



# NETWORKS OF TRAINED CNP PROFESSIONALS

A PUBLICATION FOR CHILD NUTRITION PROFESSIONALS FROM THE NATIONAL FOOD SERVICE MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE

## OVERVIEW

*J. Martin, Executive Director*

Achieving the Child Nutrition Vision of "every child having access to healthy meals offered in a pleasant eating environment and served by compassionate, empowered people" will require the coordinated efforts of many groups working together. The key to the vision becoming a reality is people—competent, compassionate and empowered. Providing the educational opportunity and the incentive for all child nutrition personnel to have the skills to offer quality programs for all children can be achieved when states form networks of trained professionals (NETPRO). NETPRO answers four questions: Who needs to be trained? What kind of training is needed? Where are the personnel located? What is the best delivery system?

A network of professionals (NETPRO) brings together all the resources within a state or district. It develops a plan for delivering the appropriate training to every corner of the state, whether the training needed is at the GED level or the PhD level. The need for training is continuous for every person involved in Child Nutrition Programs (CNP) to keep up with the changing environment.

Congress directed NFSMI to "establish a network of trained professionals to conduct training and workshops." This task was reemphasized in the 1994 reauthorization of CNPs and even made more specific as follows: "training food service personnel to comply with nutrition guidance of Section 24 through a national network of instructors . . . .<sup>1</sup> Nanus says that effective leaders invest a good deal of their time in networking with people both inside and outside their organizations to gain consensus for their vision. The ideas of NETPRO will help turn your vision for competent, compassionate and empowered personnel into a reality. Robert Holland in *The Futurist* defines a basic requirement for the 21st century enterprise as the need to be networked. NFSMI's NETPRO workshops help states to develop their training networks to assure that appropriate trainers connect with appropriate resources to reach all CNP personnel in their states.

## NETWORK FOR PROFESSIONALS FOR STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Congress enacted legislation in 1989 to establish a National Food Service Management Institute (NFSMI). The purpose of NFSMI was to conduct activities to help improve the operation and effectiveness of CNPs. The National School Lunch Act and the Child Nutrition Act addressed education and training activities in great detail and specifically charged the new Institute with

"... establishing a network of trained professionals to present training programs and workshops for food service personnel." The acronym for the Network for Professionals for Staff Development is NETPRO.

The fact that Congress emphasized the need for a network for training and education is not surprising. This idea is consistent with contemporary authors such as Drucker, Peters and Waterman, Covey, and Bennis. They emphasize collaborative efforts, networking, partnering, and teamwork. The skills learned in NETPRO also are useful in most other activities in child nutrition—in working with students, parents, and administrators; marketing activities; and nutrition education. As detailed by the red triangles in *Figure 1*, CNP personnel need many skills to develop statewide networks of trainers. Among them are skills in needs assessment, communication, training and evaluation.

The blue triangles in *Figure 1* refer to the ultimate vision of well-trained CNP professionals and what they will achieve. The **Vision of NETPRO** is to establish a national network of CNP professionals to facilitate training and education of all child nutrition personnel. The goal is to motivate CNP personnel to achieve and maintain high standards in the management of Child Nutrition and Nutrition Education Programs that help meet children's nutritional needs by:

- providing meals in pleasant surroundings served by compassionate people, offering and encouraging healthy food choices,
- promoting the development of healthy food habits for a lifetime, and
- positioning CNPs as an integral part of health education programs.

The NETPRO concept is very much a part of the original *Master Plan of Education* of the American School Food Service Association (ASFSA). Congress recognized that states should have a network of professionals involved in and responsible for training. This network would collaboratively plan training and education of personnel in all programs under the Child Nutrition umbrella. A comprehensive program of education and training can penetrate into the most isolated and remote rural areas of the country and into the most populous portions of cities. The NETPRO definition became: *A concept that depends upon a structure for the delivery of staff development that links human resources within the states which contribute to quality child nutrition and nutrition education programs—a structure that supports staff development opportunities for all child nutrition and nutrition education personnel at every level.*

## NETPRO WORKSHOPS

The NFSMI worked with the NFSMI National Advisory Council, interested state and regional leaders, and ASFSA officers to develop the structure and delivery strategy of NETPRO. ASFSA "train the trainer" programs became an excellent avenue to support NETPRO in its initial development.

