school community the important direct link between good nutrition and the educational performance of students, providing current scientific studies and research.

Key Achievement D6:

The school nutrition program communicates the importance of policies to support nutrition integrity.

Best Practice D6.1:

School nutrition personnel advocate for public policy that is beneficial to the health and education of children.

Indicators:

D6.1.1 School nutrition personnel are trained on the important role of nourishing children as part of the educational day, updated on the legislative process and how to assess effects of proposals on the school nutrition program.

D6.1.2 School nutrition personnel communicate with legislators and government agencies.

- D6.1.3** The school nutrition program provides accurate information on the program goals and objectives, how rules and regulations impact the program, and any other pertinent information to legislators and government agencies.
- D6.1.4** Elected officials are invited to visit schools to participate in activities and observe the contribution of school nutrition programs to the health and education of children.
- D6.1.5** School nutrition personnel advocate for district/school administrators to develop policy and actively endorse healthy foods while discouraging the promotion or availability of less nutritious food choices.
-

Key Achievement D7:

The school nutrition program coordinates the use of multiple approaches to provide information to stakeholders within the school district and in the community.

Best Practice D7.1:

When not restricted by local policy, the school nutrition program coordinates the use of multiple approaches to provide information to stakeholders within the school district and in the community.

Indicators:

- D7.1.1** School nutrition personnel are trained on appropriate use of social media for program promotion, or the program utilizes outside experts, to incorporate social media.
- D7.1.2** The school nutrition program uses multiple approaches to inform and educate stakeholders and determines the most appropriate channels for effective communication.
- D7.1.3** Targeted promotional materials are used to address the needs of various market segments such as athletes, females/males, and ethnic groups.
- D7.1.4** Multiple communication channels are used to disseminate consistent messages.
- D7.1.5** Information and messages are translated into the most prominent language(s) spoken by the student population.
-

Resources:

- Communication Tools for School Nutrition Programs (ICN)
<http://www.nfsmi.org/ResourceOverview.aspx?ID=249>
- Core Nutrition Messages (USDA)
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/core-nutrition/core-nutrition-messages>
- SNA Legislative Action Center (SNA)
<https://schoolnutrition.org/LegislationPolicy/SNAPolicyResources/>
- SNA's PR Resources (SNA – requires SNA membership to login)
<https://schoolnutrition.org/MarketingComm/PR-Resources/>

- About School Meals (SNA)
<http://www.schoolnutrition.org/SchoolMeals>
- SNA Marketing & Communication Tools at Your Fingertips (SNA)
<https://schoolnutrition.org/ResourcesResearch/MarketingCommunications/>
- SNA Resource Center
<https://schoolnutrition.org/resources/>
- SNA Webinars
<http://schoolnutrition.org/Webinar/Archives/#marketing>

Glossary



A

Administrative Review

A federally-prescribed review system used by the state agency to monitor School Food Authority programs, formerly known as the Coordinated Review Effort (CRE).

Afterschool Meals

Meals and snacks provided to children, including teenagers through age 18, in eligible afterschool programs in lower income areas. Provided through the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP).

Alliance for a Healthier Generation

An organization founded in 2005 by the American Heart Association and William J. Clinton Foundation to address one of the nation's leading public health threats—childhood obesity.

B

Batch Cooking

Cooking in small quantities (e.g., an amount that can be served in 15 minutes) on a continuous basis during serving periods to maintain fresh, safe, and nutritious products.

Benchmarking

Process of seeking out and studying the best practices that produce superior results for the purposes of self-evaluation.

Best Practices

Actions that measure key achievements found in Keys to Excellence. Methods or techniques showing superior results.

Biometrics

Use of physical characteristics such as fingerprint, facial recognition, or iris scan to identify an individual.

Branded Concept

Developing a brand for the school nutrition program with components such as name, logo, colors, messages, packaging, signage and print materials used to increase participation, improve image, and market the program to students.

Budget

A financial planning and management tool that projects revenues and expenses for a specific time period and/or activity.

C

Catering Services

Food and beverage services provided by the school nutrition department for special functions not directly associated with Federal food programs.

Certification Program (SNA)

An SNA professional development program with established standards, and requirements, for academic education as conditions of being awarded certification. Education must clearly relate to SNA Key Areas. Certification is renewable on an annual basis after the appropriate number of continuing education units are accumulated.

Certification in Food Safety

Provided by a local health agency or national professional organization that verifies that the holder has successfully completed a course in food safety/sanitation.

Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)

A federal food assistance program administered by USDA that provides reimbursement for meals served to children and adults attending eligible child care / day care centers and homes. Children may receive snacks and supper through CACFP.

Child Nutrition Employee Appreciation Week

One designated week a year for directors, managers, parents, teachers, and school administrators to acknowledge that child nutrition employees work hard year-round.

Community Eligibility Option

Allows all schools that meet the 40 percent direct certification threshold to provide free breakfast and lunch to all students, beginning school year 2014-2015. Reimbursement is calculated based on the number of students directly certified for free school meals.

Competitive Foods

Any foods and beverages sold in competition with the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program to students including those sold by school nutrition programs.

Contract Meals

Meals prepared and regularly served for an agreed price to an agency which has entered into an agreement with the school nutrition program.

Contract Services

Services provided through contractual agreements with independent suppliers and consultants.

Cooperative and/or Group Purchasing Organization

Entity made up of school nutrition programs created to increase buying power by combining their purchases.

Coordinated Review Effort (CRE) - See Administrative Review.

Corrective Action

Action taken by the school or school district to correct a deficiency in the administration, management, or operation of the school food and nutrition program.

Credentialing Program (SNA)

An SNA professional development program that awards the School Nutrition Specialist (SNS) credential to individuals who meet professional requirements, including successfully passing a standardized examination designed to assess professional competence against established criteria for school nutrition programs. The SNS credential is renewable every three years upon successful completion of continuing education units.

Control Point

A practice, preparation step, or procedure where a preventive or control measure can be applied that would prevent, eliminate, or reduce the risk of a hazard.

Cycle Menus

A series of menus planned for a particular period of time, such as 4 weeks. The menu varies for each day of the cycle.

D

Dietary Guidelines for Americans

A publication issued jointly every five years by USDA and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, which contains nutritional and dietary information and guidelines for the general public and is based on scientific and medical knowledge current at the time of publication. The guidelines place emphasis on choosing a variety of foods each day that limit fat, sugar, and salt, and increase complex carbohydrates and dietary fiber; and on increasing exercise. The National School Lunch and National School Breakfast Programs are directed to abide by these guidelines.

E

Electronic Scanning

Use of a computer software program to scan paper meal applications for automating the certification process.

Evening Supper Program

The informal name for the provision of reimbursable suppers to children, including teenagers through age 18, in eligible afterschool programs in lower income areas. Provided through the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). See also **Afterschool Meals**.

F

Farm to School Program

A program that connects K-12 schools and local farms with the objectives of serving healthy meals in school cafeterias, improving student nutrition, providing agriculture health and nutrition education opportunities, and supporting local and regional farmers.

First In First Out (FIFO)

A method of inventory rotation in which the oldest products held in inventory are the first to be used.

Foodborne Illness

A disease carried or transmitted to people by foods or beverages (commonly referred to as food poisoning).

Food Defense

The collective term used by federal agencies such as the Food and Drug Administration, USDA, and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to encompass activities associated with protecting the nation's food supply from chemical, biological, and other sources of contamination that pose hazards to the health and well-being of consumers.

Food Recall

An order issued by USDA, food manufacturers, or other suppliers to stop usage of a food believed to be unsafe for consumption, which also includes instructions for handling the food in question.

Food Safety Plan

A written plan including Hazard Analysis of Critical Control Points (HACCP) principles defining procedures used in preparing and serving school meals as required by law.

Food Specifications and Conditions

A written description of a desired item that provides procurement information, such as USDA grade standard (if appropriate), container size, number of containers (units) per case, number of cases ordered, and net drained weights (if appropriate). Conditions include delivery location, procedures, and schedules, and procedures for overages, shortages, outages, refunds, and returns.

Foods of Minimal Nutritional Value

A food that provides less than 5% of the Reference Daily Intakes for each of 8 specified nutrients per 100 calories or serving.

Forecasting

The use of records and data to determine how many meals will be served or how much food will be needed for a future time.

Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP)

A program administered by USDA which provides all children in participating schools with a variety of free fresh fruits and vegetables throughout the school day. It is not available in all states.

Fuel Up to Play 60

A program founded by the National Dairy Council and the National Football League, in collaboration with USDA, which empowers students to take charge in making small, everyday changes at school.

G

Generally Accepted Accounting Practices (GAAP)

Accounting practices which represent a uniform set of guidelines for financial accounting used in school districts for compliance with federal requirements.

Global Trade Item Number (GTIN)

A 14-digit number currently used exclusively within bar codes which serves as an identifier for trade items.

