

Job Functions and Training Needs of State Agency Child Nutrition Professionals



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**National Food Service Management Institute
The University of Mississippi**

Building the Future Through Child Nutrition

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PURPOSE

The purpose of the National Food Service Management Institute is to improve the operation of child nutrition programs through research, education and training, and information dissemination.

MISSION

The mission of the National Food Service Management Institute is to provide information and services that promote the continuous improvement of child nutrition programs.

VISION

The vision of the National Food Service Management Institute is to be the leader in providing education, research, and resources to promote excellence in child nutrition programs.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Headquarters

Administrative Division

The University of Mississippi

Phone: 800-321-3054

Fax: 800-321-3061

www.nfsmi.org

Education and Training Division

Information Services Division

The University of Mississippi

6 Jeanette Phillips Drive

P.O. Drawer 188

University, MS 38677-0188

Applied Research Division

The University of Southern Mississippi

118 College Drive #5060

Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001

Phone: 601-266-5773

Fax: 888-262-9631

Acknowledgments

WRITTEN AND DEVELOPED BY

**Evelina Cross, PhD, RD
Researcher**

**Mary Frances Nettles, PhD, RD
Director**

**Applied Research Division
The University of Southern Mississippi**

**NFSMI EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Katie Wilson, PhD, SNS**

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**JOB FUNCTIONS AND TRAINING NEEDS OF STATE AGENCY
CHILD NUTRITION PROFESSIONALS**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The passage of the National School Lunch Act of 1946 initiated an ongoing partnership among the federal government, states, and local school districts to provide healthy, nutritious meals and snacks to the nation's children. The role of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) is to define state responsibility, establish national standards, and maintain general supervision. State agencies receive federal rules and regulations governing each nutrition assistance program from the USDA, Food and Nutrition Service (FNS). State agencies assist program sponsors and coordinate/provide training and technical assistance to program sponsors. Career professionals are employed by state agencies to oversee the child nutrition (CN) programs. Their responsibilities include planning, administering, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating all aspects of the CN programs to ensure that meals served to clients by local school districts and other program sponsors are nutritious, age appropriate, appealing, and cost effective. The environment in which CN programs operate is complex, dynamic, and changing at an ever more rapid pace. However, limited literature was found that focused on the role of state agency staff overseeing CN programs. Thus, the objectives of this research were to identify job functions, job responsibilities, training needs, and training preferences of CN professionals working in state agencies.

This research was conducted in two phases. In Phase I, an expert panel of state agency CN professionals participated in a modified Delphi process to identify the functional areas encompassing the job responsibilities of state agency CN professionals. During a work group

session, the expert panel agreed on the responsibilities needed by state agency CN professionals, sorted the responsibilities into the appropriate functional areas, and discussed training needs and preferences. In Phase II, a nationwide review panel completed an electronic survey to verify the job responsibilities and training needs and preferences developed by the expert panel.

Six functional areas encompassing the job responsibilities of state agency CN professionals were identified: financial management; personnel management; program and regulatory compliance; program management; technology and data management; and training, technical assistance, and outreach. Definitions were developed for each functional area, and 39 job responsibilities related to the functional areas were identified and confirmed. Most state agency CN professionals rely upon training, resources, and on-the-job training provided by the USDA, FNS. Consistent interpretation of USDA guidance and regulations across all states was the most desired element in training and continuing education.

The functional areas, job responsibilities, and training needs and preferences identified in this project provide a picture of the role of CN professionals at the state level. Administrators can use this information to prepare job descriptions and evaluation criteria for state agency CN staff. These findings also can provide the basis for mentoring and other succession planning activities to prepare CN professionals for state-level responsibilities.

INTRODUCTION

The National School Lunch Act of 1946 (NSLA) began on-going partnerships among the federal government, states, and local school districts (Gunderson, 1971). As outlined in the NSLA, the role of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) was to define state responsibility, establish national standards, and maintain general supervision. The state educational agency was responsible for program administration within the state. States were required to enter into an agreement with the USDA that outlined the receipt and disbursement of funds and foods received for distribution and the supervision of the program in schools to ensure compliance with the NSLA regulations (Martin, 2008).

Additional nutrition assistance programs have been established since the initial passage of the NSLA, such as the School Breakfast Program, Special Milk Program, Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program, Summer Food Service Program, Afterschool Snack Program, Team Nutrition, and the Child and Adult Care Program (Hopgood, 2008).

State agencies play a key role as the liaison among USDA, Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), and the local child nutrition (CN) sponsors in their states. State agencies receive federal rules and regulations governing each nutrition assistance program from the USDA, FNS. They assist school districts and other program sponsors in providing quality nutrition programs for the children of their states.

In addition to reviewing programs for compliance with regulations, state agencies also provide additional assistance to school districts and other program sponsors. State agencies are responsible for the reimbursement of federal program funds used in the operation of local programs. Many state agencies coordinate and provide both training and technical assistance to program sponsors (Martin, 1999).

Since its inception, the National Food Service Management Institute, Applied Research Division, has been in the forefront in identifying the competencies, knowledge, and skills needed by professionals working in the CN arena. Early leaders in school nutrition (SN) recognized the benefits of establishing standards for personnel, as well as developing training programs for the various levels of SN personnel. Research studies have been conducted to identify the job functions/duties, competencies, knowledge, and skills needed for effective SN supervisors/directors, SN managers, SN assistants/technicians, and sponsor monitors of family day care homes (Carr & Oakley, 2002; Cater & Carr, 2004; Nettles & Carr, 2006; Nettles, Carr & Asperin, 2010). Identification of common functions, competencies, and skills needed by CN personnel working in state agencies provides the framework for state agency CN job responsibilities, and contributes to building a strong training infrastructure consistent from state to state. It is critical to have a common system of training, as it offers a method to transmit expectations for excellent performance and to strengthen accountability. Strong accountability provides the vital link between state agency expectations and local performance across the nation so that all children can be assured of receiving reliably excellent service no matter the location. No research was found that focused on the roles of state agency staff overseeing CN programs.

Research Objectives

The overall goals of this study were to identify current job functions and responsibilities needed by CN professionals working in state agencies to effectively conduct reviews and provide technical assistance to local CN agencies. The specific objectives were to:

- Identify the functional areas that encompass the responsibilities of state agency CN professionals;
- Develop definitions for functional areas;
- Develop literature- and experience-based job responsibility statements;
- Identify the job responsibility statements needed for each functional area;
- Verify the job responsibility statements developed; and
- Identify training needs and preferred training methods of CN professionals who work in state agencies.