The national workshops began in 1992 with three NETPRO I workshops in Memphis. Other NETPRO I workshops were held in Denver and Las Vegas. NETPRO II was introduced in Baltimore with follow-up workshops in Dallas and Boston. NETPRO III was held in Baltimore in the spring of '95 as a pre conference workshop to the National NET Conference.

Professionals who are experts in training dynamics conduct all the NETPRO workshops. The original idea was that participants would attend the NETPRO workshops in sequence, going from NETPRO I to NETPRO IV. Eventually, each workshop was developed to be freestanding and taken in sequence; however, the opportunity for better access for participants became a consideration. Currently, workshop participants can enter and exit from one NETPRO to the next without consideration of order. NETPRO workshops are an excellent way for states and local school districts to maximize limited resources, and participants are invited to enter the NETPRO conference cycle at any stage.

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## NETPRO I

### TRAINING DELIVERY: INITIATING

Following the theme of initiating a network, NETPRO I emphasizes training delivery and includes visionary planning, teamwork, and training skills (*Figure 2*). The session provides the information needed for developing a network of professionals for staff development. The workshop provides time for actual networking among professionals attending the workshop.

One challenging aspect of the workshop is helping participants define a vision and develop a plan for networking in their states. A vision for the NETPRO is the picture of what you would like to see happen in the future. Though not measurable, a vision provides focus. Visions are flexible to allow for responding to changing ideas, technology, and circumstances. Guidelines for developing a vision statement include:

- Visions have many purposes: inspiring, directing, positioning, and tracking.
- Visions are used to lead individuals and groups of people to success.
- All aspects of an organization affected by the vision must be addressed.
- "Healthy discontent" plays a leading role in developing visions.
- Questions that help develop a vision for NETPRO:
  - What purpose do you want to accomplish?
  - Why is the purpose important?
  - What values and beliefs do you want to represent?
  - What is worthy of your time and energy?
  - Who will be served by your efforts?
- The guiding focus in developing visions for service-related professions is the needs of the customers.
- To maximize the strength available within the entire organizational structure, representatives of each group that delivers service must be involved in establishing, implementing, and evaluating the vision.

- Success in developing a workable, meaningful vision ultimately depends on teamwork.

After the vision statement has been developed, a plan for staff development is designed. This enables participants to return to their state and/or school district and initiate a network of professionals for staff development. The workshop facilitators place emphasis on the fact that the network should meet the needs of the specific school district, state, or region. It will enable them to reach their vision and stated goals.

The USED Model is an important component of the training skills segment of the workshop. In this model, originated by Beverly Showers of the South Carolina Department of Education, five training elements are identified: presenting the theory, modeling or demonstrating, providing practice, providing feedback, and coaching. The elements are in logical order but may be used in any order. Participants practice the skills they have learned so they can return home with a series of skill packets, tailored for managers or supervisors to teach foodservice staff.

## NETPRO II

### LEADERSHIP: DEVELOPING

The primary focus of this workshop is on developing leadership skills (*Figure 2*). Networking, training, focusing on the use of resources, shifting paradigms, false assumptions about communications, information literacy, the need to focus on customer needs, and outcome-based goals are covered in this segment. A vital part of this workshop is the completion of the NETPROfile and a status report of a NETWORK for PROFESSIONALS in the participant's district or state. The information is related to the content presented in NETPRO I, and it addresses the steps used to initiate the development of a NETPRO.

Participants also have the opportunity to use an instructional module on coaching skills for Child Nutrition personnel. The purpose of coaching is to help players do the best job they can. Participants are shown how to train managers to use coaching skills with their staff so that employees are encouraged to do their best job and the foodservice team performs as well as possible. Managers use coaching to encourage and motivate, to teach, and to reinforce and praise employees.

