



Child Nutrition Program (CNP) Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) Hiring and Professional Standards for School Nutrition Program Personnel

Hiring Standards for New Child Nutrition Program (CNP) Directors

The governing body of each School Food Authority (SFA) shall employ a CNP Director. The CNP Director is responsible for the supervision and administration of the nutrition programs at the local education agency (LEA). Requirements for the position depend on the number of enrolled students in the system, as defined in the current federal and state Professional Standards for School Nutrition Program Personnel.

All school nutrition program directors must have completed at least eight hours of food safety training within five years prior to their starting date or complete eight hours of food safety training within 30 calendar days of their starting date.

Student Enrollment of 2,500 or more (One of the following requirements must be met.)

- Bachelor's degree or higher from an accredited institution, with an academic major in food and nutrition, food service management, dietetics, family and consumer sciences, nutrition education, culinary arts, business, food science, community nutrition and marketing, hospitality management, or a related field.
- Bachelor's degree or higher from an accredited institution in any academic major and one of the following:
 - a. An ALSDE recognized CNP Director certificate from another state.
 - b. The School Nutrition Specialist (SNS) credential from the School Nutrition Association (SNA).
- Bachelor's degree or higher from an accredited institution in any academic major and at least five years of experience in the management of school nutrition programs.

Student Enrollment of 2,499 or less (One of the following requirements must be met.)

- Bachelor's degree or higher from an accredited institution, with an academic major in food and nutrition, food service management, dietetics, family and consumer sciences, nutrition education, culinary arts, business, food science, community nutrition and marketing, hospitality management, or a related field.
- Bachelor's degree or higher from an accredited institution in any academic major and one of the following:
 - a. An ALSDE recognized CNP Director certificate from another state.
 - b. The School Nutrition Specialist (SNS) credential from the School Nutrition Association (SNA).
- Bachelor's degree or higher in any academic major and at least one year of relevant institutional food service experience.
- Associate degree from an accredited institution or equivalent educational experience, with an academic major in food and nutrition, food service management, dietetics, family and consumer sciences, nutrition education, culinary arts, business, food science, community nutrition and marketing, hospitality management, or a related field and at least one year of institutional food service experience.

NOTE: Any individual employed under this requirement must earn a bachelor's degree in any major or earn the State recognized School Nutrition Specialist (SNS) credential within three years of the date of employment.

Temporary Exception for Hiring CNP Directors

The ALSDE Director of Child Nutrition Programs may approve a request from an SFA to employ an individual as a CNP Director for up to three years from the date of employment who does not meet any option above but meets one of the options below:

Option 1: Holds at least an earned associate degree from an accredited institution; has two years of institutional food service work experience; completes State approved training for new CNP Directors; and earns the School Nutrition Specialist (SNS) Credential from the School Nutrition Association (SNA) within three years of the date of employment. Individuals must meet degree and specific coursework requirements prior to taking the **SNS Credentialing Exam**. **If the person does not earn a passing score within three years, federal funds may not be used to pay the person's salary.**

Option 2: Holds at least an earned bachelor's degree or higher from an accredited institution; completes state-approved training for new CNP Directors; and earns the School Nutrition Specialist Credential (SNS) from the School Nutrition Association (SNA) within three years of the date of employment. Individuals must meet degree and specific coursework requirements prior to taking the **SNS Credentialing Exam**. **If the person does not earn a passing score within three years, federal funds may not be used to pay the person's salary.**

NOTE: LEAs with a student enrollment of 2,500 – 9,999 must meet the federal hiring standards to be paid from the nonprofit school foodservice account and to be eligible for the Temporary Exception for Hiring CNP Directors per Alabama Code. The minimum requirement is an associate's degree or equivalent educational experience (60 hours), with an academic major in specific areas listed above. Once approved for the exception, the director will have three (3) years to meet the Alabama hiring standards and complete the requirements for Alabama's CNP Director Certification.



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Hiring Standards for CNP Managers

Each site that provides meals shall employ a manager. Managers are not required to hold a certificate. A CNP Director may also serve as a site manager.

1. Each manager of a food service operation at the site level must have at least a high school equivalency diploma and three years of school food service experience or related work.
2. If an acceptable candidate meeting the educational requirement is not available, the governing body may employ a manager on the condition that the educational requirement be met within one year from the date of employment. A manager so employed who fails to meet the educational requirement within the prescribed time limits shall not be employed as a CNP manager.

Professional Standards for School Nutrition Program Professionals in Alabama

CNP Directors:	Must earn at least 12 hours of annual continuing education or training.
CNP Managers:	Must earn at least 10 hours of annual continuing education or training.
All other CNP Staff:	Must earn at least 6 hours of annual continuing education or training.
Part-Time Staff:	Staff who work less than 20 hours a week must have at least 4 hours of annual continuing education or training.

NOTE: Annual training requirements apply to the program year between July 1 and June 30. If hired January 1 or later, an employee must complete only half of the required training hours.

Required Training for all CNP Directors

1. ALSDE approved food safety training must be completed every five years.
2. Civil Rights training must be completed annually.
3. Procurement training must be completed annually.

New CNP Directors must complete ALSDE required trainings within the first year of employment.

1. Institute of Child Nutrition Introduction to School Nutrition Leadership Course. (Past attendance accepted)
2. ALSDE New Director trainings and webinars.

USDA Flexibility and State Agency discretion for LEAs with Fewer than 500 Students

For LEAs (Private, RCCI and Charter Schools) with fewer than 500 students, and at the State agency's discretion, the SFA can be approved to hire a school nutrition program director who has less than the required years of food service experience, provided the applicant has the minimum education specified in the USDA Hiring Standards for New School Nutrition Program Directors for LEAs with 2,499 students or fewer (High school diploma (or GED) and 3 years of relevant food service experience.) and complete the ALSDE required trainings for CNP directors within the first year of employment.