METHOD

Research Plan

This research project was conducted in two phases. Phase I utilized an expert panel consisting of state agency child nutrition (CN) professionals to ascertain the functional areas encompassing the job responsibilities of state agency CN professionals. Expert panel members also identified the job responsibility statements needed in each functional area, and sorted the statements into functional area categories. The findings from Phase I were used to develop an electronic survey to confirm the job responsibility statements. In Phase II, the survey was sent to a review panel of state agency professionals across the United States.

Phase I

Expert Panel

State agency CN directors and/or staff who were recognized as experts, ran exemplary programs, and viewed as leaders across the nation, were asked to participate in the research project. Potential participants were e-mailed details of the research study and an invitation to participate. Ten state agency CN professionals were selected to serve on the expert panel for the research project. Participants were current CN state directors or state agency staff with representation from all seven United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) geographic regions.

Modified Delphi Technique

A modified Delphi technique of six rounds was used to bring about agreement concerning the functional areas encompassing the job responsibilities of state agency CN professionals. Each Delphi round was conducted by e-mail, with the questionnaire and summary

of the previous round sent as attachments to the participants. Expert panel members were asked to open the file, complete the questionnaire, and return it by e-mail as an attachment.

Prior to beginning Round 1, the researcher e-mailed the expert panel members an overview of the research process. This e-mail informed panel members of the purpose of the research project, summarized the modified Delphi technique process, emphasized the importance of their participation, assured them of the confidentiality of their responses, and provided the researcher's contact information for questions and concerns.

Round 1

Each expert panel member received an instructional e-mail with the Round 1 questionnaire attached. The e-mail outlined the steps to follow when completing the Round 1 questionnaire and the return date for the questionnaire. The Round 1 questionnaire consisted of open-ended questions asking expert panel members to list the functional areas or broad groupings that summarize the responsibilities of state agency CN professionals. They were also asked to provide a brief description or definition for each functional area listed. In order to frame the assignment and to ensure that panel members were consistent in their interpretation of the assignment, the researcher provided the following definitions.

- **State agency child nutrition professionals** are the individuals employed by the CN state agency, such as nutrition program specialists, administrative personnel, and financial specialists who work with the National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, Food Distribution Program, Child and Adult Care Program, and Summer Food Service Program. For the purpose of this research, the roles of clerical and support staff were not addressed.

- **Functional areas** are the broad groupings or divisions of job responsibilities that are performed by the CN professionals within the state agency.
- **Job Responsibilities** are the areas of expertise and accountability within each functional area that are necessary to ensure that the purpose(s) of the job are met.

In addition, expert panel members were asked questions concerning their tenure as a state agency CN professional, their certification/credentialed status, and their highest level of education.

All ten (100%) expert panel members returned the round 1 questionnaire. The researcher summarized the expert panel members' responses to round 1 to incorporate them into round 2.

Round 2

The researcher e-mailed the Round 1 summary, Round 2 questionnaire, and instructions to each expert panel member. The instructions outlined the steps to use when completing the questionnaire. Expert panel members were asked to review the summary of round 1, in which participants identified the functional areas that described the jobs held by state agency CN professionals. The round 2 questionnaire listed the functional areas identified in round 1. Panel members were instructed to rate their agreement with the groupings or topic areas as a primary function for the job of a state agency CN professional by using a 4-point scale, ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 4 (*strongly agree*). Next, panel members determined if each topic was appropriate as a major functional area and if not, to describe the reason. Panel members were asked to decide if the functional area could be combined with another area(s) and to suggest the area(s) with which it might be combined. Lastly, they were offered the opportunity to provide suggestions for re-wording the functional area or new functional area, if combined with another area. Nine (90%) expert panel members returned the round 2 questionnaire. The researcher summarized the expert panel members' responses to round 2 to incorporate them into round 3.

Round 3

The researcher e-mailed two Round 3 questionnaires and instructions to each expert panel member. The instructions outlined the steps to use when completing the two questionnaires. Expert panel members were instructed to review the agreement percentages from the round 2 summary. The first round 3 questionnaire listed the functional areas in descending order based on round 2 results from the question, “*Is this topic appropriate to be a major functional area?*” The researcher recommended to “*keep*” or “*delete*” the functional area based on a level of 75% agreement of expert panel members. Panel members indicated if they agreed with the recommendation to keep the functional area, and if not, described the reason. Suggested wordings for naming the functional areas were listed, and panel members indicated their preferences. The functional areas below the 75% agreement threshold were listed on the second round 3 questionnaire. Expert panel members were asked to indicate if they agreed with the recommendation to delete the functional area. If they did not agree to delete the functional area, they indicated if the area should be combined with another functional area. If they responded affirmatively, panel members suggested the functional area(s) with which it could be combined. They also proposed suggestions for naming the functional area.

Nine (90%) expert panel members returned the two round 3 questionnaires. The researcher summarized expert panel members’ responses to round 3 to integrate into round 4.

Round 4

The researcher e-mailed the Round 4 questionnaire and instructions to each expert panel member. Panel members were asked to review the summaries of the two round 3 questionnaires prior to beginning round 4. The round 4 questionnaire was divided into three sections. In the first section, the functional areas listed were above the 75% threshold criterion for retention. Expert

panel members reviewed the suggested names for the functional areas, and indicated their choice for the name of each functional area. The researcher described the guideline for selecting the name of each functional area as the choice of name that received a simple majority (one over 50%). Four functional areas met this threshold in round 3. In the remaining two sections of the round 4 questionnaire, the functional areas listed were not deleted in round 3. Many of the expert panel members indicated that these functional areas could be combined. Based on round 3 results, the researcher grouped similar functional areas, and asked specific questions about whether the functional areas should be combined. Expert panel members reviewed the suggested wording for naming the new functional area and listed their choice. All ten (100%) expert panel members returned the round 4 questionnaire. The researcher summarized the expert panel members' responses to round 4 to incorporate into round 5.

Round 5

The researcher e-mailed the Round 5 questionnaire and instructions to the expert panel. Panel members reviewed the summaries of the round 4 questionnaire prior to beginning round 5. The round 5 questionnaire was divided into two sections. In the first section, six functional areas were listed that were above the 75% agreement threshold, along with the names identified for five of the functional areas that had met the simple majority (one over 50%) guideline. Panel members were asked to review the suggested names for the one un-named functional area, and to identify their choice for the name. In the second section, fourteen functional areas that were not deleted in round 4 were listed. Expert panel members responded to specific questions regarding combining the functional areas, and provided suggestions for naming the new functional area(s). Nine (90%) expert panel members returned the round 5 questionnaire.