Good Manufacturing Practices (GMPs)

Regulations that describe the methods, equipment, facilities, and controls required for producing processed foods, human and veterinary products, and medical devices.

Goals

A broad statement of results sought; what will happen as a result of what is done over the course of short term (current year) and long term (2-3 years).

H

Hazard Analysis of Critical Control Points (HACCP)

A food safety system designed to keep food safe throughout the production and service in an establishment. HACCP is based on the idea that if hazards are identified at specific points in the flow of a food, the hazards will be prevented, eliminated, or reduced to safe levels.

Healthier US School Challenge

A voluntary certification initiative established by USDA in 2004 to recognize those schools participating in the National School Lunch Program that have created healthier school environments through schools' food quality, participation in meal programs, physical activity, physical education, and nutrition education.

I

Information Technology (IT)

Computer systems and other technology that enhance operational efficiency by accessing, processing, and transmitting information.

Inspection Report

Written report prepared by local health departments or other authorized persons that identifies the food safety status of foodservice facilities and provides recommendations and timelines for remedial actions, if needed.

Institute of Child Nutrition (ICN)

A federally funded institution established by Congress that provides technical assistance, research, education, and training for child nutrition programs.

J

Job Description

A detailed list of the work requirements and responsibilities to perform a certain task.

L

Line Architecture

The layout of serving tables and food on the school meals serving line.

M

Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS)

Product safety information sheets prepared by manufacturers and marketers of products containing toxic chemicals.

Marketing Plan

A predetermined plan to increase participation in a Child Nutrition Program through communications of varying types.

Meals Per Labor Hour (MPLH)

A common measure of productivity in school foodservice; calculated by dividing the total number of meals produced and served in a day by the total number of labor hours used.

Mission Statement

A succinct statement as to the purpose of the organization or an organization's reason for existence (usually 20 words or less).

Modified Recipes

Recipes that have been altered to accommodate a change in one or more nutrients or ingredients.

N

National Sanitation Foundation (NSF)

A widely respected and globally recognized provider of safety standards for food products, manufacturing procedures, and food preparation and serving equipment. The NSF seal represents compliance with established health and safety standards.

National School Breakfast Week

By Presidential proclamation, a week of observance in March of each year that commemorates the contribution of the School Breakfast Program to the health and education of children.

National School Lunch Program (NSLP)

The program under which participating schools operate a nonprofit lunch program in accordance with the National School Lunch Act, through which general and special cash assistance and donated food assistance are made available to schools.

National School Lunch Week

By Presidential proclamation, a week of observance in October of each year that commemorates the contribution of the National School Lunch Program to the health and education of children.

Non-Program Foods

Foods sold separately from reimbursable meals served in Federal child nutrition programs (a la carte foods).

Nutrition Education

A comprehensive nutrition information program that coordinates classroom instruction with the school nutrition program and school community, with emphasis on making healthful food choices.

Nutrition Integrity Statement

A level of performance that assures all foods and beverages available in schools are consistent with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, and, when combined with nutrition education, physical activity, and a healthy school environment, contributes to enhanced learning and the development of lifelong, healthy eating habits.

O

Offer vs. Serve

A concept that applies to the determination of reimbursable school meals. It allows students to decline some of the food offered in a school lunch or school breakfast, providing student choice and reducing program waste.

Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)

A government agency with the responsibility to set standards that promotes workplace safety and health.

Operating Ratios

An analysis of financial data that measures the efficiency of the operation of the school nutrition program. Expenditures as a percentage of revenue (food cost percentage) is an example of an operating ratio.

P

Par Value

The amount that an issuer agrees to pay at the maturity date, also called the maturity value or face value.

Percent Participation

The calculation of the number of students available to take part in a child nutrition program (breakfast, lunch, snack, summer feeding) divided by the number of students who do participate.

Physical Inventory

An actual count of goods in stock. This count should be taken at least once a month.

Point of Sale

The various locations in a school nutrition operation where sales transactions take place.

Portion Control

A specific quantity of food to be served as indicated on a standardized recipe.

Potentially Hazardous Foods (PHF)

Foods that deteriorate rapidly in quality if not subjected to sufficient heat or cold to prevent the rapid reproduction of pathogens that might cause foodborne illness.

Procurement

The act of obtaining or buying goods and services.

Production Record

A form used to provide essential information recorded at the school kitchen such as food items, recipe numbers, amounts prepared, portion sizes, and leftovers for the reimbursable meals served. It is used for determining if the appropriate level of nutrients and calories were offered for a reimbursable meal.

