

Competencies, Knowledge, and Skills Needed for State Agency Child Nutrition Professionals in the 21st Century



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National Food Service Management Institute The University of Mississippi

Building the Future Through Child Nutrition

The National Food Service Management Institute was authorized by Congress in 1989 and established in 1990 at The University of Mississippi in Oxford and is operated in collaboration with The University of Southern Mississippi in Hattiesburg. The Institute operates under a grant agreement with the United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service.

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.

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**COMPETENCIES, KNOWLEDGE, AND SKILLS NEEDED FOR STATE AGENCY
CHILD NUTRITION PROFESSIONALS IN THE 21ST CENTURY**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The passage of the National School Lunch Act of 1946 initiated an on-going partnership among the federal government, states, and local school districts to provide healthy, nutritious meals and snacks to the nation's children. Career child nutrition (CN) professionals are employed by state agencies to oversee the CN programs. Their responsibilities include planning, administering, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating all aspects of 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 National Food Service Management Institute (NFSMI) conducted research that led to the identification of the competencies, knowledge and skills needed by CN technicians, managers, and district directors/supervisors. Little information is available about the needs of state agency CN professionals; thus, the purpose of this project was to identify the competencies, knowledge and skills needed by CN professionals working in state agency positions. The specific objectives of this project were the following:

- Determine the competencies associated with each of the job functional areas previously identified.
- Identify literature- and experience-based competency statements.
- Develop and verify literature- and experience-based job knowledge statements.
- Develop and verify literature- and experience-based skill statements.
- Associate job knowledge statements with the appropriate competency area.

- Associate the job skill statements with the appropriate competency area.
- Determine the time frame in which each knowledge or skill is needed by state agency CN professionals.

To accomplish these objectives, the researchers used the following definitions:

- **State agency child nutrition professionals:** 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 Food Program, and Summer Food Service Program. For the purpose of this research, the roles of clerical and support staff were not addressed.
- **Functional areas:** The broad groupings or divisions of job responsibilities performed by the CN professionals within the state agency.
- **Competencies:** The areas of expertise and accountability within each functional area necessary to ensure that the purpose(s) of the job are met.
- **Knowledge:** The information a person has in specific content areas that is necessary for successful performance.
- **Skills:** The abilities to perform certain physical and/or mental tasks that are necessary for successful performance.

The research project was conducted in two phases. Phase I was conducted using an expert panel of ten CN state directors and state agency staff to bring about consensus on the job competencies and knowledge and skill statements needed by state agency CN professionals. The panel's evaluation resulted in the identification of 25 competencies and 180 knowledge and skill statements. This information was incorporated into an electronic survey sent to 84 CN

professionals serving in state agencies across the nation. They were asked to verify whether the knowledge and skill statements are important to the job responsibilities of a state agency CN professional, confirm whether the competency statements are consistent with the supporting knowledge and skill statements, and categorize the knowledge and skill statements into two distinct groups, *when hired* and *advanced*, to indicate the time frame in which the knowledge or skill is needed.

The electronic survey consisted of six functional areas determined in previous research, and the related competencies and knowledge and skill statements (69 knowledge statements and 111 skill statements). The review panel verified 24 competency statements, 66 knowledge statements, and 104 skill statements. From these statements, only 34 statements were identified as needed *when hired*, and 136 statements were identified as *advanced*, requiring additional experience and knowledge.

The competencies, knowledge and skill statements confirmed in this research, and the six functional areas determined in previous research, provide a clear picture of the role of CN professionals at the state level. United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and state agency administrators can apply the knowledge and skill statements to design job descriptions, and then use them as a framework for administrators to evaluate the effectiveness of state agency CN professionals. The competencies, knowledge and skills can assist in identifying agency personnel who demonstrate the potential to advance within the agency. They can form the basis for mentoring and other succession planning activities to prepare CN professionals for state agency-level responsibilities.

The review panel identified the time frame in which each knowledge and skill statement is needed by CN professionals to perform at the state agency level. Respondents considered the

majority (80%) of the knowledge and skill statements to be *advanced*. Research outcomes imply that state agency CN professionals begin their service at a basic competency level, and training and improvement opportunities will be provided while on the job to reach the advanced level of practice identified by the review panel. The information gained from this study will be an important resource to assist NFSMI, USDA, and state agencies in developing appropriate educational materials and resources for CN professionals working at the state agency level.

INTRODUCTION

The National School Lunch Act of 1946 (NSLA) initiated on-going partnerships among the federal government, states, and local school districts (Gunderson, 1971) to provide nutritious meals to school children. 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 assigned responsibility 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, food received for distribution, and 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 Food Program (Hopgood, 2008).

State agencies have several key roles as the liaison for the USDA, Food and Nutrition Service, and local child nutrition (CN) sponsors in their states. State agencies receive federal rules and regulations governing each CN assistance program and disseminate these rules and regulations to program sponsors. The state agencies are responsible for reviewing programs for compliance with these regulations and for the reimbursement of federal program funds used in the operation of local CN programs. In addition to reviewing programs for compliance with regulations, many state agencies coordinate/provide training and technical assistance to program sponsors (Martin, 2008). Through these roles, the state agency assists school districts and other CN programs in providing quality nutrition programs for the children of their state.

Career professionals are employed by state agencies to oversee the 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. However, limited literature was found that focused on the role of state agency staff overseeing CN programs. Thus, the National Food Service Management Institute, Applied Research Division (NFSMI, ARD) began research to identify and define the job functions, competencies, knowledge, and skills needed for effective performance by CN professionals working in state agencies.

Since its inception, the NFSMI, ARD has been in the forefront in identifying the competencies, knowledge, and skills needed by professionals working in the CN arena. 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. Subsequent to identifying the need for reliable and valid information related to these topics, the NFSMI, ARD conducted research to identify the job functions/duties, competencies, knowledge, and skills needed for effective performance by SN supervisors/directors, SN managers, and assistants/technicians, and sponsor monitors of family day care homes (Carr & Oakley, 2002, Cater & Carr, 2004, Nettles & Carr, 2006, Nettles, Carr & Asperin, 2010).

In the first phase of research by NFSMI, ARD to determine the job functions, competencies, and job knowledge and skills needed by CN professionals working in state agencies, Cross and Nettles (2010), analyzed job descriptions, organizational charts, and reviewed related literature for major job function themes. An electronic survey of state agency CN professionals identified 30 significant themes describing the job functions of CN

professionals working in a state agency. The results of this research were incorporated into the next phase of research. Through a modified Delphi process, an expert panel of CN professionals identified six functional areas encompassing the job responsibilities of state agency CN professionals. Definitions were developed for each functional area, and 39 job responsibilities related to the functional areas were identified and confirmed. A nationwide review panel verified the functional areas and job responsibilities of state agency CN professionals through completion of an electronic survey. The six functional areas confirmed are as follows: Financial Management, Personnel Management, Program Management, Program and Regulatory Compliance, Technology and Data Management, and Training, Technical Assistance, and Outreach (Cross & Nettles, 2013).

Research Objectives

The overall purpose of this study was to identify the competencies, knowledge and skills needed by CN professionals working in state agencies to effectively administer programs, conduct reviews, and provide technical assistance to local CN agencies in the current environment. The specific objectives were the following:

- Develop a literature-based set of knowledge and skill statements.
- Identify the knowledge and skill statements needed for each functional area.
- Determine the competencies associated with each functional area.
- Associate knowledge and skill statements with the appropriate competency areas.
- Verify whether the knowledge and skills statements are important to the job responsibilities of state agency CN professionals.

- Determine at what point the district-level CN professional should be able to know/perform the knowledge/skill statements.
- Confirm whether the competency statements are consistent with the supporting knowledge/skill statements.

METHOD

Research Plan

This research project was conducted in two phases. Phase I utilized an expert panel consisting of ten state agency child nutrition (CN) professionals to ascertain the competencies, knowledge and skills encompassing the responsibilities of state agency CN professionals. Expert panel members identified the knowledge and skill statements and sorted the statements into the appropriate competency category. The findings from Phase I were used to develop an electronic survey that was sent to a review panel of 84 state agency CN professionals across the United States to confirm and verify the competencies, knowledge and skills identified by the expert panel.

Phase I

Expert Panel

The researchers selected expert panel members from a list of state agency CN professionals identified in previous National Food Service Management Institute, Applied Research Division (NFSMI, ARD) research. Potential expert panel members were state agency CN directors and/or staff who are recognized as experts, run exemplary programs, and are viewed as leaders across the nation. From this group, ten state agency professionals were invited to participate as expert panel members. Participants were sent a letter of invitation explaining the project, the purpose of the expert panel meeting, and the researchers' contact information. The panel members were invited to attend a day-and-a-half work group meeting to accomplish the objectives of the project. After potential panelists indicated their agreement to participate as expert panel members, confirmation letters were mailed electronically with additional information about the upcoming meeting and travel arrangements. Each panel member was

e-mailed a pre-meeting packet of documents to review prior to attending the meeting. The packet included a cover letter stating the purpose of the expert panel and a meeting assignment form.

To ensure that participants in the project were consistent in their interpretation of the components of the research, the following definitions were provided:

- **State Agency Child Nutrition Professionals:** 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 Food Program, and Summer Food Service Program. For the purpose of this research, the roles of clerical and support staff were not addressed.
- **Functional Areas:** The broad groupings or divisions of job responsibilities performed by the CN professionals within the state agency.
- **Competencies:** The areas of expertise and accountability within each functional area necessary to ensure that the purpose(s) of the job are met.
- **Knowledge:** The information a person has in specific content areas that are necessary for successful performance.
- **Skills:** The abilities to perform certain physical and/or mental tasks that are necessary for successful performance.

Knowledge and Skill Statements

A comprehensive list of proposed knowledge and skill statements was drafted by the researchers from a review of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), School Nutrition Association, and NFSMI Web sites; current job descriptions provided by state agencies, review of job descriptions online, and additional statements from previous NFSMI

research studies. This list was sent to each participant prior to attendance at the work group meeting. Expert panel members were asked to review each proposed knowledge and skill statement and indicate their agreement as to whether the statement was a valid representation of a knowledge or skill needed by state agency CN professionals to perform their jobs effectively. Space was provided for expert panel members to list additional knowledge and skill statements they believed had been omitted. Panel members were reminded that the competencies, knowledge, and skill statements should reflect practices across the nation and the diversity of CN state agencies. Panel members were requested to bring their completed knowledge and skill statements document with them to the meeting to assist in gathering the panel's responses and comments.

Work Group Session

The expert panel work session was facilitated by an ARD researcher. An assistant moderator captured the participants' suggestions and comments throughout the meeting. The process was planned to allow panel members to come to consensus on the validity of the competencies, knowledge, and skill statements; the categorization of the knowledge and skill statements into appropriate competencies; and the time frame in which the knowledge and skills are needed by state agency CN professionals.

Expert panel members were divided into two groups. Each group member was given a copy of the proposed competencies, knowledge, and skill statements. The list was composed of a total of 39 competency statements: six competency statements related to Program and Regulatory Compliance, four for Financial Management, seven for Training, Technical Assistance, and Outreach, five for Personnel Management, fifteen for Program Management, and two for Technology and Data Management. Proposed knowledge and skill statements were listed in

association with a competency area. A total of 298 knowledge and skill statements were listed under appropriate competencies.

These documents were used by members as a guide as they discussed each competency or knowledge and skill statement. Each group selected a leader to guide the discussion and a secretary to record the results of group activities. The two groups worked independently to decide whether each competency, knowledge or skill statement should be deleted, retained, combined, or modified, and if new competencies or knowledge/skill statements should be added.

After each group had completed this assignment, both groups met to discuss and come to consensus on the competencies, knowledge, and skill statements. Some issues were still unresolved at the conclusion of the meeting. A work group summary was e-mailed to participants subsequent to the meeting. This document summarized the group consensus results for the competencies and asked panel members to confirm the results of the work group. An attached survey allowed participants to indicate if the remaining undecided competencies should be accepted, deleted, or modified. A 70% agreement was required to finalize the group decision.

Participants also were e-mailed a list of the knowledge and skill statements that had been deleted or accepted by the panel at the work group session. For the remaining undecided knowledge and skill statements, a modified Delphi Technique of three e-mailed surveys was used to bring about final consensus for the knowledge and skill statements subsequent to the work group meeting. Undecided knowledge and skill statements were listed in the first survey sent to the participants. Participants indicated whether each statement should be accepted, deleted, or modified. A 70% agreement was required to finalize each knowledge or skill statement. The remaining undecided knowledge and skill statements were incorporated into the second and third surveys until 172 knowledge and skill statements were identified in final form.

The eight remaining undecided statements did not reach a 70% agreement and were included in the electronic survey for final consideration and verification by the review panel. The outcomes of Phase I and the expert panel pilot test results guided the development of the review panel survey.

Phase II

Review Panel

Phase II of the project was an online survey of state agency CN professionals across the United States representing all seven USDA geographic regions. Before beginning the development of the on-line survey, state agency directors were requested to submit 3-5 or more names of school nutrition professionals to participate in the on-line survey. Additional names were received after a second request was sent asking directors to send names representing their USDA geographic region. A total of 84 names were received. Each potential participant was e-mailed an explanation of the research study and an invitation to participate. Eighty-four CN professionals representing all seven USDA regions were selected to serve on the review panel for the research project. Participants consisted of state agency directors, assistant directors, and state agency staff.

Review Panel Survey

The review panel online survey entitled, *State Agency Child Nutrition Professionals*, consisted of seven sections. The objectives of this survey were the following:

- Verify whether the knowledge and skill statements are important to the job responsibilities of a state agency CN professional.
- Confirm whether the competency statements are consistent with the supporting knowledge and skill statements.

- Categorize the knowledge and skill statements into two distinct groups, *when hired* and *advanced*.

The first six sections of the survey consisted of 69 knowledge statements, 111 skill statements, and 25 competency statements, within the six functional areas. Each competency area contained one or more competency statements with related knowledge and skill statements. Review panel participants were asked to indicate the importance of each knowledge and skill statement to the job responsibilities of a state agency CN professional using the following 4-point scale:

- **Not:** The knowledge/skill is not a necessary component of the competency.
- **Somewhat:** The knowledge/skill is a desired, but not a necessary component of the competency.
- **Vital:** The knowledge/skill is a necessary component of the competency.
- **Extremely:** The knowledge/skill is a requirement of maximum importance and must be included as a component of the competency.

Participants also were asked to categorize the knowledge and skill statements into one of two groups to indicate the time frame in which the knowledge or skill is needed: *when hired* and *advanced*.

- **When hired:** The knowledge/skills needed to perform effectively in entry-level state agency CN program positions, or
- **Advanced:** The knowledge/skills, gained through experience in CN programs and professional training, needed to perform proficiently in multi-faceted state agency CN positions.

After completing each section of the knowledge and skill statements, participants evaluated the competency statements. Using a 4-point scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 4 (*strongly agree*), review panel participants indicated their agreement with the following two statements: “The competency statement accurately reflects the knowledge and skills listed,” and “The competency statement is clearly worded.” In the last section of the survey, review panel members were asked to provide information about themselves. They responded to questions such as their highest level of education, certification/credentialed status, broad job responsibilities, and programs managed.

The survey and cover letter were transmitted electronically to 84 potential participants. The cover letter included the purpose of the survey, definitions used in the research, a summary of prior related research, an invitation to participate, and instructions for completing the survey. Approximately two weeks later, a follow-up reminder e-mail was sent to all review panel members who had not responded to encourage them to complete and return the survey.

