

# Professional Standards Topics and Training Hours for the What's in a Meal Training Modules

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) final rule, *Professional Standards for State and Local School Nutrition Programs Personnel as Required by the HHSFKA of 2010*, requires minimum education standards and annual training standards for school nutrition professionals who manage and operate the [National School Lunch Program \(NSLP\)](#) and [School Breakfast Program \(SBP\)](#). These standards ensure that school nutrition personnel have the knowledge, training, and tools needed to plan, prepare, and purchase healthy products to create nutritious, safe, and enjoyable school meals. This document summarizes the training hours and professional standards topics provided by the CSDE's training program, *What's in a Meal: National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12*.

## Training Description

The CSDE's *What's in a Meal* training program is a series of recorded modules that provide comprehensive guidance on complying with the meal patterns for grades K-12 in the NSLP, SBP, and Seamless Summer Option (SSO) of the NSLP. This training program is intended for school food service professionals in the NSLP, SBP, and SSO, including food service directors, managers, and staff.

## USDA Key Areas and Training Topics

The CSDE's *What's in a Meal* training program meets the USDA's Professional Standards training topics for the key areas of 1000 Nutrition and 2000 Operations. Training topics for these key areas are indicated below:

- 1100 MENU PLANNING: 1110 USDA Nutrition Requirements, 1120 Cycle Menus, 1140 Standardized Recipes, and 1160 Special Diets, including Food Allergies
- 2100 FOOD PRODUCTION: 2110 Standardized Recipes, 2120 Food Production Records, and 2150 CN Labeling and Crediting
- 2200 SERVING FOOD: 2220 Offer versus Serve and 2240 Serving Lines
- 2300 CASHIER AND POINT OF SERVICE: 2310 Reimbursable Meals

Table 1 summarizes the specific Professional Standards training topics addressed in each module.

## Training Hours

Completing all 16 modules of the CSDE's *What's in a Meal* training program provides **10.75 training hours** toward the annual training requirements of the USDA's Professional Standards. Completing less than 16 modules provides the specific training hours indicated for each module (refer to table 1). For example, a cafeteria manager who only completes modules 15 and 16 earns 3 training hours.

## Professional Standards Topics and Training Hours for the What's in a Meal Training Modules

**Table 1: Professional Standards Contribution of CSDE's What's in a Meal Training Modules**

Module	Training hours *	USDA Professional Standards		Module description
		Key area	Training topics	
1: Introduction to Training (length: 15:15)	<b>0.25</b>	1000 Nutrition	<b>1100 MENU PLANNING:</b> 1110 USDA Nutrition Requirements	Introduces the <i>What's in a Meal</i> training program, provides an overview of the modules and training objectives, identifies common acronyms and abbreviations, and describes resources for guidance and training.
2: Introduction to School Meal Patterns (length: 36:48)	<b>0.5</b>	1000 Nutrition	<b>1100 MENU PLANNING:</b> 1110 USDA Nutrition Requirements	Introduces the NSLP and SBP meal patterns, provides an overview of the federal legislation for school meals, identifies the requirements for food-based menu planning (including food components, servings, and meal pattern requirements), and describes resources for guidance and training on the school meal patterns.
3: National School Lunch Program (length: NSLP) Meal Pattern (length: 15:54)	<b>0.25</b>	1000 Nutrition	<b>1100 MENU PLANNING:</b> 1110 USDA Nutrition Requirements	Reviews the lunch meal pattern requirements (including the daily and weekly servings of each food component, the weekly requirements for vegetable subgroups and whole grain-rich (WGR) foods, the weekly limits for grain-based desserts and juice, and the weekly dietary specifications) and describes resources for guidance and training on the NSLP meal pattern.
4: School Breakfast Program (SBP) Meal Pattern (length: 19:29)	<b>0.25</b>	1000 Nutrition	<b>1100 MENU PLANNING:</b> 1110 USDA Nutrition Requirements	Reviews the breakfast meal pattern requirements (including the daily and weekly servings of each food component, the weekly requirement for whole grain-rich (WGR foods), offering meat/meat alternates at breakfast, the weekly limit for juice, the weekly dietary specifications) and describes resources for guidance and training on the SBP meal pattern.