Program Profile

A form used to gather and organize information about the school nutrition program needs that is used for facility planning and given to architects, engineers, and contractors.

R

Reimbursable Meal

A student meal that meets Federal food and nutrition requirements for the School Breakfast Program, the School Lunch Program, and other federal child nutrition programs and is eligible for a cash reimbursement paid for, partially or totally, by USDA.

S

School Community

Includes principals, teachers, administrators, school support staff, parents, school nutrition personnel, and students who make up and support the educational process in the schools.

School Food Authority (SFA)

The governing body that is responsible for the administration of one or more schools and has the legal authority to operate the school nutrition program therein. The school system superintendent is typically the person authorized to sign legal documents for the SFA.

School Meals Initiative (SMI)

Also known as the School Meals Initiative for Healthy Children, it is USDA's initiative to assist and provide training so that school lunches and breakfasts are consistent with the recommendations of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. All School Food Authorities participating in the National School Lunch Program must undergo a SMI review on a cyclical basis.

School Nutrition Association (SNA)

Founded in 1946, the 55,000 members of SNA represent the full spectrum of school nutrition personnel including: directors of school nutrition programs in school districts, state agency program directors, managers of individual kitchens, school nutrition employees responsible for food preparation and service, child and adult care food program employees, and industry representatives.

School Nutrition Program

The operations within a school or school district, authorized by the local governing board, that provide students with nutrition services and nutrition education.

School Nutrition Personnel

The employees of the school nutrition department who work in the schools and central office to provide healthy meals to students, provide nutrition education support to students and faculty, and promote the school nutrition program.

Social Media

A collection of online tools and platforms that allow individuals to post and share information and build relationships. These tools include Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Flickr, and YouTube, among others.

Stakeholder

An individual or group that has a strong interest in the success of the school nutrition program's services.

Standardized Recipe

A written formula that has been tested and produces a consistent quality and yield of a food or beverage. It provides a list of ingredients, the required quantity of each ingredient, and specific instructions for preparation and service, including portion size, yield, and nutrient composition.

Standards of Practices or Procedures

Written practices and procedures that are critical to producing safe food.

Statement of Revenues and Expenditures (Profit and Loss Statement)

The financial report of all revenues and expenditures earned and expended for a given period of time. Tells whether the school nutrition program is operating at a profit or loss.

Strategic Planning

A process to identify the short and long-term issues facing the school nutrition program that need to be addressed by developing goals, objectives, and action items.

SWOT Analysis

A process to identify the school nutrition program's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) for the purpose of laying the groundwork for strategic planning.

T

Team Nutrition

An initiative of the USDA Food and Nutrition Service to support the Child Nutrition Programs through training and technical assistance for nutrition services, nutrition education for children and their caregivers, and school and community support for healthy eating and physical activity.

Team Nutrition School

A school that has signed up for and participates in the USDA Team Nutrition Program.

U

United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)

The Federal agency responsible for administration of the nation's child nutrition and commodity distribution programs.

USDA Foods

A program that supports federal nutrition assistance programs, including the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). USDA Foods makes up approximately 15 to 20 percent of the food served in each school lunch.

USDA Professional Standards

The final USDA Professional Standards rule for foodservice directors, managers, school nutrition staff and state agency directors was effective July 1, 2015. In addition to hiring standards, the final rule requires all personnel in school nutrition programs to complete annual training/continuing education.

USDA Professional Standards were based on the four key areas in SNA's Keys to Excellence.

Key Area 1: Nutrition

Key Area 2: Operations

Key Area 3: Administration

Key Area 4: Communications & Marketing

V

Vended Foods

Foods sold from vending machines that include both reimbursable and non-program foods.

Vendors

Those who provide goods and services to the School Nutrition Programs.

Vision

A statement that defines what an organization seeks to become. It provides personnel with a destination by which they can measure progress and feel a sense of accomplishment as they work towards reaching that vision.

W

Waste Management Plan

A clearly stated and implemented plan that identifies and reduces waste in all areas of the food service operation, including employee training for safe and efficient waste handling procedures.

Webinar

An online seminar or workshop delivered over the internet.

Wellness Policy

A policy required by law to address a school or district's health and wellness requirements.

Whole Grain-Rich Foods

Whole grain food products defined by USDA to meet a portion size requirement for the Grains/Bread component.

Work Flow

The efficient organization of work in the kitchen that naturally and logically follows the flow of food from receiving to storage, preparation, service, and clean up.

Work Schedule

A written assignment for each employee that specifies duties and responsibilities to be carried out at specific times and on a daily, weekly, monthly, or yearly basis.