



INSTITUTE OF  
*child nutrition*

# Competencies, Knowledge, and Skills of Effective School Nutrition Directors

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# Competencies, Knowledge, and Skills of **Effective School Nutrition Directors**

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Improve the operation of child nutrition programs through research, education and training, and information dissemination.

### **VISION**

Lead the nation in providing research, education, and resources to promote excellence in child nutrition programs.

### **MISSION**

Provide relevant research-based information and services that advance the continuous improvement of child nutrition programs.

# Institute of Child Nutrition

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# Introduction

The *Competency, Knowledge & Skills (CKS)* series is the Institute of Child Nutrition, Applied Research Division's (ICN ARD) signature research-based resource for child nutrition (CN) professionals. The ICN ARD established a standardized process for identifying the CKS needed by professionals working in the field of child nutrition in 1995. The initial ICN ARD study established a research-based competency model for entry-level and advanced school nutrition managers, and a resource was developed to identify the CKS for school nutrition managers. As of 2025, ICN ARD has developed CKS resources to support the following CN professionals: Chefs working in School Nutrition programs (Lartey Gibson, Peterson, & Gordon, 2025), district-level school nutrition professionals (Nettles and Aspirin, 2010), school nutrition managers (Institute of Child Nutrition, 2018; Cater, Cross, and Nettles, 2017), school nutrition assistants/technicians (2006), CN providers in Child and Adult Care Feeding Programs (CACFP) (Lartey-Rowser, 2015), and State agency CN professionals (Cross and Nettles, 2013).

The *Competencies, Knowledge, and Skills of Effective School Nutrition Directors* resource focuses on the identified functional areas, competencies, knowledge, and skills needed for school nutrition directors to effectively operate a school meal program. The following definitions were used to guide the process:

- **School nutrition directors/supervisors** are the professional(s) who oversee all aspects of the district-wide school meal program. This could be one or more district-level school nutrition professionals.
- **Functional areas** are the broad groupings or divisions of job responsibilities performed by directors/supervisors within the school meal continued operation. These categories serve as the umbrella for all job responsibilities that occur daily, weekly, seasonally, or annually.
- **Competencies** are the underlying characteristics within each functional area that lead to successful performance. Competencies encompass knowledge, skills, and various levels of motivation.
- **Knowledge** is the information a person has in specific content areas necessary for successful performance in a competency area.
- **Skills** are the abilities to perform certain physical, mental, and/or interpersonal tasks necessary for successful performance in a competency area.
- **Entry Level** indicates a basic level of knowledge and understanding of a competency area; a general ability to communicate a basic understanding of local, state, and national regulations, as well as program requirements; and a reliance on observation and guidance from others in the field to increase effectiveness and outcomes. In this resource, "entry level" is used to classify the knowledge and skills a director should have at the time they are hired.

- **Advanced** is a higher level of knowledge and understanding of the competency areas and the ability to communicate, make decisions, solve problems, and support staff based on advanced knowledge of local, state, and national regulations and program requirements. In this resource, “advanced” is used to classify the knowledge and skills a director should have at an advanced stage in the professional’s career.

The **nine** identified functional areas encompassing the job responsibilities of school nutrition directors are listed below:

- Financial Management,
- Food Production and Operations Management,
- Food Security, Sanitation, and Safety,
- Emergency Preparedness,
- Human Resource Management,
- Marketing and Communications,
- Menu and Nutrition Management,
- Procurement and Inventory Management, and
- Program Management and Accountability.

Within the nine functional areas are 19 competencies, 67 knowledge statements, and 147 skill statements.

The functional areas, competencies, knowledge, and skills identified for this resource will offer guidance for the role of the school nutrition director. School nutrition directors and school nutrition administrators can use this resource as a framework for identifying qualified staff for entry-level and advanced-level positions in the child meal program setting. The resource can also be used by individuals as a basis for advancing their knowledge and skills while working in a school nutrition setting. In addition, this resource can be used to assess current training programs by identifying strengths and weaknesses and training outcomes. While job tasks and requirements for a school nutrition director differ from state to state and from facility to facility, the *Competencies, Knowledge, and Skills of Effective School Nutrition Directors* resource is designed to be used as a guide for professional development, job description development, assessment and evaluation, and as training development.

# How to Use this Resource

The ICN ARD's *Competencies, Knowledge, and Skills of Effective School Nutrition Directors* resource outlines entry-level and advanced knowledge and skills recommended for school nutrition directors to perform effectively in their local schools or sites, administering the school meal program in accordance to local, state and federal policies. This document provides CKS information that can empower school nutrition professionals to strengthen their programs in a variety of ways:

## How Can Superintendents and School Nutrition Administrators Use the Tool?

- A superintendent and school nutrition administrators may use the information to identify and develop job position functions. The competencies, knowledge, and skills resource can also help identify job descriptions and interview questions for prospective school nutrition directors.
- A superintendent and school nutrition administrators may use the information to compare the characteristics of an individual director's current, observed workplace practices against the recommended knowledge and skills described in the resource. Differences or shortfalls in job performance, which are identified in this comparison, can be used as teaching points and also to establish learning and growth opportunities.
- A superintendent and school nutrition administrators may use the information to offer mentoring and educational opportunities for the school nutrition directors, or aspiring school nutrition directors, to effectively function in their role.
- A superintendent or school nutrition administrator may use the tool to determine the knowledge and skills needed in the future, which helps to support succession planning.

## How Can a School Nutrition Director Use the Tool?

- A school nutrition director can use the resource to develop a clear understanding of the CKS expected in their job and critical behaviors that must be demonstrated to show proficiency at various levels.
- A school nutrition director may use the resource to achieve defined goal(s) that should foster increased knowledge or skill attainment through additional learning experiences, certifications, academic education, and/or advanced degrees.
- A school nutrition director may use the resource as an assessment tool in order to facilitate professional development.

A section of this resource has been dedicated to providing tools to apply the competencies, knowledge, and skills information shared. This section is titled *Section II: Application Tools* and includes the following: a **Competency-Based Job Description Template (as a fillable form)**, a **Competency-Based performance Plan (as a fillable form)**, and **School Nutrition Director Competency-Based Job Interview Guide**. Each tool will have detailed instructions on its usage and on how to complete the document. To allow for ease of use, the full version of each tool shown in *Section II: Application Tools* is available as a customizable Microsoft Word document.

# SECTION I

## Functional Areas

### Entry Level and Advanced

**Functional Area 1:** Financial Management

**Functional Area 2:** Food Production and Operations Management

**Functional Area 3:** Food Security, Sanitation, and Safety

**Functional Area 4:** Emergency Preparedness

**Functional Area 5:** Human Resource Management

**Functional Area 6:** Communications and Marketing

**Functional Area 7:** Menu and Nutrition Management

**Functional Area 8:** Procurement and Inventory Management

**Functional Area 9:** Program Management and Accountability



# Functional Area 1:

## **Financial Management**

**Definition of Functional Area:** Financial Management is defined as the strategic process of establishing and monitoring cost-control goals and overseeing financial systems that ensure the school meal program operates efficiently, supports program objectives, and maintains full compliance with all regulatory requirements.

**Competency 1.1:** Develops and oversees a financial management system that supports school meal program operations and ensures alignment with program goals and regulatory requirements.

**Competency 1.2:** Establishes cost control goals to effectively manage the school meal program.

**COMPETENCY 1.1**

**Develops and oversees a financial management system that supports school meal program operations and ensures alignment with program goals and regulatory requirements.**

**ENTRY LEVEL****Knowledge**

- Knows the financial goals and objectives of the school district.
- Understands basic principles of accounting.
- Knows fundamentals of reporting the school meal program budget as part of the district budget.
- Understands the process for budget development, justification, and implementation.

