

**Food Stamp Nutrition Education (FSNE)
Within the Extension/Land-Grant University System
Paraprofessional Nutrition Educators – Core Competencies**

Note: These core competencies should be used within the context of the State FSNE program guidelines and the Federal Food Stamp Plan Guidance.

Understand the Organization

- Understand the mission of Extension within the Land Grant University System.
- Understand and adopt the mission and goals of FSNE.
- Understand the relationship of FSNE to Extension; the University; the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS); and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).
- Understand the eligibility requirements for participation in the Food Stamp Program.
- Understand the importance of the paraprofessional role in achieving program goals.
- Follow State FSNE guidelines.

Understand and Respect Diversity

- Respect and value people's differences.
- Remain objective and avoid imposing one's own values on others.
- Meet the nutrition education needs of food stamp eligible learners of diverse race, ethnicity, gender, age, language, education level, sexual orientation, and disabilities.
- Meet civil rights requirements.

Achieve Excellence in Teaching

- Recruit adults and youth who are Food Stamp eligible.
- Schedule programs (with input from supervisor) to be convenient for participants.
- Assess the needs, interests, and abilities of participants.
- Understand the factors that influence an individual's food behavior.
- Limit program content to FSNE topics as defined in State program guidelines.
- Use research-based, State-approved educational materials.
- Stay current in FSNE topics.

- Plan and prepare lesson plans, activities, and materials based on participants' needs, interests, age, and abilities.
- Engage participants in hands-on learning to achieve program outcomes.
- Use creative teaching techniques that build on participants' learning styles (ways of learning), strengths, prior knowledge, and skills.
- Create respectful learning environments in which learners feel comfortable to participate.
- Help participants set goals using new information and skills.
- Encourage participants to increase food and nutrition-related skills and become more independent.
- Acknowledge participants' success.
- Use evaluation results to focus programming and improve teaching skills/techniques.

Conduct Program Evaluation

- Use State-approved evaluation forms and methods for collecting participant and program outcome information.
- Meet expected goals for participation/caseload as designated by supervisor.
- Provide constructive feedback to supervisors/State leaders on program effectiveness.

Maintain Accurate Records and Reports

- Submit records and reports neatly, accurately, completely, and on time. Document time and travel regularly on appropriate forms.
- Secure and/or document match.
- Secure and submit participant signatures indicating consent for photographs, and/or other personal information that may be used to improve programming.

Maintain Effective Internal and External Partnerships

- Know community demographics, resources, needs, and issues.
- Build and maintain effective partnerships with other Extension programs and community agencies.
- Respect the missions of partnering agencies.

- Understand and follow program memoranda of understanding and/or collaborative agreements.
- Communicate regularly with partnering agencies to coordinate services.
- Respond to agency referrals in a timely manner and report follow-up with the person/agency that made the referral.
- Refer participants to the Food Stamp Program, Extension programs, and other appropriate community resources.
- Strengthen programming by involving volunteers.
- Participate in the research mission of the University as approved by supervisor.

Communicate Program Value

- Serve as a good representative of the University.
- Include required logos, Food Stamp Program message, and FSNE funding statement on all print materials.
- Share program outcomes and successes with stakeholders, media, and the public.

Ensure Productive Interpersonal Relationships

- Maintain positive working relationships with support staff, co-workers, and supervisors.
- Share program materials and ideas with co-workers. Be open to new ideas, concepts, and information.
- Mentor new co-workers as directed by supervisor.
- Use effective verbal, writing, and listening skills.
- Volunteer and/or accept additional responsibilities when appropriate and with supervisor approval.
- Accept constructive criticism and suggestions.

Demonstrate Technology Literacy

- Demonstrate basic computer skills including e-mail and accessing the Internet.
- Use basic office equipment including the telephone system, fax, and copier.
- Use websites approved by supervisor.
- Use audio visual equipment and materials appropriately in teaching.

- Enter data accurately and print reports.

Demonstrate Personal Accountability

- Balance multiple responsibilities including teaching, recruiting, recordkeeping, and reporting.
- Communicate concerns and issues to supervisor in a timely manner (sickness, leave requests, change of schedules, accidents, and conflicts with agencies, participants, co-workers).
- Practice positive work ethics (loyalty, honesty, integrity, perseverance).
- Demonstrate an understanding of job responsibilities and boundaries.
- Use good judgment about health and personal safety at work.
- Dress appropriately (as defined by State FSNE guidelines) and practice good hygiene.
- Meet scheduled commitments; arrive prepared and on time; cancel appointments only when absolutely necessary.
- Model positive nutrition, health, and food safety behaviors.
- Maintain reliable transportation.
- Organize and maintain teaching materials, supplies, and equipment.
- Use time and travel resources wisely.
- Participate actively in staff development/training.
- Develop a personal staff development plan including setting goals to improve work performance in conjunction with supervisor.
- Use technology and program equipment/materials appropriately and for work purposes only.
- Work independently with confidence.
- Maintain confidentiality of participant and program information (appropriately file, transport, and store records).
- Comply with State laws regarding reporting criminal activity (copyright laws, reporting child abuse, and issues related to court cases).