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).