**Skill**

- Skilled in providing budget status updates to appropriate district administrators, following local guidelines.
- Skilled at preparing and administering budgets that appropriately reflect financial goals.
- Skilled at analyzing financial statements regularly to make informed financial decisions.
- Skilled in collaborating with appropriate district administrators to identify desired financial outcomes for the school meal program.
- Skilled in ensuring all financial reports necessary for the annual audit are prepared accurately and on time.
- Skilled at implementing written procedures for collecting, reconciling, depositing, and disbursing funds.
- Skilled at using financial management systems (software and/or manual processes) to enhance financial reporting and accountability.
- Skilled in sharing relevant financial information with school nutrition managers and developing strategies for addressing issues.
- Skilled in reconciling the projected annual budget to actual revenue and expenditures and providing documentation to explain any variances.
- Skilled in approving school nutrition staff payroll records before payment.
- Skilled in checking all bills and purchase orders for accuracy before approving them for payment.

## ADVANCED



### **Knowledge**

- Understands the impact of changing demographics and enrollment trends on the school meal program budget.



### **Skill**

- No advanced skill statements.

## COMPETENCY 1.2

**Establishes cost control goals to effectively manage the school meal program.**

### ENTRY LEVEL



#### Knowledge

- Understands the importance of appropriate staffing and scheduling to control labor costs.
- Knows methods for establishing internal and external financial benchmarks.



#### Skill

- Skilled in evaluating the financial performance of individual school nutrition sites and adjusting as necessary.
- Skilled at controlling labor costs by assessing meals served, labor hours, and school nutrition staff benefits.
- Skilled in establishing internal benchmarks for food and labor cost percentages.

### ADVANCED



#### Knowledge

- Understands the importance of providing cost-effective special functions (e.g., catering) as appropriate.



#### Skill

- Skilled at seeking external funding to support school meal program initiatives, as appropriate.
- Skilled in identifying the benefits and costs associated with maintaining a comprehensive technology system.
- Skilled at performing cost analysis to justify additional expenses that promote program growth.
- Skilled in monitoring the appropriate use of external funding (e.g., grants, donations) when applicable.

*No additional knowledge or skill statements in this Functional Area.*

# Functional Area 2: **Food Production and Operations Management**

**Definition of Functional Area 2:** Food Production and Operations Management is the systematic development and oversight of operational and management systems that ensure high-quality food production and effective, efficient service across all program sites.

**Competency 2.1:** Develops a management system that upholds high standards for quality food production.

**Competency 2.2:** Develops and implements operational systems that ensure effective management of food production and service.

## COMPETENCY 2.1

**Develops a management system that upholds high standards for quality food production.**

### ENTRY LEVEL



#### Knowledge

- Knows procedures for documenting and evaluating amounts of food planned, prepared, and served.
- Understands the importance and methods for identifying and producing cost-effective, high-quality food and beverages.
- Knows principles of developing and using standardized recipes.
- Understands the importance of production scheduling for optimum holding of food items.
- Knows the principles of food science and culinary arts related to quantity and quality food production, holding, serving, and appealing food presentation.
- Knows guidelines for recipe modification to meet nutrition objectives and increase customer acceptability.
- Knows food production and distribution systems and distribution systems that allow for efficient use of products, labor, and equipment.



#### Skill

- Skilled at establishing procedures to complete and maintain required daily food production records at each school nutrition site.
- Skilled at developing and monitoring food production planning procedures, including forecasting, production schedules, standardized recipes, and portion control.
- Skilled at training staff in food production and forecasting procedures.
- Skilled in developing food quality standards to assist school nutrition staff in evaluating menu items prior to service.
- Skilled in maintaining current training materials for use by school nutrition managers to train staff on food production techniques.
- Skilled at implementing standard procedures (e.g., appropriate product ingredients, standardized recipes, accurate portion sizes) to control food costs.

## ADVANCED



### Knowledge

- None.



### Skill

- Skilled at selecting and monitoring the most effective food production system for school nutrition sites.

## COMPETENCY 2.2

**Develops and implements operational systems that ensure effective management of food production and service.**

### ENTRY LEVEL



#### **Knowledge**

- Understands the relationship between student meal periods and efficient food production and timely service of meals.



#### **Skill**

- Skilled at establishing an effective food distribution system for all school nutrition sites.
- Skilled at developing safe and efficient work methods to maximize staff productivity.
- Skilled at using established benchmarks for the efficient production of meals (e.g., meals per labor hour).

*No additional knowledge or skill statements in this Functional Area.*

# Functional Area 3:

## **Food Security, Sanitation, and Safety**

**Definition of Functional Area 3:** Food security, sanitation, and safety is the development and leadership of policies, procedures, and practices that ensure food is prepared, served, and stored in a sanitary, safe environment while promoting safe working conditions for all school nutrition staff.

**Competency 3.1:** Establishes policies and procedures to ensure food is prepared and served in a sanitary and safe environment.

**Competency 3.2:** Provides leadership in creating safe work environments for school meal program operations.

## COMPETENCY 3.1

**Establishes policies and procedures to ensure food is prepared and served in a sanitary and safe environment.**

### ENTRY LEVEL



#### Knowledge

- Knows federal, State, and local sanitation and food safety requirements.
- Knows fundamentals of Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) based standard operating procedures.
- Knows basic principles and techniques of foodservice sanitation and food safety.
- Understands the importance of all aspects of food security (e.g., foodborne illness and biosecurity).



#### Skill

- Skilled at developing a HACCP-based food safety and sanitation program that meets federal, state, and local regulations.
- Skilled at ensuring that all food safety inspection deficiencies are addressed competently and in a timely manner.

### ADVANCED



#### Knowledge

- None.



#### Skill

- None.

## COMPETENCY 3.2

**Provides leadership in creating safe work environments for school nutrition operations.**

### ENTRY LEVEL



#### Knowledge

- Knows principles for selecting, storing, using, and maintaining chemical supplies and other hazardous materials.
- Understands principles of creating and maintaining a safe work environment.
- Knows safety standards for school nutrition establishments that comply with the Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA) and other regulations.



#### Skill

- Skilled at encouraging school nutrition staff participation in creating a safe work environment.
- Skilled at developing procedures and training school nutrition staff on the proper use, cleaning, and sanitizing of foodservice equipment.
- Skilled in ensuring that Safety Data Sheets (SDS) for chemical products are up-to-date and accessible to school nutrition staff.
- Skilled at implementing established safety requirements and standards for the selection and use of chemicals, hazardous materials, and equipment.
- Skilled in guiding school nutrition staff in meeting all health code regulations.

### ADVANCED



#### Knowledge

- None.



#### Skill

- Skilled at developing and implementing training procedures and safety guidelines for workplace injury prevention and injury response reporting.

*No additional knowledge or skill statements in this Functional Area.*

# Functional Area 4: **Emergency Preparedness**

**Definition of Functional Area 4:** Emergency Preparedness is the development and implementation of a systematic approach that ensures continuity of meal service and operational safety during emergency and disaster situations.

**Competency 4.1:** Develops a systematic approach to address emergency and disaster situations.

## COMPETENCY 4.1

**Develops a systematic approach to address emergency and disaster situations.**

### ENTRY LEVEL



#### Knowledge

- Knows the district’s crisis management plan and/or emergency response plan.
- Knows federal, State, and local regulations for providing services during an emergency or crisis.



#### Skill

- Skilled at ensuring food is prepared, stored, and served at proper temperatures during an emergency.
- Skilled at establishing and communicating an emergency/disaster plan to school nutrition staff and appropriate school/district staff.

### ADVANCED



#### Knowledge

- Knows how to develop an emergency feeding plan and train school nutrition staff on appropriate implementation.



#### Skill

- Skilled at networking with community disaster agencies and maintaining current contact information.
- Skilled at developing a plan for communicating with appropriate federal, state, and/or local officials regarding the use of USDA Foods for disaster relief.
- Skilled at determining the food and supply items needed at each school nutrition site for emergency situations.

