Hello,
My name is Jan Steffen, Child Nutrition Program Consultant for the Iowa Department of Education and Project Director for the USDA Professional Standards Grant.

Welcome to the first of at least three webinars in the new manager series. The target audience for these webinars is individuals who have supervisory responsibility for School Meals Programs in Iowa. Your job title may be Director, Manager, Supervisor, or perhaps even Head Cook. We also have invited today the individuals who are listed as new Authorized Representatives, but not Food Service or Child Nutrition Director in the School Nutrition Programs application. That is because our emphasis today is to help you see where you fit in the management of School Nutrition Programs in your school. The next two webinars will emphasize the basics of menu planning and meal service as well as counting and claiming meals.

The Bureau of Nutrition and Health Services is your help line. We want all School Nutrition Programs in Iowa to have the information you need to provide students with tasty meals that meet USDA guidelines.

The Bureau phone number 515-281-5356 is there on the slide. Each school organization is assigned a consultant from our Bureau who can answer questions and who will be scheduling an Administrative Review with you sometime in the next 3 years. If you don’t have contact information for the consultant assigned to your school, you can call the Bureau number (515-281-5356) to get that information.
During the webinar if you have questions, please click on Questions and Answers at the upper left of your screen. A box should appear where you can type your question. If we don’t get to your question during the webinar, the questions and answers of general interest will be posted on Learning Tools-Nutrition. If you have a question specific to your situation, please be sure either to identify yourself so that we can answer you individually or you may email me after the webinar.

You may also request a recording of the webinar.
Our learning objectives for you today are that you will:

- Understand the scope of responsibilities in the school nutrition programs but also that these may be divided in some districts so don’t be overwhelmed by the sample job description in the handouts.

- Identify resources for education in all of the areas of responsibility

- List specific food safety, menu planning/food production, meal counting & claiming training activities that you have already completed or which you plan to complete as part of your school nutrition training plan.
The Learning Objectives for today are in the USDA Professional Standards Key Learning Areas of Administration- Program Management and Staff Training

This webinar does count toward the required training to meet USDA Professional Standards Requirements. Keep the documentation page (next slide) that you received with the webinar link with your other training documentation.
Fill in the date you watched the webinar and your name.
Before we go much further, I would like to clarify some of the terms USDA and the Iowa Department of Education use when presenting information to School Nutrition Programs in Iowa.

The acronym SFA stands for School Food Authority. The SFA is the organization that administers a School Nutrition Program.

The Authorized Representative for the School Meals Program is an employee of the organization – the SFA - who is the point of contact for the Department of Education. It is the Authorized Representative’s responsibility to act on information or guidance provided by the Dept. or to distribute it to the appropriate staff member to act, respond, or implement. This person has signature authority related to matters of the School Nutrition Programs and is the primary contact for the School Meal Programs.

In the Iowa School Nutrition Program Application, we also ask organizations who operate the School Meals Programs to list a contact as the Child Nutrition/Food Service Director. Sometimes this person is also the Authorized Representative but sometimes they are not. Often the terms Child Nutrition Program Director, School Nutrition Program Director, and School Food Service Director are used interchangeably. The Child Nutrition term is used because School Meal Programs (NSLP, SBP, After School Snack Program) are part of a larger group of USDA Child Nutrition Programs. The preferred name is “School Nutrition Program Director” because nutrition is the primary focus of the School Meal Programs. We have changed to School Nutrition Programs application, but have not yet changed the title in IowaCNP.
The essential functional areas of responsibility that we have used in the Training Plan and Guidelines and Resources documents are based on information from the Institute of Child Nutrition. The Institute of Child Nutrition is an organization funded by USDA to provide information and services that promote the continuous improvement of Child Nutrition Programs. The Institute defined core competencies, knowledge and skills for School Nutrition Program Directors and developed a sample job description.

Please do not be overwhelmed by these documents. In many smaller school districts in Iowa, responsibilities for the School Nutrition Programs are divided among several individuals so you may not have responsibility in every one of the areas listed on the Training Plan. The School Food Authorized Representative does need to be sure that all of those areas are covered, but may not perform them all.

Your training plan should be based on your job description.
If you look through the Guidelines and Resources document, you will see “Includes Program Accountability” under several of the areas of responsibility. This is because the Institute of Child Nutrition included a separate section on Program Management and Accountability when defining the core competencies for a School Nutrition Director, but we consider Program Accountability to be spread throughout the functional areas of the school nutrition programs.

Programs that are federally supported, such as the school nutrition program, are accountable for the funds used to support them. One of the School Nutrition Specialists from our regional USDA office in Denver used to show a dollar bill with a string attached to show that compliance with USDA regulations is required to receive federal dollars. Many view accountability and compliance as synonymous; however, accountability is a more comprehensive term. In addition to compliance with regulations, accountability includes meeting responsibilities to other stakeholders, such as students, administrators, parents and community leaders.
As we go through the essential areas of responsibility of the School Nutrition Programs during the webinar, I will be asking you to do some self-assessment about your responsibilities. This can help you develop your training plan so I encourage you to make notes on your personal training plan so that by the end of the webinar you should have a pretty good idea of what your priorities should be.
The core responsibilities that usually lead to a person being designated as the Child Nutrition/Food Service Director in the Iowa School Nutrition Program Application are these: Food and Employee Safety, Menu Planning and Food Production, Meal Counting & Claiming, and Income Eligibility Determination.

