The Ins and Outs of Hiring the School Nutrition Director
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1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;

(2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or

(3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

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School Nutrition Programs Professional Standards

Background

March 2, 2015, USDA released a final rule, *Professional Standards for State and Local School Nutrition Program (SNP) Personnel*, as required by the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (HHFKA) effective July 1, 2015. The regulations are intended to provide consistent, national professional standards strengthening the skills of SNP staff to perform their duties effectively and efficiently. The rule identifies specific hiring standards for the selection of local SNP Directors and requires all personnel in the SNP to complete annual continuing education and training. Compliance with these Standards are assessed during the Administrative Review conducted by the Indiana Department of Education, School and Community Nutrition.

The intent of this guide is to:

- provide awareness of the new USDA – National School Lunch Program (NSLP) hiring and professional development requirements
- assist school district agents with recruiting and hiring a SNP Director

“The Ins and Outs of Hiring the School Nutrition Director” provides information and resources to meet the needs of your Local Education Agency (LEA). The guide is divided into three key sections. Section 1 enables the hiring team to determine specific needs of the LEA to meet USDA hiring criteria, recruit candidates, select the best candidate, and provide effective onboarding. Section II of the guide provides information and resources for the School Food Authority (SFA) to provide professional development. Section III contains a sample job posting; job description template; knowledge, skills, and ability components; interview questions; and a glossary of key SNP terms.

I. Steps to Hiring the School Nutrition Director

Prior to advertising the open position, the LEA should assess the current program and update the job description. This is a perfect opportunity to identify the duties of the SNP Director, assess current programs, and identify specific duties and responsibilities. Based on the information gathered during the assessment, the LEA can begin to develop the job description, set the salary range, and create the job posting.

The LEA should answer these questions as they assess SNP department needs.

- What programs does the SNP participate in? *School Breakfast Program (SBP); National School Lunch Program (NSLP); Afterschool Snack Program (ASSP); Child & Adult Care Food Programs (CACFP) which might include Head Start, Day Care and Supper; and Catering.*
- What is the type of employment? *Administrator, full-time focus, union employees, cook/manager.*
• What are the education and certificate qualifications for the position? *Table 1. SNP Director Education and Experience Requirement Rubric*
• What is the type of administrative environment? *Collaborative, diverse, going through change."

There are several steps required to hire a qualified SNP Director and ensure the selected candidate has a successful start. Each step will be discussed in detail.

**A. Step 1 – Create Job Description**

SNP Directors hired after July 1, 2015 must meet minimum levels of education (Table 1. SNP Director Education and Experience Requirement Rubric) as defined in the HHFKA Professional Development Standards. The standards reflect specific knowledge and expertise required to perform job duties. Standards are based on student enrollment and define education and experience requirements for the LEA to follow in the hiring process.

If the LEA employed a SNP Director prior to July 1, 2015, the new rules for hiring were waived. Upon the vacancy of the SNP Director, the LEA must meet the defined criteria for the size of the operation. Should a SNP Director apply from another LEA, they too must meet the new criteria if the student enrollment group is higher than the current group. Should a situation arise during recruitment where candidates do not meet USDA requirements, the LEA should consult with the Indiana Department of Education, School and Community Nutrition for further guidance.

After the needs of the LEA are identified, the job description needs to be developed, reviewed, or revised. The job description defines qualifications and areas of accountability the SNP Director should meet during their tenure in the department. An effective, detailed job description is:

• Define major responsibilities of the employee’s job or position
• Outline performance expectations, job training, job evaluation, and career advancement
• Provide a reference point for compensation decisions and unfair hiring practices
• Attract the right candidates

Job descriptions need to be practical, clear, and accurate. At the same time, it identifies the position and the needs of the department. A good job description (*Appendix A*) typically begins with a careful analysis of the important facts about a job such as:

• Individual tasks involved
• The methods used to complete the tasks
• The purpose and responsibilities of the job
• The relationship of the job to other jobs
• The individual or position that oversees the job
Table 1. SNP Director Education and Experience Requirement Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Enrollment</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 – 2,499 students*</td>
<td>▪ Bachelor’s degree with specific major, **&lt;br&gt; **OR&lt;br&gt; ▪ Bachelor’s degree with any academic major, and a State-recognized certificate, &lt;br&gt; **OR&lt;br&gt; ▪ Bachelor’s degree with any academic major, and 1 year of experience, &lt;br&gt; <strong>OR&lt;br&gt; ▪ Associate’s degree with specific major</strong>&lt;br&gt; and at least 1 year of experience, &lt;br&gt; **OR&lt;br&gt; ▪ High school diploma (or GED) and 3 years of SNP experience.</td>
<td>▪ At least 8 hours of food safety training within 5 years prior to the start date, or completed within 30-days of the starting date. ▪ SNP Directors must obtain food safety certification every 5 years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2,500 – 9,999 students</td>
<td>▪ Bachelor’s degree with specific major, **&lt;br&gt; **OR&lt;br&gt; ▪ Bachelor’s degree with any academic major, and a State-recognized certificate, &lt;br&gt; **OR&lt;br&gt; ▪ Bachelor’s degree with any academic major and at least 2 years of experience, &lt;br&gt; **OR&lt;br&gt; ▪ Associate’s degree with specific major and at least 2 years of experience.</td>
<td>▪ At least 8 hours of food safety training within 5 years prior to the start date, or completed within 30-days of the starting date. ▪ SFA Directors must obtain food safety certification every 5 years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10,000 or more students</td>
<td>▪ Bachelor’s degree with specific major, **&lt;br&gt; **OR&lt;br&gt; ▪ Bachelor’s degree with any academic major, and a State-recognized certificate, &lt;br&gt; **OR&lt;br&gt; ▪ Bachelor’s degree with any academic major and at least 5-year experience in management of programs.</td>
<td>▪ At least 8 hours of food safety training within 5 years prior to the start date, or completed within 30-days of the starting date. ▪ SFA Directors must obtain food safety certification every 5 years.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*For LEAs <500 students: State agency has discretion to approve the hiring of a Director that has a high school diploma (GED) but less than 3 years of experience. Contact the State Agency for more information.