Informed Consent

The researchers followed informed consent procedures for the research established by the Human Subjects Protection Review Committee at The University of Southern Mississippi. Correspondence with expert panel members included a confidentiality statement and contact information for the Human Subjects Protection Review Committee at The University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, MS. Acceptance of the invitation and written agreement to become a member of the expert panel signified consent to participate in the study. Informed consent with review panel members was obtained using the cover letters requesting participation in the research study. Agreement to participate, and the return of a completed survey, served as informed consent.

Data Analysis

The responses to the electronic review panel survey were analyzed using the statistical package SPSS Version 15.0 for Windows. Descriptive statistics included means, standard deviations, and frequencies of total responses.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Phase I

All ten (100%) state agency child nutrition (CN) professionals invited to attend the work group session participated as expert panel members. Participants considered 39 competencies and 298 knowledge and skill statements at the work group session. By the conclusion of the work session, the panel had come to consensus on 22 competencies and 135 knowledge and skill statements, but some issues were still unresolved, as final agreement was not reached on four of the remaining competencies and 163 knowledge and skill statements.

A work group summary was e-mailed to each panel member along with an attached questionnaire asking members to combine, modify, delete, or accept the four remaining undecided competencies. A 70% agreement was required for acceptance. One competency was deleted, and three were accepted. Panel members reached final agreement on 25 competencies.

Participants also were e-mailed a list of the knowledge and skill statements that had been accepted and the statements that had been deleted at the work group meeting. For the remaining 163 undecided knowledge and skill statements, a modified Delphi Technique of three e-mailed surveys was used to bring about final consensus. Participants indicated whether each statement should be accepted, deleted, or modified. A 70% agreement was required to finalize each knowledge or skill statement. The undecided knowledge and skill statements from the first survey (100% response rate) were incorporated into the second (90% response rate) and third surveys (100% response rate) until a total of 172 knowledge and skill statements had been accepted by the expert panel members. The expert panel members still had not reached a 70% agreement level for eight knowledge and skill statements, so these statements were included in the electronic survey for final consideration and verification by the review panel. The survey

included 69 knowledge statements and 111 skill statements. A total of 180 knowledge and skill statements were included in the electronic survey.

Survey Pilot Test

The expert panel members (70% response rate) pilot tested the completed survey. Several expressed concern over the length of the survey, and suggested that participants be advised in the cover letter that the survey was lengthy and an estimated time for completion be provided. Additionally, a brief survey asked respondents to select the terms they thought most accurate and descriptive of the time frame in which each knowledge and skill would be needed by state agency CN professionals. The terms decided on were *when hired* and *advanced*. The outcomes of Phase I and the expert panel pilot test results guided the development of the review panel survey.

Phase II

Of the 84 CN professionals invited to participate in the review panel, 48 (57%) returned the review panel survey entitled, *State Agency Child Nutrition Professionals*. Demographic information for the responding review panel members is presented in Table 1. More than two-thirds (69.4%) of the responding review panelists described their job title as state agency staff. The greatest number of respondents (38.5%) indicated that they have worked in their current position for six to ten years, and 15.4% have worked in their current position for more than 20 years. Ten (25.6%) had a Bachelor's degree with the majority (53.8%) holding a Master's degree. When asked about their certification or credentialed status, 24.5 % were Registered Dietitians, 18.9% were Licensed Dietitians, 18.9% were not certified, and 17.0% were School Nutrition Specialists. All seven USDA geographic regions were represented, with 35.9% responding from the Mountain Plains states and 30.8% from the Southeast region.

The majority of respondents worked with the following programs: National School Lunch Program in public (66.7%) and private schools (56.4%), School Breakfast Program (64.1%), Summer Food Service Program (59.0%), public Residential Child Care Institutions (59.0%), Special Milk Program (51.3%), and Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (51.3%). When asked to identify their broad areas of job responsibilities, the top five cited by respondents were education (92.3%), compliance (92.3%), technical assistance (89.7%), monitoring (87.2%) and nutrition and menu management (74.4%).

Table 1

Personal and Program Characteristics of Review Panel Members

Demographic Question	Frequency	%
What best describes your job title? (n=36)		
State Agency Staff	25	69.4
Assistant State Agency Director	4	11.1
Division Supervisor	4	11.1
State Agency Director	3	8.3
How long have you worked in your current position? (n=39)		
Less than one year	4	10.3
1 – 5 years	15	38.5
6 – 10 years	6	15.4
11 – 15 years	4	10.3
16 – 20 years	4	10.3
Greater than 20 years	6	15.4
What is your highest level of education? (n=39)		
Bachelor's degree	10	25.6
Some graduate credits	3	7.7
Master's degree	21	53.8
Graduate hours beyond Master's degree	4	10.3
Doctoral degree	1	2.6
What is your certification/credentialed status? ^a (n=39)		
Registered Dietitian	13	24.5
Licensed Dietitian	10	18.9
Not certified	10	18.9
School Nutrition Association certification	6	18.2
School Nutrition Specialist	9	17.0
State Agency	5	9.4

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

(Table 1 continues)

(Table 1 continued)

Personal and Program Characteristics of Review Panel Members

Demographic Question	Frequency	%
In which USDA region do you work? (<i>n</i> =39)		
Mountain Plains	14	35.9
Southeast	12	30.8
Northeast	5	12.8
Western	3	7.7
Midwest	2	5.1
Southwest	2	5.1
Mid-Atlantic	1	2.6
With which programs do you work? ^a (<i>n</i> =39)		
National School Lunch Program-public	26	66.7
School Breakfast Program	25	64.1
Summer Food Service Program	23	59.0
Residential Child Care Institutions-public	23	59.0
National School Lunch Program-private	22	56.4
Special Milk Program	20	51.3
Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program	20	51.3
Child and Adult Care Food Program-child	19	48.7
Residential Child Care Institutions-private	19	48.7
Child and Adult Care Food Program-adult	14	35.9
What are your broad job responsibilities? ^a (<i>n</i> =39)		
Education	36	92.3
Compliance	36	92.3
Technical assistance	35	89.7
Monitoring	34	87.2
Nutrition and menu management	29	74.4
Outreach	25	64.1
Professional excellence	24	61.5
Administration	21	53.8
Accountability	20	51.3
Auditing	19	48.7
Resource management	18	46.2
Financial management	13	33.3
Grant preparation/administration	13	33.3
Human resource management	8	20.5
Research	7	17.9
Food distribution	1	2.6

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

Review panel members reviewed the knowledge and skill statements for each of the six functional areas and rated the importance of each statement to its related competency. Panel members also were asked to categorize each statement into one of two groups; *when hired* or *advanced*, to indicate when the knowledge or skill was needed to perform effectively as a state agency CN professional. Knowledge and skill statements with a mean score of 2.5 or higher on a 4-point scale indicated that review panel respondents considered the statement important in today's work environment, whereas a score of less than 2.5 indicated a level of disagreement as to the importance of the statement. The classification of each statement was based on the greater percentage of responses between the *when hired* and *advanced* categories. Four statements received ratings of 50% *when hired* and 50% *advanced*. Researchers reviewed similar statements and ratings by the review panel, and decided that one statement was categorized as *when hired* and the remaining three were classified as *advanced*. Tables 2 and 4 - 8 present the six functional areas, the means and standard deviations for the knowledge and skill statements, and the frequencies for when the knowledge or skill is needed to perform as a state agency CN professional.

Review panel members also reviewed the competencies in each functional area and indicated their agreement with two statements evaluating the competencies using a 4-point agreement scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 4 (*strongly agree*). A mean score of 2.5 or higher for the first evaluation statement indicated that the panel members agreed that the competency accurately reflected the knowledge and skill statements, and the second statement reflected whether the competency was clearly worded. The means and standard deviations for each competency and the evaluation of the competency statements in the six functional areas are listed in Table 3.

Functional Area 1: Financial Management

The Financial Management functional area contains four competency statements, nine knowledge statements and 15 skill statements (Table 2). All of the statements had mean importance ratings of 2.5 or greater, so no knowledge or skill statements were eliminated. The statements with the highest mean ratings were: “knows United Department of Agriculture (USDA) procurement regulations and resources” (3.5 ± 0.8) and “knows importance of prompt submission of accurate financial documents to successfully secure program funds” (3.2 ± 0.8). Statements with the lowest mean ratings were “knows financial goals and objectives of the state agency” (2.6 ± 0.8), “uses financial management information system software to enhance financial reporting and accountability” (2.6 ± 0.8), and “analyzes data, projects outcomes, and develops and implements procedures/systems for coordinating and controlling diverse financial activities” (2.6 ± 0.7).

Panel members identified the following two statements as a knowledge or skill that state agency CN professionals should possess when hired. These statements were: “knows basic manual and computerized recordkeeping procedures” (69.8%) and “works cooperatively with individuals and organizations to expand resources available (59.1%). One statement, “knows importance of prompt submission of accurate financial documents to successfully secure program funds,” received ratings of 50% *when hired* and 50% *advanced*; researchers made the decision to categorize this statement as *when hired*. All 21 remaining knowledge and skill statements in the financial management functional area were identified by review panel members as advanced (i.e., knowledge or skill gained through additional training and experience). The review panel’s mean agreement ratings for the financial management competency statements are presented in Table 3. All four competency statements had mean ratings of 2.5 or greater for the

evaluation statements. This indicates that the review panel agreed that the competencies accurately reflected the knowledge and skill statements in this functional area and were clearly worded.

Table 2

Functional Area 1: Financial Management and Skill Statements

Competency Statement	Importance ^a (<i>M</i> ± <i>SD</i>)	When Needed ^b When Hired	Advanced
Competency 1.1: Develops and oversees a financial management system that manages and supports program goals which ensure regulatory compliance.			
Knows generally accepted financial procedures and federal, state, and municipal finance laws and regulations	2.7 ± 0.7	18 (38.3)	29 (61.7)
Knows financial goals and objectives of the state agency.	2.6 ± 0.8	14 (29.8)	33 (70.2)
Competency 1.2: Promptly and accurately processes program claims and federal funding reports per regulations and financial management requirements/guidance.			
Ensures compliance with local, state, federal, and other regulatory guidelines that impact business operations.	3.1 ± 0.8	10 (21.7)	36 (78.3)
Analyzes and determines applicability of accounting data and draws conclusions to make appropriate recommendations.	2.8 ± 0.9	9 (19.6)	37 (80.4)
Collaborates with clients to identify the desired child nutrition program financial outcomes.	2.7 ± 0.8	18 (39.1)	28 (60.9)

^a Scale = 1 (*not important*) to 4 (*extremely important*)

^b Percentage (Number responding)

(Table 2 continues)

(Table 2 continued)

Functional Area 1: Financial Management Knowledge and Skill Statements

Competency Statement	Importance (<i>M</i> ± <i>SD</i>)	When Needed	
Knowledge/Skill Statement		When Hired	Advanced
Competency 1.3: Develops and oversees State Child Nutrition Administrative and Budget Plans to ensure compliance with program regulations and prompt program funding.			
Knows importance of prompt submission of accurate financial documents to successfully secure program funds.	3.2 ± 0.8	22 (50.0)	22 (50.0)
Knows basic manual and computerized recordkeeping procedures.	3.1 ± 0.6	30 (69.8)	13 (30.2)
Knows United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) procurement regulations and resources.	3.1 ± 0.8	5 (11.6)	38 (88.4)
Maintains financial viability.	3.1 ± 1.0	14 (33.3)	28 (66.7)
Works cooperatively with individuals and organizations to expand resources available.	3.0 ± 0.7	26 (59.1)	18 (40.9)
Knows federal and state guidelines for pricing meals and food items.	2.9 ± 0.9	13 (30.2)	30 (69.8)
Analyzes financial statements regularly to make informed financial decisions.	2.9 ± 0.9	14 (32.6)	29 (67.4)
Knows accounting and financial management processes related to food-service operations.	2.8 ± 0.7	18 (41.9)	25 (58.1)
Establishes and/or implements written procedures for collecting, reconciling, depositing, and disbursing funds.	2.7 ± 0.9	13 (29.5)	31 (70.5)
Uses financial management information system software to enhance financial reporting and accountability.	2.6 ± 0.8	16 (37.2)	27 (62.8)

^a Scale = 1 (*not important*) to 4 (*extremely important*)

^b Percentage (Number responding)

(Table 2 continues)

(Table 2 continued)

*Functional Area 1: Financial Management Knowledge and Skill Statements***Competency Statement**

Knowledge/Skill Statement	Importance ($M \pm SD$)	When Needed	
		When Hired	Advanced
Prepares federal and state financial reports.	2.6 ± 1.0	10 (23.3)	33 (76.7)
Analyzes data, projects outcomes, and develops and implements procedures/systems for coordinating and controlling diverse financial activities.	2.6 ± 0.7	10 (23.3)	33 (76.7)
Competency 1.4: Develops and disseminates financial procedures and policy guidance in the areas of budgeting and annual financial reports and submitting claims for reimbursement to program participants.			
Knows federal and state guidelines for pricing meals and food items.	3.0 ± 0.8	11 (26.8)	30 (73.2)
Develops system for disseminating financial policies, procedures, reports, and reimbursement claims to nutrition program participants.	2.9 ± 0.9	10 (24.4)	31 (75.6)
Manages reimbursement funds for meals served in child nutrition programs.	2.8 ± 0.9	10 (25.0)	30 (75.0)
Prepares, evaluates, and analyzes financial reports.	2.8 ± 0.9	13 (31.7)	28 (68.3)
Prepares or participates in preparation of budgets that reflect financial goals.	2.7 ± 1.0	8 (20.5)	31 (79.5)
Knows federal and state processes for budget development, justification, implementation, and management, including financial benchmarks.	2.7 ± 0.8	6 (14.6)	35 (85.4)
Assists child nutrition personnel in reconciling projected annual budget with revenue and expenditure performance routinely and providing documentation to justify variances.	2.7 ± 1.0	7 (17.5)	33 (82.5)

^a Scale = 1 (*not important*) to 4 (*extremely important*)^b Percentage (Number responding)

Table 3

Mean Agreement Ratings and Standard Deviations for Competency Statements

Functional Area Competency Statement	Accurately Reflects Knowledge and Skills		Statement is Clearly Worded	
	N	M ± SD	N	M ± SD
Financial Management				
1.1 Develops and oversees a financial management system that manages and supports program goals which ensure regulatory compliance.	47	3.1 ± 0.6	46	2.9 ± 0.6
1.2 Promptly and accurately processes program claims and federal funding reports per regulations and financial management requirements/guidance.	45	3.1 ± 0.7	44	3.1 ± 0.7
1.3 Develops and oversees State Child Nutrition Administrative and Budget Plans to ensure compliance with program regulations and prompt program funding.	44	3.2 ± 0.7	44	3.1 ± 0.6
1.4 Develops and disseminates financial procedures and policy guidance to the areas of budgeting and annual financial reports and submitting claims for reimbursement to program participants.	41	3.1 ± 0.6	41	2.9 ± 0.8
Personnel Management				
2.1 Establishes a comprehensive training system based on current educational principles to include orientation, new employee training, continuing education, and on-going professional growth.	41	3.3 ± 0.6	41	3.2 ± 0.5
2.2 Collaborates with Human Resources to establish a comprehensive personnel management infrastructure to fulfill the mission of the organization and comply with federal, state, and local regulations and policies.	39	3.3 ± 0.6	40	3.10 ± 0.6
2.3 Provides leadership, direction, and support to child nutrition personnel for department/bureau operations.	40	3.3 ± 0.5	40	3.3 ± 0.5