Round 6

The researcher e-mailed the Round 6 questionnaire and instructions to the expert panel members. Expert panel members reviewed the summary of the round 5 questionnaire prior to beginning round 6. The round 6 questionnaire listed eight functional areas that were above the 75% agreement threshold, along with the names that had met the simple majority (one over 50%) guideline, identifying the eight functional areas. Eight functional areas that were not deleted in round 5 were listed. Expert panel members responded to specific questions concerning combining the functional areas, and provided suggestions for naming the new area(s). Consensus was reached for six functional areas, and two areas still needed to be combined and/or determined. Eight (80%) expert panel members returned the round 6 questionnaire.

Job Responsibility Statements

The researchers drafted job responsibility statements using a review of USDA, School Nutrition Association, National Food Service Management Institute resources, and current state agency CN professionals' job descriptions and organizational charts provided by state agency/bureau directors in earlier research. Additional job descriptions were accessed from state agency Web sites. These resources were analyzed, items were reviewed, and subjects sorted into similar themes. Based on this analysis, 110 job responsibility statements were drafted.

Work Group Session

In preparation for a two-day work group meeting, a cover letter, instructions, and a pre-meeting document containing draft job responsibility statements were e-mailed to the expert panel members. As they reviewed the draft job responsibility statements, expert panel members

were instructed to consider the following questions:

- Is this job responsibility needed by state agency CN professionals to be effective in their jobs in the current environment?
- Is this job responsibility needed by CN professionals in state agencies across the nation?

For each statement, panel members recorded their responses to the questions, “*Do you agree this is a responsibility related to state agency CN professionals?*” and, “*Do you agree with the wording of the responsibility statement?*” Space was provided for panel members to record their comments about the statements and the wording of the statements. Panel members were asked to list additional job responsibility statements they believed had been omitted. Expert panel members were reminded to utilize their state agency experience while considering the diversity of state agencies across the nation, so that the final job responsibility statements would address the responsibilities of state agency CN professionals in the United States.

The expert panel members attended a work group session to accomplish the following objectives:

- Agree upon final functional areas;
- Develop a definition for each functional area; and
- Identify job responsibility statements related to each functional area.

The expert panel members were assigned to one of two work groups of four members each. Panel members engaged in small panel discussions and consensus building activities. The groups worked independently to accomplish the following objectives:

- Review the wording of each job responsibility statement;
- Categorize the job responsibility statements into appropriate functional areas;

- Decide if there are any missing job responsibility statements and recommend wording; and
- Arrive at agreement on the job responsibility statements for each functional area.

Once the small groups completed their assignments, the researchers used consensus building steps to reach agreement with the panel members on a course of action for the wording on the job responsibility statements and the placement of statements into the functional areas. Finally, the group responded to a series of questions about the initial training and continuing education options utilized by state agencies and the training preferences of state agency CN professionals. Eight (80%) expert panel members attended the work group meeting.

Work Group Summary

Following the conclusion of the expert panel work group session, the researcher e-mailed a summary of the work completed at the meeting, and a job responsibility statements questionnaire to the expert panel members with instructions for completing the questionnaire.

The objectives of the questionnaire were to:

- Confirm the wording of the job responsibility statements from the work group session;
- Confirm the categorization of the job responsibility statements into the appropriate functional areas;
- Determine if there were job responsibility statements that needed to be added to any of the functional areas; and
- Draft the wording of new job responsibility statements.

Eight (80%) expert panel members returned the questionnaire. Following summarization of the responses to the questionnaire, a second questionnaire was sent asking panel members to

confirm job responsibility statements, and to solicit suggestions for additional job responsibility statements and wording to add to the one functional area that participants felt was incomplete.

A final questionnaire was sent to the expert panel members. This questionnaire summarized the previous questionnaire, and asked for agreement/non-agreement with a statement by researchers that one job responsibility statement was encompassed by a previously agreed-upon job responsibility statement. Eight (80%) members returned the final job responsibility statements questionnaire, agreeing with the researchers' recommendation.

Phase II

Review Panel

The directors of state agencies were asked to provide the names of three to five CN professionals within their state agency to participate on a review panel to confirm the job responsibility statements developed by the expert panel. Eighty-two state agency CN professionals representing the seven USDA regions were nominated to be on the review panel and to receive an electronic survey.

The electronic survey, entitled *State Agency Survey*, consisted of nine sections. The objectives of the survey were to:

- Verify the importance of the job responsibility statements to the accuracy and comprehensiveness of the job functions of state agency CN professionals; and
- Identify the initial training and continuing education options utilized by state agencies and the training preferences of state agency CN professionals.

The first section of the survey identified the purpose of the survey, provided essential definitions, and detailed instructions for completing the survey. The next six sections consisted of 39 job responsibility statements categorized into the appropriate functional area. Survey

respondents were asked to indicate the importance of each job responsibility statement to the job functions of state agency CN professionals using a 4-point scale, ranging from 1 (*not important*) to 4 (*extremely important*). To ensure that participants in the survey were consistent in their interpretations of the rating designation, the following definitions were provided:

- **Not important:** The job responsibility is not a necessary component of the functional area.
- **Somewhat important:** The job responsibility is a desired, but not necessary, component of the functional area.
- **Vital:** The job responsibility is an essential component of the functional area.
- **Extremely important:** The job responsibility is a requirement of maximum importance and must be included as a component of the functional area.

In the next (eighth) section of the survey, respondents were asked to provide information about the training and continuing education resources utilized by state agency CN professionals and their training preferences. The final section requested demographic information from the participants. They responded to questions such as their job title, highest level of education, certification/credentialed status, length of time worked in state agency CN programs, and the USDA region in which their state is located.

The survey and a cover letter were e-mailed to the 82 state agency CN professionals nominated by their state agency. The cover letter informed recipients of the purpose of the study, asked for their participation, assured them of the confidentiality of their responses, and provided the researchers' contact information for questions and concerns. Approximately three weeks later, a follow-up e-mail was sent to all review panel members who had not already responded, encouraging them to complete and return the surveys. A second reminder was sent one week

subsequent the first reminder, delaying the deadline for submission by a week, and asking for all who had not responded to submit their survey responses.

Informed Consent

The researchers followed informed consent procedures established by the Human Subjects Protection Review Committee at The University of Southern Mississippi for the research study.