**Specific major: 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.
The SNP Director must have skills and program knowledge to ensure USDA requirements are met. To meet the goals and objectives of the LEA, the SNP Director’s responsibilities also include:

- Leadership
- Communication
- Operation management
- Financial integrity

The SNP team requires a leader who possesses the ability to guide staff using an array of skills and strategies. The leader needs to execute a range of traits while effectively managing staff. They need to be honest, humble, enthusiastic, supportive, and possess the ability to work with an assortment of stakeholders. An effective leader must be able to appropriately delegate tasks and embrace change while allowing staff time to adapt.

Effective communication is a necessary skill the SNP Director should possess. They must be prepared to provide information in a variety of methods including verbal, written, and electronic. Communicating with the customer of the 21st century involves understanding and implementing effective social media strategies in a variety of formats. It is important to use innovative methods to communicate with existing and new stakeholders.

Operation management requires meal preparation knowledge combined with an understanding of USDA requirements. The SNP Director must implement strategies to ensure staff are trained in meal production, recordkeeping, food safety, and customer service. Effective management includes program promotion to increase participation while establishing positive customer relationships.

Financial integrity is an essential skill. The ability to assess and analyze the financial status of the SNP is vital to the overall fiscal health of the SNP. Skills in budget development, financial reporting, measuring productivity and participation, along with assessing information are key to operating a financially sound operation.

Resource materials for other programs under supervision of the Indiana Department of Education, School and Community Nutrition are also provided. Additional resources can be used independently or incorporated in the job description if your LEA provides these services.

- Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)
- Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)
- USDA Foods
The Institute of Child Nutrition (ICN) recommends the following areas of knowledge, skills, and abilities be included in the job description. The information provided in this section of the resource provides a sample of job duties, responsibilities, skills, and outcomes. Appendix C has a robust list of knowledge, skills, and abilities, for consideration as the job description is developed.

a. **Program Management and Accountability**
   Focuses on compliance federal laws, regulations, and policies related to operating the SNP, SFSP, CACFP, farm-to-school, and the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP).

b. **Facilities and Equipment Management**
   Evaluates and projects facility and equipment needs, maintenance, repairs, and manages the physical structures and equipment.

c. **Financial Management**
   Budgets, monitors, and reports the financial health of the SNP.

d. **Food Production and Operation Management**
   Establishes procedures to develop menus and ensure food production systems provide safe nutritious foods of high quality.

e. **Food Security, Sanitation, and Safety**
   Ensures the development of a food safety plan and inspection of facilities.

f. **Customer Service, Marketing, and Communication**
   Implements a district-wide customer service driven philosophy integrating effective communication with a focus on value and satisfaction.

g. **Menu and Nutrition Management**
   Serves on the LEA local wellness policy committee, plans cost-effective menus cognizant of student preferences, nutrition integrity, and special nutrition needs.

h. **Human Resource Management**
   Manages and trains staff to effectively perform job duties in compliance with local, state, and federal regulations.

i. **Procurement and Inventory Management**
   Implements and adheres to procurement and storage guidelines and regulations to ensure purchased food and supplies, including locally procured foods meet federal, state, and local regulations.

j. **Technology and Information Systems**
   Implements data management systems to track productivity and improve the efficiency of the SNP.
B. Step 2 – Determine Compensation Range

Establish an appropriate compensation range prior to advertising the position. The salary range should be commensurate with the level of responsibility and duties in the job description. Each SNP is unique in providing a variety of services in the LEA and should reflect the specifics of the position. Salary ranges provide a guideline for the LEA to consider appropriate pay for candidates who exceed requirements. The more robust the candidate, the more likely they will be to meet expectations. Additional compensation may be warranted based on:

- Previous experience
- Education
- Number of SNP sites and employees supervised
- Variety of programs at each SNP site (breakfast, lunch, afterschool snack, suppers, CACFP, and SFSP)
- Size and fiscal health of the SNP budget

Resources to establish a fair range for the new SNP Director include:

- Pay schedule of comparable LEAs within the region. When comparing pay rates to other LEA’s, be sure to consider all influencing factors, e.g., a Director at one LEA might have a higher level of education, experience, skill, and success than a Director at another.
- Pay scale of positions with similar supervisory job responsibilities within the district.
- On-line resources for national salary ranges: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS); School Nutrition Association; salary.com; payscale.com; Indeed.com; and vault.com.
- Local job market

C. Step 3 – Prepare Job Posting

The job posting communicates the vacant position. It allows the LEA to inform to the public what it wants in the person who fills the job. It is based on the job description and provides applicants a good idea about necessary qualifications. The job posting informs candidates of general information about the position, education and experience requirements, duties, knowledge, skills and abilities, starting salary, and application instructions. Refer to Appendix B for a Sample Job Posting.
D. Step 4 – Recruitment
The process of identifying qualified candidates will vary depending on the size of the LEA and the duties and responsibilities of the position. Qualified candidates may come from a variety of fields and backgrounds. It is important to advertise the job posting through a variety of formats. Posting on the Indiana Department of Education and the LEA website alone may not attract or identify enough qualified candidates. To identify qualified candidates, the job posting must state the required skills and experience as defined in the job description.

Sharing SNP Directors between two or more LEAs is becoming more common. When LEAs share SNP Directors all operations benefit as they attract more highly qualified candidates with current SNP knowledge. The LEA shares salary and benefit cost for the SNP Director. Shared programs can benefit from joint services in areas such as procurement, reporting, and program oversight, a win-win for the LEAs. Depending on the size of the LEAs, the Director may need additional administrative support at each LEA.