^aScale = 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 4 (*strongly agree*)

(Table 3 continues)

(Table 3 continued)

Mean Agreement Ratings and Standard Deviations for Competency Statements

Functional Area Competency Statement	Accurately Reflects Knowledge and Skills		Statement is Clearly Worded	
	<i>N</i>	<i>M ± SD</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>M ± SD</i>
2.4 Collaborates with Human Resources to interpret and communicate human resource regulations, policies, and procedures to program staff.	40	3.1 ± 0.5	40	3.1 ± 0.4
Program and Regulatory Compliance				
3.1 Interprets regulations and develops and disseminates written guidance to ensure compliance with federal, state, local policies, and rules and regulations for all participating entities.	39	3.3 ± 0.7	39	3.3 ± 0.6
3.2 Evaluates policies and recommends changes and policy revisions.	40	3.2 ± 0.7	40	3.2 ± 0.7
3.3 Designs program compliance review instruments and procedures to ensure uniform monitoring and review efforts throughout the state.	40	3.2 ± 0.6	40	3.2 ± 0.6
3.4 Oversees the development, preparation, implementation of program agreements, and ensures compliance with related requirements and regulations.	39	3.1 ± 0.8	40	3.2 ± 0.7
Program Management				
4.1 Plans, develops implements, and evaluates child nutrition programs to meet changing priorities to support the mission of the program.	40	3.2 ± 0.6	40	3.2 ± 0.6
4.2 Establishes and administers electronic or manual recordkeeping and reporting instruments and ensures compliance with related to maintain efficient and effective programs.	40	3.2 ± 0.5	39	3.2 ± 0.6

^a Scale = 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 4 (*strongly agree*)

(Table 3 continues)

(Table 3 continued)

Mean Agreement Ratings and Standard Deviations for Competency Statements

Functional Area Competency Statement	Accurately Reflects Knowledge and Skills		Statement is Clearly Worded	
	N	M ± SD	N	M ± SD
4.3 Supports federal, state, local, and private disaster relief activities.	40	3.1 ± 0.5	40	3.1 ± 0.5
4.4 Investigates, adapts, and applies educational policies, research issues, and topics relevant to improve child nutrition programs.	40	3.1 ± 0.5	40	3.2 ± 0.5
4.5 Establishes a system for the coordination and oversight of child nutrition-related grant activities, if applicable.	40	3.1 ± 0.5	40	3.2 ± 0.5
4.6 Interprets, analyzes, reviews, and provides policies, research issues, and topics relevant to written/oral testimony related to child nutrition programs, program rules, regulations, policies, and statutes.	39	3.2 ± 0.7	39	3.1 ± 0.6
4.7 Develops and organizes strategies to support continuous program excellence.	40	3.2 ± 0.5	40	3.2 ± 0.5
Technology and Data Management				
5.1 Uses available resources to ensure that information technology systems and infrastructure meet the operational needs of child nutrition programs and ensures USDA compliance.	38	3.1 ± 0.5	38	3.1 ± 0.5
5.2 Researches, analyzes, and proposes the acquisition of technological equipment and computer software having the potential to make the work of the team more efficient.	39	3.0 ± 0.4	38	3.1 ± 0.5
Training, Technical Assistance, and Outreach				
6.1 Serves as a resource for educational materials, presentations, current research, and regulatory information.	40	3.2 ± 0.5	40	3.3 ± 0.5

^a Scale = 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 4 (*strongly agree*)

(Table 3 continues)

(Table 3 continued)

Mean Agreement Ratings and Standard Deviations for Competency Statements

Functional Area Competency Statement	Accurately Reflects Knowledge and Skills		Statement is Clearly Worded	
	N	M ± SD	N	M ± SD
6.2 Develops 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.	39	3.2 ± 0.7	39	3.4 ± 0.6
6.3 Develops and initiates outreach activities to expand the scope and effectiveness of child nutrition programs.	39	3.2 ± 0.5	39	3.2 ± 0.5
6.4 Conducts needs assessment and acts as resource for nutrition education and wellness/healthy environment.	39	3.2 ± 0.5	39	3.1 ± 0.6

^aScale = 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 4 (*strongly agree*)

Functional Area 2: Personnel Management

The Personnel Management functional area contains four competency statements, 14 knowledge statements, and 19 skill statements (Table 4). The mean rating and standard deviation for knowledge statement, “knows legislation and resources pertaining to collective bargaining and labor union contracts, when applicable” was 2.3 ± 0.8. This rating fell below the standard of a mean of 2.5, thus, this knowledge statement was eliminated. All other knowledge and skill statements received a mean rating of 2.5 or greater and were retained as important to state agency CN professionals. The statements with the highest mean ratings were: “knows importance of discretion in handling confidential information” (3.8 ± 0.4); “builds mutual trust, respect, and cooperation among program staff” (3.5 ± 0.5) and “demonstrates excellent human relations skills” (3.4 ± 0.6). Statements with the lowest mean ratings were: “knows federal, state,

and local laws and regulations relevant to human resource management” (2.6 ±0.8); “seeks resources for the most current technical information applicable to distance learning and its use” (2.6 ± 0.7); and “develops/maintains nutrition program projects such as web-based application and ordering systems, Web pages, and Web-based courses” (2.6 ±0.8). The review panel identified 14 statements as knowledge and skills needed by state agency CN professionals *when hired* and 18 were deemed by respondents as advanced knowledge or skill gained through training and experience. Review panel members tied in their rating of one statement, “knows factors important to employee satisfaction and strategies to address dissatisfaction” so researchers made the decision to classify the statement as *advanced*.

The review panel’s mean agreement ratings for the personnel management competency statements are presented in Table 3. All competency statements had mean ratings of 2.5 or greater for both evaluation statements. This indicates that the review panel agreed that the competencies accurately reflect the knowledge and skill statements under this functional area and were clearly worded.

Table 4

Functional Area 2: Personnel Management Knowledge and Skill Statements

Competency Statement Knowledge/Skill Statement	Importance ^a (<i>M ± SD</i>)	When Needed ^b	
		When Hired	Advanced
Competency 2.1: Establishes a comprehensive training system based on current educational principles to include orientation, new employee training, continuing education, and on-going professional growth.			
Knows importance of state agency orientation to assure that new staff has appropriate information to perform their jobs.	3.2 ± 0.6	21 (51.2)	20 (48.8)
Formulates, coordinates, and develops education and training programs to improve professional knowledge and skills.	3.0 ± 0.7	15 (36.6)	26 (64.4)
Knows effective job training methods.	3.0 ± 0.7	28 (68.3)	13 (31.7)
Formulates and develops plans, procedures, and programs to meet specific training needs.	3.0 ± 0.6	14 (35.0)	26 (65.0)
Assists in developing long and short range goals.	2.9 ± 0.7	18 (43.9)	23 (56.1)
Knows educational theories, principles, techniques for assessing effective professional development and training.	2.9 ± 0.8	24 (58.5)	17 (41.5)
Knows procedures for documenting staff development and training following state agency policies.	2.9 ± 0.7	13 (31.7)	28 (68.3)
Provides information regarding professional organizations and opportunities for personal and professional development.	2.7 ± 0.7	16 (39.0)	25 (61.0)

^a Scale = 1 (*not important*) to 4 (*extremely important*)

^b Percentage (Number responding)

(Table 4 continues)

(Table 4 continued)

Functional Area 2: Personnel Management Knowledge and Skill Statements

Competency Statement Knowledge/Skill Statement	Importance ^a (<i>M ± SD</i>)	When Needed ^b	
		When Hired	Advanced
Develops/maintains nutrition program projects such as Web-based application and ordering systems, Web pages, and Web-based courses.	2.6 ± 0.8	8 (19.5)	33 (80.5)
Seeks resources for the most current technical information applicable to distance learning and its use.	2.6 ± 0.7	17 (41.5)	24 (58.5)
Competency 2.2: Collaborates with Human Resources to establish a comprehensive personnel management infrastructure to fulfill the mission of the organization and comply with federal, state, and local regulations and policies.			
Demonstrates excellent human relations skills.	3.4 ± 0.6	29 (76.3)	9 (23.7)
Applies conflict resolution, negotiation, and problem-solving techniques.	3.3 ± 0.6	25 (62.5)	15 (37.5)
Assures compliance with equal protection for a culturally diverse workforce and fosters an environment of valuing cultural diversity and equal opportunity.	3.2 ± 0.8	28 (70.0)	12 (30.0)
Utilizes interviewing techniques and hiring procedures that comply with federal and state guidelines.	3.1 ± 0.9	17 (42.5)	23 (57.5)
Knows factors important to employee satisfaction and strategies to address dissatisfaction.	3.1 ± 0.7	20 (50.0)	20 (50.0)
Develops a staffing plan that meets state agency needs and federal, state, and local regulations and policies.	3.1 ± 0.8	7 (17.9)	32 (82.1)

^a Scale = 1 (*not important*) to 4 (*extremely important*)

^b Percentage (Number responding)

(Table 4 continues)

(Table 4 continued)

Functional Area 2: Personnel Management Knowledge and Skill Statements

Competency Statement Knowledge/Skill Statement	Importance ^a (M ± SD)	When Needed ^b	
		When Hired	Advanced
Knows basic principles of job analysis, job design, job specifications, job descriptions, and performance appraisals.	2.9 ± 0.8	21 (52.5)	19 (47.5)
Conducts staff performance appraisals in accordance with state agency policies and federal and state regulations.	2.9 ± 0.9	8 (21.1)	30 (78.9)
Assesses staff performance and ensures that recommended training is completed and implemented on-the-job.	2.9 ± 0.8	13 (33.3)	26 (66.7)
Knows strategies for conducting effective performance appraisals.	2.9 ± 0.8	19 (47.5)	21 (52.5)
Knows federal, state, and local laws and regulations relevant to human resource management.	2.6 ± 0.8	16 (40.0)	24 (60.0)
Knows legislation and resources pertaining to collective bargaining and labor union contracts, when applicable.	2.3 ± 0.8	8 (20.0)	32 (80.0)
Competency 2.3: Provides leadership, direction, and support to child nutrition personnel for department/bureau operations.			
Knows importance of discretion in handling confidential information.	3.8 ± 0.4	34 (85.0)	6 (15.0)
Builds mutual trust, respect, and cooperation among program staff.	3.5 ± 0.5	25 (62.5)	15 (37.5)
Knows organization and time management.	3.3 ± 0.7	32 (80.0)	8 (20.0)
Works with and coordinates diverse groups to encourage participation. (33.3)	3.2 ± 0.6	26	13 (66.7)

^a Scale = 1 (*not important*) to 4 (*extremely important*)

^b Percentage (Number responding)

(Table 4 continues)

(Table 4 continued)

Functional Area 2: Personnel Management Knowledge and Skill Statements

Competency Statement Knowledge/Skill Statement	Importance ^a (<i>M ± SD</i>)	When Needed ^b	
		When Hired	Advanced
Provides feedback for improving productivity and morale.	3.2 ± 0.7	25 (62.5)	15 (37.5)
Knows group dynamics, group facilitation principles and techniques.	3.0 ± 0.8	26 (65.0)	14 (35.0)
Competency 2.4: Collaborates with Human Resources to interpret and communicate human resource regulations, policies, and procedures to program staff.			
Knows civil rights related requirements and regulations.	3.1 ± 0.8	16 (41.0)	23 (59.0)
Maintains accurate records and other pertinent human resource documentation.	3.0 ± 0.8	22 (56.4)	17 (43.6)
Knows selection, supervision, promotion, termination, and disciplinary procedures that comply with federal, state, and local regulations, and contractual policies, when applicable.	3.0 ± 0.8	4 (10.3)	35 (89.7)
Verifies that human resource decisions follow due process established by the agency.	2.9 ± 0.9	5 (13.2)	33 (86.8)
Knows state agency policies and procedures for performing human resource functions (e.g., accident reporting, payroll, benefits, immigration, policy acknowledgement, performance appraisal).	2.8 ± 0.8	5 (12.8)	34 (87.2)
Interprets and communicates human resources management policies and procedures.	2.8 ± 0.9	14 (35.9)	25 (64.1)

^a Scale = 1 (*not important*) to 4 (*extremely important*)

^b Percentage (Number responding)

Functional Area 3: Program and Regulatory Compliance

The Program and Regulatory Compliance functional area contains four competencies, 18 knowledge statements, and 26 skill statements (Table 5). All of the statements had mean

importance ratings of 2.5 or greater, so no knowledge or skill statements were eliminated. The statements with the highest mean ratings were: “maintains confidentiality of clients and records” (3.6 ± 0.6); “complies with all federal and state regulations and policies and procedures” (3.6 ± 0.6); “knows how to interpret and apply the provision of law, regulations, and policies to specific nutrition program situations” (3.6 ± 0.6); “conducts federal and state mandated administrative, operations, and civil rights compliance reviews and evaluations” (3.6 ± 0.8), and “knows how to interpret and apply the provisions of law, regulations, and policies to specific nutrition program situations” (3.6 ± 0.6). Statements with the lowest mean ratings were “monitors the ordering, maintenance, allocation, and shipment of USDA foods” (2.6 ± 1.1) and “knows current research in food and nutrition” (2.6 ± 0.7).

Review panel members identified one statement as knowledge needed *when hired*, “maintains confidentiality of clients and records” (70%). Forty-two other knowledge and skill statements in the program and regulatory compliance functional area were identified by review panel members as *advanced* (i.e., requiring further training and experience). Review panel members tied in their rating of one statement, “knows current research in food and nutrition” so researchers made the decision to classify the statement as *advanced*.

The review panel’s mean agreement ratings for the program and regulatory compliance competency statements are displayed in Table 3. The competency statements had mean ratings of 2.5 or greater for both evaluation statements. This indicates that the review panel agreed that the competencies accurately reflect the knowledge and skill statements under this functional area and were clearly worded.