*No additional knowledge or skill statements in this Functional Area.*

# Functional Area 5: **Human Resource Management**

**Definition of Functional Area 5:** Human Resource Management is the development and administration of systems that ensure compliance with district and regulatory requirements; support the recruitment, hiring, retention, and advancement of qualified staff; and provide needs-based training that strengthens employee skills and enhances school meal program performance.

**Competency 5.1:** Establishes a human resource infrastructure for the school meal program that complies with school district policies as well as federal, State, and local regulations.

**Competency 5.2:** Develops and implements a process for recruiting, hiring, retaining, and promoting qualified school nutrition staff in compliance with the school district's written procedures and labor laws.

**Competency 5.3:** Designs a comprehensive needs-based training infrastructure that enhances learning and improves job skills.

## COMPETENCY 5.1

**Establishes a human resource infrastructure for the school meal program that complies with school district policies as well as federal, State, and local regulations.**

### ENTRY LEVEL



#### Knowledge

- Knows district policies and procedures for performing human resource functions (e.g., accident reporting, payroll, benefits, immigration, policy acknowledgment, performance appraisal).
- Understands the importance of a school nutrition staff handbook.
- Knows staffing and scheduling techniques to achieve operational goals.



#### Skill

- Skilled at maintaining accurate school nutrition staff records and other essential human resource documentation.
- Skilled at interpreting and disseminating the school district's human resource policies and procedures and providing guidance as needed.
- Skilled at ensuring that employees work within contracted weekly hours by supervising time records.
- Skilled at administering personnel policies and evaluating school nutrition staff.
- Skilled in adhering to the Professional Code of Ethics as established by the Education Professional Standards Board (EPSB).
- Skilled in verifying that human resource decisions follow due process established by the school district.

## ADVANCED



### Knowledge

- Knows legislation and resources pertaining to collective bargaining and labor union contracts, when applicable.
- Knows selection, supervision, promotion, termination, and disciplinary procedures that comply with federal, State, and local regulations and contractual policies, when applicable.



### Skill

- Skilled at developing guidelines for work schedules that effectively and efficiently meet operational goals.
- Skilled at reviewing and recommending wages, salaries, and fringe benefits that are equitable and competitive.
- Skilled at monitoring and tracking the cost and incidence of on-the-job injuries and related liabilities.
- Skilled at developing and maintaining a school nutrition staff handbook that includes a current organizational chart and program/district policies and procedures.
- Skilled in collaborating with other staff and leadership to advance the goals of the strategic leadership plan, particularly those related to human resources.

**COMPETENCY 5.2**

**Develops and implements a process for recruiting, hiring, retaining, and promoting qualified school nutrition staff in compliance with the school district's written procedures and labor laws.**

**ENTRY LEVEL****Knowledge**

- Knows basic principles of job analysis, job design, job specifications, job descriptions, and performance appraisals.
- Knows effective job interview techniques that incorporate legally permissible inquiries.
- Understands the importance of staff orientation to ensure that new school nutrition staff have the appropriate information to perform their jobs.
- Understands the importance of providing professional development opportunities for school nutrition staff.
- Understands factors important to employee satisfaction and strategies to address dissatisfaction.

**Skill**

- Skilled in determining the minimum skills and characteristics required for an effective school nutrition staff member.
- Skilled at developing a team approach to all work done in the kitchen, fostered by an emphasis on collaboration and mutual support to complete required tasks.
- Skilled at interviewing, screening, and employing school nutrition employees.
- Skilled at assigning responsibilities, supervision, and training to all school nutrition staff.
- Skilled at maintaining a positive attitude, fostering positivity among employees, and communicating clearly to ensure instructions are accurately implemented.
- Skilled at establishing a process for conducting performance appraisals that aligns with district timetables and guidelines.
- Skilled in providing school nutrition staff with information on professional organizations and opportunities for personal and professional development, including certification.

## ADVANCED



### Knowledge

- Knows strategies for effective recruitment, hiring, and retention of school nutrition staff.



### Skill

- Skilled at developing a staffing plan based on delivery systems, student participation, facilities, and services provided.
- Skilled at designing an effective orientation program that introduces new staff to the mission, requirements, and goals of the school meal program.
- Skilled in utilizing competency-based performance appraisals to identify staff weaknesses and areas for improvement.
- Skilled at applying conflict resolution, negotiation, and problem-solving techniques when addressing staff issues in a fair and equitable manner.
- Skilled in developing and implementing a staff recognition program, as appropriate.
- Skilled in developing and implementing contingency staffing plans to maintain operations during vacancies.

## COMPETENCY 5.3

**Designs a comprehensive needs-based training infrastructure that enhances learning and improves job skills.**

### ENTRY LEVEL



#### Knowledge

- Knows effective job training methods for various learning styles.
- Knows procedures for documenting staff development and training following district policies.



#### Skill

- Skilled at ensuring that first aid training programs are provided to school nutrition staff.
- Skilled at selecting resources for technical information and educational materials appropriate for staff training.
- Skilled in documenting safety training in accordance with district guidelines.
- Skilled at supervising and directing staff in providing a variety of foods and methods of preparation and ensuring that meals are attractively served.
- Skilled at planning and conducting yearly school nutrition personnel training courses for all cafeteria personnel.

### ADVANCED

#### Knowledge

- Knows methods to assess the professional development needs of school nutrition staff.

#### Skill

- Skilled at developing a system to evaluate the effectiveness of training programs and making necessary modifications.

*No additional knowledge or skill statements in this Functional Area.*

# Functional Area 6: **Marketing and Communications**

**Definition of Functional Area 6:** Marketing and Communications is the strategic use of communication, promotion, and outreach by school nutrition professionals to engage internal and external stakeholders, enhance program visibility, and support high-quality, customer-focused service through collaboration within and beyond the school community.

**Competency 6.1:** Works collaboratively and effectively within and outside the school meal program to achieve program-related goals.

**Competency 6.2:** Develops and implements customer-oriented approaches to achieve and maintain quality service and engagement.

**Competency 6.3:** Actively promotes the school meal program to internal and external stakeholders.

## COMPETENCY 6.1

**Works collaboratively and effectively within and outside the school meal program to achieve program-related goals.**

### ENTRY LEVEL



#### Knowledge

- Understands the importance of school nutrition staff in marketing the school meal program.
- Knows effective strategies for positively influencing customers' eating behaviors.
- Understands principles of public relations and marketing techniques appropriate for the school community.
- Knows resources for the development and evaluation of nutrition education materials and activities.



#### Skill

- Skilled at networking with school nutrition professionals to share best practices in marketing.
- Skilled at evaluating catering as a viable marketing tool.
- Skilled at responding appropriately to media publicity related to the school meal program.
- Skilled at forming partnerships with parents, students, and the education community to support an integrated approach to nutrition education.
- Skilled at using customer feedback to improve production and service.
- Skilled in working with the superintendent, central office staff, and all teaching personnel to ensure the school cafeteria supports learning experiences.
- Skilled in using appropriate nutrition education and promotional materials to encourage healthy eating behaviors.

## ADVANCED



### Knowledge

- None.



### Skill

- Skilled at leading the development of a marketing plan that integrates objectives, strategies, implementation, and evaluation.
- Skilled at aligning the school nutrition marketing plan with district-wide marketing initiatives.
- Skilled at designing and implementing an effective public relations program to maintain a positive image for the school meal program.
- Skilled at evaluating marketing plans and promotional campaigns periodically and modifying initiatives that are ineffective.
- Skilled at promoting and supporting activities that increase wellness and nutrition awareness among students, administrators, teachers, and other district staff.

**COMPETENCY 6.2**

**Develops and implements customer-oriented approaches to achieve and maintain quality service and engagement.**

**ENTRY LEVEL****Knowledge**

- Knows the fundamentals of creating a pleasant, appealing, and safe dining experience.
- Knows food merchandising techniques to enhance the presentation of food.
- Knows methods to collect and use data on customer acceptability of school meals.
- Knows the fundamentals of creating a pleasant, appealing, and safe environment for serving nutritious meals.
- Knows age-appropriate methods for promoting nutrition education.