LEAs may also contract with a Food Service Management Company (FSMC) for the SNP Director. There are specific processes and procedures to procure a FSMC. The LEA should allow at minimum of six months of planning when considering a FSMC. The LEA must work with and utilize the Indiana Department of Education’s procurement templates during this process, http://www.doe.in.gov/nutrition/procurement-fsmc-and-vendors-nslp. It is important to note that if a FSMC is put into place, the LEA must still oversee that regulations are being followed.

There are a variety of sources to solicit and identify qualified candidates:
- SNP Directors from other LEAs
- State and national school nutrition organizations
  - Indiana School Nutrition Association, Contact: Sheri Shipp, sher@indianasna.org
  - Indiana Association of School Business Officials, Contact: Ella Adamson, www.indiana-asbo-org
  - Indiana Dietetic Association, Contact: iand_exec@eatrightin.org
  - Indiana Dairy Council
  - School Nutrition Association, Careers in School Nutrition
  - Indiana Department of Education, Office of School and Community Nutrition, Contact: Sarah Kenworthy, skenworthy@doe.in.gov
  - Family, Career and Community Leaders of America
  - Ohio School Nutrition Association
  - Illinois School Nutrition Association
  - Michigan School Nutrition Association
- Educators within the LEA (Culinary Instructors and Chefs, Family and Consumer Science Teachers)
- Experienced and educated SNP kitchen managers
• College graduates
  o Purdue University, Center for Career Opportunities (CCO) at Purdue University, https://www.cco.purdue.edu/Employers/
  o Indiana University School of Public Health-Bloomington, http://careers.publichealth.iu.edu/employers/
  o Indiana University – Purdue University of Indianapolis, School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences Department of Nutrition & Dietetics, Jacquelynn O’Palka PhD, RDN, Director Dietary Internships, jopalka@iu.edu
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• Local restaurant managers
• Recruiting companies (Monster, Indeed, CareerBuilder, LinkedIn)
• Newspapers - Local, County, State

E. Step 5 – Selecting the Best Candidate

After the job description has been created, salary range determined, the job posted and advertised, and applications received, the interview committee should review the status of the program and the job description prior to reviewing applications. Each application, resume, and cover letter should be screened to ensure the candidate meets minimum required qualifications. A phone interview can further screen candidates and determine if a face-to-face interview is warranted. These steps can reduce the number of candidates to a manageable number. Ideally, three to five candidates should be invited for personal interviews.

The first interview might take place with the position supervisor, reducing the field to two or three candidates. The second interview is generally held with other LEA personnel including:

- Position supervisor
- Human resources
- SNP manager
- Other LEA administrators
- Wellness committee member
- Current SNP Director

The SNP Director Interview Rubric, Appendix D, provides an assessment tool to record and document the interview process. Interviewers can create questions or use the Candidate Assessment Questions, Appendix E. The Candidate Assessment Questions are based on the Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities segments from the job description. At the conclusion of the interviews, the committee will discuss rubric results and overall impressions. The interview team should be able to make an informed determination of the final candidate.
After selecting the best candidate, an offer of employment is made. Human Resources handles appropriate hiring paperwork and position fringe benefit details. The applicant must be given a reasonable time to review the package, negotiate a start date, and receive answers to hiring questions. Some negotiating may be necessary if another district is involved to ensure release from their current position and allow for a smooth transition.

Once an agreement is reached, the LEA’s School Board of Directors may be required to officially approve the hiring at a formal meeting. Sometimes, a confirmation interview is held with the Superintendent and the School Board of Directors. The confirmation interview provides both the candidate and key stakeholders the opportunity to meet and get to know the candidate prior to approval at the school board meeting.

The other finalists for the position should be notified by phone or in writing, thanking them for their interest and that a new SNP Director has been hired.

**F. Step 6 – Successful Onboarding**

Onboarding is more than an initial orientation to the LEA. It is a detailed process of ensuring the new SNP Director receives information related to both district and department organization. Policies, procedures, and administrative guidance provides insight to how the LEA operates. To successfully assimilate into the position onboarding could take up to 2 years. The LEA can identify resources to maximize job performance:

- Assign a SNP mentor or coach
- Provide job specific training
- Identify USDA compliance resources
- Develop additional human resource skills

The success of the SNP Director will be based on feedback, both positive and negative, and will be tied to the specific knowledge, skills and abilities, defined in the job description. The goal of the review is to provide feedback to assist the SNP Director to maximize productivity, develop skills to achieve the level of expected performance, and ensure growth and success. Assessments should be held at a minimum 30, 60, and 90 days, with additional reviews at 6 months and the first year.

Hiring a competent, knowledgeable leader for the SNP is key to a successful program, satisfied customers, and a productive staff.
II. Training Requirements for School Nutrition Program Professional Development

All SNP staff are required to meet professional development standards for training. The intent of the regulation is to ensure staff is knowledgeable about key aspects of the SNP and the duties of their position. The School Food Authority (SFA) is required to train staff based on assigned job duties, level of job responsibility, and include training on specific topics each year.

Table 1. Annual Required Professional Development Training Hours

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Required Training Hours*</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School Nutrition Director</td>
<td>12 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managers</td>
<td>10 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff working more than 20 hours per week</td>
<td>6 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff working less than 20 hours per week</td>
<td>4 hours</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Employees hired mid-way through the school year (i.e. after January 1) must receive at least half of the required number of training hours.

Table 1. Annual Required Professional Development Training Hours defines positions and required number of training hours. Professional development topics and training are required to be documented for each employee. Specific topic codes are available at https://professionalstandards.nal.usda.gov and additional information is available at http://www.doe.in.gov/nutrition/professional-standards.

A. Professional Development Topic Areas

Staff must receive training and build skills in areas specific to their duties and tasks. Four key areas have been identified to meet various staff needs. Those four key areas include:

- Nutrition
- Operations
- Administration
- Communications and Marketing

Some training will need to be repeated on an annual basis. These include:

- Civil rights, annual training and when hiring new employees
- Food safety and sanitation
- Meal pattern
- Identifying a reimbursable meal
- Meal counting and claiming
III. Reliable Sources of Training

The Indiana School Nutrition Association, https://www.indianasna.org, provides education opportunities throughout the year including:

- Annual conference
- Regional workshops
- Winter and spring seminars
- Leadership academy

The Indiana Department of Education, http://www.doe.in.gov/nutrition/school-nutrition-program-trainings, provides various in-person and e-learning courses focusing on USDA’s rules and regulations.