Table 5

Functional Area 3: Program and Regulatory Compliance Knowledge and Skill Statements

Competency Statement Knowledge/Skill Statement	Importance ^a (<i>M ± SD</i>)	When Needed ^b When Hired Advanced	
Competency 3.1 Interprets regulations and develops and disseminates written guidance to ensure compliance with federal, state, local policies, and rules and regulations for all participating entities.			
Maintains confidentiality of clients and records.	3.6 ± 0.6	28 (70.0)	12 (30.0)
Complies with all federal and state regulations and policies and procedures.	3.6 ± 0.6	10 (25.0)	30 (75.0)
Knows how to interpret and apply the provisions of law, regulations, and policies to specific nutrition program situations.	3.6 ± 0.6	9 (22.5)	31 (77.5)
Knows current federal and state policies, rules and regulations, and records regarding nutrition and meal pattern requirements.	3.5 ± 0.7	12 (30.0)	28 (70.0)
Knows program audit procedures and administrative review requirements.	3.5 ± 0.8	8 (20.0)	32 (80.0)
Provides written instruction and guidance to field staff and local sponsors related to all federal and state regulations.	3.5 ± 0.7	8 (20.0)	32 (80.0)
Knows federal and state policies, rules, and regulations governing Child Nutrition Programs.	3.5 ± 0.7	11 (27.5)	29 (72.5)
Provides on-going training.	3.4 ± 0.7	19 (47.5)	21 (52.5)

^a Scale = 1 (*not important*) to 4 (*extremely important*)

^b Percentage (Number responding)

(Table 5 continues)

(Table 5 continued)

Functional Area 3: Program and Regulatory Compliance Knowledge and Skill Statements

Competency Statement Knowledge/Skill Statement	Importance ^a (<i>M</i> ± <i>SD</i>)	When Needed ^b	
		When Hired	Advanced
Assists nutrition program sponsors/directors/ managers in interpretation of federal and state regulations.	3.4 ± 0.7	11 (27.5)	29 (72.5)
Knows program admission and compliance procedures.	3.4 ± 0.8	9 (23.7)	29 (76.3)
Knows techniques to solve situations of regulatory noncompliance.	3.4 ± 0.7	7 (17.5)	33 (82.5)
Ensures that all menu items meet federal requirements which contribute to the development of healthy eating habits.	3.4 ± 0.8	14 (35.9)	25 (64.1)
Knows records required for federal and state compliance.	3.4 ± 0.8	10 (25.0)	30 (75.0)
Understands and explains the laws, rules, regulations, policies, and guidelines governing all nutrition program operations.	3.3 ± 0.8	5 (12.8)	34 (87.2)
Knows regulations and requirements of serving children with special food and/or nutrition needs.	3.3 ± 0.7	11 (27.5)	29 (72.5)
Reviews, approves, and issues compliance review reports.	3.3 ± 0.9	8 (20.0)	32 (80.0)
Develops appropriate systems to ensure effective policy compliance.	3.2 ± 0.8	6 (15.0)	34 (85.0)
Develops auditing process to monitor programs to log, track, and analyze review deficiencies.	3.2 ± 0.8	11 (28.2)	28 (71.8)

^a Scale = 1 (*not important*) to 4 (*extremely important*)

^b Percentage (Number responding)

(Table 5 continues)

(Table 5 continued)

Functional Area 3: Program and Regulatory Compliance Knowledge and Skill Statements

Competency Statement Knowledge/Skill Statement	Importance^a (<i>M ± SD</i>)	When Hired^b When Hired Advanced	
Knows federal, state, and local regulations governing food and beverage sales.	3.0 ± 0.9	9 (22.5)	31 (77.5)
Knows cultural/ethnic eating behaviors of client populations and how they affect nutritional status, human behavior, and techniques for modifying the diet.	2.7 ± 0.9	14 (35.0)	26 (65.0)
Knows current research in food and nutrition.	2.6 ± 0.7	20 (50.0)	20 (50.0)
Monitors the ordering, maintenance, allocation, and shipment of USDA foods.	2.6 ± 1.1	7 (18.9)	30 (81.1)
Competency 3.2: Evaluates policies and recommends changes and policy revisions.			
Ensures policies and directives are consistent with and applicable to state and federal laws, regulations, and policies.	3.5 ± 0.6	4 (10.3)	35 (89.7)
Interprets, develops, implements, and evaluates regulations, guidelines, policies and procedures for federal, state, and local child nutrition programs.	3.4 ± 0.8	5 (12.5)	35 (87.5)
Knows importance of current and effective policies and procedures.	3.3 ± 0.7	16 (42.1)	22 (57.9)
Develops and adjusts materials regularly to reflect current nutrition program policies and procedures.	3.3 ± 0.7	12 (30.0)	28 (70.0)
Evaluates policies and procedures for efficiency and effectiveness of operations.	3.2 ± 0.8	10 (25.6)	29 (74.4)

^a Scale = 1 (*not important*) to 4 (*extremely important*)

^b Percentage (Number responding)

(Table 5 continues)

(Table 5 continued)

Functional Area 3: Program and Regulatory Compliance Knowledge and Skill Statements

Competency Statement Knowledge/Skill Statement	Importance ^a (<i>M</i> ± <i>SD</i>)	When Needed ^b When Hired Advanced	
Recommends revisions and improvements to policies and procedures.	3.0 ± 0.7	9 (22.5)	31 (77.5)
Recommends revisions to program activities based on existing data.	3.0 ± 0.7	7 (17.5)	33 (82.5)
Recommends system changes and enhancements.	3.0 ± 0.7	6 (15.0)	34 (85.0)
Competency 3.3: Designs program and compliance review instruments and procedures to ensure uniform monitoring and review efforts throughout the state.			
Conducts federal and state mandated administrative, operations, and civil rights compliance reviews and evaluations.	3.6 ± 0.8	10 (25.0)	30 (75.0)
Adheres to USDA regulations regarding applications, claims, processing, and program reviews.	3.6 ± 0.8	12 (30.0)	28 (70.0)
Develops procedures to maintain accurate and appropriate records that comply with federal and state regulations.	3.3 ± 0.8	7 (17.9)	32 (82.1)
Knows regulations, policies, and procedures, and guidelines governing all review efforts.	3.3 ± 1.0	5 (12.5)	35 (87.5)
Knows reporting and recordkeeping requirements for monitoring and reviews.	3.2 ± 0.8	11 (28.9)	27 (71.1)
Knows principles and techniques of assessments and verification of program activities.	3.2 ± 0.8	9 (22.5)	31 (77.5)

^a Scale = 1 (*not important*) to 4 (*extremely important*)

^b Percentage (Number responding)

(Table 5 continues)

(Table 5 continued)

Functional Area 3: Program and Regulatory Compliance Knowledge and Skill Statements

Competency Statement Knowledge/Skill Statement	Importance^a (<i>M ± SD</i>)	When Needed^b When Hired Advanced	
Assures systems are in place to monitor progress toward meeting state agency goals and objectives.	3.2 ± 0.7	5 (12.8)	34 (87.2)
Performs internal review/audits on all aspects.	3.1 ± 0.8	6 (15.0)	34 (85.0)
Designs nutrition program compliance review instruments and procedures to ensure uniform monitoring and review efforts throughout the state.	3.1 ± 0.9	3 (7.5)	37 (92.5)
Competency 3.4: Oversees the development, preparation, and implementation of program agreements and ensures compliance with related requirements and regulations.			
Knows program admission and compliance procedures.	3.3 ± 0.7	13 (32.5)	27 (67.5)
Knows federal and state rules and regulations governing program agreements.	3.2 ± 0.8	6 (15.0)	34 (85.0)
Develops and reviews application/renewal materials to reflect federal and state requirements.	3.1 ± 0.8	8 (21.1)	30 (78.9)
Knows the specifics of the annual School Food Authority Program Agreement and the associated responsibilities.	3.0 ± 0.9	7 (17.5)	33 (82.5)
Assists with processing annual participation agreements including determining sponsor eligibility for participation.	3.0 ± 1.0	11 (27.5)	29 (72.5)

^a Scale = 1 (*not important*) to 4 (*extremely important*)

^b Percentage (Number responding)

Functional Area 4: Program Management

The Program Management functional area contains six competencies, 11 knowledge statements and 21 skill statements (Table 6). Thirty-two of the knowledge or skill statements in the Program Management functional area had mean ratings of 2.5 or greater. The statements with the highest mean ratings were: “demonstrates flexibility in responding to changing job requirements” (3.5 ± 0.7); “complies with federal reporting requirements ensuring timely and accurate submission of reports” (3.3 ± 0.8); “establishes and maintains good working relationships with sponsor agencies, administrators, staff, teachers, parents, children, child-orientated service/civic groups, and other government agencies” (3.5 ± 0.6); “knows fundamentals of team work, consensus management, and participatory decision-making processes” (3.3 ± 0.6).

Six skill statements had mean importance ratings that were less than the 2.5 criteria for acceptance: These skill statements were eliminated: “researches, assembles, correlates, and analyzes facts and trends” (2.3 ± 0.8); “conducts and/or participates in food and nutrition research” (2.1 ± 0.8); “knows techniques of grant writing” (2.3 ± 0.7); “assists in development of legislation, policies, goals, and objectives affecting child nutrition programs” (2.4 ± 0.9); “identifies food and nutrition-related legislative requirements, develops proposed legislation, and testifies on legislative bills to explain and defend state agency objectives and goals” (2.2 ± 1.1); and “coordinates all media opportunities and publicity of child nutrition programs with appropriate state agency staff” (2.4 ± 0.9). The elimination of these statements left one competency area with only one knowledge statement. Researchers made the decision to eliminate the competency “investigates, adapts, and applies educational policies, research issues, and topics relevant to improve child nutrition programs” and move the remaining knowledge

statement to the competency “develops and organizes strategies to support continuous program excellence.”

Review panel members identified seven statements as knowledge or skills needed when the state agency CN professional is hired. All other 25 statements were considered by panel members to be advanced knowledge and skills. Review panel members’ mean agreement ratings for the program management competency statements are displayed in Table 3. The competency statements had mean ratings of 2.5 or greater for both evaluation statements. This indicates that the review panel agreed that the competencies accurately reflect the knowledge and skill statements under this functional area and were clearly worded.

Table 6

Functional Area 4: Program Management Knowledge and Skill Statements

Competency Statement	Importance ^a (<i>M ± SD</i>)	When Needed ^b	
Knowledge/Skill Statement		When Hired	Advanced
Competency 4.1: Plans, develops, implements, and evaluates Child Nutrition Programs to meet changing priorities to support the mission of the program.			
Demonstrates flexibility in responding to changing job requirements.	3.5 ± 0.7	28 (70.0)	12 (30.0)
Develops policies and procedures, goals, and objectives to administer Child Nutrition Programs.	3.2 ± 0.7	4 (10.3)	35 (89.7)
Conceptualizes nutrition programs' rules and responsibilities in context of state agency (mission, vision, strategic goals, functions, policies, and procedures).	3.0 ± 0.7	15 (37.5)	25 (62.5)
Knows state and national trends.	2.9 ± 0.8	14 (35.0)	26 (65.0)
Attends legislative hearings, departmental meetings, public meetings, workshops, conferences, seminars, and meets with allied organization groups, and agencies in matters pertaining to child nutrition.	2.9 ± 0.8	13 (32.5)	27 (67.5)
Gathers, analyzes, and evaluates complex data from a wide variety of sources and makes recommendations.	2.8 ± 0.7	6 (15.4)	33 (84.6)
Networks with appropriate national, state, and local partners, professional associations, and advisory councils.	2.8 ± 0.7	8 (20.0)	32 (80.0)

^a Scale = 1 (*not important*) to 4 (*extremely important*)

^b Percentage (Number responding)

(Table 6 continues)

(Table 6 continued)

Functional Area 4: Program Management Knowledge and Skill Statements

Competency Statement

Knowledge/Skill Statement	Importance^a (<i>M ± SD</i>)	When Needed^b When Hired Advanced	
Competency 4.2: Establishes and administers electronic or manual recordkeeping and reporting instruments to maintain efficient and effective programs.			
Complies with federal reporting requirements ensuring timely and accurate submission of reports.	3.3 ± 0.8	12 (31.6)	26 (68.4)
Knows all federal and state requirements for maintaining accurate and appropriate records.	3.2 ± 0.9	9 (22.5)	31 (77.5)
Organizes data in logical format for presentation in reports, documents, and other written materials.	3.2 ± 0.7	22 (55.0)	18 (45.0)
Competency 4.3: Supports federal, state, local, and private disaster relief activities.			
Knows federal, state, and local regulations related to operations in an emergency or crisis.	2.6 ± 0.8	10 (25.0)	30 (75.0)
Provides coordination with federal, state, and local disaster relief agencies.	2.5 ± 0.9	6 (15.0)	34 (85.0)
Knows the state agency's crisis management plan and/or emergency response plan.	2.5 ± 0.9	9 (22.5)	31 (77.5)
Competency 4.4: Establishes a system for the coordination and oversight of child nutrition-related grant activities, if applicable.			
Evaluates grants/projects for compliance with federal, state, departmental policies, procedures, and expected outcomes.	2.7 ± 0.8	7 (17.5)	33 (82.5)

^a Scale = 1 (*not important*) to 4 (*extremely important*)

^b Percentage (Number responding)

(Table 6 continues)

(Table 6 continued)

Functional Area 4: Program Management Knowledge and Skill Statements

Competency Statement

Knowledge/Skill Statement	Importance ^a (<i>M</i> ± <i>SD</i>)	When Needed ^b	
		When Hired	Advanced
Assists in grant proposal implementation as well as their related activities.	2.6 ± 0.8	12 (30.0)	30 (70.0)
Participates in planning, financial oversight, coordination with program priorities, and all financial coordination in relation to nutrition programs and grant writing.	2.6 ± 0.7	4 (10.0)	36 (90.0)
Competency 4.5: Interprets, analyzes, reviews, and provides written/oral testimony related to Child Nutrition Programs, program rules, regulations, policies, and statutes.			
Knows state and federal legislative process and governmental organization and structure.	2.7 ± 0.8	10 (25.0)	30 (75.0)
Responds to correspondence, inquiries from legislators, media, and public about Child Nutrition Programs and related issues.	2.7 ± 1.0	7 (17.9)	32 (82.1)
Reviews proposed legislation at request of legislative office, recommends revisions, provides expert comments concerning nutrition education and childhood obesity.	2.5 ± 0.9	3 (8.1)	34 (91.5)
Represents Child Nutrition Programs before legislative committees, as requested.	2.5 ± 1.1	7 (17.9)	32 (82.1)
Competency 4.6: Develops and organizes strategies to support continuous program excellence.			
Establishes and maintains good working relationships with sponsor agencies, administrators, staff, teachers, parents, children, child-oriented service/civic groups, and other government agencies.	3.5 ± 0.6	21 (53.8)	18 (46.2)

^a Scale = 1 (*not important*) to 4 (*extremely important*)

^b Percentage (Number responding)

(Table 6 continues)

(Table 6 continued)

Functional Area 4: Program Management Knowledge and Skill Statements

Competency Statement Knowledge/Skill Statement	Importance^a (<i>M ± SD</i>)	When Needed^b	
		When Hired	Advanced
Knows fundamentals of team work, consensus management, and participatory decision-making processes.	3.3 ± 0.6	28 (70.0)	12 (30.0)
Determines and implements methods to continually improve operations.	3.2 ± 0.8	22 (55.0)	18 (45.0)
Knows organizational framework needed to achieve goals and objectives.	3.2 ± 0.7	19 (47.5)	21 (62.5)
Knows factors that contribute to meeting employee needs and job satisfaction.	3.1 ± 0.7	20 (51.3)	19 (48.7)
Negotiates, facilitates, and collaborates with other management staff, agencies, and personnel to promote and implement program goals and objectives.	3.0 ± 0.8	13 (34.2)	25 (65.8)
Maximizes employee potential in meeting organizational goals and mission.	3.0 ± 0.7	18 (47.4)	20 (52.6)
Analyzes internal and external audit review findings, recommends changes for program and process efficiency, and prioritizes improvement initiative.	3.0 ± 0.7	6 (15.8)	32 (84.2)
Knows principles of strategic planning and goal-setting.	3.0 ± 0.7	28 (70.0)	12 (30.0)
Oversees planning and development of evaluation criteria, forms, statistics, and conduct targeted quality assurance reviews for child nutrition programs.	3.0 ± 0.8	6 (15.4)	33 (84.6)
Knows where to access resources for best practices.	2.9 ± 0.7	16 (40.0)	24 (60.0)
Knows principles of public relations and marketing techniques appropriate for the nutrition programs community.	2.7 ± 0.8	18 (45.0)	22 (55.0)

^a Scale = 1 (*not important*) to 4 (*extremely important*)

^b Percentage (Number responding)

Functional Area 5: Technology and Data Management

The Technology and Data Management functional area contains two competencies, four knowledge statements, and seven skill statements (Table 7). Eleven of the knowledge or skill statements in the Technology and Data Management functional area had mean ratings of 2.5 or greater. The statements with the highest mean ratings were: “knows basic uses of word processing, database, spreadsheet, and presentation software” (3.5 ± 0.6); demonstrates operating knowledge of technology” (3.4 ± 0.7); and “knows benefits of computer applications in preparation and maintenance of financial records” (3.2 ± 0.7).