Data Analysis

The electronic surveys were analyzed using the statistical package SPSS Version 18.0 for Windows. Descriptive statistics included means, standard deviations, and frequencies of total.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Phase I

Ten state agency child nutrition (CN) professionals served as expert panel members for the research project, *Investigation of the Job Functions and Training Needs of State Agency Child Nutrition Professionals*. Demographic information for the expert panel members is presented in Table 1. The preponderance (70%) of the state agency professionals had worked in CN programs at the state agency for eleven or more years. All (100%) held at least a bachelor’s degree, and two (20%) had completed a doctoral degree. The majority (60%) of the expert panel members were registered dietitians. All seven USDA geographic regions were represented on the panel.

Table 1

Personal and Program Characteristics of Expert Panel Members (n=10)

Demographic Question	Frequency	%
How long have you worked in Child Nutrition Programs at the State Agency?		
6-10 years	3	30.0
11-15 years	4	40.0
Greater than 20 years	3	30.0
What is your certification/credentialed status? ^a		
School Nutrition Association certified	2	20.0
School Nutrition Specialist credentialed	2	20.0
Licensed Dietitian/Nutritionist	5	50.0
Registered Dietitian	6	60.0
Other	2	20.0

^aTotal exceeds 100%, since respondents could select more than one response.

(Table 1 continues)

(Table 1 continued)

Personal and Program Characteristics of Expert Panel Members (n=10)

Demographic Question	Frequency	%
What is your highest level of education?		
Bachelor’s degree	1	10.0
Some graduate credits	2	20.0
Master’s degree	5	50.0
Doctoral degree	2	20.0
In which USDA region do you work?		
Western-AK, AZ, CA, GU, HI, ID, NV, OR, WA	1	10.0
Mid-Atlantic-DC, DE, MD, NJ, PA, PR, VA, VI, WV	1	10.0
Midwest-IL, IN, MI, MN, OH, WI	1	10.0
Southwest-AR, LA, NM, OK, TX	1	10.0
Mountain Plains-CO, IA, KS, MO, MT, ND, NE, SD, UT, WY	2	20.0
Southeast-AL, FL, GA, KY, MS, NC, SC, TN	2	20.0
Northeast-CT, MA, ME, NH, NY, RI, VT	2	20.0

^aTotal exceeds 100%, since respondents could select more than one response.

Of the ten state agency CN professionals invited to participate in the expert panel, ten participated in Rounds 1 and 4 (100%); nine in Rounds 2, 3, and 5 (90%), and eight (80%) in Round 6. Eight (80%) completed the post work group questionnaire, and seven completed the final job responsibility questionnaire #2 (70%).

The expert panel generated a list of functional areas/broad groupings during round 1 that they perceived described the job responsibilities of state agency CN professionals. The initial list was composed of 188 suggestions that were broadly summarized into 58 preliminary topic areas.

In Round 2, expert panel members reviewed the round 1 list of topic areas and definitions, and indicated whether the topic area was a primary function for the job of state agency CN professionals, whether the topic was appropriate to be a major functional area, or whether it could be combined with another/other area(s). Panel members indicated their choice

for wording of the topic areas. A total of 38 topic areas were identified. Seventy-five percent (75%) or greater of the panel members indicated that nine topics were appropriately categorized as functional areas. The remaining 29 topic areas received less than 75% agreement.

In round 3, expert panel members reviewed the round 2 summary and completed two round 3 questionnaires. Based on the round 2 results, the researcher provided a recommendation to “*keep*” or “*delete*” each of the 38 topic areas as a functional area, and listed suggested wording for naming the functional area. Seventy-five percent of the panel members agreed to keep nine of the topic areas as functional areas. Fifteen topic areas received less than seventy-five percent agreement, and were deleted as functional areas. An additional thirteen topic areas had less than a 75% agreement to keep them as functional areas, but panel members suggested that they be combined with others. The expert panel members indicated their choice for wording of the agreed-upon functional areas.

A simple majority was used in determining the name of each selected functional area. Sixty-seven percent agreed on the name of “Training and Technical Assistance” for one of the functional areas; 56% agreed on “Program Management;” 67% percent agreed on “Technology and Data Management;” and “Personnel Management” was agreed on by 60% of the respondents.

In round 4, the expert panel members reviewed the four functional area names selected in round 3, and selected “Program and Regulatory Compliance” (67%) as the name for a fifth functional area encompassing state agency CN program job responsibilities. Panel members identified a sixth functional area (90% agreement). Several topic areas were carried over to round 5 for additional clarification.

In round 5, expert panel members selected by majority agreement (67%) the name “Financial Management” for the sixth functional area. Participants continued to make decisions regarding the topic areas carried over from round 4. Three topic areas were incorporated into “Program and Regulatory Compliance,” one combined with “Program Management,” and two incorporated into “Personnel Management.”

Round 6 asked participants to review the round 5 summary and to complete the round 6 questionnaire. In the round 6 questionnaire, participants continued to select functional areas by combining topic areas, incorporating into another topic area, or by leaving the topic area as an independent functional area. Participants incorporated one topic area into “Program and Regulatory Compliance,” one into “Financial Management,” one into “Personnel Management,” and one into “Program Management.” No decision was reached on four topic areas, so selection of the final functional areas was completed at the work group meeting.

At the beginning of the work group meeting, the researcher summarized the results of the modified Delphi process that identified six functional areas and emphasized that when the process resulted in the deletion of topics areas, the topics were not eliminated but were incorporated into state agency CN professionals’ responsibilities. The expert work group reviewed the functional areas already decided, then discussed and came to consensus on the unresolved topic areas. All remaining topic areas were incorporated into the six agreed-upon functional areas. The “Training and Technical Assistance” functional area was renamed “Training, Technical Assistance, and Outreach” by the expert panel members.

In order to facilitate the work group process, the panel developed definitions for each

functional area. The final six functional areas and definitions for each are as follows:

- **Financial Management:** Provides fiscal oversight that includes managing finances through accurate budgeting, accounting, reporting of federal funds, and providing procedures and policy guidance to statewide entities is provided.
- **Personnel Management:** Fosters a successful organization through leadership, supervision, recruitment, retention, and professional development to accomplish the agency goals and mission.
- **Program Management:** Establishes an effective management system to ensure that all programs are administered per Code of Federal Regulations and other guidance.
- **Program and Regulatory Compliance:** Fosters program integrity by reviewing, interpreting, disseminating, evaluating, and ensuring policy and regulatory compliance per USDA and state instructions and guidance.
- **Technology and Data Management:** Uses technology to effectively manage programs and provide management reports and data.
- **Training, Technical Assistance, and Outreach:** Develops and provides training, technical assistance, and outreach services using a variety of delivery systems.