The Institute of Child Nutrition, http://theicn.org/, has a variety of online courses on food safety, special needs, wellness, and child nutrition.

Additional information for temporary, substitute, and acting staff positions is available at http://www.doe.in.gov/nutrition/professional-standards
IV. Appendix

Appendix A: Sample Job Description Template

**Position Title:** (Suggestions) School Nutrition Program (SNP) Director; Director of Child Nutrition; Food Service Director; Supervisor of Food and Nutrition

**Primary Function:** Organize and direct the School Nutrition Program to provide quality food service in a cost-effective manner; supervise staff of ###, and manage a budget in excess of $$.

**Reports To:** Director of Finance and Operations, Business Manager, Superintendent

**Requirements:**

- Education Level: [per USDA requirements]
- Experience: [per USDA requirements]
- Certification Required:
  - Current Food Safety Certification or Food Safety Certification within 30-days of hire. Certification must be renewed every 5-years per Indiana Department of Education, School and Community Nutrition requirements.
  - School Nutrition Specialist (SNS)
- Physical Activities: Routine physical activities of walking, standing, squatting, exposure to extreme cold and/or heat; operate and use computers and food service equipment; drive personal vehicle to fulfill job duties.
- Skills: Written and oral communication; planning, organization, and leadership.

**Essential Duties:**

- Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities: [Appendix C contains a variety of detailed responsibilities for consideration in compiling the job description.]

Signature of Employee ________________________________ Date ____________________

Signature of Supervisor ________________________________ Date ____________________
Appendix B: Sample Job Posting

The ABC School District is seeking applicants for the position of School Nutrition Program (SNP) Director. This position oversees the daily operations of the SNP for ABC School District. The director leads and manages the activities of SNP employees to ensure that nutrition standards and district goals are met for all student meals.

Applicants must have a (identify USDA requirements) [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.] Effective communication and leadership skills. Ability and willingness to work and collaborate with district leaders, school principals, and state/local agencies.

Experience in managing an operating budget of $$$$ Ability to develop strategic plans, marketing programs, and initiatives to achieve district-level goals. Knowledge of current technology as it relates to business management and operation of the SNP.

The successful candidate will serve as a member of the ABC School District Administrative Team. This position offers an excellent salary and benefit package. For a complete listing of the minimum requirements and position responsibilities, please visit our website. To apply, please visit our website and submit an online Job Application.
Appendix C: Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities

The following list of Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities contains a variety of detailed responsibilities for consideration in compiling the job description.

a. Program Management and Accountability

1. Ensures the SNP is in compliance with all local, state, and federal laws, regulations, and policies.
2. Implements the free and reduced price meal program in a manner that protects and preserves the civil rights of all students.
3. Ensures compliance with the processing, approval, and verification of free and reduced meal benefits.
4. Ensures an accurate meal counting and claiming system throughout the district.
5. Implements corrective action, when needed, to address any deficiencies identified within the SNP.
6. Effectively trains SNP staff, school administrators, and other school support staff to address corrective action.
7. Monitors the district’s agreement with the Indiana Department of Education, School and Community Nutrition to ensure the district complies with the provisions of Child Nutrition programs.
8. Contributes to the nutrition education and nutrition promotion components of the district’s local wellness policy by serving as part of the LEAs School Wellness Committee.
9. Meets the requirements for implementing Smart Snack guidelines for the SNP and the LEA.
10. Conducts routine on-site reviews of all facilities operated by the LEA.
11. Employs management techniques to operate an effective and efficient program.
12. Through strategic planning develops short and long term goals for the SNP supporting the philosophy and policies of the LEA and Board of Education.
13. Ensures the allocation of USDA Food is appropriately ordered, planned for use, and safely stored.
14. Reviews current research information to determine health and nutrition-related trends and management techniques and then develops innovative program changes and expansions based on this information.
15. Develops guidelines for providing services in response to disaster or emergency situations.
16. Develops a long-range program for establishing professional status for the SNP’s role in the education community.
17. Updates and maintains the Child Nutrition Program web (CNP web) Sponsor Summary information each program year.
Optional

18. Implements Farm to School initiatives.
19. Implements, supervises, and meets compliance requirements with the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP).
20. Implements, supervises, and meets compliance requirements for a SFSP.
21. Implements, supervises, and meets compliance requirements for Afterschool Snack programs.
22. Implements, supervises, and meets compliance requirements for CACFP.
23. Identifies and assesses strategies to implement Smarter Lunchroom techniques to apply for the Healthier US School Challenge award.

b. Facilities and Equipment Management

1. Evaluates and projects facility and equipment needs for the SNP.
2. Coordinates maintenance and repair of equipment and food preparation facilities.
3. Conducts follow-up on completed repairs and maintenance.
4. Develops and implements policies and procedures to ensure environmental responsibility.
5. Implements a waste management system for the SNP that is effective, economical, environmentally safe, and meets LEA and local requirements.