**Skill**

- Skilled at ensuring the daily menu schedule is accessible to the public.
- Skilled at developing procedures to maintain the aesthetic qualities of menu items throughout the meal period.
- Skilled at establishing quality customer service standards and training school nutrition staff on those standards.
- Skilled at treating students as priority customers and instilling this concept in employees.
- Skilled at encouraging school nutrition managers and staff to produce and serve meals in a customer-friendly environment.
- Skilled at cultivating a dining environment that promotes good nutrition and healthy eating behaviors.

## ADVANCED



### Knowledge

- None.



### Skill

- Skilled at empowering school nutrition managers to address and resolve customer service issues.
- Skilled at ensuring student involvement in recipe and product testing to determine customer acceptability.
- Skilled at developing procedures for collecting, analyzing, and addressing customer feedback.

## COMPETENCY 6.3

**Actively promotes the school meal program to internal and external stakeholders.**

### ENTRY LEVEL



#### Knowledge

- Knows appropriate channels for effectively communicating with school meal program stakeholders.
- Understands the importance of involving stakeholders in implementing marketing plans, measuring outcomes, and interpreting results.



#### Skill

- Skilled at informing stakeholders of policy updates and current school meal program information.
- Skilled at coordinating the use of multiple approaches for informing stakeholders about menus, nutrition information, and available services (e.g., website, newsletter, printed menus).
- Skilled at attending Board of Education meetings and preparing reports as needed.

### ADVANCED



#### Knowledge

- None.



#### Skill

- Skilled in communicating school nutrition research findings to stakeholders, when applicable.
- Skilled in communicating the relationship between nutritional adequacy and children's educational performance.
- Skilled at representing the school meal program at conferences and giving presentations on district initiatives, best practices, challenges, and innovations.

*No additional knowledge or skill statements in this Functional Area.*

# Functional Area 7: **Menu and Nutrition Management**

**Definition of Functional Area 7:** Menu and Nutrition Management is the leadership and oversight of menu planning and nutrition practices that meet program goals, support operational needs, and promote district-wide wellness initiatives.

**Competency 7.1:** Develops guidelines for planning menus that comply with nutrition objectives and support operational goals of the school meal program.

**Competency 7.2:** Provides leadership to support the nutrition and wellness initiatives within the school district.

**COMPETENCY 7.1**

**Develops guidelines for planning menus that comply with nutrition objectives and support operational goals of the school meal program.**

**ENTRY LEVEL****Knowledge**

- Understands the relationship between menu planning and the design of the facility.
- Knows menu planning principles.
- Knows current USDA menu planning options and requirements.
- Knows how to standardize recipes.
- Knows the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, USDA Menu Planner for Healthy School Meals, and Food Buying Guide as menu planning tools.
- Knows menu planning and service techniques for children with special food and/or nutrition needs, as appropriate.
- Knows how to nutritionally analyze menus according to USDA meal pattern requirements.
- Understands the relationship of menu planning to the availability of USDA Foods, purchasing, food production, and productivity.
- Understands the importance of customer feedback on menu planning.

**Skill**

- Skilled in ensuring all menu items served are consistent with nutrition objectives and contribute to the development of healthy eating habits.
- Skilled at planning menus that incorporate cultural preferences and introduce students to a variety of foods.
- Skilled in evaluating new and existing food products for nutritional value, quality, and acceptance.
- Skilled in providing nutritional analysis for menus and to school nurses.
- Skilled at developing and implementing a menu system that maximizes the use of USDA Foods.

## ADVANCED



### Knowledge

- None.



### Skill

- Skilled at assessing customer preferences, industry trends, and research to plan menus that encourage participation in the school meal program.
- Skilled at developing procedures for collecting customer feedback, that may include but are not limited to surveys, taste panels, and menu committees.
- Skilled in developing an effective system for menu planning that includes, but is not limited to, costing, forecasting, nutrient analysis, variety, and customer preferences.
- Skilled in developing internal guidelines for planning menus that comply with nutrition objectives and support operational goals of the school meal program.
- Skilled at working with appropriate school nutrition staff on developing and implementing quality recipes and effective techniques to improve food quality in school meals.

## COMPETENCY 7.2

**Provides leadership to support the nutrition and wellness initiatives within the school district.**

### ENTRY LEVEL



#### Knowledge

- Understands the importance of providing nutrition education training for school nutrition staff.



#### Skill

- Skilled at collaborating with faculty and school nutrition staff to implement nutrition education projects.
- Skilled at collaborating with school staff, teachers, parents, physicians, and other health professionals to meet the special food and/or nutrition needs of children, as appropriate.
- Skilled at planning for school nutrition promotional events (i.e., National School Lunch Week, National School Breakfast Week).
- Skilled at promoting healthy eating habits and providing guidelines for selecting healthful meals and snacks through nutrition education and appropriate marketing in the school cafeteria.
- Skilled at encouraging school nutrition staff to support and participate in school district nutrition/wellness initiatives.

### ADVANCED



#### Knowledge

- None.



#### Skill

- None.

*No additional knowledge or skill statements in this Functional Area.*

# Functional Area 8: **Procurement and Inventory Management**

**Definition of Functional Area 8:** Procurement and Inventory Management is the development and oversight of purchasing and inventory practices that comply with regulations, support operational goals, and ensure the efficient and effective operation of the school meal program.

**Competency 8.1:** Develops procurement guidelines that comply with established regulations and support operational goals of the school meal program.

**Competency 8.2:** Establishes operational procedures to effectively manage receiving and inventory systems.

## COMPETENCY 8.1

**Develops procurement guidelines that comply with established regulations and support operational goals of the school meal program.**

### ENTRY LEVEL



#### Knowledge

- Knows ethical practices for procurement.
- Knows federal, State, and local procurement regulations, policies, and procedures governing all school meal program purchases.
- Knows factors that guide the procurement of equipment.
- Knows the structure of procurement channels from the manufacturer to the school meal program for food, supplies, and equipment.
- Knows principles for purchasing chemical supplies and other hazardous materials.
- Knows fundamentals of developing specifications for food, supplies, and equipment that incorporate quality and/or performance indicators.
- Knows basic principles of requests for proposals (RFP), formal bidding, and informal bidding (quotes).
- Knows guidelines for procurement and processing of USDA Foods following federal and State regulations.



#### Skill

- Skilled at monitoring current market conditions that influence procurement decisions (e.g., price, supply, demand).

## ADVANCED



### Knowledge

- None.



### Skill

- Skilled at developing product specifications that ensure broad customer acceptability and nutrition integrity, utilizing pre-bid conferences, product testing/screening, and product comparison.
- Skilled at analyzing technical support, training availability, maintenance service availability, and cost of upgrades when considering new purchases.
- Skilled at evaluating purchasing methods (e.g., bid buying, prime vendors, group purchasing) and selecting the most appropriate method for the school meal program.
- Skilled at developing appropriate bid documents that include product specifications, usages, and special instructions/conditions following federal, state, and local regulations.
- Skilled in evaluating current purchasing practices to determine effectiveness.
- Skilled at evaluating bids/quotes and making purchase recommendations following federal, state, and local regulations.
- Skilled in providing a profile describing the school meal program to assist industry representatives in meeting procurement needs.
- Skilled at developing and/or implementing established procurement guidelines for environmentally responsible purchasing practices, if applicable.

## COMPETENCY 8.2

**Establishes operational procedures to effectively manage receiving and inventory systems.**

### ENTRY LEVEL



#### **Knowledge**

- Knows fundamentals of effective receiving procedures.
- Understands the relationship of standardized recipes to accurate ordering and inventory management.
- Knows methods to project food and supply needs.



#### **Skill**

- Skilled at developing and monitoring procurement procedures for school nutrition sites to order, receive, and store products.
- Skilled at updating product specifications by communicating with industry and other school nutrition professionals.