One knowledge statement and two skill statements had mean importance ratings that were less than the 2.5 criteria for acceptance. These knowledge and skill statements were eliminated: “identifies costs associated with maintaining a comprehensive technology infrastructure” (2.4 ± 0.8); “knows federal and state procedures for selection, purchase, and disposal of hardware and/or software systems” (2.4 ± 0.9); and “develops procedures for proper care and maintenance of hardware and software systems” (2.28 ± 1.0).

Review panel members identified three statements as knowledge or skills needed when the state agency CN professional is hired. These statements were: “knows basic uses of word processing, database, spreadsheet, and presentation software” (82.5%); “demonstrates operating knowledge of technology” (85.0%); and “knows benefits of computer applications in preparation and maintenance of financial records” (72.5%). All other statements were considered by panel members to be advanced knowledge and skills to be acquired through further experience and training.

Review panel members’ mean agreement ratings for the Technology and Data Management competency statements are displayed in Table 3. The competency statements had

mean ratings of 2.5 or greater for both evaluation statements. This indicates that the review panel agreed that the competencies accurately reflect the knowledge and skill statements under this functional area and were clearly worded.

Table 7

Functional Area 5: Technology and Data Management Knowledge and Skill Statements

Competency Statement

Knowledge/Skill Statement	Importance^a (<i>M ± SD</i>)	When Needed^b	When Hired	Advanced
Competency 5.1: Uses available resources to ensure that information technology systems and infrastructure meet the operational needs of Child Nutrition Programs and ensures USDA compliance.				
Knows basic uses of word processing, database, spreadsheet, and presentation software.	3.5 ± 0.6	33 (82.5)	7 (17.5)	
Demonstrates operating knowledge of technology.	3.4 ± 0.7	34 (85.0)	6 (15.0)	
Knows benefits of computer applications in preparation and maintenance of financial records.	3.2 ± 0.7	29 (72.5)	11 (27.5)	
Assists child nutrition program clients in implementing and sustaining State agency electronic computer systems.	3.0 ± 0.8	12 (32.4)	25 (67.6)	
Develops contingency plans for use in the event of hardware and/or software failure, such as performing backup of information periodically.	2.8 ± 0.9	18 (45.0)	22 (55.0)	
Utilizes available resources to ensure that information technology systems are meeting the operational needs of the agency.	2.7 ± 0.9	9 (24.3)	28 (75.7)	

^a Scale = 1 (*not important*) to 4 (*extremely important*)

^b Number responding (percentage)

(Table 7 continues)

(Table 7 continued)

Functional Area 5: Technology and Data Management Knowledge and Skill Statements

Competency Statement

Knowledge/Skill Statement	Importance (<i>M ± SD</i>)	When Needed When Hired Advanced	
Competency 5.2: Researches, analyzes, and proposes the acquisition of technological equipment and computer software having the potential to make the work of the team more efficient and accurate.			
Assists nutrition program clients in implementing and sustaining state agency electronic computer systems.	3.0 ± 0.8	12 (30.8)	27 (69.2)
Collaborates with technology consultants to design and maintain systems that store program records, fiscal payments, and participation data.	2.7 ± 1.0	4 (10.5)	34 (89.5)
Knows available technology resources in the department.	2.6 ± 0.8	9 (23.1)	30 (76.9)
Knows importance of training programs and technical support provided by software and hardware vendors.	2.5 ± 0.9	10 (26.3)	28 (73.7)
Evaluates and selects appropriate software and hardware that integrates with the technology infrastructure of the agency.	2.5 ± 0.9	7 (17.9)	32 (82.1)

^a Scale = 1 (*not important*) to 4 (*extremely important*)

^b Number responding (percentage)

Functional Area 6: Training, Technical Assistance, and Outreach

The Training, Technical Assistance, and Outreach functional area contains four competencies, ten knowledge statements, and 16 skill statements (Table 8). All the knowledge and skill statements in the Training, Technical Assistance, and Outreach functional area had mean ratings of 2.5 or greater. The statements with the highest mean ratings were: “responds to telephone, written, and electronic requests for information” (3.6 ± 0.6); “demonstrates excellent oral and written communication including public speaking, writing, coaching, coordination, and

education” (3.5 ± 0.6); “provides technical assistance, consultation, training, and guidance to nutrition program clients, section staff, other programs, and department staff through formal training sessions, on-site visits, and written and oral correspondence” (3.4 ± 0.8); and “knows principles, processes for providing excellent customer and personal services” (3.4 ± 0.7).

Statements with the lowest mean ratings were: “knows community-based organizations and resources interested in promoting education and nutrition needs and goals” (2.5 ± 0.7); and “knows marketing principles and techniques appropriate to nutrition programs” (2.7 ± 0.8).

Review panel members identified six statements as knowledge and skills needed by state agency CN professionals when hired. These statements were: “demonstrates excellent oral and written communication skills when responding to and addressing stakeholders” (87.2%); “knows principles and techniques of effective communication including public speaking, writing coaching, coordination, and education” (82.5%); “knows principles, processes for providing excellent customer and personal services” (76.9%); “responds to telephone, written, and electronic requests for information” (75.0%); “knows principles, theories, and practices of education and training” (67.5%); and “uses appropriate tools to evaluate learning” (55.0%). Nineteen knowledge and skill statements in the training, technical assistance, and outreach functional area were identified by review panel members as advanced knowledge and skills requiring further training and experience. Review panel members tied in their rating of one statement, “knows resources for the development and evaluation of nutrition education materials and activities” so researchers made the decision to classify the statement as advanced.

The review panel’s mean agreement ratings for the Training, Technical Assistance, and Outreach competency statements are displayed in Table 3. The competency statements had mean ratings of 2.5 or greater for both evaluation statements. This indicates that the review panel

agreed that the competencies accurately reflect the knowledge and skill statements under this functional area and were clearly worded.

Table 8

Functional Area 6: Training, Technical Assistance, and Outreach Knowledge and Skill Statements

Competency Statement Knowledge/Skill Statement	Importance ^a (M ± SD)	When Needed ^b	
		When hired	Advanced
Competency 6.1: Serves as a resource for educational materials, presentations, current research, and regulatory information.			
Knows appropriate channels for effectively communicating with nutrition program stakeholders.	3.0 ± 0.8	12 (30.0)	28 (70.0)
Knows resources for the development and evaluation of nutrition education materials and activities.	3.0 ± 0.8	20 (50.0)	20 (50.0)
Uses appropriate tools to evaluate learning.	2.9 ± 0.8	22 (55.0)	18 (45.0)
Evaluates training programs and materials to recommend purchase of new materials and modifications of existing materials.	2.8 ± 0.7	11 (27.5)	29 (72.5)
Competency 6.2: Develops a comprehensive technical assistance plan to reflect current program policies and procedures, identification of client needs, areas of non-compliance, and program goals using all types of delivery methods.			
Provides technical assistance, consultation, training, and guidance to nutrition program clients, section staff, other programs, and department staff through formal training sessions, on-site visits, and written and oral correspondence.	3.4 ± 0.8	10 (25.6)	29 (74.4)
Recognizes program needs and provides competent assistance to clients relative to problems of: marketing; purchasing; menu development; computerized nutrient analysis; food storage; selection, purchase, placement, and care of equipment; and maintenance of accounts, records, and reports.	3.2 ± 0.7	10 (25.6)	29 (74.4)

^a Scale = 1 (*not important*) to 4 (*extremely important*)

^b Number responding (percentage)

(Table 8 continues)

(Table 8 continued)

Functional Area 6: Training, Technical Assistance, and Outreach Knowledge and Skill Statements

Competency Statement	Importance ^a (M ± SD)	When Needed ^b	
Knowledge/Skill Statement		When hired	Advanced
Competency 6.3: Develops and initiates outreach activities to expand the scope and effectiveness of Child Nutrition Programs.			
Represents the state agency at conferences and gives presentations, as requested.	3.2 ± 0.7	12 (31.6)	26 (68.4)
Networks with appropriate national, state, and local partners, professional associations, and advisory councils.	3.0 ± 0.7	12 (30.8)	27 (69.2)
Promotes child nutrition programs to the public through effective public relations to national, federal, state, and local partners, professional associations, and advisory councils.	2.9 ± 0.8	9 (23.7)	29 (76.3)
Develops/implements a multi-faceted plan to expand participation in nutrition programs.	2.9 ± 0.8	3 (7.7)	36 (92.3)
Knows importance of networking within the community to advocate and build support for nutrition programs.	2.8 ± 0.8	18 (46.2)	21 (53.8)
Knows community-based organizations and resources interested in promoting education and nutrition needs and goals.	2.5 ± 0.7	13. (33.3)	26 (66.7)
Competency 6.4: Conducts needs assessment and acts as a resource for nutrition education and wellness/healthy environment.			
Knows principles, processes for providing excellent customer service and personal services.	3.4 ± 0.7	30 (76.9)	9 (23.1)
Knows age-appropriate methods for promoting nutrition education.	3.0 ± 0.7	19 (48.7)	9 (23.1)
Serves as a resource for appropriate nutrition education and promotional materials to encourage healthy eating behaviors.	3.0 ± 0.7	13 (33.3)	26 (66.7)

^a Scale = 1 (*not important*) to 4 (*extremely important*)

^b Number responding (percentage)

(Table 8 continues)

(Table 8 continued)

Functional Area 6: Training, Technical Assistance, and Outreach Knowledge and Skill Statements

Competency Statement Knowledge/Skill Statement	Importance^a (M ± SD)	When Needed^b	
		When hired	Advanced
Evaluates the effectiveness of nutrition education programs initiated by the state agency.	3.0 ± 0.8	8 (20.5)	31 (79.5)
Conducts program assessment for identifying training needs.	2.8 ± 0.7	11 (28.2)	28 (71.8)
Knows marketing principles and techniques appropriate to nutrition programs.	2.7 ± 0.8	15 (38.5)	24 (61.5)

^a Scale = 1 (*not important*) to 4 (*extremely important*)

^b Number responding (percentage)

Knowledge and Skill Statements Not Meeting Criteria for Acceptance

Three knowledge statements and seven skill statements were deleted, as they did not meet the pre-determined criteria of a mean importance rating of 2.5 or greater to be accepted (Table 9). All ten statements achieved mean ratings between 2.1 and 2.4, indicating that although the statements did not meet the criteria for general acceptance, respondents did consider them valuable contributors to the related competencies.

The preponderance of respondents were classified as state agency staff. This may have had an impact on the ratings for these criteria. The knowledge and skills may have more value to CN professionals working in state agencies in administrative and management positions. Also, the deleted knowledge and skill statements may be needed in more limited or specific situations than for general practice. The statements have been retained in Table 9 so they may possibly be used by those who find them appropriate to their particular needs, and as a general reference.

Table 9

*Knowledge and Skill Statements Not Meeting Criteria for Acceptance***Functional Area**

Knowledge/Skill Statement	Importance ^a (<i>M</i> ± <i>SD</i>)
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Personnel Management

Knows legislation and resources pertaining to collective bargaining and labor union contracts, when applicable.	2.3 ± 0.8
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Program Management

Assists in development of legislation, policies, goals, and objectives affecting child nutrition programs.	2.4 ± 0.9
--	-----------

Knows techniques of grant writing.	2.3 ± 0.7
------------------------------------	-----------

Researches, assembles, correlates, and analyzes facts and trends.	2.3 ± 0.8
---	-----------

Coordinates all media opportunities and publicity of child nutrition programs with appropriate state agency staff.	2.3 ± 0.9
--	-----------

Identifies food and nutrition-related legislative requirements, develops proposed legislation, and testifies on legislative bills to explain and defend state agency objectives and goals.	2.2 ± 1.1
--	-----------

Conducts and/or participates in food and nutrition research.	2.1 ± 0.8
--	-----------

Technology and Data Management

Knows federal and state procedures for selection, purchase, and disposal of hardware and/or software systems.	2.4 ± 0.9
---	-----------

Identifies costs associated with maintaining a comprehensive technology infrastructure.	2.4 ± 0.8
---	-----------

Develops procedures for proper care and maintenance of hardware and software systems.	2.3 ± 1.0
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^a Scale = 1 (*not important*) to 4 (*extremely important*)

Time Frame in Which Knowledge and Skills are Needed

Review panel respondents were asked to categorize each knowledge and skill statement as to the time frame in which it is needed by state agency CN professionals. The two choices presented were *when hired* or *advanced*. Table 10 lists the statements that received above 50% for *when hired*, indicating that the knowledge or skill is needed at the time of hire and not later in the course of practice as a state agency CN professional. A total of 34 (20%) knowledge and skill statements were classified as needed by state agency CN professionals *when hired*. The remaining 136 (80%) statements were classified as *advanced* knowledge or skills. This preponderance of *advanced* knowledge and skill statements underscores the expectation of complex and high-level performance by CN professionals at the state agency level. This underscores the need for training and education to bring beginning CN professionals to the level required at the agency level.

In prior research, Cross and Nettles (2010) found that CN professionals come to agency positions with a wide range of prior work experiences. Most remain in their current position for extended periods of time. This stability provides a repository of experience and knowledge available to the CN professionals. During their first year of employment, most initial training was on an individual basis with an on-the-job mentor enhancing the process. Major sources of first year training were within the home unit and provided by the USDA.

The major sources of professional development opportunities for CN professionals in their first year of employment are provided by the School Nutrition Association, professional association conferences/workshops, and The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. Later opportunities are provided by the USDA/FNS, state agency staff and professional organizations.

Webinars and Web-based modules also were cited as sources of professional development opportunities for CN professionals (Cross & Nettles, 2010).

Table 10

Knowledge and Skills Needed by State Agency Child Nutrition Professionals at the Time of Hire

Functional Area

Knowledge/Skill Statement

Financial Management

Knows importance of prompt submission of accurate financial documents to successfully secure program funds.

Knows basic manual and computerized recordkeeping procedures.

Works cooperatively with individuals and organizations to expand resources available.

Personnel Management

Knows importance of state agency orientation to assure that new staff has appropriate information to perform their jobs.

Knows effective job training methods.

Knows educational theories, principles, and techniques for assessing effective professional development and training.

Knows basic principles of job analysis, job design, job specifications, job descriptions, and performance appraisals.

Knows importance of discretion in handling confidential information.

Knows organization and time management.

Knows group dynamics, group facilitation principles, and techniques.

Demonstrates excellent human relations skills.

Applies conflict resolution, negotiation, and problem-solving techniques.

Assures compliance with equal protection for a culturally diverse work-force and fosters an environment of valuing cultural diversity and equal opportunity.

(Table 10 continues)

(Table 10 continued)

Knowledge and Skills Needed by State Agency Child Nutrition Professionals at the Time of Hire

Functional Area

Knowledge/Skill Statement

Builds mutual trust, respect, and cooperation among program staff.

Works with and coordinates diverse groups to encourage participation.

Provides feedback for improving productivity and morale.

Maintains accurate records and other pertinent human resource documentation.

Program and Regulatory Compliance

Maintains confidentiality of clients and records.

Program Management

Knows fundamentals of team work, consensus management, and participatory decision-making.