The last three are also what are defined as “Critical Areas” in the Administrative Review of School Nutrition Programs that could result in fiscal action if found out of compliance.
Food Safety is the only area where USDA specifically requires training within 30 days of hire for a School Nutrition Director. That is because food safety is the only area of responsibility that can have an immediate effect on the health and well-being of the students and employees that you serve.

USDA requires 8 hours of Food safety training within 30 days of hire or in previous 5 years

What food safety training have you had?
Do a Quick Self-Assessment:
What Food Safety training have you had?
When did you complete it?

If you have not had at least 8 hours of food safety training in the last 5 years, and are the person listed as Child Nutrition/Food Service Director for your SFA, the first thing you should do after this webinar is use the Guidelines and Resources handout to schedule your food safety training plan.
Nutrition accountability means not only planning menus that meet the USDA meal patterns, but also planning menus that students can enjoy.

The USDA meal patterns include serving sizes of 5 different components to meet the needs of students in varying age groups. There are many training opportunities to learn more about the meal patterns. If you have not attended training on the meal patterns, or if you would like a review, several recommended trainings to complete before the second New Manager Webinar on February 8 are listed on the registration page for that webinar, and also on the Guidelines and Resources Document. Menus and Food Preparation will be the focus of that webinar, but we will not have time to go into every detail.

Compliance with federal regulations does mean maintaining documentation that you have followed the meal patterns. This means keeping menus, purchasing records, and food production records for three years after the school year is over.
Several states including Iowa have developed cycle menus that meet the meal pattern requirements if your time for menu planning or meal pattern knowledge is limited. However, the menu is just the first step. A published menu only shows what was planned to be served. Regardless of who planned the menus, the staff preparing them to know the correct serving sizes for each grade groups and the preparation methods, recipes, and product specifications to follow in order for those menus to meet USDA guidelines. Food Purchasing and Production Records must be maintained to document that the correct items to serve the menu as planned were purchased and prepared and that correct portion sizes were served.

Our Iowa Nutrition Programs web site includes production record templates that include all of the required information. There is also an Iowa School Nutrition Online Tutorial about production records. More detail on the requirements for Food Production Records will be included in the February and March webinars.
Here’s another Quick Self-Assessment:

What training have you had on the meal patterns?

Do you feel confident that you understand the meal patterns including the differences in serving sizes between grade groups?

Do your production records show that meal patterns are met? Do they include the amounts prepared and the serving sizes planned for each food item?

Do you provide high quality food for your students?

Is there additional training needed for me or other staff?
Meal Counting and Claiming includes several daily tasks as well as the filing of the claim for reimbursement each month so I think there may have been some individuals who completed the survey who didn’t fully understand this area of responsibility.

The first task in accurately counting and claiming meals is to be sure that only meals that meet the USDA meal pattern requirements are claimed for reimbursement. This starts with offering all of the components required by USDA, but then the offer vs. serve option does allow meals to be reimbursed even if students only take three of the components at lunch or 3 items at breakfast. Making sure that you have well-trained staff monitoring that students do have the required items on their trays is an important part of this area of responsibility. We will include more about offer vs. serve in Webinar #3 in March.

The other task that needs to be part of claiming is to assure that the meals are claimed at the correct income eligibility level. The only way this can be accomplished is to be sure that an accurate count of which students are served at each meal is taken unless your organization is operating under one of the special claiming provisions.
The reason you need to accurately record which children eat school meals each day is that the amount of reimbursement from USDA depends on the income eligibility status of the student. This slide shows that for the 2016-17 school year USDA provides up to $3.22 for each lunch and $1.71 for each breakfast for students eligible for free benefits, $2.82 for each lunch and $1.41 for each breakfast for reduced price-eligible students and $.36 for each lunch and $.29 for breakfast for those who do not meet income guidelines if the school’s lunch menus are certified to meet the meal pattern requirements.

The $.06 performance-based reimbursement was included in the lunch reimbursement totals because at one time all schools in Iowa have had their menus certified as meeting the meal patterns and eligible to receive it. However, at the time of the Administrative Review, the menu and food production documentation is reviewed to assure that menus being served still meet the USDA certification requirements. If they do not, that payment can be withheld.

Many schools have a computerized system that allows students to enter a number or scan their personal card to count their meal for the day. That number links the student’s meal to the correct income eligibility status. These totals are automatically added for the monthly claim and to keep track of how much a student owes for meals. Periodic checks need to be made to assure that the system is working accurately, that more meals are not claimed in any eligibility category than have been determined eligible. Many systems have a daily edit check function and this should be used. If your school does not have meal claiming software, then you must have a system to count which students are eating and a way to assign the correct eligibility status without identifying the student as eligible for free or reduced price meals.
Let’s do another quick self-assessment.