c. Financial Management

1. Monitors the SNP’s (optional CACFP, SFSP, FFVP) use of federal, state and local funds to ensure they are used only for allowable purposes.
2. Manages the SNP (optional CACFP, SFSP, FFVP) using appropriate financial management techniques.
3.Establishes measurable financial objectives and goals for the SNP (optional CACFP, SFSP, FFVP).
4. Projects operating costs based on meal equivalents.
5. Projects the annual operating budget based on revenue and expenditure forecasts.
6. Prepares justifications for budget requests.
7. Develops, implements, and monitors internal controls, monthly, to ensure financial accountability and program integrity.
8. Establishes inventory management and control systems.
9. Implements efficient management techniques to ensure all records and supporting documentation is maintained per local, state, and federal laws and policies.
10. Completes the annual Paid Lunch Equity Tool to recommend reimbursable meal paid pricing.
11. Establishes and justifies Non-Program Food pricing.
12. Completes the Revenue from Non-Program Food Tool.
13. Tracks revenues and expenditures by object codes.
14. Implements and monitors a reliable system of cash management.
15. Oversees payment of invoices in an accurate and timely manner.
16. Maintains a fixed asset inventory.
17. Prepares and submits required financial reports in a timely manner.
18. Retains appropriate financial and participation records.
19. Works with appropriate department personnel to complete the Annual Financial Report for the state.

d. Food Production and Operation Management

1. Develops procedures to ensure the food production system provides safe nutritious foods of high quality.
2. Ensures operational procedures for efficient and effective food production and distribution.
3. Establishes, implements, and evaluates policies and procedures for quality standards and quantity control.
4. Identifies procedures to incorporate Farm to School foods in recipes and meal production.
5. Establishes quality standards for the presentation and service of food.
6. Provides leadership in developing recipes following USDA meal pattern guidelines.
7. Ensures daily production records are completed accurately for each meal type in each school.
8. Plans menus for breakfast, lunch, afterschool snack, supper program, summer feeding, and catering programs.
9. Ensures all breakfast, lunch, and afterschool snacks served to students meet current USDA requirements.
10. Assesses the program to determine if summer feeding is viable for the students in the LEA.
11. Implements a plan for providing foodservice for special functions consistent with Board of Education policies.
12. Implements, plans, and oversees special events/catering.
e. **Food Security, Sanitation, and Safety**

1. Develops, implements, and monitors the required USDA food safety plan.
2. Ensures each school is inspected bi-annually by the Department of Health.
3. Establishes procedures to ensure food is prepared and served in a sanitary and safe environment.
4. Develops and integrates employee safety regulations into all phases of the school nutrition operation.
5. Establishes procedures and policies for risk management.
6. Maintains Food Safety Certification recognized by the Department of Health.

f. **Customer Service, Marketing, and Communication**

1. Implements a district-wide customer service driven philosophy that focuses on value and satisfaction.
2. Develops specific marketing plans geared to students, parents, teachers, administrators, support staff, and/or the community.
3. Conducts an on-going evaluation of the marketing plan.
4. Communicates program information to encourage and secure support for the SNP from the Board of Education, administrators, faculty, students, parents, and the community.
5. Develops social marketing plans to involve students, parents, school personnel, and community partners in the district’s SNP (optional CACFP, SFSP).
6. Develops relationships and communicates with local farmers to advance Farm to School initiatives.
7. Seeks and responds to student, parent, media, community, and other concerns.
8. Maintains relationships with community agencies and collaborates to achieve mutual goals.
9. Prepares appropriate newsletters, news releases, and brochures to inform, involve and engage the community in various Child Nutrition initiatives.
10. Engages stakeholders using a variety of social media communication techniques.
g. **Menu and Nutrition Management**

1. Develops cost-effective menus that maintain nutrition integrity and meet all local, state, and federal guidelines and regulations.
2. Integrates USDA Food(s) into menus.
3. Assesses customer preferences, industry trends, and current research to plan menus that encourage participation in the SNP (optional CACFP, SFSP).
4. Works with school staff, nurses, teachers, parents, and health care providers who have prescriptive authority to plan menus for children with special nutrition needs.
5. Develops or implements customer friendly recipes and offers methods of culinary training to school food service staff.
6. Includes and identifies locally grown foods when developing menus and recipes.
7. Contributes to the nutrition education and nutrition promotion of the LEAs local wellness policy; and serves on the Wellness Policy Committee (or serves as the chair of the Wellness Policy Committee).

h. **Human Resource Management**

1. Implements personnel policies and procedures for the SNP (optional CACFP, SFSP) in compliance with local, state, and federal regulations and laws.
2. Develops job performance standards that provide for performance improvement.
3. Develops methods for hiring, training, and evaluating personnel that recognize education, experience, performance, and certification.
4. Establishes procedures to implement employee contract agreements, progressive discipline, and formal grievances.
5. Meets training requirements of Professional Development Standards for SNP personnel.
6. Annually receives training and trains all school staff working with the SNP (optional CACFP, SFSP) on Civil Rights.
i. **Procurement and Inventory Management**

1. Meets program compliance requirements for procurement of all food, supplies, and equipment for the SNP (optional CACFP, SFSP, FFVP).
2. Implements a cost-effective procurement system.
3. Implements and adheres to a strict code of conduct for procurement using federal, state, and local money.
4. Develops purchasing guidelines to ensure purchased food and supplies, including locally procured foods, reflect product knowledge, customer preferences, district needs, policies, and nutrition objectives.
5. Identifies standards for implementing farm-to-school procurement.
6. Establishes standards for receiving storing, and inventorying food and non-food supplies based on sound principles of management.
7. Effectively orders, inventories, and uses USDA Food.

j. **Technology and Information Systems**

1. Implements management information systems that increase the productivity and efficiency of the SNP (optional CACFP, SFSP).
2. Trains staff to use computer technology in individual school sites to improve management control and information.
3. Implements an up-to-date web based data information system for parents, students, staff, administrators, and the community.
4. Conducts direct certification and direct verification through the Indiana STN Website.
## Appendix D: School Nutrition Program Director Interview Rubric

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Rating 1=Low; 5=High</th>
<th>Comments</th>
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<tr>
<td>Quality of cover letter and resume</td>
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<td>Other assessments</td>
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**OVERALL RATING (70 points possible)**
Appendix E: Candidate Assessment Questions

The following questions provide the interview team with a variety of questions to select from and use during the interview. The questions tie directly to the knowledge, skills, and abilities included in the job description. The level of knowledge and degree of articulation provides insight to subject expertise and the ability to handle a variety of situations. Key words and phrases are in italics with some of the questions to assist in identifying candidate knowledge.