Eight expert panel members attended the work group session and were divided into two teams of four participants. Each group reviewed the job responsibility statements from the pre-meeting document and decided on a course of action. Their options were to omit the statement, revise the wording, or accept the statement as written. Their final step was to categorize the remaining job responsibility statements into functional areas. The two groups then worked to consensus and came to agreement on the wording of 36 job responsibility statements within the six functional areas.

The results of the work group meeting were summarized, and a questionnaire to verify the functional area definitions and job responsibility statements was e-mailed to all expert panel members. Eight (80%) members of the panel completed and returned the questionnaire. Seventy-five percent agreement was required to verify functional area definitions, job responsibility statements, and the functional area categorizations. All (100%) expert panel members confirmed the functional area definitions. Additionally, participants verified that all 36 job responsibility statements were responsibilities of state agency CN professionals and were categorized into the appropriate functional areas. When asked if the number of job responsibility statements was adequate to address each functional area, expert panel members agreed that the number was adequate for all functional areas except for the “Financial Management” functional area. The 50% agreement level did not meet the threshold of seventy-five percent. Four panel members provided comments/suggestions for additional “Financial Management” job responsibility statements.

The panel was sent another questionnaire asking members if the “Financial Management” job responsibilities suggested by panel members in the previous survey were a responsibility related to state agency CN professionals, should they be added to the “Financial Management” functional area, and did they agree with the wording of the job responsibility statement. All four job responsibility statements met the 75% agreement threshold. A final questionnaire was sent to the expert panel stating that one job responsibility statement was considered a skill by the researchers and was already encompassed by another job responsibility statement. This was confirmed by 100% of the respondents.

The final result of the modified Delphi process and work group session to identify functional areas and job responsibility statements for jobs held by state agency CN professionals was the confirmation of six functional areas and development of 39 job responsibility statements.

Phase II

Of the 82 CN professionals who were sent the electronic questionnaire, *State Agency Survey*, 53 (65%) responded and returned the survey. Demographic information about the respondents is illustrated in Table 2. Three-fourths of the CN professionals described their job title as Division/Section/Bureau Supervisor or State Agency Staff. The remaining respondents indicated that they were either a State Agency Director (9.4%) or Assistant State Agency Director (9.8%). The majority (60.4%) have worked in their current position for fifteen years or less. More than half of the CN professionals (56.6%) hold a Master's degree or have completed graduate level courses beyond the Master's. When asked about their credentialed status, 19 (30.6%) stated that they were not certified, and 19 (30.6%) were Registered Dietitians with the remaining respondents citing a variety of credentials. The five programs for which the most respondents are responsible were: National School Lunch Program-Public (57.5%), School Breakfast Program (57.7%), Summer Food Service Program (55.8%), Child and Adult Care Food Program-Child (55.8%), and National School Lunch Program-Private (51.9%). The program for which the lowest number of respondents was responsible was the Food Distribution Program (23.1%). All of the seven USDA geographic regions were represented with more than three-fourths (77.4%) of the respondents coming from the Southeast, Mountain Plains, and Midwest regions.

Table 2

Personal and Program Characteristics of Review Panel Respondents

Demographic Question	Frequency	%
What best describes your job title? (<i>n</i> =49)		
State Agency Director	5	10.2
Assistant State Agency Director	5	10.2
Division/Section/Bureau Supervisor	14	28.6
State Agency Staff	25	51.0
How long have you worked in your current position? (<i>n</i> =52)		
Less than one year	5	9.6
1-5 years	17	32.7
6-10 years	10	19.2
11-15 years	10	19.2
16-20 years	7	13.5
Greater than 20 years	3	5.8
With which programs do you work? ^a (<i>n</i> =52)		
National School Lunch Program-Public (NSLP)	30	57.7
School Breakfast Program (SBP)	30	57.7
Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)	29	55.8
Child and Adult Care Food Program-Child (CACFP)	29	55.8
National School Lunch Program-Private (NSLP)	27	51.9
Special Milk Program (SMP)	26	50.0
Residential Child Care Institutions-Private (RCCI)	24	46.2
Residential Child Care Institutions-Public (RACCI)	24	46.2
Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP)	23	44.2
Child and Adult Care Food Program-Adult (CACFP)	21	40.4
Food Distribution Program (FDP)	12	23.1
What are your broad job responsibilities? ^a (<i>n</i> =52)		
Compliance	43	82.7
Technical assistance	42	80.8
Education/training	42	80.8
Monitoring	35	67.3
Accountability	32	61.5
Administration	30	57.7
Outreach	26	50.0
Financial management	24	46.2
Human resource management	20	38.5

(Table 2 continues)

Table 2 continued

Personal and Program Characteristics of Review Panel Respondents

Nutrition and menu management	24	46.2
Auditing	24	46.2
Professional excellence	21	40.4
Grant preparation/administration	20	38.5 ^a
Research	11	21.2
Food distribution	7	13.5
What is your highest level of education? (n=52)		
High school diploma or GED	1	1.9
Associate's degree	3	5.8
Bachelor's degree	10	19.2
Some graduate credits	8	15.4
Master's degree	26	50.0
Graduate hours beyond Master's	4	7.7
What are your certifications/credentials? ^a (n=47)		
Not certified/credentialed	19	30.6
Registered Dietitian	19	30.6
Licensed Dietitian/Nutritionist	11	17.7
School Nutrition Specialist	5	8.1
School Nutrition Association certified	5	8.1
State Agency certified	2	3.2
Dietetic Technician, Registered	1	1.6
Dietitian Technician, Registered	1	1.6
In which USDA region do you work? (n=52)		
Mid-Atlantic-DC, DE, MD, NJ, PA, PR, VA, VI, WV	1	1.9
Southwest-AR, LA, NM, OK, TX	2	3.8
Northeast-CT, MA, ME, NH, NY, RI, VT	4	7.7
Western-AK, AZ, CA, GU, HI, ID, NV, OR, WA	4	7.7
Mountain Plains-CO, IA, KS, MO, MT, ND, NE, SD, UT, WY	13	25.0
Southeast-AL, FL, GA, KY, MS, NC, SC, TN	18	34.6
Midwest-IL, IN, MI, MN, OH, WI	10	19.2

^aTotal exceeds 100% since respondents could select more than one response

At the beginning of the electronic survey questions, researchers listed the definitions for state agency CN professionals, functional areas, and job responsibilities that have provided the foundation for this research. Review panel members reviewed the job responsibility statements

associated with each of the six functional areas, and rated the importance of each statement to the functional area. Job responsibility statements with a score of 2.5 or greater on a 4-point scale indicated that the survey respondents considered the statement important to the functional area, whereas a score of less than 2.5 indicated a level of disagreement as to the importance of the job responsibility statement. Tables 3-8 present the means and standard deviations for the importance ratings of the job responsibility statements as well as the frequencies and percentages of the responses in the six functional areas.

