Competencies, Knowledge, and Skills for District-Level School Nutrition Professionals in the 21st Century

Phase II
- Review panel consisted of 52 SN professionals representing 27 states in the seven USDA regions.
- Review panel participants included state agency representatives, SN directors, and NFSMI staff.
- Review panel members responded to a mailed survey that asked them to:
  - verify whether the knowledge and skill statements are important to job responsibilities of an SN director/supervisor;
  - categorize the knowledge and skill statements into three district groups: essential, advanced, or just-in-time and
  - confirm whether the competency statements are consistent with the supporting knowledge and skill statements.

RESULTS
Ten functional areas were identified that encompass the job responsibilities of district-level SN professionals: facilities and equipment management; financial management; food production and operation management; food safety; nutrition management; marketing and communication; menu and nutrition management; procurement and inventory management; program management, accountability, and technology, and information systems.
Twelve-three competencies, 128 knowledge statements, and 187 skill statements were confirmed by the Phase II review panel.
The review panel identified 291 statements as being essential knowledge or skills needed to administer the SN program.

APPLICATION
- The functional areas, competencies, knowledge, and skills identified in this project provide a clear picture of the role of SN professionals at the district level.
- School district administrators can use the knowledge and skill statements and the sample job description template in preparing job descriptions and identifying evaluation criteria for SN directors.
- The competencies, knowledge, and skills can provide the foundation, when needed, to design other district-level SN positions and prepare job descriptions.
- These findings can provide the basis for mentoring and other succession planning activities to prepare SN professionals for district-level responsibilities.

PROJECT DEFINITIONS
- School nutrition directors/supervisors are the professionals who oversee all aspects of the district-wide school nutrition program. This could be at a central district or school nutrition professional.
- Functional areas are the broad groupings or divisions of job responsibilities that are performed by directors/supervisors within the local school nutrition operation. These categories vary as an umbrella for all job responsibilities that occur on a daily, weekly, seasonal, or yearly basis.
- Competencies are underlying characteristics within each functional area that lead to successful performance. They may include knowledge and skills as well as various levels of motivation.
- Knowledge is the information a person has in specific content areas that is necessary for successful performance in a competency area.
- Skills are the abilities to perform certain physical and/or mental tasks that are necessary for successful performance in a competency area.

Web-based Resource
The Web-based resource that provides the competencies, knowledge, and skills for district-level school nutrition professionals and sample job description template is available at: http://www.nfsmi.org/documentlibrary/files/PDFs/00904006112559.pdf

PURPOSE
To identify the functional areas, competencies, knowledge, and skills needed by district-level school nutrition (SN) professionals to be successful in the 21st century.