\* Completing all 16 modules provides **10.75 training hours**. Completing less than 16 modules provides the specific training hours indicated for each module.

## Professional Standards Topics and Training Hours for the What's in a Meal Training Modules

**Table 1: Professional Standards Contribution of CSDE's What's in a Meal Training Modules**

Module	Training hours *	USDA Professional Standards		Module description
		Key area	Training topics	
5: Dietary Specifications (length: 18:07)	<b>0.25</b>	1000 Nutrition	<b>1100 MENU PLANNING:</b> 1110 USDA Nutrition Requirements	Reviews the four dietary specifications for school meals (calories, saturated fat, sodium, and trans fat) and describes resources for guidance and training on the dietary specifications.
6: Meal Pattern Documentation (length: 1:17:38 plus 15 minutes for worksheet activity)	<b>1.5</b>	1000 Nutrition	<b>1100 MENU PLANNING:</b> 1110 USDA Nutrition Requirements 1120 Cycle Menus 1140 Standardized Recipes	Reviews the meal pattern documentation requirements for school meals. Topics include the importance of documentation, an introduction to crediting foods, menus, production records, standardized recipes, and crediting documentation for commercial processed foods, i.e., Child Nutrition (CN) labels and product formulation statements (PFS), and the USDA's <i>Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs</i> . Describes resources for guidance and training on meal pattern documentation and includes a knowledge check activity on how to review the creditable ingredients in a PFS.
		2000 Operations	<b>2100 FOOD PRODUCTION:</b> 2110 Standardized Recipes 2120 Food Production Records 2150 CN Labeling and Crediting	
7: Milk Component (length: 36:03)	<b>0.5</b>	1000 Nutrition	<b>1100 MENU PLANNING:</b> 1110 USDA Nutrition Requirements 1160 Special Diets, including Food Allergies	Reviews the requirements and crediting information for the milk component. Topics include the required daily and weekly servings, allowable types of milk, requirements for fluid milk substitutes in school meals, serving considerations for milk, and noncreditable milk. Describes resources for guidance and training on the milk component and includes a knowledge check on milk substitutes for children without a disability.

\* Completing all 16 modules provides **10.75 training hours**. Completing less than 16 modules provides the specific training hours indicated for each module.

## Professional Standards Topics and Training Hours for the What's in a Meal Training Modules

8: Meat/Meat Alternates Component (1:00:05)	<b>1.0</b>	1000 Nutrition	<b>1100 MENU PLANNING:</b> 1110 USDA Nutrition Requirements	Reviews the requirements and crediting information for the meat/meat alternates (MMA) component. Topic include the difference between MMA and protein, the required daily and weekly servings, offering MMA substitutions at breakfast, the main dish requirement for lunch, crediting requirements for different types of MMA, e.g., commercial processed products, dried meats, cheeses, eggs, legumes (including roasted legumes and pasta made of 100 percent legume flours), nuts and seeds, nut and seed butters, yogurt and soy yogurt, tofu, tempeh, surimi, and alternate protein products (APPs), and noncreditable MMA. Describes resources for guidance and training on the MMA component.
9: Fruits Component (length: 46:25)	<b>0.75</b>	1000 Nutrition	<b>1100 MENU PLANNING:</b> 1110 USDA Nutrition Requirements	Reviews the requirements and crediting information for the fruits component. Topics include the required daily and weekly servings, the weekly juice limit, crediting requirements for

## Professional Standards Topics and Training Hours for the What's in a Meal Training Modules

**Table 1: Professional Standards Contribution of CSDE's What's in a Meal Training Modules**

Module	Training hours *	USDA Professional Standards		Module description
		Key area	Training topics	
				different types of fruits (whole fresh fruits, frozen fruits, canned fruits, dried fruits, fruit juice, coconut, and pureed fruits including fruit smoothies), and noncreditable fruits. Describes resources for guidance and training on the fruits component and includes knowledge checks on canned fruits and crediting fruits.

\* Completing all 16 modules provides **10.75 training hours**. Completing less than 16 modules provides the specific training hours indicated for each module.