FIGURE 1

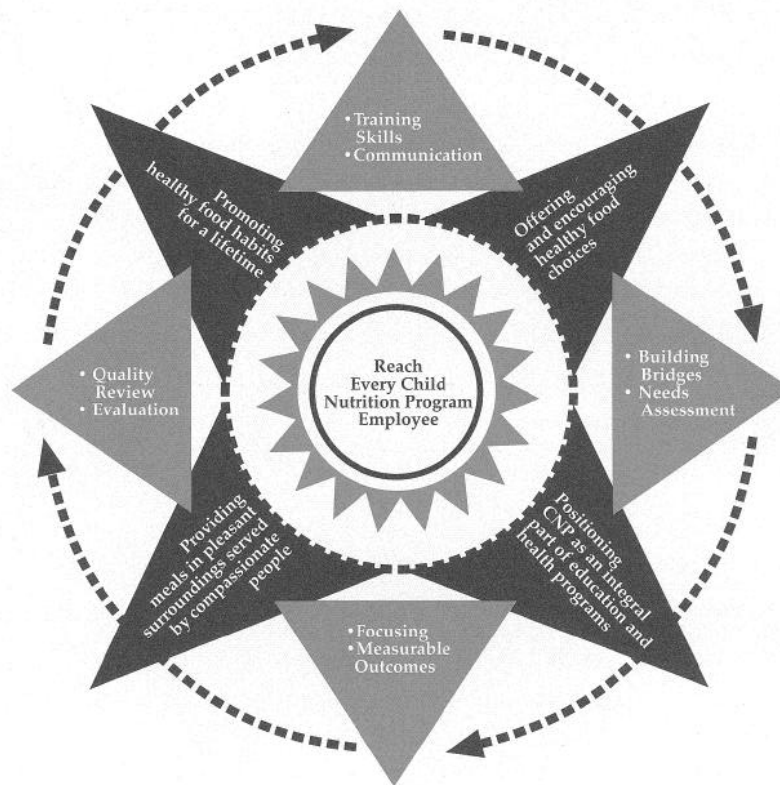


Figure 1. Vision of NETPRO

FIGURE 2

### Training Delivery

To initiate the development of a network for professionals for staff development.

1. To promote a vision of a network for staff development that links national, state, and district agencies, and customer-site resources and services.
2. To define models for a network for staff development.
3. To identify guidelines for effective teamwork that promote networking.
4. To identify training skills which enhance the networking process.
5. To create a plan for implementing a network for staff development.

### Leadership

To develop a network for professionals for staff development.

1. To develop a systems approach for implementing a network for professionals for staff development.
2. To identify leadership skills that promote the development of a network for professionals for staff development.
3. To apply networking skills to the development of a network for professionals for staff development.
4. To describe options for accessing existing training resources.
5. To develop a process for integrating an instructional module for coaching skills into the training delivery system.

### Planning and Evaluating Training

To support a network of professionals for staff development through planning and evaluating training.

1. To describe needs assessment as the process for determining training needs and priorities.
2. To define standards for developing measurable outcomes.
3. To describe a process for evaluating training.
4. To review adult training materials using a quality standard.
5. To promote the development of facilitation skills.

Figure 2. Objectives for NETPRO I, II, and III

The coaching portion of the workshop is designed to train CNP managers to improve the skills and work habits of foodservice assistants through coaching. The term "manager" refers to the foodservice manager, and the term "employee" is used to designate the foodservice assistant. Because all coaches use the same basic coaching skills, the workshop provides information for any manager to use in improving the performance of any employee.

## NETPRO III

### PLANNING AND EVALUATING OUTCOMES: FOCUSING

NETPRO III deals with needs assessment, measurable outcomes, evaluation, and training skills (*Figure 2*). Information also is provided on how to conduct a quality review of materials and resources available in child nutrition. This workshop is helpful to anyone who conducts training, designs materials, or is responsible for material selection.

The building block of the workshop is the Planning Process for Effective Training. Effective training begins with careful planning. First, effective trainers review the Child Nutrition Program mission statement and develop a vision statement. They establish a team for planning, implementing, and evaluating the training offered. The team adopts a training model that addresses the target population's needs as identified by a needs assessment. Training objectives are developed that describe the measurable outcomes to be achieved, and then appropriate training materials are selected or developed. Finally trainers implement, monitor, revise the training program as necessary, and evaluate the results.