*No additional knowledge or skill statements in this Functional Area.*

# Functional Area 9: **Program Management and Accountability**

**Definition of Functional Area 9:** Program Management and Accountability is the strategic direction and coordination of school meal operations to maintain quality, compliance, and efficiency while reinforcing the program's value and role within the school district.

**Competency 9.1:** Establishes a system to ensure nutritional, financial, and regulatory accountability of the school meal program.

**Competency 9.2:** Provides leadership to position the school meal program as an integral component of the school district.

## COMPETENCY 9.1

**Establishes a system to ensure nutritional, financial, and regulatory accountability of the school meal program.**

### ENTRY LEVEL



#### Knowledge

- Understands the role of controlling costs through menu development.
- Knows federal, State, and local regulations governing food and beverage sales.



#### Skill

- Skilled at establishing and/or maintaining a system for retaining financial records following federal, State, and local regulations.
- Skilled at ensuring that foodservice accounting procedures are in alignment with district guidelines.
- Skilled at ensuring public access to information on child nutrition programs as mandated by federal guidelines.
- Skilled at establishing a pricing structure for meals and food items that follows federal, state, and local guidelines.
- Skilled at planning nutritionally sound menus that comply with federal, State, and local regulations.
- Skilled at maximizing the use of United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Foods to assist in controlling food cost.

### ADVANCED



#### Knowledge

- None



#### Skill

- None

## COMPETENCY 9.2

**Provides leadership to position the school meal program as an integral component of the school district.**

### ENTRY LEVEL



#### Knowledge

- Understands the importance of school nutrition services and nutrition education as a component of the coordinated school health education program.
- Understands the concepts of institutional and structural racism and bias and their impact on underserved and underrepresented communities.



#### Skill

- Skilled at coordinating training for school nutrition staff to enhance their culinary and/or catering skills.
- Skilled at participating in wellness committee meetings and preparing required wellness reports of the nutrition program.
- Skilled at coordinating meal operations and special functions with administration and/or support staff.
- Skilled at advising appropriate central office administrators, school principals, relevant school nutrition staff, and local board with respect to program needs.
- Skilled at attending professional meetings and staying involved with such organizations to remain knowledgeable of all aspects of the School Meal Programs.
- Skilled at coordinating and preparing special school meal requests made by faculty and staff, as appropriate.
- Skilled at reporting regularly to the superintendent on any developments or situations within the district requiring the superintendent's awareness.
- Skilled at encouraging school nutrition staff to participate in general staff meetings at school sites.

## ADVANCED



### Knowledge

- None



### Skill

- None

*No additional knowledge or skill statements in this Functional Area.*

# SECTION II

## Application Tools

This section of the document can help individuals utilize the information shared regarding the competencies, knowledge, and skills to address personal and program needs.

Included in the Application Tools section are the following supplementary materials and fillable forms:

### **Competency-Based Job Description Template**

How to Use the Competency-Based Job Description Template

Competency-Based Job Description Template (as a fillable form)

### **Competency-Based Performance Plan**

How to Use the Competency-Based Performance Plan

Competency-Based Performance Plan Template (as a fillable form)

### **School Nutrition Director Competency-Based Job Interview Guide**



# **Competency-Based Job Description Template**



# How to Use the Competency-Based Job Description Template

## General Function and Scope

The school nutrition director performs various job functions essential to the successful operation of the school meal program. These job functions fall under nine functional areas: financial management; food production and operations management; food security, safety and sanitation; emergency preparedness; human resource management; marketing and communications; menu and nutrition management; procurement and inventory management; and program management and accountability. The job responsibilities encompassed within these functional areas can be divided into one or more positions as appropriate for the school meal program.

The information provided in the *Competencies, Knowledge, and Skills of Effective School Nutrition Directors* resource is a framework for school nutrition administrators to design school nutrition director positions and to create job descriptions. Below are step-by-step instructions on how to use the sample job description template to create school nutrition director job descriptions:

**Step 1 Position Information:** In the boxes next to Position Title, Location, and Level/Salary Range marked “click or tap here to enter text,” enter the information required for the job description. In the box next to Position Type marked “choose an item,” click on the drop-down menu and select either “Full-Time” or “Part-Time”. In the boxes next to Date Posted and Closing Date, there is a calendar that opens for you to choose the date needed.

**Step 2 Qualifications:** In this section, utilize the drop-down boxes marked “choose an item” to select the desired qualifications for the position. Within each qualification area (Education, Work Experience, and Credentials), a box marked “other: click or tap here to enter text” has been provided to enter additional qualifications as needed.

**Step 3 Competencies:** In this section, there are nine (9) functional areas. Under each functional area, choose the competency preferred or required for the job description. In the second column, choose whether this competency is preferred or required using the drop-down menu. Please note that you can delete or add rows as needed to complete the job description.

**Step 4:** In the footer, the date and time form are updated and will change automatically. The person editing the form may add initials to identify who updated the form if they prefer.

**Step 5:** Once the job description is complete, distribute it for review and approval as needed.

*Note: Our job description template serves as a versatile tool that can be utilized by each school district to craft job descriptions tailored to meet specific district requirements. District administrators have the option to adapt and customize the template according to the unique needs, priorities, and standards of their districts. Alternatively, the template can be used as it is created, providing a comprehensive foundation for defining the roles and responsibilities of school nutrition directors within the district. We encourage collaboration and communication between district administrators and relevant stakeholders to ensure that job descriptions accurately reflect the objectives and expectations of each district.*

# Competency-Based Job Description Template

## Position Information

Position Title: {Enter Position Title Here} \_\_\_\_\_

Work Location: {Enter Work Location Here} \_\_\_\_\_

Division/Department: {Enter Division/Department Here} \_\_\_\_\_

Reports to: {Enter Title of Supervisor Here} \_\_\_\_\_

Level/Salary Range: {Enter level/salary range here} \_\_\_\_\_

Date Posted: {Click down-arrow on right to choose a date} \_\_\_\_\_

Closing Date: {Click down-arrow on right to choose a date} \_\_\_\_\_

QUALIFICATIONS			
Education	Select Emphasis or Major Below (If Applicable)	Select Preferred, Required, or N/A	N/A
High School Diploma or GED	N/A	Choose an item.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Associate's Degree	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bachelor's Degree	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Master's Degree	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Doctoral Degree	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Certificate Program	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	<input type="checkbox"/>
On-the-Job Training	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other: (Click or tap here to enter text.)			<input type="checkbox"/>