Knows factors that contribute to meeting employee needs and job satisfaction.

Knows principles of strategic planning and goal-setting.

Demonstrates flexibility in responding to changing job requirements.

Organizes data in logical format for presentation in reports, documents, and other written materials.

Establishes and maintains good working relationships with sponsor agencies, administrators, staff, teachers, parents, children, child-oriented service/civic groups, and other government agencies.

Determines and implements methods to continually improve operations.

Technology and Data Management

Knows basic uses of word processing, database, spreadsheet, and presentation software.

Knows benefits of computer applications in preparation and maintenance of financial records.

Demonstrates operating knowledge of technology.

(Table 10 continues)

(Table 10 continued)

Knowledge and Skills Needed by State Agency Child Nutrition Professionals at the Time of Hire

Functional Area

Knowledge/Skill Statement

Training, Technical Assistance, and Outreach

Knows principles and techniques of effective communication including public speaking, writing, coaching, coordination, and education.

Knows principles, theories, and practices of education and training.

Knows principles, processes for providing excellent customer and personal services.

Responds to telephone, written, and electronic requests for information.

Demonstrates excellent oral and written communication skills when responding to and addressing stakeholders.

Uses appropriate tools to evaluate learning.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The functional areas, competencies, knowledge, and skills identified in this project provide a clear picture of the complex role of child nutrition (CN) professionals at the state agency level. Job requirements for state agency professional staff differ from state to state, and the number of professional staff in the state agency varies from state to state; these factors impact the job responsibilities of state agency CN professionals. Understanding of the competencies, knowledge, and skills is valuable to state agency CN professionals who function in today's dynamic and challenging environment.

The findings of this project supported the development of a Web-based resource (Appendix). For each functional area, the competencies, the *when hired* knowledge and skill statements, and the *advanced* knowledge and skill statements are presented. Also included in the resource are comprehensive listings of the *when hired* knowledge and skill statements and the *advanced* knowledge and skill statements.

State agency administrators can use the knowledge and skill statements to develop job descriptions for CN professional staff and to identify interview questions for potential staff. The competencies, knowledge, and skills identified in this project can provide the foundation to design training programs for new staff as well as on-going professional development for all CN professional staff.

The information can also serve as a framework for administrators to identify the criteria for evaluating the effectiveness of state agency CN professionals. The competencies, knowledge and skills verified in this project can supply the foundation for administrators to design state agency positions and prepare job descriptions for these roles.

In addition, state agency directors can use this information when identifying staff members who demonstrate the potential to advance within the state agency. Finally, the competencies, knowledge, and skills framework can provide the basis for mentoring and other succession planning activities to prepare CN professionals for higher-level state agency responsibilities.

The review panel identified the time frame in which each knowledge and skill statement is needed by CN professionals to perform at the state agency level. Respondents considered the majority (80%) of the knowledge and skill statements “advanced.” This result indicates that state agency CN professionals are expected to operate at a high level of practice. Research outcomes imply that state agency CN professionals begin their service at a basic competency level and training and improvement opportunities will be provided by the agency while on the job to reach the advanced level of practice identified by the review panel.

The information gained from this study will assist the National Food Service Management Institute (NFSMI), the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), and state agencies in developing appropriate educational materials and resources for CN professionals working at the state agency level. Identification of common functions, competencies, and skills needed by CN professionals working in state agencies contributes to building a strong infrastructure consistent from state to state. Prior research (Cross & Nettles, 2010) identified consistent interpretation of USDA guidance and regulations across all states as the element in training and continuing education most desired by state agency CN professionals.

Training modules should be developed to address each of the functional areas. The training modules should be based on the competencies, knowledge, and skill statements 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.

It is important to have a common and consistent understanding of the requirements of CN professionals working at state agencies across the nation. It offers a system to transmit expectations for excellent performance and strengthen accountability that is applicable to all state agencies. 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.

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Appendix

Competencies, Knowledge, and Skills for State Agency

Child Nutrition Professionals in the 21st Century



National Food Service Management Institute
The University of Mississippi

Competencies, Knowledge and Skills for State Agency Child Nutrition Professionals in the 21st Century

Financial Management

Personnel Management

Program and Regulatory Compliance

Program Management

Technology and Data Management

Training, Technical Assistance, and Outreach

Applied Research Division
The University of Southern Mississippi

**Competencies, Knowledge and Skills for
State Agency Child Nutrition Professionals
in the 21st Century**



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

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

GY 2011 #7

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National Food Service Management Institute
The University of Mississippi
Building the Future Through Child Nutrition

The National Food Service Management Institute was authorized by Congress in 1989 and established in 1990 at The University of Mississippi in Oxford and is operated in collaboration with The University of Southern Mississippi in Hattiesburg. The Institute operates under a grant agreement with the United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service.

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.

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INTRODUCTION

The passage of the National School Lunch Act of 1946 (NSLA) initiated an on-going partnership among the federal government, states, and local school districts to provide healthy, nutritious meals and snacks to the nation's children. Career child nutrition (CN) professionals are employed by state agencies to oversee the federally-funded CN programs. Their responsibilities include planning, administering, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating all aspects of 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 National Food Service Management Institute (NFSMI) has conducted research that has led to the identification of the competencies, knowledge and skills needed by CN technicians, managers, and district-level school nutrition professionals. Little information is available about the needs of state agency CN professionals; thus, the purpose of this project was to identify the competencies, knowledge and skills needed by CN professionals working in state agency positions. The following definitions were used to guide the process:

- **State agency child nutrition professionals:** 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 Food Program, and Summer Food Service Program. For the purpose of this research, the roles of clerical and support staff were not addressed.
- **Functional areas:** The broad groupings or divisions of job responsibilities performed by the CN professionals within the state agency.
- **Competencies:** The areas of expertise and accountability within each functional area necessary to ensure that the purpose(s) of the job are met.
- **Knowledge:** The information a person has in specific content areas that is necessary for successful performance.
- **Skills:** The ability to perform certain physical and/or mental tasks that are necessary for successful performance.

This project was conducted in three phases and CN professionals participated in all phases of the project. Phase I utilized an expert panel of state agency professionals to bring about agreement on the functional areas encompassing the job responsibilities of state agency CN professionals. In Phase II, another expert panel of CN state directors and state agency staff met to arrive at consensus on the job competencies and knowledge and skill statements needed by state agency CN professionals. The Phase II review panel members verified whether the knowledge and skill statements are important to the job responsibilities of a state agency CN professional, and confirmed whether the competency statements are consistent with the supporting knowledge and skill statements. They were also asked to categorize the knowledge and skill statements into two



Introduction

distinct groups, using the following definitions:

- **When Hired:** The knowledge/skills needed to perform effectively in entry-level state agency CN program positions.
- **Advanced:** The knowledge/skills gained through experience in CN programs and professional training that are needed to perform proficiently in multifaceted state agency CN positions.

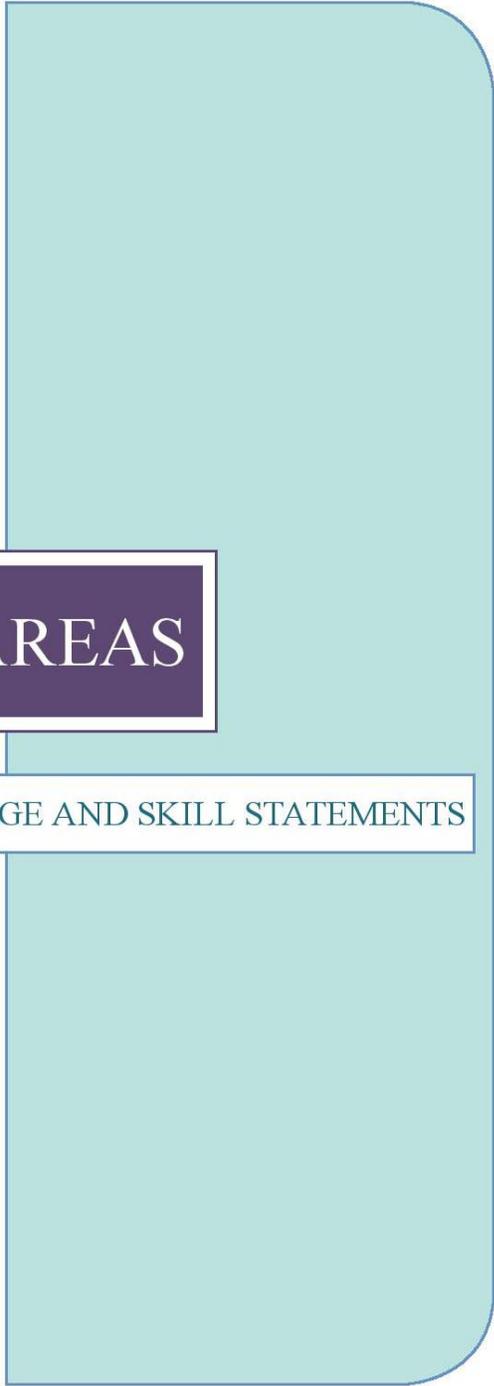
Six functional areas encompassing the job responsibilities of state agency CN professionals were identified:

- Financial Management
- Personnel Management
- Program Management
- Program and Regulatory Compliance
- Technology and Data Management
- Training, Technical Assistance, and Outreach

In addition to those functional areas, 24 competencies, 66 knowledge statements, and 104 skill statements were confirmed by the review panel. From these statements, the review panel identified 34 statements as needed when state agency CN professionals are hired and 136 statements as being advanced and gained through professional experience and training. Of the 34 statements identified as needed when hired, the most statements came from the Personnel Management functional area, followed by Program Management then Training, Technical Assistance, and Outreach. The relatively small number of knowledge and skills statements needed when state agency CN professionals are hired emphasizes the need for training and education to bring beginning CN professionals to the performance level required at the state agency.

The functional areas, along with the competencies, knowledge, and skills identified in this project, provide a clear picture of the complex role of state agency CN professionals. Job requirements for state agency professional staff differ from state to state and the number of professional staff in the state agency varies from state to state. State agency directors can use the knowledge and skill statements to develop job descriptions for CN professional staff and to identify interview questions for potential staff. The competencies, knowledge, and skills identified in this project can provide the foundation to design training programs for new staff as well as on-going professional development for all CN professional staff. The information can also serve as a framework to identify the criteria for evaluating an effective state agency CN professional. In addition, state agency directors can use this information when identifying staff members who demonstrate the potential to advance within the state agency. Finally, the competencies, knowledge, and skills framework can provide the basis for mentoring and other succession planning activities to prepare CN professionals for higher-level state agency responsibilities.





FUNCTIONAL AREAS

COMPETENCIES, KNOWLEDGE AND SKILL STATEMENTS

Functional Area 1: 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.

Competency 1.1: Oversees a financial management system that manages and supports program goals which ensure regulatory compliance.

When Hired

Knowledge Statements

- None

Skill Statements

- None

Advanced

Knowledge Statements

- Knows generally accepted financial procedures and federal, state, and municipal finance laws and regulations.
- Knows financial goals and objectives of the state agency.

Skill Statements

- None

Competency 1.2: Promptly and accurately processes program claims and federal funding reports per regulations and financial management requirements/guidance.

When Hired

Knowledge Statements

- None

Skill Statements

- None

Advanced

Knowledge Statements

- None



Skill Statements

- Ensures compliance with local, state, federal, and other regulatory guidelines that impact business operations.
- Analyzes and determines applicability of accounting data and draws conclusions to make appropriate recommendations.
- Collaborates with clients to identify the desired CN program financial outcomes.

Competency 1.3: Develops and oversees state child nutrition administrative and budget plans to ensure compliance with program regulations and prompt program funding.

When Hired

Knowledge Statements

- Knows importance of prompt submission of accurate financial documents to successfully secure program funds.
- Knows basic manual and computerized recordkeeping procedures.

Skill Statements

- Works cooperatively with individuals and organizations to expand resources available.

Advanced

Knowledge Statements

- Knows United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) procurement regulations and resources.
- Knows federal and state guidelines for pricing meals and food items.
- Knows accounting and financial management processes related to foodservice operations.

Skill Statements

- Maintains financial viability.
- Analyzes financial statements regularly to make informed financial decisions.
- Establishes and/or implements written procedures for collecting, reconciling, depositing, and disbursing funds.
- Uses financial management information system software to enhance financial reporting and accountability.
- Prepares federal and state financial reports.
- Analyzes data, projects outcomes, and develops/implements procedures/systems for coordinating and controlling diverse financial activities.



Competency 1.4: Develops and disseminates financial procedures and policy guidance in the areas of budgeting, annual financial reports, and submission of claims for reimbursement to program participants.

When Hired

Knowledge Statements

- None

Skill Statements

- None

Advanced

Knowledge Statements

- Knows federal and state guidelines for pricing meals and food items.
- Knows federal and state processes for budget development, justification, implementation, and management, including financial benchmarks.

Skill Statements

- Develops system for disseminating financial policies, procedures, reports, and reimbursement claims to nutrition program participants.
- Manages reimbursement funds for meals served in CN programs.
- Prepares, evaluates, and analyzes financial reports.
- Prepares or participates in preparation of budgets that reflect financial goals.
- Assists CN personnel in reconciling projected annual budget with revenue and expenditure performance routinely and in providing documentation to justify variances.



Functional Area 2: Personnel Management

Fosters a successful organization through leadership, supervision, recruitment, retention, and professional development to accomplish the agency goals and mission.

Competency 2.1: Establishes a comprehensive training system based on current educational principles to include orientation, new employee training, continuing education, and on-going professional growth.

When Hired

Knowledge Statements

- Knows importance of state agency orientation to assure that new staff has appropriate information to perform their jobs.
- Knows effective job training methods.
- Knows educational theories, principles, and techniques for assessing effective professional development and training.

Skill Statements

- None

Advanced

Knowledge Statements

- Knows procedures for documenting staff development and training that follow state agency policies.

Skill Statements

- Formulates and develops plans, procedures, and programs to meet specific training needs.
- Formulates, coordinates, and develops education and training programs to improve professional knowledge and skills.
- Assists in developing long- and short-range goals.
- Provides information regarding professional organizations and opportunities for personal and professional development.
- Develops/maintains nutrition program projects such as Web-based application and ordering systems, Web pages, and Web-based courses.
- Seeks resources for the most current technical information applicable to distance learning and its use.



Competency 2.2: Collaborates with human resources to establish a comprehensive personnel management infrastructure to fulfill the mission of the organization and to comply with federal, state, and local regulations and policies.

When Hired

Knowledge Statements

- Knows basic principles of job analysis, job design, job specifications, job descriptions, and performance appraisals.

Skill Statements

- Demonstrates excellent human relations skills.
- Applies conflict resolution, negotiation, and problem-solving techniques.
- Assures compliance with equal protection for a culturally diverse workforce and fosters an environment of valuing cultural diversity and equal opportunity.

Advanced

Knowledge Statements

- Knows factors important to employee satisfaction and strategies to address dissatisfaction.
- Knows strategies for conducting effective performance appraisals.
- Knows federal, state, and local laws and regulations relevant to human resource management.

Skill Statements

- Utilizes interviewing techniques and hiring procedures that comply with federal and state guidelines.
- Develops a staffing plan that meets state agency needs and federal, state, and local regulations and policies.
- Conducts staff performance appraisals in accordance with state agency policies and federal and state regulations.
- Assesses staff performance and ensures that recommended training is completed and implemented on the job.

Competency 2.3: Provides leadership, direction and support to child nutrition personnel for department/bureau operations.