What training have you had on identifying meals eligible for reimbursement?
Does your school have an electronic system for counting meals?
Do you feel confident that your meal counting system is accurate?
Is there additional training that I need regarding meal counting and claiming?
The processing of income eligibility applications to determine eligibility for free or reduced price lunches is a function of the school meals programs that may be assigned to an administrative office rather than to food service staff. Regardless of where in the school income eligibility is determined, it is important that only those who need to know have access to that information and keep it confidential.

Annual training is presented by our Bureau to highlight any changes USDA may have made regarding income eligibility determination such as the new application forms this year. If you have this responsibility, but did not participate in the training, it is available on the Learning Tools-Nutrition section of our web site.

Assuring that income eligibility determination is correctly completed is part of your accountability for Program Access to all participants.
Another quick self-assessment:
• Is determining income eligibility part of your job?
• If so, did you participate in training for this school year?
• Are you careful to keep income eligibility confidential?
The USDA Foods Planned Assistance Level for your school is based on the number of reimbursable school lunches served in the previous year. Because this is food that you pay little or nothing to obtain, it is important to make good use of these food items in menu planning. There are webinars available explaining the options for obtaining USDA foods, including one on January 23, 2017. In this Webinar, part of our monthly What’s New In School Nutrition series, Sarah White, our USDA Foods Coordinator will present options for using USDA Foods, how to order them, and how to track usage. You can also contact Sarah directly with your questions.
Customer Service is important because students will not participate in the school meals programs if they are not satisfied customers. Participation is necessary for you to have revenue to operate your program. Customer service as it pertains to protecting the civil rights of all participants is required by USDA, and is part of your accountability for program access for all students. Documenting annual civil rights training for all staff who deal with food service or income eligibility determination is required by USDA. There are resources to assist with that training on the Nutrition Programs web page under Civil Rights.
USDA also has several requirements related to financial accountability. Purchasing of goods and service for School Meals Program must be done using fair and open competition so records of bid solicitations and purchases must be maintained. Fair and open competition is also part of your accountability to the community that might do business with your school nutrition program.

USDA regulations require that schools keep documentation that they are working toward paid lunch equity in their meal prices and that items sold outside of a reimbursable meal (ala carte items, adult meals, catering) are priced to assure that USDA funds are used only for reimbursable meals. References to the PLE Tool and Nonprogram food revenue are related to these requirements. There are resources to learn more about those items on the Department of Education- Nutrition Programs website.

Records of all income and expenses of the School Nutrition Programs must be kept for 3 years after the year they are incurred or until audit findings are resolved. School administrative offices often provide support for maintaining those records, but it important to have good communication so that everyone understand the USDA requirements and the records necessary to document compliance.
School wellness is another area of Accountability for the School Nutrition Director. While nutritious school meals are an important part of a healthy school environment, the wellness policy includes topics that go beyond the scope of school meals.

USDA rules require that wellness policies include:
• Specific goals for nutrition promotion and education, physical activity, and other school-based activities that promote student wellness.
• Standards and nutrition guidelines for all foods and beverages sold to students on the school campus during the school day
• Standards for all foods and beverages provided or marketed to students during the school day
• Description of public involvement, public updates, policy leadership, and evaluation plan.

A Wellness Policy Update webinar is being presented next Tuesday, January 17. If the wellness policy is not part of YOUR job description, please share that information with the person who does facilitate the wellness committee in your organization.
Smart Snacks standards are specific USDA requirements that apply to all food sold ala carte by School Nutrition Programs, and also foods sold by other organizations. There are many resources for learning more about Smart Snack standards on the Department of Education - Nutrition Programs web site.
The rest of the functional areas listed on the Guidelines and Resources for Training and the Training Plan (Marketing, Personnel Management, General Management, Environmental Management, Computer Technology, and Nutrition Education) are definitely important for maintaining program participation, program financial integrity and employee retention. There are resources listed for training in these areas and they should definitely be included in your training plan. However, if you are brand new to school nutrition, the basic areas (Menu Planning, Quality Food Preparation, Production Records, Meal Counting & Claiming, and Income Eligibility Determination) need to be your first priority for training.
One more self assessment:

Which of these areas do you need to learn more about? Highlight them on your training plan.
Use the Guidelines and Resources to choose training resources on those topics that you marked as needing more information, then set a realistic date (based on how confident you are with the basic topics) for completing that training.
There is a lot to learn to be a successful School Nutrition Program Director, but there is also lots of assistance available.

Your regional consultant or other Bureau staff who have expertise in specific areas such as USDA Foods, Procurement or Wellness Policies are here to help. Don’t hesitate to call them.

There are many training opportunities online that you can access whenever it is convenient for you. We also have face to face training where you also have the opportunity to network with School Nutrition Personnel from other schools. Our web site includes information about all of those training opportunities plus many other resources.

Several of you noted on the New Manager survey that you would like to be contacted by an experienced Food Service Director. We will be facilitating that contact in the next few weeks.
We’ve covered a large amount of information so I would be happy to answer any questions you may have. Or you may contact your regional consultant.
Your goal and ours is Happy Healthy Students. We are here to help you toward that goal.
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(1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;

(2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

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