## OVER 1,200 SCHOOL FOODSERVICE PROFESSIONALS HAVE BEEN TRAINED IN THE PAST TWO YEARS THROUGH THIS CADRE.

*Brenda Cusack - New Jersey*

Workshop facilitators discuss needs assessment as the process for deciding training needs and priorities. The general purpose of a training needs assessment is to obtain data to make decisions about training. A training needs assessment is essentially a gap analysis; it identifies the difference between the current performance or level of competence ("what is") and the desired level of performance or competence ("what should be"). It is important to conduct a training needs assessment for all

the groups for whom training is provided. Examples include: teachers, principals, district-level administrator, school nutrition district directors/supervisors, managers, school foodservice assistants, child care directors and staff, and others as needed.

## NETPRO SEEMS TO EMBODY A REAL TEAM OF PROFESSIONALS WORKING TOWARD PROVIDING THE BEST SERVICES FOR CHILDREN.

*Carol Griffith - Washington*

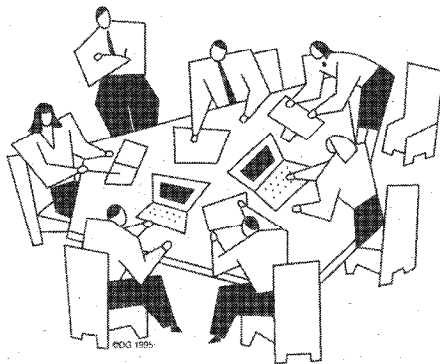
To plan a training needs assessment for identified target groups, workshop facilitators suggest the following steps:

- Decide whether you will seek information only from practitioners, from experts, or from both groups.
- Determine the objective(s) of the needs assessment.
- Select an appropriate data collection method/technique.
- Develop and carry out a management plan for conducting the needs assessment.
- Synthesize and interpret the findings.
- Present the findings.
- Draw conclusions.

## NETPRO IV

### QUALITY CONTROL: REFINING

Currently under development, NETPRO IV will complete the networking sequence by focusing on quality control, planning for revitalization and training skills.



# EVALUATION

The CNP professionals who have participated in NETPRO workshops are the best source of information on the value of the NETPRO experience. The following are statements from participants about networks for professional staff development they have developed in their states:

## KANSAS - Jodi Mackey

The Nutrition Services Team (NST) of the Kansas State Board of Education has developed a statewide network for training school foodservice professionals made up of twenty "Leadership Connections" groups. Group members are school foodservice directors/supervisors and managers.

NST created *Leadership Connections* in response to the NFSMI's charge to develop a nationwide training network. *Leadership Connections* groups provide strengthened communication between state staff and local school personnel, and an opportunity for local personnel to network. They also serve as a vehicle for cooperative development and delivery of school foodservice training.

## FLORIDA - Millie Kissinger

Florida's Comprehensive School Health Education Program will continue to train Comprehensive Health teams at schools. Team members consist of principals, nurses, teachers, parents, counselors, foodservice personnel, business partners, superintendents, school board members, and any other interested person they wish to choose for their team. The main goal of these teams is "Healthy children learn better and, as a result, have improved test scores."

## UTAH - Marilyn Clayton

Utah NETPRO participants are setting up a cadre of nine to twelve trainers throughout the state. The trainers will be trained in four focus areas: *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, new regulations/computer analysis of menus, *Target Your Market*, and nutrition education for the classroom. Each trainer will be accessible to school districts and child care facilities in their geographical area.

## INDIANA - Jane Regnier

Indiana has recently completed a series of five *HEALTHY E.D.G.E.* training workshops statewide. Two hundred foodservice employees attended and more training sessions will be conducted in the fall. NETPRO attendees have organized a formal training committee that meets regularly to assess needs for additional training. Indiana also has established an Interagency Nutrition Education Coordinating Committee. Representatives from all USDA programs are included along with Purdue University Cooperative Extension Service, Indiana Family and Social Services Administration, Indiana State Department of Health, and the Indiana Department of Education. The Committee's responsibilities are to develop materials or nutrition-related activities that will reach all USDA program participants.

## TENNESSEE - Jane Hamlet

Following NETPRO in Denver of 1993, an area of 23 school systems piloted NETPRO with managers. Presentations were done at the Area Workshop in August of 1994. Two

hundred individuals attended. At the 1995 TSFSA State Conference, six hours were devoted to NETPRO training. One session was "Managers Put NETPRO in Action." Cooperative training has been conducted with the UT-Extension staff.