When Hired

Knowledge Statements

- Knows importance of discretion in handling confidential information.
- Knows organization and time management.
- Knows group dynamics, group facilitation principles and techniques.



Skill Statements

- Builds mutual trust, respect, and cooperation among program staff.
- Works with and coordinates diverse groups to encourage participation.
- Provides feedback for improving productivity and morale.

Advanced

Knowledge Statements

- None

Skill Statements

- None

Competency 2.4: Collaborates with human resources to interpret and communicate human resource regulations, policies, and procedures to program staff.

When Hired

Knowledge Statements

- None

Skill Statements

- Maintains accurate records and other pertinent human resource documentation.

Advanced

Knowledge Statements

- Knows civil rights related requirements and regulations.
- Knows selection, supervision, promotion, termination, and disciplinary procedures that comply with federal state, and local regulations, and contractual policies, when applicable.
- Knows state agency policies and procedures for performing human resource functions (e.g., accident reporting, payroll, benefits, immigration, policy acknowledgement, performance appraisal).

Skill Statements

- Verifies that human resource decisions follow due process established by the state agency.
- Interprets and communicates human resources management policies and procedures.



Functional Area 3: 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.

Competency 3.1: Interprets regulations and develops and disseminates written guidance to ensure compliance with federal, state, local policies, and rules and regulations for all participating entities.

When Hired

Knowledge Statements

- None

Skill Statements

- Maintains confidentiality of clients and records.

Advanced

Knowledge Statements

- Knows how to interpret and apply the provisions of law, regulations, and policies to specific nutrition program situations.
- Knows current federal and state policies, rules and regulations, and records regarding nutrition and meal pattern requirements.
- Knows program audit procedures and administrative review requirements.
- Knows federal and state policies, rules, and regulations governing CN programs.
- Knows program admission and compliance procedures.
- Knows techniques to solve situations of regulatory noncompliance.
- Knows records required for federal and state compliance.
- Knows regulations and requirements of serving children with special food and/or nutrition needs.
- Knows federal, state, and local regulations governing food and beverage sales.
- Knows cultural/ethnic eating behaviors of client populations and how they affect nutritional status, human behavior and techniques for modifying the diet.
- Knows current research in food and nutrition.

Skill Statements

- Complies with all federal and state regulations and policies and procedures.
- Provides written instruction and guidance to field staff and local sponsors related to all federal and state regulations.
- Provides on-going training.



- Assists nutrition program sponsors/directors/managers in interpretation of federal and state regulations.
- Ensures that all menu items meet federal requirements which contribute to the development of healthy eating habits.
- Understands and explains the laws, rules, regulations, policies, and guidelines governing all nutrition program operations.
- Reviews, approves, and issues compliance review reports.
- Develops appropriate systems to ensure effective policy compliance.
- Develops auditing process to monitor programs to log, track, and analyze review deficiencies.
- Monitors the ordering, maintenance, allocation, and shipment of USDA foods.

Competency 3.2: Evaluates policies and recommends changes and policy revisions.

When Hired

Knowledge Statements

- None

Skill Statements

- None

Advanced

Knowledge Statements

- Knows importance of current and effective policies and procedures.

Skill Statements

- Ensures policies and directives are consistent with and applicable to state and federal laws, regulations, and policies.
- Interprets, develops, implements, and evaluates regulations, guidelines, policies and procedures for federal, state, and local CN programs.
- Develops and adjusts materials regularly to reflect current nutrition program policies and procedures.
- Evaluates policies and procedures for efficiency and effectiveness of operations.
- Recommends revisions and improvements to policies and procedures.
- Recommends revisions to program activities based on existing data.
- Recommends system changes and enhancements.



Competency 3.3: Designs program and compliance review instruments and procedures to ensure uniform monitoring and review efforts throughout the state.

When Hired

Knowledge Statements

- None

Skill Statements

- None

Advanced

Knowledge Statements

- Knows regulations, policies, procedures, and guidelines governing all review efforts.
- Knows reporting and recordkeeping requirements for monitoring and reviews.
- Knows principles and techniques of assessments and verification of program activities.

Skill Statements

- Conducts federal and state mandated administrative, operations, and civil rights compliance reviews and evaluations.
- Adheres to USDA regulations regarding applications, claims, processing, and program reviews.
- Develops procedures to maintain accurate and appropriate records that comply with federal and state regulations.
- Assures systems are in place to monitor progress toward meeting state agency goals and objectives.
- Performs internal review/audits on all aspects.
- Designs nutrition program compliance review instruments and procedures to ensure uniform monitoring and review efforts throughout the state.

Competency 3.4: Oversees the development, preparation, and implementation of program agreements and ensures compliance with related requirements and regulations.

When Hired

Knowledge Statements

- None

Skill Statements

- None



Advanced

Knowledge Statements

- Knows program admission and compliance procedures.
- Knows federal and state rules and regulations governing program agreements.
- Knows the specifics of the annual School Food Authority Program Agreement and the associated responsibilities.

Skill Statements

- Develops and reviews application/renewal materials to reflect federal and state requirements.
- Assists with processing annual participation agreements including determining sponsor eligibility for participation.



Functional Area 4: Program Management

Establishes an effective management system to ensure all federal programs are administered per Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) and other guidance.

Competency 4.1: Plans, develops, implements, and evaluates child nutrition programs to meet changing priorities that support the mission of the program.

When Hired

Knowledge Statements

- None

Skill Statements

- Demonstrates flexibility in responding to changing job requirements.

Advanced

Knowledge Statements

- Knows state and national trends.

Skill Statements

- Develops policies and procedures, goals, and objectives to administer CN programs.
- Conceptualizes nutrition programs' rules and responsibilities in context of the state agency (mission, vision, strategic goals, functions, policies, and procedures).
- Attends legislative hearings, departmental meetings, public meetings, workshops, conferences, seminars, and meets with allied organization groups, and agencies in matters pertaining to CN.
- Gathers, analyzes, and evaluates complex data from a wide variety of sources and makes recommendations.
- Networks with appropriate national, state, and local partners, professional associations, and advisory councils.

Competency 4.2: Establishes and administers electronic or manual recordkeeping and reporting instruments to maintain efficient and effective programs.

When Hired

Knowledge Statements

- None



Skill Statements

- Organizes data in logical format for presentation in reports, documents and other written materials.

Advanced

Knowledge Statements

- Knows all federal and state requirements for maintaining accurate and appropriate records.

Skill Statements

- Complies with federal reporting requirements ensuring timely and accurate submission of reports.

Competency 4.3: Supports federal, state, local, and private disaster relief activities.

When Hired

Knowledge Statements

- None

Skill Statements

- None

Advanced

Knowledge Statements

- Knows federal, state, and local regulations related to operations in an emergency or crisis.
- Knows the state agency's crisis management plan and/or emergency response plan.

Skill Statements

- Provides coordination with federal, state, and local disaster relief agencies.

Competency 4.4: Establishes a system for the coordination and oversight of child nutrition-related grant activities, if applicable.

When Hired

Knowledge Statements

- None

Skill Statements

- None



Advanced

Knowledge Statements

- None

Skill Statements

- Evaluates grants/projects for compliance with federal, state, departmental policies, procedures, and expected outcomes.
- Assists in grant proposal implementation as well as their related activities.
- Participates in planning, financial oversight, coordination with program priorities, and all financial coordination in relation to CN programs and grant writing.

Competency 4.5: Interprets, analyzes, reviews, and provides written/oral testimony related to child nutrition programs, program rules, regulations, policies, and statutes.

When Hired

Knowledge Statements

- None

Skill Statements

- None

Advanced

Knowledge Statements

- Knows state and federal legislative process and governmental organization and structure.

Skill Statements

- Responds to correspondence, inquiries from legislators, media, and public about CN programs and related issues.
- Reviews proposed legislation at request of legislative office, recommends revisions, provides expert comments concerning nutrition education and childhood obesity.
- Represents CN programs before legislative committees, as requested.

Competency 4.6: Develops and organizes strategies to support continuous program excellence.

When Hired

Knowledge Statements

- Knows fundamentals of team work, consensus management, and participatory decision-making processes.



- Knows factors that contribute to meeting employee needs and job satisfaction.
- Knows principles of strategic planning and goal setting.

Skill Statements

- Establishes and maintains good working relationships with sponsor agencies, administrators, staff, teachers, parents, children, child-oriented service/civic groups, and other government agencies.
- Determines and implements methods to continually improve operations.

Advanced

Knowledge Statements

- Knows where to access resources for best practices.
- Knows organizational framework needed to achieve goals and objectives.
- Knows principles of public relations and marketing techniques appropriate for the nutrition program community.

Skill Statements

- Negotiates, facilitates, and collaborates with other management staff, agencies, and personnel to promote and implement program goals and objectives.
- Maximizes employee potential in meeting organizational goals and mission.
- Analyzes internal and external audit review findings, recommends changes for program and process efficiency, and prioritizes improvement initiatives.
- Oversees planning and development of evaluation criteria, forms, statistics, and conducts targeted quality assurance reviews for CN programs.



Functional Area 5: Technology and Data Management

Uses technology to effectively manage programs and provide management reports and data.

Competency 5.1: Uses available resources to ensure that information technology systems and infrastructure meet the operational needs of child nutrition programs and ensures United States Department of Agriculture compliance.

When Hired

Knowledge Statements

- Knows basic uses of word processing, database, spreadsheet, and presentation software.
- Knows benefits of computer applications in preparation and maintenance of financial records.

Skill Statements

- Demonstrates operating knowledge of technology.

Advanced

Knowledge Statements

- None

Skill Statements

- Assists CN program clients in implementing and sustaining state agency electronic computer systems.
- Develops contingency plans for use in the event of hardware and/or software failure, such as performing backup of information periodically.
- Utilizes available resources to ensure that information technology systems are meeting the operational needs of the state agency.

Competency 5.2: Researches, analyzes, and proposes the acquisition of technological equipment and computer software having the potential to make the work of the team more efficient and accurate.

When Hired

Knowledge Statements

- None



Skill Statements

- None

Advanced

Knowledge Statements

- Knows available technology resources in the department.
- Knows importance of training programs and technical support provided by software and hardware vendors.

Skill Statements

- Assists nutrition program clients in implementing and sustaining state agency electronic computer systems.
- Collaborates with technology consultants to design and maintain systems that store program records, fiscal payments, and participation data.
- Evaluates and selects appropriate software and hardware that integrates with the technology infrastructure of the state agency.



Functional Area 6: Training, Technical Assistance, and Outreach

Develops and provides training, technical assistance, and outreach services using a variety of delivery systems.

Competency 6.1: Serves as a resource for educational materials, presentations, current research, and regulatory information.

When Hired

Knowledge Statements

- Knows principles and techniques of effective communication including public speaking, writing, coaching, coordination, and education.
- Knows principles, theories, and practices of education and training.

Skill Statements

- Responds to telephone, written, and electronic requests for information.
- Demonstrates excellent oral and written communication skills when responding to and addressing stakeholders.
- Uses appropriate tools to evaluate learning.

Advanced

Knowledge Statements

- Knows sources of appropriate educational and training materials.
- Knows appropriate channels for effectively communicating with CN program stakeholders.
- Knows resources for the development and evaluation of nutrition education materials and activities.

Skill Statements

- Develops an ongoing system of informing stakeholders of policy updates and current CN information.
- Plans, develops, and conducts training programs and conferences using latest technology.
- Coordinates the use of multiple approaches for informing stakeholders about nutrition programs' operations and services.
- Evaluates training programs and materials to recommend purchase of new materials and modifications of existing materials.



Competency 6.2: Develops a comprehensive technical assistance plan to reflect current program policies and procedures, identification of client needs, areas of non-compliance, and program goals using all types of delivery methods.

When Hired

Knowledge Statements

- None

Skill Statements

- None

Advanced

Knowledge Statements

- None

Skill Statements

- Provides technical assistance, consultation, training, and guidance to nutrition program clients, section staff, other programs, and department staff through formal training sessions, on-site visits, and written and oral correspondence.
- Recognizes program needs and provides competent assistance to clients relative to problems of: marketing; purchasing; menu development; computerized nutrient analysis; food storage; selection, purchase, placement, and care of equipment; and maintenance of accounts, records, and reports.

Competency 6.3: Develops and initiates outreach activities to expand the scope and effectiveness of child nutrition programs.

When Hired

Knowledge Statements

- None

Skill Statements

- None

Advanced

Knowledge Statements

- Knows importance of networking within the community to advocate and build support for CN programs.
- Knows community-based organizations and resources interested in promoting education and nutrition needs and goals.



Skill Statements

- Represents the state agency at conferences and gives presentations, as requested.
- Networks with appropriate national, state, and local partners, professional associations, and advisory councils.
- Promotes CN programs to the public through effective public relations to national, federal, state, and local partners; professional associations; and advisory councils.
- Develops/implements a multi-faceted plan to expand participation in nutrition programs.

Competency 6.4: Conducts needs assessment and acts as a resource for nutrition education and wellness/healthy environment.

When Hired

Knowledge Statements

- Knows principles, processes for providing excellent customer and personal services.

Skill Statements

- None

Advanced

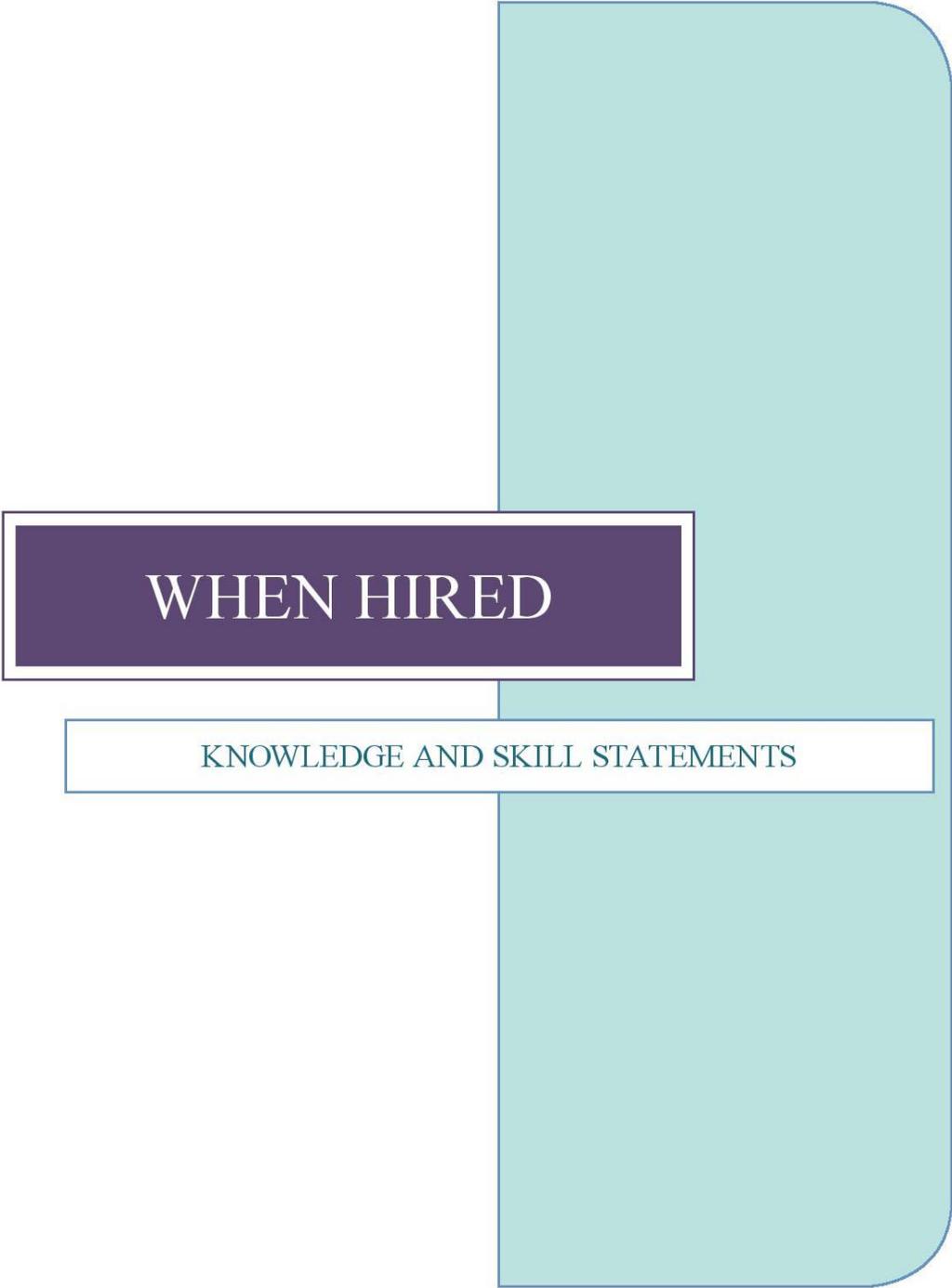
Knowledge Statements

- Knows age-appropriate methods for promoting nutrition education.
- Knows marketing principles and techniques appropriate to nutrition programs.

