

In a “Nutshell”: Professional Standards

Hiring Requirements for New Food Service Directors
Effective July 1, 2015



The Professional Standards regulations in 7 CFR 210.30 established minimum professional standards hiring requirements for new Food Service Directors who manage and operate the National School Lunch and School Breakfast programs. The hiring requirements aim to ensure new Food Service Directors have the knowledge they need to operate School Nutrition Programs effectively.

Food Service Directors hired before July 1, 2015, are exempt from the professional standards hiring requirements since they were hired before the Professional Standards rule was in effect.

Definition of Food Service Director

- The Food Service Director is responsible for the management of the day-to-day operations of school food service for all participating schools under the jurisdiction of the School Food Authority (SFA). This may include the program planning, administration, implementation, evaluation, and monitoring.
- Duties of the Food Service Director generally include sanitation, food safety, nutrition and menu planning, food production, facility layout and design, procurement, financial management, recordkeeping, program accountability, marketing, customer service, and personnel management.
- Each SFA must designate one person as the Food Service Director. The job title used may be different, so it is important to focus on job duties of the staff when determining who the “director” is.
- If the SFA has responsibilities related to the school nutrition program divided among multiple staff members, for example, the business manager, administrative assistant, and head cook, the SFA will still have to designate one person as the director. The person hired to perform the majority of the duties must meet the hiring standards.

Minimum Hiring Requirements

- Minimum hiring requirements are based on enrollment and include minimum education and experience.
- This includes Food Service Management Company employees acting as the Food Service Director.
- The salary of a new director that does not meet the minimum hiring requirements cannot be paid utilizing the nonprofit school food service account. The salary would be considered an unallowable cost.
- The minimum hiring requirements for new Food Service Directors in SFAs with an enrollment of 2,499 or less includes the flexibilities provided under the [Hiring Flexibility Under Professional Standards Final Rule \(https://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/fr-030119\)](https://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/fr-030119), for new Food Service Directors hired after April 1, 2019.

Minimum Hiring Standards Exemption

SFAs with an enrollment of 2,499 or less that cannot recruit a candidate that meets the minimum hiring requirements may be eligible for an exemption. Contact the [School Nutrition Team \(https://dpi.wi.gov/school-nutrition/contact-us\)](https://dpi.wi.gov/school-nutrition/contact-us) for more information prior to hiring a new director.

Food Safety Training

At least eight hours of food safety training is required for all new Food Service Directors, either not more than five years prior to their starting date or completed within 30 days of their start date.

Documentation

- Maintain documentation for new Food Service Directors that show their highest level of education, such as a resume, college transcripts or other education information and food safety training. This will be requested as part of an Administrative Review.

Resources

- Sample job description templates at the [Institute of Child Nutrition webpage \(https://theicn.org/icn-resources-a-z/job-description-template-cnp/\)](https://theicn.org/icn-resources-a-z/job-description-template-cnp/).
- [USDA's Professional Standards webpage \(https://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/professional-standards\)](https://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/professional-standards)

Minimum Hiring Requirements for New Food Service Directors

Enrollment	Minimum Hiring Requirement
<p>Student Enrollment: 2,499 or Less</p>	<p>Bachelor's degree, or equivalent educational experience, with academic major or concentration in food and nutrition, food service management, dietetics, family and consumer sciences, nutrition education, culinary arts, business, or a related field;</p> <p style="text-align: center;">OR</p> <p>Bachelor's degree, or equivalent educational experience, with any academic major or area of concentration, <i>and</i> a State-recognized certificate for school nutrition directors. In Wisconsin this is the GOALS Certificate (https://dpi.wi.gov/school-nutrition/training/goal-oriented-achievement-learning-skills);</p> <p style="text-align: center;">OR</p> <p>Associate's degree, or equivalent educational experience, with academic major or concentration in food and nutrition, food service management, dietetics, family and consumer sciences, nutrition education, culinary arts, business, or a related field; <i>and</i> at least one year of relevant food service experience;</p> <p style="text-align: center;">OR</p> <p>High school diploma (or GED) <i>and</i> three (3) years of relevant food service experience.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SFAs with an enrollment of 500 or less, the Wisconsin DPI allows a minimum of <i>one year</i> of relevant food service experience with this option.
<p>Student Enrollment: 2,500–9,999</p>	<p>Bachelor's degree, or equivalent educational experience, with academic major or concentration in food and nutrition, food service management, dietetics, family and consumer sciences, nutrition education, culinary arts, business, or a related field;</p> <p style="text-align: center;">OR</p> <p>Bachelor's degree, or equivalent educational experience, with any academic major or area of concentration, <i>and</i> a State-recognized certificate for school nutrition directors. In Wisconsin this is the GOALS Certificate (https://dpi.wi.gov/school-nutrition/training/goal-oriented-achievement-learning-skills);</p> <p style="text-align: center;">OR</p> <p>Bachelor's degree in any academic major <i>and</i> at least two years of relevant school nutrition programs experience;</p> <p style="text-align: center;">OR</p> <p>Associates degree, or equivalent educational experience, with academic major or concentration in food and nutrition, food service management, dietetics, family and consumer sciences, nutrition education, culinary arts, business, or a related field; <i>and</i> at least two years of relevant school nutrition programs experience.</p>
<p>Student Enrollment: 10,000 or More</p>	<p>Bachelor's degree, or equivalent educational experience, with academic major or concentration in food and nutrition, food service management, dietetics, family and consumer sciences, nutrition education, culinary arts, business, or a related field;</p> <p style="text-align: center;">OR</p> <p>Bachelor's degree, or equivalent educational experience, with any academic major or area of concentration, <i>and</i> a State-recognized certificate for school nutrition directors. In Wisconsin this is the GOALS Certificate (https://dpi.wi.gov/school-nutrition/training/goal-oriented-achievement-learning-skills);</p> <p style="text-align: center;">OR</p> <p>Bachelor's degree in any major <i>and</i> at least five years' experience in management of school nutrition programs.</p>