## NEW JERSEY - Brenda Cusack

Nine adult evening schools throughout the state of New Jersey are offering courses in food safety and sanitation, *Dietary Guidelines/Healthy Edge*, and *Target Your Market*. Cadre members are the instructors for these courses. The cadre consists of school foodservice directors, managers, and general workers providing training in their area of expertise. Cadre members are required to attend at least two hours of training sponsored by NET and the Bureau of Child Nutrition Programs. This training is designed to enhance the skills of those who train others. Over 1,200 school foodservice professionals have been trained in the past two years through this cadre.

## SOUTH CAROLINA - Marci Clark

The six individuals from South Carolina who attended NETPRO sessions have been involved in a strategic planning process for school foodservice. One strategy is to "develop a comprehensive training plan that ensures competencies at all levels of school food services." The Strategic Planning for School Food Services was accomplished through the efforts of individuals from school cafeterias, business, school districts, the Departments of Education, Health, and Social Services in South Carolina, advocate groups, school boards, and State Office staff.

## WASHINGTON - Carol Griffith

In October of 1994, the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) Child Nutrition conducted a tailored NETPRO training session for a team of foodservice professionals. Thirty-four participants from a variety of CNPs participated in this three-day event. Participants were selected for their expertise in school foodservice, head start, child care, migrant services, education at the community college level, and other state agencies that work with CNPs. Seven regional NETPRO teams were formed at the conclusion of the workshop. The regional teams identified additional members in their respective areas that would affect the mission of the Child Nutrition section and listed training needs with respect to food and nutrition services. There has been an overwhelmingly positive response to NETPRO at the regional level. It seems to embody a real team of professionals working toward providing the best services for children.

## OREGON - Terri Lloyd-Jones

NETPRO Oregon trainers have provided over 4500 state child nutrition personnel with a myriad of training programs, classes, and consultations on a multitude of food and nutrition topics. To improve the NETPRO Oregon training program for the upcoming school year, the planning committee decided to schedule mandatory, biyearly workshops for the 30 NETPRO Oregon trainers. These workshops will serve several purposes including program updates, hands-on training, resource sharing and networking.



## FOR MORE INFORMATION

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### RESOURCES:

- Conklin, M.T. (ed.) (1995). *Competencies, knowledge, and skills of effective school nutrition managers*, NFSMIR16-95, University, MS: National Food Service Management Institute.
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- Holland, R.C. (1994, Jan.-Feb.). Future view: Sailing into the millennium. *The Futurist*, p.60.
- Nanus, B. (1992). *Visionary leadership*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass Management Series.
- Sneed, J., & Gregoire, M.B. (eds.) (1994). *Research related to Child Nutrition Programs*, NFSMIR11-94, University, MS: National Food Service Management Institute.

### VIDEO AND TRAINING MATERIALS:

- NFSMI. Barely Bear learns about good nutrition, NFSMIET6-93, University, MS: author.
- NFSMI. Go for the gold with customer service BLT, NFSMIET9-94, University, MS: author.
- NFSMI. Healthy cooking for kids BLT, NFSMIET13-95, University, MS: author.
- NFSMI. Managing Child Nutrition Programs to teach healthy food practices, NFSMITT070194, University, MS: author.
- NFSMI. Participation: The key to health food practices, NFSMITT030994, University, MS: author.
- NFSMI. Preparation and the *Dietary Guidelines*, NFSMITT020393, University, MS: author.
- NFSMI. Promoting healthy food practices, NFSMITT042893, University, MS: author.

### NETPRO WORKSHOPS, 1995-96:

- NETPRO I: Training Delivery (Bringing the Vision into Focus). Sheraton Music City, Nashville, TN, November 15-17, 1995.
- NETPRO II: Leadership. Imperial Palace Hotel, Las Vegas, NV, March 11-13, 1996.

Information about this and other topics may be obtained by contacting the

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Order Number R104-95

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This project was funded at least in part with Federal funds provided to the National Food Service Management Institute at the University of Mississippi from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Consumer Service under Grant number F33385. The contents of this publication do not necessarily reflect the view or policies of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. government.

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