Work Experience	Select Number of Years or Experience Required Below	Select Preferred, Required, or N/A	N/A
School Nutrition	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	<input type="checkbox"/>
School Nutrition Management District Level	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	<input type="checkbox"/>
School Nutrition Management School/Unit Level	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Foodservice Management (Commercial)	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other: (Click or tap here to enter text.)	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Certification and Credentials	Preferred	Required
ServSafe®	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ServSafe® Proctor	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ServSafe® Instructor	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ServSafe® Dual Role	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Registered Dietitian/Registered Dietitian Nutritionist	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
School Nutrition Specialist (SNS)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (Click or tap here to enter text.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>COMPETENCIES</b>		
<b>Financial Management</b>	<b>Preferred</b>	<b>Required</b>
Develops and oversees a financial management system that supports school meal program operations and ensures alignment with program goals and regulatory requirements.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Establishes cost control goals to effectively manage the school meal program.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ServSafe® Instructor	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ServSafe® Dual Role	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Food Production and Operations Management</b>	<b>Preferred</b>	<b>Required</b>
Develops a management system that upholds high standards for quality food production.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Develops and implements operational systems that ensure effective management of food production and service.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Food Security, Sanitation, and Safety</b>	<b>Preferred</b>	<b>Required</b>
Establishes policies and procedures to ensure food is prepared and served in a sanitary and safe environment.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provides leadership in creating safe work environments for school nutrition operations.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Emergency Preparedness</b>	<b>Preferred</b>	<b>Required</b>
Develops a systematic approach to address emergency and disaster situations.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Human Resource Management</b>	<b>Preferred</b>	<b>Required</b>
Establishes a human resource infrastructure for the school meal program that complies with school district policies as well as federal, state, and local regulations.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Develops and implements a process for recruiting, hiring, retaining, and promoting qualified school nutrition staff in compliance with the school district's written procedures and labor laws.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Designs a comprehensive needs-based training infrastructure that enhances learning and improves job skills.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Marketing and Communications	Preferred	Required
Works collaboratively and effectively within and outside the school meal program to achieve program-related goals.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Develops and implements customer-oriented approaches to achieve and maintain quality service and engagement.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Actively promotes the school meal program to internal and external stakeholders.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Menu and Nutrition Management	Preferred	Required
Develops guidelines for planning menus that comply with nutrition objectives and support operational goals of the school meal program.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provides leadership to support the nutrition and wellness initiatives within the school district.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Procurement and Inventory Management	Preferred	Required
Develops procurement guidelines that comply with established regulations and support operational goals of the school meal program.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Establishes operational procedures to effectively manage receiving and inventory systems.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Program Management and Accountability	Preferred	Required
Establishes a system to ensure nutritional, financial, and regulatory accountability of the school meal program.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provides leadership to position the school meal program as an integral component of the school district.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Approved by:**

I certify that, to the best of my knowledge, this job description is accurate and complete.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Superintendent Signature** **Date**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Department Head Signature** **Date**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**District-Level Signature** **Date**



# **Competency-Based Performance Plan Template**



# How to Use the Competency-Based Performance Plan Template

## General Function and Scope

Competencies are the underlying characteristics within each functional area that lead to successful performance. Competencies are measurable patterns of knowledge and skills needed to perform and fulfill job responsibilities. With competency-based performance plans, school nutrition administrators can assess what an employee accomplishes, and how they do it. The School Nutrition Director Competency-Based Performance Plan provides school nutrition administrators with a tool to evaluate employee performance, guided by the competencies identified in the Competencies, Knowledge, and Skills of Effective School Nutrition Directors resource. This tool will help school nutrition administrators clearly communicate to school nutrition Directors the expectations for the position, providing a foundation for dialogue between school nutrition administrators and school nutrition directors about performance, growth, and career-related milestones. School nutrition administrators will also be able to establish performance benchmarks to improve the accuracy of observing, discussing, and evaluating school nutrition directors. Step-by-step instructions are provided within the performance plan to guide the review process. Each section of the plan addresses different elements of the review.

### Step 1: Position Information

In the boxes next to **Employee Name**, **Position Title**, **Department**, and **Supervisor** marked “Click here to enter text,” enter the information required for the performance plan. In the box **Plan Type**, check whether the performance plan is a “Probationary,” “Annual,” or “Review” performance plan. In the box **Evaluation Period**, calendars are provided for you to choose the start date and completion date of the performance plan.

### Step 2: Essential Job Duties and Responsibilities

In this section, review the list of essential duties (competency statements) provided. In the last item under each functional area titled **Additional Duties**, you may use this row to add any additional duties required for the SN Director that are not listed. In the box marked “click here to enter text,” enter the additional duty. To the right of each essential duty, check whether the performance of the essential duty rates as “Novice,” “Developing,” “Competent,” or “Proficient.”

\*\*Please note that you can delete rows as needed to complete the performance plan. To do this, you must select and highlight the row(s) you want to delete using your computer mouse. Under **Table Tools** (at the top of the page), click the **Layout** tab. In the **Rows & Columns** group, click **Delete**. Select **Delete Rows**.

### Step 3: Performance Goals

In the **Essential Duty** and **Results** and **Comments** columns, each row is marked “click here to enter text,” enter the information required for each row.

# How to Use the Competency-Based Performance Plan Template

## Step 4: Goal Setting

In the column titled Goal(s) enter text in each row marked “Click here to enter text.” In the column titled Date (which is found on each row), a calendar opens for you to choose the date needed.

## Step 5: Overall Rating and Comments

In this section, check the box under the column Overall Rating Selection that corresponds with the overall rating that best represents the employee’s performance.

## Step 6: Evaluator Comments and Chef Response

In this section, there are two areas that need to be completed. In each textbox marked “click here to enter text,” enter the information required for each area.

## Step 7: Acquiring Signatures

Once the performance plan is complete, distribute it for review and approval as needed. These titles are examples and may be changed to fit the institution’s needs.

## Additional Editing Notes

Any row in the document can be deleted to format the job description to meet the needs of your School Meal Program. To do this, you must select and highlight the row or rows you want to delete using your computer mouse. Under **Table Tools** (at the top of the page), click the **Layout** tab. In the **Rows & Columns** group, click Delete. Select **Delete Rows**.

# Competency-Based Performance Plan Template

## Position Information

**Employee Name:** [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

**Position Title:** [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

**Department:** [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

**Supervisor:** [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

**Plan Type:**  Probationary  Annual  Review

**Evaluation Period:**

**From:** [Click or tap to enter a date.](#) **To:** [Click or tap to enter a date.](#)

## Section 1—Essential Job Duties and Responsibilities

### Instructions:

**1. Select the rating** that corresponds to your overall assessment of the employee's performance (as described in the competency statement). Note: If performance in a competency requires improvement (novice), **comments are required**. If performance in a competency area is exceptional (proficient), **comments are highly recommended**. The rating scale is as follows:

- a. Novice:** Individuals at this level are new to the job function and have limited experience or knowledge. They require close supervision and guidance to perform tasks effectively. Novices may struggle to complete tasks independently and may make frequent errors.
  - i. Additional information:** Beginners in the field of School Nutrition with limited experience and knowledge; completed basic requirements but have not yet gained practical experience; may require close supervision and guidance to perform tasks; and may have basic knowledge of School Meal program operations and USDA standards, but they require further training and experience to apply this knowledge effectively.
- b. Developing:** Individuals at this level have begun to gain some experience and knowledge in the job function but still require significant guidance and support. They can perform basic tasks with moderate supervision but may need assistance with more complex tasks. Developing professionals are in the process of building their skills and may still make occasional errors.
  - i. Additional information:** Capable of performing basic tasks with moderate supervision; demonstrate an understanding of School Meal Program operations and USDA standards.
- c. Competent:** Individuals at this level have acquired a solid understanding of the job function and can perform tasks independently with minimal supervision. They demonstrate proficiency in executing tasks efficiently and effectively. Competent professionals may require occasional guidance on more complex tasks but can generally handle their responsibilities with confidence.
  - i. Additional information:** Demonstrate proficiency in multitasking, time management, and organization in a school nutrition and administrative environment; demonstrate a good understanding of School Meal Program operations and USDA standards and can ensure compliance with these regulations in their school district operations.

## Instructions (Continued):

**d. Proficient:** Individuals at this level have mastered the job function and can perform tasks at a high level of proficiency. They possess advanced knowledge and skills in their area of expertise and can handle a wide range of tasks independently. Proficient professionals consistently produce high-quality work and can effectively troubleshoot and resolve issues as they arise.

**2. Tabulate the rating.** Add up the number of checks for each rating scale. Here's how you score job duties:

- a. For each novice selection, give the individual 1 point.
- b. For each developing selection, give the individual 2 points.
- c. For each competent selection, give the individual 3 points.
- d. For each proficient selection, give the individual 4 points.

To be considered:

- **Novice**, the total score must be 28 or below,
- **Developing**, the total score must be between 29 and 56,
- **Competent**, the total score must be between 57 and 84, and
- **Proficient**, the total score must be 85 or above.