a. Program Management and Accountability

1. Provide an overview of Child Nutrition regulations pertaining to school foodservice.
2. What is Offer vs. Serve, and how does it differ from regular service? [Student selects items they want; reduces plate waste; impacts food cost]
3. The School Board has expressed an interest in providing meals to students during the summer. What has been your experience with the summer feeding program?
4. How would you implement a summer feeding program if one of our schools decided to offer summer education programs? [Identify number of potential customers; apply to provide program; advertise program to stakeholders]
5. There is an increased need in our district to provide afterschool services to students. What is your experience with the supper program through CACFP?
6. What has been your role in Wellness Policy development and administration?
7. Have you applied for and received a Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program grant? How did you administer the program?
8. What is your experience approving and processing free and reduced applications?
9. What is your experience ordering and utilizing USDA foods?
10. What is your experience with on-site reviews and how often would you visit the facilities in the LEA?
11. What is your experience implementing Smart Snack standards for all foods sold during the school day on the school campus?

b. Facilities and Equipment Management

1. Have you had any experience with green initiatives? If so describe your involvement.
2. Identify procedures you would implement to replace kitchen equipment.
3. What is your experience working with in-house staff to repair food service equipment?
4. How would you select a competent equipment repair company? [Develop Request for Proposal Bid specifications; implement district and federal procurement regulations]
c. Financial Management

1. Describe the financial reports you have prepared in previous positions. *[Statement of Net Position (Balance Sheet); Statement of Activities (Net Gain/Loss Statement); Budget]*

2. Describe a situation where you successfully improved operational efficiency resulting in a cost savings. *[Improved participation; participated in cooperative purchasing; labor restructuring; satellite operation]*

3. What experience do you have in developing operational budgets? *[$$ size of budget; steps used - historical data, forecasting, discussions with stakeholders – staff, students, administrators]*

4. Tell us about your experience in cost analysis, including the various methods you have used to maintain cost control and accountability in a food service operation. *[Analysis of financial data – percentage of costs to revenues; cost per meal equivalent; inventory control; meals per labor hour]*

5. If a program is experiencing financial difficulties, either inherited or new, what steps would you take to restore the financial health of the program? *[Meet with key stakeholders – students, staff, parents, administrators; review food costs – menus, production records; analyze financial reports; identify areas for participation growth]*

6. The Smart Snack regulations have impacted our a la carte sales. How have you or would you address supplemental income to cover costs? *[Identify other areas of revenue sources such as catering, day care programs; meet with student focus groups to identify foods they are interested in purchasing]*

d. Food Production and Operation Management

1. How would you work with SNP staff to handle special requests for bag lunches, field-trips, and special functions? *[Define job duties and responsibilities; identify how extra revenue impacts budget process]*

2. Describe your experience supervising or managing food service workers. How many daily meals were prepared?

3. Due to the constant need to cut costs, it is often necessary to develop creative methods to eliminate waste and serve less expensive meals, while still maintaining nutritional quality and compliance with USDA requirements. Tell us about a situation where you have used a cost saving method of this type. *[Cost menus, identify over production based on production records]*

4. What is a production record? Identify the role it plays in the SNP. *[Required record detailing meal components planned, served and left over; reviewed during the Administrative Review]*

5. Reducing food waste is important to our school. Describe how you will address food waste issues. *[Sharing food tables, food production records, food recovery]*

6. Describe your experience handling special dietary needs and requests. *[Required to accommodate children with disabilities]*
e. Food Security, Sanitation, and Safety

1. What procedures need to be in place to keep food safe? [Staff training on personal hygiene, temperature controls, proper cleaning and sanitizing, receiving and storing food; food safety plan; bi-annual food safety inspections]

2. Define the requirements of the SNP food safety plan. [Standard Operating Procedures; temperature control records; process identification of recipes; identification of Critical Control Points on recipes; annual review of plan]

3. Describe your knowledge of food safety and sanitation. In your previous position, how did you monitor food safety and sanitation? [On-site observations; review of required records; training of staff]

4. How have you provided food safety training to workers? [Hired trainer; local health inspector; provided my own training]

f. Customer Service, Marketing, and Communication

1. What strategies might you use to promote the SNP to customers? [Identify perceptions of stakeholders; attend PTO/PTA meetings; meet with focus groups]

2. Identify the role the SNP employee plays in customer service. [Key to participation and repeat customers]

3. What methods have you used to communicate program information to stakeholders? [Information on website; articles for Principal newsletters; SNP newsletter; backpack fliers; monthly menu]

g. Menu and Nutrition Management

1. Provide an overview of the USDA’s Dietary Guidelines for Americans. How will you relate this to our SNP? [School meal patterns are based on Dietary Guidelines; train staff on nutrition integrity of school meals]

2. What elements should be considered when developing a school lunch menu? [Student preferences; meal pattern compliance; USDA Donated Foods to incorporate; cost per plate]

3. Describe the meal components and nutritional requirements of a federally subsidized student breakfast and lunch. [Planned breakfast must include milk, fruit/juice/vegetable, and whole grains; planned lunch must include milk, meat/meat alternate, whole grains, vegetables, and fruit; meals must meet calories, sodium, and saturated fat according to 3 grade groups.]

4. What procedures would you implement for special diet needs and/or religious restrictions? [Collect diet order from physician or recognized medical authority; work with parent/guardian, cafeteria manager, and school nurse]

5. What do you know about the USDA Food Distribution Program? How does it apply to schools? [USDA Foods are part of entitlement funds; effective use reduces purchased food costs]

6. How do you plan menus to incorporate USDA Foods? [Identify student preferences; incorporate items into new or existing recipes; select/order USDA foods favorable for our program]
7. Describe your experience in menu planning. How have (would) you keep up on changes in the requirements set by USDA for the school meal programs? [Attend ISNA, ISBO, SNA conferences; attend IN DOE trainings and webinars; read updates in IDOE’s weekly email and website]

8. Identify your experience in Farm to School initiatives. How would you incorporate/expand Farm to School? [Work with a committee to define local; identify farms within the LEA; form partnerships; include educational experiences for students and staff]

h. Human Resource Management

1. Describe your experience in food service training. Have you ever administered a training program? What was your role in the process?