Functional Area 1: Financial Management

The “Financial Management” functional area contains four job responsibility statements. Mean ratings for all statements were 2.5 or greater, so no job responsibility statements were eliminated. The statement with the highest mean rating was, “Promptly and accurately process program claims and federal funding reports per regulations and financial requirements/guidance” (3.6 ± 0.8). The statement with the lowest mean rating was, “Develop and oversee a financial management system that manages and supports program goals which ensure regulatory compliance” (3.2 ± 0.3). The review panel’s mean agreement ratings for the job responsibility statements indicated that the survey respondents agreed the job responsibilities accurately reflect their importance to the functional area (Table 3).

Table 3

Functional Area 1: Financial Management

Job Responsibility Statement	How important? (M±SD)	Extremely # %	Vital # %	Somewhat # %	Not # %
Promptly and accurately process program claims and federal funding reports per regulations and financial requirements/guidance.	3.6 ± 0.8	38 (71.7)	8 (15.1)	5 (9.4)	2 (3.8)
Develop/provide input and manage USDA SAE and Summer Food Service Program MAP plans and Agency budget/appropriation process to ensure prompt levels of funding to administer child nutrition programs.	3.4 ± 0.8	30 (56.6)	16 (30.2)	5 (9.4)	2 (3.8)
Develop and disseminate financial procedures and policy guidance in the areas of budgeting and annual financial reports and submitting claims for reimbursement to program participants.	3.4 ± 0.7	28 (52.8)	17 (32.1)	7 (13.2)	
Develop and oversee a financial management system that manages and supports program goals which ensure regulatory compliance.	3.2 ± 0.3	29 (54.7)	12 (22.6)	12 (22.6)	

^a Scale = 4=Extremely important, 3= Vital, 2=Somewhat important, 1=Not important

Functional Area 2: Personnel Management

The “Personnel Management” functional area contains five job responsibility statements. All job responsibility statements achieved a mean rating of 2.5 or greater, so none were eliminated. The statement with the highest mean rating for importance was, “Provide leadership, direction, and support to child nutrition personnel for department/bureau operations” (3.5 ± 0.7). The job responsibility statement with the lowest mean rating was, “Collaborate with Human Resources to interpret and communicate human resource regulations, policies and procedures to program staff” (2.8 ± 0.8). The mean ratings indicate that all five job responsibility statements are an important part of the functional area, “Personnel Management” (Table 4).

Table 4

Functional Area 2: Personnel Management

Job Responsibility Statement	How important? (M±SD)	Extremely # %	Vital # %	Somewhat # %	Not # %
Provide leadership, direction, and support to child nutrition personnel for department/bureau operations.	3.5 ± 0.7	28 (52.8)	21 (39.6)	2 (3.8)	1 (1.9)
Establish a comprehensive training system based on current educational principles to include orientation, new employee training, continuing education, and on- going professional growth.	3.2 ± 0.6	16 (30.2)	32 (60.4)	4 (7.5)	
Establish a comprehensive personnel management infrastructure to best utilize and focus efforts toward fulfilling the mission of the organization and complying with federal, state, and local regulations and policies.	3.2 ± 0.8	19 (35.8)	26 (49.1)	4 (7.5)	3 (5.7)
Foster development of state personnel expertise in the use of current technologies for distance learning.	2.9 ± 0.8	11 (20.8)	28 (52.8)	10 (18.9)	3 (5.7)
Collaborate with Human Resources to interpret and communicate human resource regulations, policies, and procedures to program staff.	2.8 ± 0.8	10 (18.9)	23 (43.4)	17 (32.1)	2 (3.8)

^a Scale = 4=Extremely important, 3= Vital, 2=Somewhat important, 1=Not important

Functional Area 3: Program Management

The functional area “Program Management” contains 15 job responsibility statements. All achieved a mean rating of 2.5 or greater, so no job responsibility statements were eliminated from the functional area. The statements with the highest ratings were: “Plan, develop, implement, and evaluate child nutrition programs to meet changing priorities and support mission of the program” (3.4 ± 0.6); “Establish and administer electronic or manual recordkeeping and reporting instruments to maintain efficient and effective programs” (3.4 ± 0.6); “Develop a system to ensure timely and accurate submission of required reports and correspondence”(3.4 ± 0.7); “Formulate state policies and/or recommendations for

administration of child nutrition programs” (3.4 ± 0.7); and “Establish and maintain an environment conducive to continuous quality improvement by using project management skills and encouraging employee ideas, input, and teamwork” (3.4 ± 0.6). Statements with the lowest mean ratings were: “Support federal, state, local, and private disaster relief activities” (2.6 ± 0.7); and “Support media opportunities and publicity of child nutrition programs and the agency” (2.6 ± 0.7). All job responsibilities were validated as important to the functional area (Table 5).

Table 5

Functional Area 3: Program Management

Job Responsibility Statement	How important? (M±SD)	Extremely # %	Vital # %	Somewhat # %	Not # %
Plan, develop, implement, and evaluate child nutrition programs to meet changing priorities and support mission of the program.	3.4 ± 0.6	24 (45.3)	24 (45.3)	4 (7.5)	
Formulate state policies and/or recommendations for administration of child nutrition programs.	3.4 ± 0.7	27 (50.9)	20 (37.7)	4 (7.5)	1 (1.9)
Establish and administer electronic or manual recordkeeping and reporting instruments to maintain efficient and effective programs.	3.4 ± 0.6	27 (50.9)	21 (39.6)	4 (7.5)	
Develop a system to ensure timely and accurate submission of required reports and correspondence.	3.4 ± 0.7	24 (49.1)	1 (45.3)	1 (1.9)	1 (1.9)
Establish and maintain an environment conducive to continuous quality improvement by using project management skills and encouraging employee ideas, input, and teamwork.	3.4 ± 0.6	24 (45.3)	25 (47.2)	3 (5.7)	
Establish a systematic method for resolving problems and concerns relating to child food and nutrition programs.	3.3 ± 0.6	17 (32.1)	31 (58.5)	4 (7.5)	
Develop strategies to attain program goals and objectives and improve performance.	3.3 ± 0.5	18 (34.0)	32 (60.4)	2 (3.8)	

