

Food Service ‘Director’ required in every school participating in NSLP.

Every school district is required to have a “Food Service Director” (or similar title). This person may manage all the key areas of the school meal programs or share the responsibility with others, such as financial management, human resources, and technology and information systems.

The person with the food service director title in a school district must have the food safety certification (as they are listed as the “Lead Food Service Worker” in NDFoods). This is probably the number one factor in determining the role. Most school administrators and other staff who do not work in the kitchen are not interested in obtaining and maintaining the certification and implementing the HACCP standard operating procedures to ensure food safety. If the food service director does not have the certification, the federal requirement is to “obtain it within the first 30 days after hire.” We track this information in ND Foods so please submit the certification as soon as possible after hiring a new director.

The person with the food service director title must also obtain at least 12 hours of professional development (continuing education/training). *This is in addition to the food safety training required in the first year of employment.*

Professional standards for hiring a new food service director also include an education and experience component. USDA wants to see the person have a bachelor’s degree or equivalent in a related food service major. A person without even a high school diploma can be hired though with 3 years of relevant food service experience. For more information on the hiring standards, please visit the USDA Professional Standards website: [Professional Standards for School Nutrition Program Professionals Summary of Updates Effective May 2019 \(azureedge.us\)](https://www.azureedge.us)

If, after the job has been posted, not even one candidate with these qualifications applies, let us know, and we can issue a waiver for these qualifications based on your confidence in the candidate who has applied.

Once your District has hired the new Food Service Director, we encourage you to have them attend our New Kitchen Manager training, which is held each summer. This year, it will be held July 24-25, 2024. The registration link is here: [New School Kitchen Manager Training Tickets, Wed, Jul 24, 2024 at 8:30 AM | Eventbrite](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/new-school-kitchen-manager-training-tickets-wed-jul-24-2024-at-8-30-am)

If the new Food Service Director needs the 8-hour Initial Sanitation training, our office is hosting the training on Tuesday, July 23. Registration is here: [Food Safety in Schools - 8 hour Initial Sanitation Course from ICN Tickets, Tue, Jul 23, 2024 at 8:30 AM | Eventbrite](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/food-safety-in-schools-8-hour-initial-sanitation-course-from-icn-tickets-tue-jul-23-2024-at-8-30-am). The nationally recognized ‘ServeSafe’ training is also an appropriate training that will count as the initial 8-hour training.

If your District has questions regarding the Food Service Director role and/or its requirements, please reach out to our office at dpicnfd@nd.gov.