2. What experience have you had working with a union or union employees? How have you handled grievances? [Treat everyone with respect; follow procedures as defined in the contract]

3. How would you handle a situation in which a production employee repeatedly makes costly mistakes? [Identify root cause of the problem; training; task reassignment; follow disciplinary action protocol if required]

4. As the SNP Director, how would you assist a school kitchen that was short staffed for the day? [Jump in and help to get the work done]

5. Identify what have you done to improve employee productivity? [Work with staff; provide training to build necessary skills]

6. Describe your experience managing employees and staffing kitchens in the field from a central location. What is your management philosophy?

7. Describe progressive discipline.

8. Describe a situation/problem that you encountered for the first time. What did you do to resolve the issue?

9. Identify procedures you implement to train staff to be compliant with the professional development standards. [Follow requirements for SNP Professional Development; relevant; interactive; engaging]

i. Procurement and Inventory Management

1. Why is inventory important to the financial management of a food service operation? [Reduces over ordering; ensures freshest product available for use; identifies theft concerns; ties to production records]

2. Are you familiar with, or do you have working knowledge of federal procurement regulations? Describe your knowledge of federal procurement regulations. [Uniform Grant Guidance requires all items purchased for use in the SNP be procured in a free and open competitive environment]

3. What is the difference between perpetual inventory and physical inventory? [Perpetual inventory is updated on a continuous basis every time something is removed/used; physical inventory is a physical count of all items; even if a perpetual inventory system is used a physical inventory should be taken monthly]
4. If a board member or administrator asked you to secure free food for a private party, how would you handle the situation? [Ethical issue]

j. **Technology and Information Systems**
   2. Tell us about your technology background including knowledge of hardware, software, and networks.
   3. Describe your proficiency with Microsoft applications, including Word, Excel, Outlook, and Point-of-Sale systems.
   4. Do you have experience with social media use, development, etc.?

k. **General Questions and/or Assessments**
   1. Do you have affiliations with any professional associations? [Indiana School Nutrition Association; the Indiana School Business Officials]
   2. Are you certified with the Indiana School Nutrition Association, the Indiana School Business Officials? Any others?
   3. Have you ever been involved in an administrative review with the Indiana Dept. of Education’s School Nutrition Program? If yes, were any findings noted? What were the findings? (Beginning in school year 2016-17, all administrative review findings are noted on the Indiana Dept. of Education’s School Nutrition Program website.)
   4. Assess additional skills by having candidates complete any of the following:
      - Develop a 1-week cycle menu
      - Prepare a communication to stakeholders promoting school meals
      - Provide a training outline (e.g., Knife safety)
   5. After participating in this interview are you still interested in the position?
   6. If approved for the position how soon would you be able to start?

l. **Candidate-Asked Questions**
   These are questions the interview team might be asked by the candidate:
   1. What is the current financial status of the SNP?
   2. Is the SNP expected to be self-supporting?
   3. When was the last union contract negotiated?
   4. What is the percentage of student participation for breakfast? For lunch?
   5. Is the SNP responsible to cover the cost for equipment replacement?
   6. Do School Board members understand and support the objectives of the SNP?
   7. What role does the Principal have with supervision of SNP building staff?
   8. Does the SNP currently participate in any purchasing groups? If yes, for what areas? (food, paper, small wares, etc.)
   9. Does the SNP purchase any foods from local farmers to support Farm to School initiatives?
   10. Is the SNP involved with any special grants, such as the FFVP grant?
   11. Is the SNP Director an active member of the administrative team?
   12. Are there any staff issues I should be aware of which might impact production?
Appendix F: Glossary

The following terms and definitions are provided for reference and assistance in understanding terminology specific to SNPs.

**Administrative Review (AR)** – Unified accountability process to ensure the SFA plans and provides meals which comply with program requirements.

**Afterschool Snack Program (ASSP)** – A program in afterschool hours organized for the purpose of care and supervision of enrolled school-age children. The program shall be distinct from any extracurricular programs organized primarily for scholastic, cultural, or athletic purposes.

**Child Nutrition Program (CNP)** – Programs providing healthy food to children through the National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, Child and Adult Care Food Program, Summer Food Service Program, Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program, and Special Milk Program. Each of these programs help fight hunger and obesity.

**Community Eligibility Provision (CEP)** – A meal service option for schools and school districts in low-income areas. A key provision of The Healthy, Hunger Free Kids Act (HHFKA, Public Law 111-296; December 13, 2010), CEP allows the nation’s highest poverty schools and districts to serve breakfast and lunch at no cost to all enrolled students without the burden of collecting household applications. Schools that adopt CEP are reimbursed using a formula based on the percentage of students participating in other specific means-tested programs, such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).

**Child & Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)** – Similar to the school meal program CACFP provides meals to children and adults in day care programs. Meals must meet federal requirements following the federal CACFP meal pattern.

**Direct Certification (DC)** – Information received directly from a state’s Health and Human Services Department used to determine free meal status and CEP.

**Food Distribution Program (FDP)** – USDA’s food distribution programs support American agriculture by distributing high quality, 100% American-grown USDA Foods and strengthening the nutrition safety net through the distribution of USDA Foods and other nutrition assistance to children, low-income families, and emergency feeding programs.

**Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP)** – A federally assisted grant program providing free fresh fruits and vegetables to students in participating elementary schools during the school day. The goal of the FFVP is to improve children’s overall diet and create healthier eating habits. The FFVP creates healthier school environments by providing healthier food choices; expanding the variety of fruits and vegetables children experience; and increasing children’s fruit and vegetable consumption.