## Professional Standards Topics and Training Hours for the What's in a Meal Training Modules

**Table 1: Professional Standards Contribution of CSDE's What's in a Meal Training Modules**

Module	Training hours *	USDA Professional Standards		Module description
		Key area	Training topics	
10: Vegetables Component (length: 1:05:20)	<b>1.0</b>	1000 Nutrition	<b>1100 MENU PLANNING:</b> 1110 USDA Nutrition Requirements	Reviews the requirements and crediting information for the vegetables component. Topics include the required daily and weekly servings, vegetable subgroups, juice limit, and the crediting requirements for different types of vegetables (vegetable juice, raw leafy greens, canned vegetables, hominy, dried vegetables, pureed vegetables, soups, mixed vegetables, vegetable and fruit mixtures, and vegetable flour pasta), and noncreditable vegetables. Describes resources for guidance and training on the vegetables component and includes a knowledge check on crediting vegetables.
11: Grains Component (length: 1:01:05)	<b>1.0</b>	1000 Nutrition	<b>1100 MENU PLANNING:</b> 1110 USDA Nutrition Requirements	Reviews the requirements and crediting information for the grains component. Topics include the required daily and weekly servings, allowable grains and grain products, creditable grain ingredients, how to identify whole and enriched grains, the crediting requirements for different types of grains (breakfast cereals, commercial grain products, commercial combination foods, and grain foods made from scratch), and restrictions for crediting grain-based desserts. Describes resources for guidance and training on the grains component.

\* Completing all 16 modules provides **10.75 training hours**. Completing less than 16 modules provides the specific training hours indicated for each module.

## Professional Standards Topics and Training Hours for the What's in a Meal Training Modules

**Table 1: Professional Standards Contribution of CSDE's What's in a Meal Training Modules**

Module	Training hours *	USDA Professional Standards		Module description
		Key area	Training topics	
12: Whole Grain-rich (WGR) Requirement (length: 1:16:59 plus 15 minutes for worksheet activity)	<b>1.5</b>	1000 Nutrition	<b>1100 MENU PLANNING:</b> 1110 USDA Nutrition Requirements	Reviews the weekly WGR requirement and the WGR criteria for the grains component. Topics include the WGR criteria for different types of grains (commercial grain products, commercial combination foods, ready-to-eat breakfast cereals, and grain foods made from scratch), the limit for noncreditable grains and when to ignore noncreditable grains, how to determine if commercial grain products and standardized recipes are WGR, the required WGR documentation for commercial grain products, and when a PFS is required for WGR foods. Includes a quiz on how to determine if commercial grain foods meet the WGR criteria and describes resources for guidance and training on the WGR criteria.
13: Grain Ounce Equivalents (length: 1:10:25)	<b>1.0</b>	1000 Nutrition	<b>1100 MENU PLANNING:</b> 1110 USDA Nutrition Requirements	Reviews the required ounce equivalents (oz eq) for the grains component. Topics include the USDA's oz eq chart for nine different grain groups (groups A-I), <i>Exhibit A: Grain Requirements for Child Nutrition Programs</i> , the required quantities for each grain group to provide 1 oz eq, considerations for crediting sliced breads, how to determine the oz eq contribution of a commercial grain food or standardized recipe using the two allowable methods (Exhibit A and creditable grains), choosing a calculation method, rounding rules for oz eq calculations, when method 2 (creditable grains) is required for commercial grain products, and examples of how to use methods 1 and 2. Describes resources for guidance and training on grain oz eq.

\* Completing all 16 modules provides **10.75 training hours**. Completing less than 16 modules provides the specific training hours indicated for each module.