**In accordance with our commitment to accommodate the unique needs of each school district, please note that the scoring guide for this performance plan may be tailored to align with district-specific requirements. District administrators have the flexibility to create a scoring guide that best reflects the objectives, priorities, and expectations of their districts. We encourage collaboration between district administrators and employees to ensure that performance assessments accurately reflect the goals and standards of each district.**

RATING	RATING DESCRIPTION
<b>Novice</b>	Requires close supervision/guidance/needs support to complete tasks.
<b>Developing</b>	Requires some supervision/guidance; able to perform basic tasks without supervision.
<b>Competent</b>	Requires little to no supervision/guidance; may require guidance for complex tasks.
<b>Proficient</b>	Advanced knowledge and skills; handles tasks independently.

Essential Duty	Novice 1	Developing 2	Competent 3	Proficient 4
<b>Financial Management</b>				
<b>Essential Duty #1:</b> Develops and oversees a financial management system that supports school meal program operations and ensures alignment with program goals and regulatory requirements.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Essential Duty #2:</b> Establishes cost control goals to effectively manage the school meal program.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Additional Duty:</b> (Click or tap here to enter text.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Food Production and Operations Management</b>				
<b>Essential Duty #1:</b> Develops a management system that upholds high standards for quality food production.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Essential Duty #2:</b> Develops and implements operational systems that ensure effective management of food production and service.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Additional Duty:</b> (Click or tap here to enter text.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Food Security, Sanitation, and Safety</b>				
<b>Essential Duty #1:</b> Establishes policies and procedures to ensure food is prepared and served in a sanitary and safe environment.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Essential Duty #2:</b> Provides leadership in creating safe work environments for school nutrition operations.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Additional Duty:</b> (Click or tap here to enter text.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Essential Duty	Novice 1	Developing 2	Competent 3	Proficient 4
<b>Emergency Preparedness</b>				
<b>Essential Duty:</b> Develops a systematic approach to address emergency and disaster situations.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Additional Duty:</b> (Click or tap here to enter text.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Human Resource Management</b>				
<b>Essential Duty #1:</b> Establishes a human resource infrastructure for the school meal program that complies with school district policies as well as federal, State, and local regulations.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Essential Duty #2:</b> Develops and implements a process for recruiting, hiring, retaining, and promoting qualified school nutrition staff in compliance with the school district's written procedures and labor laws.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Essential Duty #3:</b> Designs a comprehensive needs-based training infrastructure that enhances learning and improves job skills.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Additional Duty:</b> (Click or tap here to enter text.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Marketing and Communications</b>				
<b>Essential Duty #1:</b> Works collaboratively and effectively within and outside the school meal program to achieve program-related goals.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Essential Duty #2:</b> Develops and implements customer-oriented approaches to achieve and maintain quality service and engagement.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Essential Duty #3:</b> Actively promotes the school meal program to internal and external stakeholders.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Additional Duty:</b> (Click or tap here to enter text.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Essential Duty	Novice 1	Developing 2	Competent 3	Proficient 4
<b>Menu and Nutrition Management</b>				
<b>Essential Duty #1:</b> Develops guidelines for planning menus that comply with nutrition objectives and support operational goals of the school meal program.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Essential Duty #2:</b> Provides leadership to support the nutrition and wellness initiatives within the school district.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Additional Duty:</b> (Click or tap here to enter text.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Procurement and Inventory Management</b>				
<b>Essential Duty #1:</b> Develops procurement guidelines that comply with established regulations and support operational goals of the school meal program.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Essential Duty #2:</b> Establishes operational procedures to effectively manage receiving and inventory systems.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Additional Duty:</b> (Click or tap here to enter text.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Program Management and Accountability</b>				
<b>Essential Duty #1:</b> Establishes a system to ensure nutritional, financial, and regulatory accountability of the school meal program.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Essential Duty #2:</b> Provides leadership to position the school meal program as an integral component of the school district.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Additional Duty:</b> (Click or tap here to enter text.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>OVERALL RATING FOR COMPETENCY-BASED JOB DUTIES</b>				

## Section 2—Performance Goals

### Instructions:

1. Review the essential duties and the level of proficiency the director demonstrates.
2. For all essential duties where the director is rated as novice, discuss with the director and rank the duties in order of priority.
3. List the essential duty by priority rating in the “Essential Duty” column.
4. Under the results and comments column, add an appropriate comment for each essential duty based on your discussion with the director.

Priority Rating	Essential Duty	Results and Comments
1	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
2	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
3	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
4	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
5	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.

## Section 3—Goal Setting

### Instructions:

1. Identify any performance goals that you and the school nutrition director have set for the coming year in Section 2.
2. Discuss with the school nutrition director and create goal statements that are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) that you and the director have agreed upon.
3. Collaborate with the school nutrition director to choose a date when the goal should be achieved and enter the date in the “Date” column.

Goal(s)	Date
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter date.
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter date.
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter date.

## Section 4—Overall Rating and Comments

### Overall Rating Guidelines:

Review all your total ratings in Section One. Enter the overall rating that best represents your overall rating of this employee's performance during the evaluation period.

To be considered:

- **Novice**, the total score must be 28 or below.
- **Developing**, the total score must be between 29 and 56.
- **Competent**, the total score must be between 57 and 84.
- **Proficient**, the total score must be 85 or above.

Rating	Rating Description	Overall Rating Selection
<b>Novice</b>	Requires close supervision/guidance; needs support to complete tasks.	Click or tap here to enter text.
<b>Developing</b>	Requires some supervision/guidance; able to perform basic tasks without supervision.	Click or tap here to enter text.
<b>Competent</b>	Requires little to no supervision/guidance; may require guidance for complex tasks.	Click or tap here to enter text.
<b>Proficient</b>	Advance knowledge and skills; handles tasks independently.	Click or tap here to enter text.

**Evaluator Comments:** Discuss your assessment of the director's performance plan, suggest ways you plan to support the director in meeting the goals, or additional information not already conveyed.

Click or tap here to enter text.

**Director Response:** Discuss your thoughts about the evaluation and identify ways the school nutrition administrator can help you meet your performance goals or additional information not already covered.

Click or tap here to enter text.

# **School Nutrition Director Job Interview Guide**



# Competency-Based Interview Guide

## Overview

Competency-based interviews focus on discovering how a candidate performed in specific work-related tasks, challenges, and other aspects of a previous or current job. This interview technique allows the potential employer to identify the key competencies of a potential employee, or the key qualities required to be successful in a position.

### School Nutrition Director Competencies

<b>Financial Management</b>
Develops and oversees a financial management system that supports school meal program operations and ensures alignment with program goals and regulatory requirements.
Establishes cost control goals to effectively manage the school meal program.
<b>Food Production and Operations Management</b>
Develops a management system that upholds high standards for quality food production.
Establishes operational systems that ensure effective management of food production and service.
<b>Food Security, Sanitation, and Safety</b>
Establishes policies and procedures to ensure food is prepared and served in a sanitary and safe environment.
Provides leadership in creating safe work environments for school nutrition operations.
<b>Emergency Preparedness</b>
Develops a systematic approach to address emergency and disaster situations.
<b>Human Resource Management</b>
Establishes a human resource infrastructure for the school meal program that complies with school district policies as well as federal, state, and local regulations.
Develops and implements a process for recruiting, hiring, retaining, and promoting qualified school nutrition staff in compliance with the school district's written procedures and labor laws.
Designs a comprehensive needs-based training infrastructure that enhances learning and improves job skills.
<b>Marketing and Communications</b>
Works collaboratively and effectively within and outside the school meal program to achieve program-related goals.
Develops and implements customer-oriented approaches to achieve and maintain quality service and engagement.
Actively promotes the school meal program to internal and external stakeholders.

## School Nutrition Director Competencies (Continued)

<b>Menu and Nutrition Management</b>
Develops guidelines for planning menus that comply with nutrition objectives and support operational goals of the school meal program.
Provides leadership to support the nutrition and wellness initiatives within the school district.
<b>Procurement and Inventory Management</b>
Develops procurement guidelines that comply with established regulations and support operational goals of the school meal program.
Establishes operational procedures to effectively manage receiving and inventory systems.
<b>Program Management and Accountability</b>
Establishes a system to ensure nutritional, financial, and regulatory accountability of the school meal program.
Provides leadership to position the school meal program as an integral component of the school district.