**Food & Nutrition Service (FNS)** – Administers the food and nutrition assistance programs in the U.S. Department of Agriculture. FNS provides children and needy families with better access to food and a more healthful diet through its programs and nutrition education efforts.
**Food Component** – One of the food groups which comprise reimbursable meals. The food components are: Meats/meat alternates, grains, vegetables, fruits, and fluid milk. Meals offered to preschoolers must consist of: Meats/meat alternates, grains, vegetables/fruits, and fluid milk.

**Food Item** – A specific food offered within a food component.

**Food Service Management Company (FSMC)** – A commercial enterprise or a nonprofit organization which may be contracted to manage any aspect of the school food service.

**Free Lunch** – A lunch served under the Program to a child, from a household eligible for such benefits, for which neither the child nor any member of the household pays or is required to work.

**Hazard Analysis & Critical Control Point (HACCP)** – A process control system that identifies where hazards might occur in the food production process and puts into place stringent actions to take to prevent the hazards from occurring. By strictly monitoring and controlling each step of the process, there is less chance for hazards to occur. HACCP is required for all schools participating in the child nutrition programs.

**Healthier US School Challenge: Smarter Lunchrooms (HUSC-SL)** – A voluntary certification initiative recognizing those schools enrolled in Team Nutrition that have created healthier school environments through promotion of nutrition and physical activity.

**Institute of Child Nutrition (ICN)** – Provides information and services that promote the continuous improvement of child nutrition programs. Services are free and include workshops, research, and training for SNPs and CACFP.

**Invitation for Bid** – Procurement process used to procure food and supplies.

**Income Eligibility Guidelines (IEG)** – Detailed criteria to approve free and reduced applications when the determination is based on family size and income. The eligibility guidelines are updated annually by USDA.

**Identified Student Percentage (ISP)** – Pre-determined calculation used to justify CEP determination.

**Local Education Authority (LEA)** – A public board of education or other public or private nonprofit authority having administrative control and direction of a public or private nonprofit elementary school or secondary school, including residential child care institutions, Bureau of Indian Affairs schools, and educational service agencies.

**National School Lunch Program (NSLP)** – Program under which participating schools operate a nonprofit lunch program in accordance with this part. General and special cash assistance and donated food assistance are made available to schools in accordance with this part.

**Offer versus Serve (OVS)** – Students are offered 4 menu items at breakfast and may take as few as 3 or all 4. One serving must be a ½ cup vegetable or fruit. Lunch, 5 meal components offered, student may take as few as 3, 4, or all 5. One serving must be a ½ cup vegetable and/or fruit serving.

**Paid Lunch** – A lunch served to children who are either not certified for or elect not to receive the free or reduced price benefits. The Department subsidizes each paid lunch with both general cash assistance and donated foods.
Perpetual Inventory – Information on inventory quantities is updated on a continuous basis as product is removed. Often this is connected to an order entry and product usage software program.

Physical Inventory – A manual count of all items purchased and used in the program, often completed at the end of an accounting period, e.g. monthly.

Point of Sale (POS) – The point in the food service operation where a determination can accurately be made that a reimbursable free, reduced price or paid lunch has been served to an eligible child.

Reduced Price Lunch – A federally reimbursable meal (or snack) served to a child who applies for and qualifies because the family’s income is between 130 and 185 percent of the federal poverty threshold.

Reimbursement – Federal cash assistance including advances paid or payable to participating schools for lunches meeting meal requirements and are served to eligible children.

Residential Child Care Institution (RCCI) – Facilities providing school age students housing and meals due to health or judicial concerns.

Request for Proposal (RFP) – Bid process used to procure services.

School Breakfast Program (SBP) – A meal meeting specific requirements served to a child in the morning hours. The meal shall be served at or close to the beginning of the child's day at school. Breakfast meal components include, milk, fruit or vegetable, and whole grains.

School Food Authority (SFA) – The governing body which is responsible for the administration of one or more schools. The SFA has the legal authority to operate meal programs approved by FNS.

School Nutrition Program Directors – Individuals directly 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.

School Nutrition Program Manager – Individual directly responsible for the management of the day-to-day operations of school food service for a participating school(s).

School Nutrition Program Staff – Individuals, without managerial responsibilities, involved in day-to-day operations of school food service for a participating school(s).

School Nutrition Specialist (SNS) – A person who has successfully passed the SNS certification exam, offered by the School Nutrition Association. The exam confirms a high level of knowledge and competency to manage school nutrition programs and reflects an individual who is dedicated to continuing their professional development.

Smart Snacks – All foods sold at school, during the school day, must meet specific nutrition standards. The Smart Snacks in School regulation applies to foods and beverages sold a la carte, in the school store, and from vending machines.

Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) – Ensures that low-income children continue to receive nutritious meals when school is not in session. Free meals that meet Federal nutrition guidelines are provided to all children at approved SFSP sites in areas with significant concentrations of low-income children.
**Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)** – Formerly known as the Food Stamp Program, provides food-purchasing assistance for low- and no-income people living in the U.S. It is a federal aid program, administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, under the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), though benefits are distributed by each U.S. state's Division of Social Services or Children and Family Services.

**Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)** – A federally funded grant program that allows states to create and administer their own assistance programs for families in need.

**United States Department of Agriculture Food (USDA Food)** – Food commodities donated by USDA for use in nonprofit lunch programs. These foods support American agriculture by distributing high quality, 100% American-grown USDA Foods.

**Wellness Committee** – Group of concerned parents, students, representatives of the school food authority, teachers of physical education, school health professionals, the school board, school administrators, and the community to participate in the development, implementation, review, and update of the local wellness policy.

**Wellness Policy** – Each LEA participating in the NSLP or other federal Child Nutrition program is required by federal law to establish a local wellness policy for all schools. The local wellness policy is an important tool for parents and LEAs to promote student wellness, prevent and reduce childhood obesity, and provide assurance the SNP guidelines meet the minimum federal school meal standards.
Appendix G: References