## Professional Standards Topics and Training Hours for the What's in a Meal Training Modules

**Table 1: Professional Standards Contribution of CSDE's What's in a Meal Training Modules**

Module	Training hours *	USDA Professional Standards		Module description
		Key area	Training topics	
14: Water Requirement (length: 15:02)	<b>0.25</b>	1000 Nutrition	<b>1100 MENU PLANNING:</b> 1110 USDA Nutrition Requirements	Reviews the USDA's requirement for making potable water available to students during the meal service (including examples of how to offer water, implementation considerations, and allowable costs) and identifies resources for guidance and training on the water requirement.
15: Offer versus Serve (OVS) in the NSLP (length: 1:41:07)	<b>1.5</b>	2000 Operations	<b>2200 SERVING FOOD:</b> 2220 Offer versus Serve 2240 Serving Lines  <b>2300 CASHIER AND POINT OF SERVICE:</b> 2310 Reimbursable Meals	Reviews the OVS requirements for the NSLP including the requirements for reimbursable lunches, menu planning considerations for the food components, identifying reimbursable meals, OVS with family-style meal service and salad bars, required signage, and OVS best practices and strategies for success. Describes resources for guidance and training on OVS and includes Meal or No Meal, a knowledge check on identifying reimbursable lunches with OVS.
16: Offer versus Serve (OVS) in the SBP (length: 1:32:08)	<b>1.5</b>	2000 Operations	<b>2200 SERVING FOOD:</b> 2220 Offer versus Serve 2240 Serving Lines  <b>2300 CASHIER AND POINT OF SERVICE:</b> 2310 Reimbursable Meals	Reviews the OVS requirements for the SBP. Topics include the requirements for reimbursable breakfasts, menu planning considerations, required signage, identifying reimbursable meals, and best practices for OVS. Describes resources for guidance and training on OVS and includes Meal or No Meal: Breakfast Edition, a quiz on identifying reimbursable breakfasts with OVS.

\* Completing all 16 modules provides **10.75 training hours**. Completing less than 16 modules provides the specific training hours indicated for each module.



# Professional Standards Topics and Training Hours for the What's in a Meal Training Modules

## Resources

Guide to Professional Standards for School Nutrition Programs (USDA):

[https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/resource-files/Professional\\_Standards\\_Guide.pdf](https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/resource-files/Professional_Standards_Guide.pdf)

Professional Standards (USDA webpage):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/professional-standards>

Professional Standards for School Nutrition Professionals (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Professional-Standards-for-School-Nutrition-Professionals>

Professional Standards Learning Objectives (USDA):

[https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/cn/ps\\_learningobjectives.pdf](https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/cn/ps_learningobjectives.pdf)

Professional Standards Training Topics (USDA):

[https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/cn/ps\\_trainingtopics.pdf](https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/cn/ps_trainingtopics.pdf)

USDA final rule, Professional Standards for State and Local School Nutrition Programs Personnel as Required by the HHFKA of 2010:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/fr-030215>

What's in a Meal: National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 (CSDE's Meal Pattern Training for School Nutrition Programs webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Meal-Pattern-Training-Materials>

## Professional Standards Topics and Training Hours for the What's in a Meal Training Modules



For more information, visit the CSDE's [Meal Pattern Training for School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage or contact the [school nutrition programs staff](#) at the Connecticut State Department of Education, Bureau of Child Nutrition Programs, 450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 504, Hartford, CT 06103-1841.

This document is available at [https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/Training/WIAM/Whats\\_in\\_a\\_Meal\\_Meeting\\_USDA\\_Professional\\_Standards.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/Training/WIAM/Whats_in_a_Meal_Meeting_USDA_Professional_Standards.pdf).

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ad-3027.pdf>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

1. mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or
2. fax: (833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
3. email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov)

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

The Connecticut State Department of Education is committed to a policy of equal opportunity/affirmative action for all qualified persons. The Connecticut Department of Education does not discriminate in any employment practice, education program, or educational activity on the basis of race; color; religious creed; age; sex; pregnancy; sexual orientation; workplace hazards to reproductive systems, gender identity or expression; marital status; national origin; ancestry; retaliation for previously opposed discrimination or coercion, intellectual disability; genetic information; learning disability; physical disability (including, but not limited to, blindness); mental disability (past/present history thereof); military or veteran status; status as a victim of domestic violence; or criminal record in state employment, unless there is a bona fide occupational qualification excluding persons in any of the aforementioned protected classes. Inquiries regarding the Connecticut State Department of Education's nondiscrimination policies should be directed to: Attorney Louis Todisco, Connecticut State Department of Education, by mail 450 Columbus Boulevard, Hartford, CT 06103-1841; or by telephone 860-713-6594; or by email [louis.todisco@ct.gov](mailto:louis.todisco@ct.gov).