# Competency-Based Interview Guide

Candidates can and should draw from previous work experience and non-work experiences to respond to interview questions. As you approach candidates, keep in mind the following steps for conducting competency-based interviews:

## 1. Preparation

- Familiarize yourself with the job description and competencies required for the school nutrition director.
- Review the list of competency-based interview questions below that are tailored to assess the desired knowledge, skills and behaviors.

## 2. Introduction

- Start the interview by introducing yourself and providing an overview of the interview process.
- Encourage candidates to draw from both their work and non-work experiences to respond to questions.

## 3. Asking Questions

- Pose competency-based interview questions one at a time, allowing candidates sufficient time to formulate their responses.
- Use probing techniques such as asking for specific examples or clarifications to ensure comprehensive responses. Some examples are provided below:
  - Can you walk us through what you did first?*
  - How did you measure success?*
  - What was the outcome?*
  - What would you do differently?*
- Maintain a neutral and non-judgmental demeanor to create a comfortable environment for open communication.

## 4. Active Listening

- Listen attentively to candidates' responses, paying close attention to the details of their examples and experiences.
- Take notes to capture key points and examples provided by the participants.

## 5. Evaluation

- Assess candidates' responses against predetermined criteria provided for each competency.
- Consider the depth of their examples, the relevance of their experiences, and the effectiveness of their actions in addressing the given situations.
- Use the standardized rating scale provided to evaluate candidates' proficiency in each competency.

# Competency-Based Interview Guide

## 6. Follow-Up Questions

- If necessary, ask follow-up questions to seek clarification or gather additional information about specific aspects of the candidate's response.
- Ensure that follow-up questions are focused and directly related to the competency being assessed.

## 7. Conclusion:

- Conclude the interview by thanking the candidate for their time and participation.
- Offer an opportunity for candidates to ask any questions they may have about the role or the organization.
- Provide information on the next steps in the selection process and when they can expect to hear back from you.

By following these steps, you can conduct effective competency-based interviews that enable you to assess candidates' knowledge, skills, experiences, and suitability for the role.

# Competency-Based Interview Guide

## School Nutrition Director

### (1) Financial Management

#### Core Competencies

- Develops and oversees a financial management system that supports school meal program operations and ensures alignment with program goals and regulatory requirements.
- Establishes cost control goals to effectively manage the school meal program.

#### Sample Interview Questions

1. Describe your approach to managing a program budget.
2. Tell us about a time you implemented cost-saving measures without compromising quality.

#### Work Samples

- Bug reports
- Cost analyses
- Audit results

#### Candidate Response:

#### Scoring & Notes

Overall Competency Proficiency Score (1–4): \_\_\_\_\_

#### Notes:

# Competency-Based Interview Guide

## School Nutrition Director

### (2) Food Production and Operations Management

#### Core Competencies

- Develops a management system that upholds high standards for quality food production.
- Establishes operational systems that ensure effective management of food production and service.

#### Sample Interview Questions

1. How do you ensure quality and efficiency in meal production?
2. Describe an operational improvement you led.

#### Work Samples

- SOPs
- Production logs
- Workflow diagrams

#### Candidate Response:

#### Scoring & Notes

Overall Competency Proficiency Score (1–4): \_\_\_\_\_

#### Notes:

# Competency-Based Interview Guide

## School Nutrition Director

### (3) Food Security, Sanitation, and Safety

#### Core Competencies

- Establishes policies and procedures to ensure food is prepared and served in a sanitary and safe environment.
- Provides leadership in creating safe work environments for school nutrition operations.

#### Sample Interview Questions

1. How do you ensure food safety across all sites?
2. Give an example of creating a safe work environment.

#### Work Samples

- HACCP logs
- Inspection reports
- Training records

#### Candidate Response:

#### Scoring & Notes

Overall Competency Proficiency Score (1–4): \_\_\_\_\_

#### Notes:

# Competency-Based Interview Guide

## School Nutrition Director

### (4) Emergency Preparedness

#### Core Competencies

- Develops a systematic approach to address emergency and disaster situations.

#### Sample Interview Questions

1. How have you prepared a feeding plan for emergencies or school closures?

#### Work Samples

- Emergency plans
- COOP documents
- Crisis reports

#### Candidate Response:

#### Scoring & Notes

Overall Competency Proficiency Score (1–4): \_\_\_\_\_

#### Notes:

# Competency-Based Interview Guide

## School Nutrition Director

### (5) Human Resource Management

#### Core Competencies

- Establishes a human resource infrastructure for the school meal program that complies with school district policies as well as federal, State, and local regulations.
- Develops and implements a process for recruiting, hiring, retaining, and promoting qualified school nutrition staff in compliance with the school district's written procedures and labor laws.
- Designs a comprehensive needs-based training infrastructure that enhances learning and improves job skills.

#### Sample Interview Questions

1. Describe your process for recruiting and retaining staff.
2. How do you design training to improve staff skills?

#### Work Samples

- Training logs
- Recruitment plans
- PD records

#### Candidate Response:

#### Scoring & Notes

Overall Competency Proficiency Score (1-4): \_\_\_\_\_

#### Notes:

# Competency-Based Interview Guide

## School Nutrition Director

### (6) Marketing and Communications

#### Core Competencies

- Works collaboratively and effectively within and outside the school meal program to achieve program-related goals.
- Develops and implements customer-oriented approaches to achieve and maintain quality service and engagement.
- Actively promotes the school meal program to internal and external stakeholders.

#### Sample Interview Questions

1. How do you communicate program goals to stakeholders?
2. Give an example of promoting the program externally.

#### Work Samples

- Newsletters
- Social media posts
- Stakeholder engagement plans

#### Candidate Response:

#### Scoring & Notes

Overall Competency Proficiency Score (1–4): \_\_\_\_\_

#### Notes:

# Competency-Based Interview Guide

## School Nutrition Director

### (7) Menu and Nutrition Management

#### Core Competencies

- Develops guidelines for planning menus that comply with nutrition objectives and support operational goals of the school meal program.
- Provides leadership to support the nutrition and wellness initiatives within the school district.

#### Sample Interview Questions

1. How do you ensure menus meet nutrition objectives?
2. How do you support district wellness initiatives?

#### Work Samples

- Cycle menus
- Nutrition analyses
- Wellness campaign materials

#### Candidate Response:

#### Scoring & Notes

Overall Competency Proficiency Score (1–4): \_\_\_\_\_

#### Notes:

# Competency-Based Interview Guide

## School Nutrition Director

### (8) Procurement and Inventory Management

#### Core Competencies

- Develops procurement guidelines that comply with established regulations and support operational goals of the school meal program.
- Establishes operational procedures to effectively manage receiving and inventory systems.

#### Sample Interview Questions

1. How do you manage procurement compliance?
2. Describe a time you improved inventory management.

#### Work Samples

- Procurement logs
- Inventory reports
- Vendor contracts

#### Candidate Response:

#### Scoring & Notes

Overall Competency Proficiency Score (1–4): \_\_\_\_\_

#### Notes:

# Competency-Based Interview Guide

## School Nutrition Director

### (9) Program Management and Accountability

#### Core Competencies

- Establishes a system to ensure nutritional, financial, and regulatory accountability of the school meal program.
- Provides leadership to position the school meal program as an integral component of the school district.

#### Sample Interview Questions

1. How do you maintain overall program accountability?
2. How do you promote the program's value district-wide?

#### Work Samples

- Audit reports
- Program evaluations
- Stakeholder communications

#### Candidate Response:

#### Scoring & Notes

Overall Competency Proficiency Score (1-4): \_\_\_\_\_

#### Notes:



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