Skill Statements

- Serves as resource for appropriate nutrition education and promotional materials to encourage healthy eating behaviors.
- Evaluates for effectiveness of nutrition education programs initiated by the state agency.
- Conducts program assessment for identifying training needs.





WHEN HIRED

KNOWLEDGE AND SKILL STATEMENTS

When Hired Knowledge and Skill Statements

Statements identified by review panel as needed when state agency child nutrition professionals are hired

Financial Management

Knowledge Statements

- Knows importance of prompt submission of accurate financial documents to successfully secure program funds.
- Knows basic manual and computerized recordkeeping procedures.

Skill Statements

- Works cooperatively with individuals and organizations to expand resources available.

Personnel Management

Knowledge Statements

- Knows importance of state agency orientation to assure that new staff has appropriate information to perform their jobs.
- Knows effective job training methods.
- Knows educational theories, principles, and techniques for assessing effective professional development and training.
- Knows basic principles of job analysis, job design, job specifications, job descriptions, and performance appraisals.
- Knows importance of discretion in handling confidential information.
- Knows organization and time management.
- Knows group dynamics, group facilitation principles and techniques.

Skill Statements

- Demonstrates excellent human relations skills.
- Applies conflict resolution, negotiation, and problem-solving techniques.
- Assures compliance with equal protection for a culturally diverse workforce and fosters an environment of valuing cultural diversity and equal opportunity.
- Builds mutual trust, respect, and cooperation among program staff.
- Works with and coordinates diverse groups to encourage participation.
- Provides feedback for improving productivity and morale.
- Maintains accurate records and other pertinent human resource documentation.

Program and Regulatory Compliance

Knowledge Statements

- None



When Hired Knowledge and Skill Statements

Skill Statements

- Maintains confidentiality of clients and records.

Program Management

Knowledge Statements

- Knows fundamentals of team work, consensus management, and participatory decision-making processes.
- Knows factors that contribute to meeting employee needs and job satisfaction.
- Knows principles of strategic planning and goal-setting.

Skill Statements

- Demonstrates flexibility in responding to changing job requirements.
- Organizes data in logical format for presentation in reports, documents and other written materials.
- Establishes and maintains good working relationships with sponsor agencies, administrators, staff, teachers, parents, children, child-oriented service/civic groups, and other government agencies.
- Determines and implements methods to continually improve operations.

Technology and Data Management

Knowledge Statements

- Knows basic uses of word processing, database, spreadsheet, and presentation software.
- Knows benefits of computer applications in preparation and maintenance of financial records.

Skill Statements

- Demonstrates operating knowledge of technology.

Training, Technical Assistance, and Outreach

Knowledge Statements

- Knows principles and techniques of effective communication including public speaking, writing, coaching, coordination, and education.
- Knows principles, theories, and practices of education and training.
- Knows principles, processes for providing excellent customer and personal services.

Skill Statements

- Responds to telephone, written, and electronic requests for information.
- Demonstrates excellent oral and written communication skills when responding to and addressing stakeholders.
- Uses appropriate tools to evaluate learning.





ADVANCED

KNOWLEDGE AND SKILL STATEMENTS

Advanced Knowledge and Skill Statements

Statements identified by the review panel as knowledge/skills gained through experience and professional training in child nutrition programs

Financial Management

Knowledge Statements

- Knows generally accepted financial procedures and federal, state, and municipal finance laws and regulations.
- Knows financial goals and objectives of the state agency.
- Knows United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) procurement regulations and resources.
- Knows federal and state guidelines for pricing meals and food items.
- Knows accounting and financial management processes related to foodservice operations.
- Knows federal and state guidelines for pricing meals and food items.
- Knows federal and state processes for budget development, justification, implementation, and management, including financial benchmarks.

Skill Statements

- Ensures compliance with local, state, federal, and other regulatory guidelines that impact business operations.
- Analyzes and determines applicability of accounting data and draws conclusions to make appropriate recommendations.
- Collaborates with clients to identify the desired CN program financial outcomes.
- Maintains financial viability.
- Analyzes financial statements regularly to make informed financial decisions.
- Establishes and/or implements written procedures for collecting, reconciling, depositing, and disbursing funds.
- Uses financial management information system software to enhance financial reporting and accountability.
- Prepares federal and state financial reports.
- Analyzes data, projects outcomes, and develops/implements procedures/systems for coordinating and controlling diverse financial activities.
- Develops system for disseminating financial policies, procedures, reports, and reimbursement claims to nutrition program participants.
- Manages reimbursement funds for meals served in CN programs.
- Prepares, evaluates, and analyzes financial reports.
- Prepares or participates in preparation of budgets that reflect financial goals.
- Assists CN personnel in reconciling projected annual budget with revenue and expenditure performance routinely and in providing documentation to justify variances.



Advanced Knowledge and Skill Statements

Personnel Management

Knowledge Statements

- Knows procedures for documenting staff development and training that follow state agency policies.
- Knows factors important to employee satisfaction and strategies to address dissatisfaction.
- Knows strategies for conducting effective performance appraisals.
- Knows federal, state, and local laws and regulations relevant to human resource management.
- Knows civil rights related requirements and regulations.
- Knows selection, supervision, promotion, termination, and disciplinary procedures that comply with federal state, and local regulations, and contractual policies, when applicable.
- Knows state agency policies and procedures for performing human resource functions (e.g., accident reporting, payroll, benefits, immigration, policy acknowledgement, performance appraisal).

Skill Statements

- Formulates and develops plans, procedures, and programs to meet specific training needs.
- Formulates, coordinates, and develops education and training programs to improve professional knowledge and skills.
- Assists in developing long- and short-range goals.
- Provides information regarding professional organizations and opportunities for personal and professional development.
- Develops/maintains nutrition program projects such as Web-based application and ordering systems, Web pages, and Web-based courses.
- Seeks resources for the most current technical information applicable to distance learning and its use.
- Utilizes interviewing techniques and hiring procedures that comply with federal and state guidelines.
- Develops a staffing plan that meets state agency needs and federal, state, and local regulations and policies.
- Conducts staff performance appraisals in accordance with state agency policies and federal and state regulations.
- Assesses staff performance and ensures that recommended training is completed and implemented on the job.
- Verifies that human resource decisions follow due process established by the state agency.
- Interprets and communicates human resources management policies and procedures.



Advanced Knowledge and Skill Statements

Program and Regulatory Compliance

Knowledge Statements

- Knows how to interpret and apply the provisions of law, regulations, and policies to specific nutrition program situations.
- Knows current federal and state policies, rules and regulations, and records regarding nutrition and meal pattern requirements.
- Knows program audit procedures and administrative review requirements.
- Knows federal and state policies, rules, and regulations governing CN programs.
- Knows program admission and compliance procedures.
- Knows techniques to solve situations of regulatory noncompliance.
- Knows records required for federal and state compliance.
- Knows regulations and requirements of serving children with special food and/or nutrition needs.
- Knows federal, state, and local regulations governing food and beverage sales.
- Knows cultural/ethnic eating behaviors of client populations and how they affect nutritional status, human behavior and techniques for modifying the diet.
- Knows current research in food and nutrition.
- Knows importance of current and effective policies and procedures.
- Knows regulations, policies, procedures, and guidelines governing all review efforts.
- Knows reporting and recordkeeping requirements for monitoring and reviews.
- Knows principles and techniques of assessments and verification of program activities.
- Knows program admission and compliance procedures.
- Knows federal and state rules and regulations governing program agreements.
- Knows the specifics of the annual School Food Authority Program Agreement and the associated responsibilities.

Skill Statements

- Complies with all federal and state regulations and policies and procedures.
- Provides written instruction and guidance to field staff and local sponsors related to all federal and state regulations.
- Provides on-going training.
- Assists nutrition program sponsors/directors/managers in interpretation of federal and state regulations.
- Ensures that all menu items meet federal requirements which contribute to the development of healthy eating habits.
- Understands and explains the laws, rules, regulations, policies, and guidelines governing all nutrition program operations.
- Reviews, approves, and issues compliance review reports.
- Develops appropriate systems to ensure effective policy compliance.
- Develops auditing process to monitor programs to log, track, and analyze review deficiencies.
- Monitors the ordering, maintenance, allocation, and shipment of USDA foods.
- Ensures policies and directives are consistent with and applicable to state and federal laws, regulations, and policies.



Advanced Knowledge and Skill Statements

- Interprets, develops, implements, and evaluates regulations, guidelines, policies and procedures for federal, state, and local CN programs.
- Develops and adjusts materials regularly to reflect current nutrition program policies and procedures.
- Evaluates policies and procedures for efficiency and effectiveness of operations.
- Recommends revisions and improvements to policies and procedures.
- Recommends revisions to program activities based on existing data.
- Recommends system changes and enhancements.
- Conducts federal and state mandated administrative, operations, and civil rights compliance reviews and evaluations.
- Adheres to USDA regulations regarding applications, claims, processing, and program reviews.
- Develops procedures to maintain accurate and appropriate records that comply with federal and state regulations.
- Assures systems are in place to monitor progress toward meeting state agency goals and objectives.
- Performs internal review/audits on all aspects.
- Designs nutrition program compliance review instruments and procedures to ensure uniform monitoring and review efforts throughout the state.
- Develops and reviews application/renewal materials to reflect federal and state requirements.
- Assists with processing annual participation agreements including determining sponsor eligibility for participation.

Program Management

Knowledge Statements

- Knows state and national trends.
- Knows all federal and state requirements for maintaining accurate and appropriate records.
- Knows federal, state, and local regulations related to operations in an emergency or crisis.
- Knows the state agency's crisis management plan and/or emergency response plan.
- Knows state and federal legislative process and governmental organization and structure.
- Knows where to access resources for best practices.
- Knows organizational framework needed to achieve goals and objectives.
- Knows principles of public relations and marketing techniques appropriate for the nutrition program community.

Skill Statements

- Develops policies and procedures, goals, and objectives to administer CN programs.
- Conceptualizes nutrition programs' rules and responsibilities in context of the state agency (mission, vision, strategic goals, functions, policies, and procedures).
- Attends legislative hearings, departmental meetings, public meetings, workshops, conferences, seminars, and meets with allied organization groups, and agencies in matters pertaining to CN.
- Gathers, analyzes, and evaluates complex data from a wide variety of sources and makes recommendations.



Advanced Knowledge and Skill Statements

- Networks with appropriate national, state, and local partners, professional associations, and advisory councils.
- Complies with federal reporting requirements ensuring timely and accurate submission of reports.
- Provides coordination with federal, state, and local disaster relief agencies.
- Evaluates grants/projects for compliance with federal, state, departmental policies, procedures, and expected outcomes.
- Assists in grant proposal implementation as well as their related activities.
- Participates in planning, financial oversight, coordination with program priorities, and all financial coordination in relation to CN programs and grant writing.
- Responds to correspondence, inquiries from legislators, media, and public about CN programs and related issues.
- Reviews proposed legislation at request of legislative office, recommends revisions, provides expert comments concerning nutrition education and childhood obesity.
- Represents CN programs before legislative committees, as requested.
- Negotiates, facilitates, and collaborates with other management staff, agencies, and personnel to promote and implement program goals and objectives.
- Maximizes employee potential in meeting organizational goals and mission.
- Analyzes internal and external audit review findings, recommends changes for program and process efficiency, and prioritizes improvement initiatives.
- Oversees planning and development of evaluation criteria, forms, statistics, and conducts targeted quality assurance reviews for CN programs.

Technology and Data Management

Knowledge Statements

- Knows available technology resources in the department.
- Knows importance of training programs and technical support provided by software and hardware vendors.

Skill Statements

- Assists CN program clients in implementing and sustaining state agency electronic computer systems.
- Develops contingency plans for use in the event of hardware and/or software failure, such as performing backup of information periodically.
- Utilizes available resources to ensure that information technology systems are meeting the operational needs of the state agency.
- Assists nutrition program clients in implementing and sustaining state agency electronic computer systems.
- Collaborates with technology consultants to design and maintain systems that store program records, fiscal payments, and participation data.
- Evaluates and selects appropriate software and hardware that integrates with the technology infrastructure of the state agency.



Advanced Knowledge and Skill Statements

Training, Technical Assistance, and Outreach

Knowledge Statements

- Knows sources of appropriate educational and training materials.
- Knows appropriate channels for effectively communicating with CN program stakeholders.
- Knows resources for the development and evaluation of nutrition education materials and activities.
- Knows importance of networking within the community to advocate and build support for CN programs.
- Knows community-based organizations and resources interested in promoting education and nutrition needs and goals.
- Knows age-appropriate methods for promoting nutrition education.
- Knows marketing principles and techniques appropriate to nutrition programs.

Skill Statements

- Develops an ongoing system of informing stakeholders of policy updates and current CN information.
- Plans, develops, and conducts training programs and conferences using latest technology.
- Coordinates the use of multiple approaches for informing stakeholders about nutrition programs' operations and services.
- Evaluates training programs and materials to recommend purchase of new materials and modifications of existing materials.
- Provides technical assistance, consultation, training, and guidance to nutrition program clients, section staff, other programs, and department staff through formal training sessions, on-site visits, and written and oral correspondence.
- Recognizes program needs and provides competent assistance to clients relative to problems of: marketing; purchasing; menu development; computerized nutrient analysis; food storage; selection, purchase, placement, and care of equipment; and maintenance of accounts, records, and reports.
- Represents the state agency at conferences and gives presentations, as requested.
- Networks with appropriate national, state, and local partners, professional associations, and advisory councils.
- Promotes CN programs to the public through effective public relations to national, federal, state, and local partners; professional associations; and advisory councils.
- Develops/implements a multi-faceted plan to expand participation in nutrition programs.
- Serves as resource for appropriate nutrition education and promotional materials to encourage healthy eating behaviors.
- Evaluates for effectiveness of nutrition education programs initiated by the state agency.
- Conducts program assessment for identifying training needs.





National Food Service Management Institute

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