(Table 5 continues)

Table 5 continued

Functional Area 3: Program Management

Job Responsibility Statement	How important? (M±SD)	Extremely # %	Vital # %	Somewhat # %	Not # %
Develop and organize strategies for program excellence in accordance with federal, state, and departmental goals, vision, mission, and objectives.	3.2 ± 0.7	19 (35.8)	24 (45.3)	7 (13.2)	
Serve as liaison to advocacy groups, other state government agencies, and USDA to provide department philosophy, policies, procedures and regulations.	3.1 ± 0.7	18 (34.0)	23 (43.4)	10 (18.9)	1 (1.9)
Investigate, adapt, and apply educational policies, research, issues, and topics relevant to improved child nutrition programs.	3.0 ± 0.6	9 (17.0)	32 (60.4)	10 (18.9)	
Establish a system for coordination and oversight of all grant activities.	3.0 ± 0.9	16 (30.2)	24 (45.3)	8 (15.1)	4 (7.6)
Interpret, analyze, review, and provide written/oral testimony related to child nutrition programs.	2.9 ± 0.9	15 (28.3)	18 (34.0)	16 (30.2)	3 (5.7)
Support federal, state, local, and private disaster relief activities.	2.6 ± 0.7	19 (35.8)	25 (47.2)	1 (1.9)	1 (1.9)
Represent Agency on boards, task forces, advocates, state and national organizations, and state and federal agencies.	3.1 ± 0.8	15 (28.3)	26 (49.1)	10 (18.9)	1 (1.9)
Support media opportunities and publicity of child nutrition programs and the agency.	2.6 ± 0.7	12 (22.6)	22 (41.5)	16 (30.2)	2 (3.8)

^a Scale = 4=Extremely important, 3= Vital, 2=Somewhat important, 1=Not important

Functional Area 4: Program and Regulatory Compliance

The “Program and Regulatory Compliance” functional area contains six job responsibility statements. The mean importance ratings for all the statements were 2.5 or greater, so no job responsibility statements were eliminated. The statement with the highest mean rating was, “Ensure compliance with federal, state, and local policies and rules and regulations for all

participating entities” (3.9 ± 0.3). The job responsibility statement with the lowest mean rating was, “Evaluate policies and recommend changes and policy revisions” (3.3 ± 0.8). The consistently high mean ratings for the job responsibilities in the “Program and Regulatory Compliance” functional area indicated that respondents agreed that all the statements were important and validated the expert panel’s development of the job responsibility statements for this area. Table 6 displays the mean agreement ratings for the statements.

Table 6

Functional Area 4: Program and Regulatory Compliance

Job Responsibility Statement	How important? (M±SD)	Extremely # %	Vital # %	Somewhat # %	Not # %
Ensure compliance with federal, state, and local policies, and rules and regulations for all participating entities.	3.9 ± 0.3	49 (92.5)	4 (7.5)		
Interpret regulations and develop and disseminate written guidance.	3.8 ± 0.5	44 (83.0)	8 (15.1)		1 (1.9)
Ensure that meals served in child nutrition programs meet nutritional standards and meal pattern requirements.	3.8 ± 0.6	44 (83.0)	6 (11.3)	2 (3.8)	1 (1.9)
Oversee the development, preparation, and implementation of program agreements, and ensure compliance with related requirements and regulations.	3.6 ± 0.7	35 (66.0)	14 (26.4)	3 (5.7)	1 (1.9)
Oversee the development, preparation, and implementation of program agreements, and ensure compliance with related requirements and regulations.	3.6 ± 0.7	35 (66.0)	14 (26.4)	3 (5.7)	1 (1.9)
Design program compliance review instruments and procedures to ensure uniform monitoring and review efforts throughout the state.	3.5 ± 0.7	31 (58.5)	18 (34.0)	2 (3.8)	1 (1.9)

(Table 6 continues)

(Table 6 continued)

Functional Area 4: Program and Regulatory Compliance

Job Responsibility Statement	How important? (M±SD)	Extremely	Vital	Somewhat	Not
		# %	# %	# %	# %
Evaluate policies and recommend changes and policy revisions.	3.3 ± 0.6	28 (52.8)	13 (24.5)	12 (22.6)	

^a Scale = 4=Extremely important, 3= Vital, 2=Somewhat important, 1=Not important

Functional Area 5: Technology and Data Management

The “Technology and Data Management” functional area contains two job responsibility statements. Both achieved a mean rating of 2.5 or greater. Neither job responsibility statement was eliminated. The job responsibility with the higher rating was, “Use available resources to ensure that information technology systems and infrastructure meet the operational needs of child nutrition programs” (3.7 ± 0.6). Both job responsibility statements were validated as important components of the functional area (Table 7).

Table 7

Functional Area 5: Technology and Data Management

Job Responsibility Statement	How important? (M±SD)	Extremely	Vital	Somewhat	Not
		# %	# %	# %	# %
Use available resources to ensure that information technology systems and infrastructure meet the operational needs of child nutrition programs and ensures USDA compliance.	3.7 ± 0.6	36 (67.9)	14 (26.4)	2 (3.8)	
Research, analyze, and propose the acquisition of technological equipment and computer software having the potential to make the work of the team more efficient and accurate.	3.3 ± 0.7	24 (45.3)	22 (41.5)	5 (9.4)	1 (1.9)

^a Scale = 4=Extremely important, 3= Vital, 2=Somewhat important, 1=Not important

Functional Area 6: Training, Technical Assistance, and Outreach

The functional area “Training, Technical Assistance, and Outreach” contains seven job responsibility statements. All received a mean rating of 2.5 or more, so no job responsibility statements were eliminated. The statement with the highest mean rating was, “Develop comprehensive training plan to reflect current program policies and procedures and identification of client needs, areas of non-compliance, and program goals using all types of delivery methods” (3.6 ± 0.5). The statement with the lowest mean rating was, “Assess nutrition services and needs on statewide basis” (2.6 ± 0.8). The survey respondents’ agreement ratings for the “Training, Technical Assistance, and Outreach” functional area are presented in Table 8. The results indicate agreement with the expert panel that the job responsibility statements are an important component of the functional area.

