Paraprofessional Nutrition Educators – Core Competencies

Note: These core competencies should be used within the context of the State EFNEP program guidelines.

**Understand the Organization**
- Understand the mission of Extension within the Land Grant University System.
- Understand and adopt the mission and goals of EFNEP.
- Understand the relationship of EFNEP to Extension; the University; and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).
- Understand the eligibility requirements for participation in EFNEP.
- Understand the importance of the paraprofessional role in achieving program goals.
- Follow State EFNEP guidelines.

**Understand and Respect Diversity**
- Respect and value peoples’ differences.
- Remain objective and avoid imposing one’s own values on others.
- Meet the nutrition education needs of 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 EFNEP 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 EFNEP topics as defined in program guidelines.
- Use research-based, approved educational materials.
- Stay current in EFNEP 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 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 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 SNAP-Ed Program, WIC Program and other assistance programs, 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, EFNEP message on all approved 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 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 up to date 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).