Table 8

Functional Area 6: Training, Technical Assistance, and Outreach

Job Responsibility Statement	How important? (M±SD)	Extremely	Vital	Somewhat	Not
		# %	# %	# %	# %
Develop comprehensive training plan to reflect current program policies and procedures and identification of client needs, areas of non-compliance, and program goals using all types of delivery methods.	3.6 ± 0.5	33 (62.3)	19 (35.8)	1 (1.9)	
Serve as a resource for educational materials, presentations, current research, and regulatory information.	3.5 ± 0.6	30 (56.6)	21 (39.6)	2 (3.8)	
Develop a comprehensive technical assistance plan to reflect current program policies and procedures and identification of client needs, areas of non-compliance, and program goals using all types of delivery methods.	3.4 ± 0.7	24 (45.3)	25 (47.2)	3 (5.7)	1 (1.9)
Establish a communication infrastructure that promotes child nutrition programs to internal and external stakeholders.	3.2 ± 0.7	16 (30.2)	29 (54.7)	8 (15.1)	
Develop and initiate outreach activities to expand the scope and effectiveness of child nutrition programs.	3.1 ± 0.7	14 (26.4)	29 (54.7)	9 (17.0)	1 (1.9)
Conduct needs assessment and act as resource for nutrition education and wellness/healthy environment.	2.8 ± 0.7	9 (17.0)	26 (49.1)	17 (32.1)	1 (1.9)
Assess nutrition education services and needs on statewide basis.	2.6 ± 0.8	6 (11.3)	25 (47.2)	19 (35.8)	3 (5.7)

^a Scale = 4=Extremely important, 3= Vital, 2=Somewhat important, 1=Not important

Training and Education Issues

The training/education section of the electronic survey investigated issues related to the training and professional development aspects of working as a CN professional within a state agency. Respondents were asked to identify the top five professional development/continuing

education options utilized by CN professionals in their state agency (Table 9). The five professional development/continuing education options most utilized by CN professionals within state agencies were “USDA/FNS training and resources” (90.4%), “Professional organizations and conferences” (80.8%), “Webinars” (78.8%), “National Food Service Management Institute (NFSMI) training and resources” (73.1%), and “Seminars/workshops” (57.5%). “Podcasts” was the only option not selected by any survey respondents.

Table 9

Professional Development/Continuing Education Options^a (n = 52)

Options	Number	%
USDA/FNS training and resources	47	90.4
Professional organizations and conferences	42	80.8
Webinars	41	78.8
NFSMI training and resources	38	73.1
Seminars/workshops	30	57.7
State Agency staff	19	36.5
Audio/video conferences	12	23.1
State agency departments	11	21.2
Professional books, journals, and/or magazines	6	11.5
Outside consultants	5	9.6
Individual, self-paced, computerized learning modules	4	7.7
Web-based modules	3	5.8
Podcasts	0	0.0

^a Percentage exceeds 100, because more than one option could be selected.

Survey respondents were asked to select the most effective methods for receiving continuing education (Table 10). The three most effective training methods selected by the respondents were “On-the-job training” (65.4%), “Audio/video conferences” (48.1%), and “Mentoring” (46.2%). The method that received the least number of responses was “Podcasts” (11.5%).

Table 10

Most Effective Methods for Receiving Continuing Education (n=52)

Method	Number	%^a
On-the-job training	34	65.4
Audio/video conferences	25	48.1
Mentoring	24	46.2
Self-paced, independent, on-line learning modules	23	44.2
Shadowing staff on-the-job	19	36.5
Group lecture	17	32.7
Individual review of policy/procedure manuals, training resources, etc.	16	30.8
Podcasts	6	11.5

^a Percentage exceeds 100, because more than one option could be selected

The survey respondents were asked what improvements in their training and continuing education they would like to have (Table 11). The two most common responses were, “Consistent interpretation of USDA guidance, regulations, etc. across all states,” (86.5%) and “Training modules by specific topic or functional area that can be accessed electronically” (71.2%). The response with the least number of responses was, “On-line, self-paced, independent

learning modules focusing on specific child nutrition programs and utilizing child nutrition program materials” (42.3%).

Table 11

Desired Improvements in Training and Continuing Education (n=52)

Improvement	Number	%^a
Consistent interpretation of USDA guidance, regulations, etc. across all states.	45	86.5
Training modules by specific topic or functional area that can be accessed electronically.	37	71.2
A central link for all state agencies to share education and training opportunities and resources and to eliminate duplication of effort.	34	65.4
Universal software consistent across all state agencies.	22	42.3
On-line, self-paced, independent learning modules focusing on specific child nutrition programs and utilizing child nutrition program materials.	22	42.3

^a Percentage exceeds 100, because more than one option could be selected.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Functional Areas and Job Responsibilities

The functional areas and job responsibilities identified in this project provide an understanding of the overall role of child nutrition (CN) professionals working in state agencies. To achieve a more in-depth and comprehensive description of the job requirements of state agency CN professionals, more research should be conducted. The knowledge and skills needed to perform effectively as a state agency CN professional should be developed through an experience and research-based process. When completed, the results will provide a basis for developing a sample job description template for preparing job descriptions for CN professionals. Additionally, the information can serve as a framework to identify the criteria for evaluating an effective CN professional working in a state agency, to advance knowledge and skills through professional development opportunities, and provide the basis for mentoring and other succession planning activities to prepare CN professionals for state agency level responsibilities.

Training Issues

Child nutrition professionals working in state agencies overwhelmingly utilize United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) training, Food and Nutrition Service training, and related resources for continuing education. Additionally, they rely on professional organizations and conferences, webinars, National Food Service Management Institute (NFSMI) education opportunities and resources, and seminars/workshops for the majority of their training and continuing education. The methods considered to be the most effective for receiving continuing education were “on-the-job” training, audio/video conferences, and mentoring. Respondents demonstrated a strong desire for consistent interpretation of USDA guidance and regulations and

on-line access to training modules specific to child nutrition programs. State agency CN professionals are eager to update their skills through professional education that is current and accessible on the job. Respondents expressed a strong desire/need for consistency in their profession in order to perform more effectively and efficiently.

Training modules should be developed to address each of the functional areas: Program and Regulatory Compliance; Financial Management; Technical Assistance and Outreach; Personnel Management; Program Management; and Technology and Data Management. The training modules should be based on the job responsibilities identified for each functional area with content and activities planned in accordance with adult education principles. The NFSMI, state agencies, and training professionals could use the modules to develop and customize professional development specifically designed for state agency CN professional staff.

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National Food Service Management Institute
The University of Mississippi
P. O. Drawer 188
University, MS 38677-0188
www.nfsmi.org

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