

Attachment to Info Memo No. 109

Year 2000 Best Practices Categories

The following are the Year 2000 Best Practices categories. A description of each category is followed by some suggested topics. These topics are not intended as limitations, only as guidelines.

Creative Implementation of the School Meals Initiative

Implementation of the School Meals Initiative is being accomplished in many creative ways. Successful implementation relies on the cooperation of food service staff at all levels. We are looking for creative and practical methods used by districts to comply with the School Meals Initiative.

- What record keeping techniques were used to ease transition into the selected menu planning system i.e, standardized recipes, production records, vendor compliance, nutritional information.
- What are some successful ways that you are meeting the Dietary Guidelines for Americans?
- Give examples of “before” and “after” menus.
- How have you introduced new foods, include the steps taken to inform students about the new foods?
- How have you monitored student choices to determine how students are incorporating the Dietary Guidelines for Americans?
- How does food service utilize commodity foods to help meet the Dietary Guidelines for Americans?
- Give examples of preparation techniques used to limit fat and reduce calories in cooking.

Innovative Food Service Practices

Food service practices include food preparation, purchasing, sound business practices, customer service, and sanitation. A successful food service operation relies on the coordination of all these areas to ensure integrity and accuracy in all aspects of food service. We would like to hear about the innovative methods you have incorporated to achieve success in your food service operation.

- How have you improved your business practices in order to more effectively comply with federal regulations?
- How do you choose vendors to help purchase foods that meet the Dietary Guidelines?
- How is the district using cooperative buying techniques to purchase food at a lower cost?
- How is staff involved in developing menus with new food choices, more variety and/or lower fat foods?
- How is recycling used to cut food service costs?
- How does your method of accountability (point-of service ,etc.) ensure compliance with federal regulations and how have you successfully implemented this system?
- How does your staff epitomize the word SERVICE?

Establishing Cooperative Partnerships

Establishing cooperative partnerships with business and health organizations within the community provides food service operations with alternative sources of funding, opportunities to provide a service to the local community, and a vehicle to spread the word on the importance of healthy eating. For example, providing meals to local institutions or donating leftover foods (gleaning) to area food banks aids in strengthening the food security needs of the community. We would like to hear more about links established between your school food service operation and the community.

- How are other community programs linked with school food service i.e., senior citizens, Head Start, Even Start, Second Harvest or other food gleaning program?
- Is there a food gleaning program established in your community?
- Does your district provide meals to local needy groups through a gleaning project?
- Are there student volunteer groups or clubs which provide a nutrition service to the community?
- Has your school food service established links with local businesses or organizations which have had a positive effect on the nutritional well-being of the students?
- Is your district involved with local hospitals or other health organizations in ways which communicate to students the link between nutrition and health?

Increasing Nutrition Awareness

As food providers, increasing the nutrition awareness of our children is one of our top priorities. Educating students to make the right food choices ensures their health for a lifetime. Empowering children by providing them with healthy choices is one of the goals of the School Meals Initiative. It is important to maintain this message of good nutrition by establishing links between the classroom and the cafeteria. We would like to hear about your nutrition education programs and how they help to increase student awareness of the importance of good nutrition.

- What efforts were made at the district/school level to assist students in making healthy choices in the cafeteria?
- What materials or programs did you adopt or develop to reach your goals, i.e. brochures, training programs, etc.?
- How are students made aware of the nutrition content of school meals?
- How are the teachers in your school/district involved in the daily food service operation?
- How do teachers assist in menu planning?

Training & Professional Development

You and your staff are the cornerstone of school food service. A solid training foundation is vital to its success. Developing food service staff to become nutrition resources assists students with making the right food choices. We would like to hear about your training methods and how they help your staff provide healthy meals and influence student food choices.

- Which methods were used to increase staff skills in preparing them to incorporate the School Meals Initiative requirements?
- What training was given at the district level to improve preparation techniques to prepare more healthful meals?
- Give examples of how training was successfully delivered.
- How were USDA materials used in training?
- How has Team Nutrition helped to increase awareness of the need for more healthful foods?
- How have the students benefited from your staff's training?

Community Involvement

Successful food service operations incorporate the entire community in their daily operations. Community involvement in nutrition and health related events helps solidify the bond between school and the home.

- Did the district/school sponsor events that involved the community, i.e. picnics, parents day, health fairs, administration/local government visits, visits by local farmers, etc.?
- Were there any Team Nutrition related activities that helped to educate the local community on the importance of good nutrition, i.e. Team Nutrition Days ?
- Were there any notable activities sponsored by the school during National School Lunch Week, School Breakfast Week, Nutrition Month which involved the parents or the community?

Improved School Breakfast Program Participation

The School Breakfast Program has long been a way to provide students with a nutritious way to start their school day. Recent studies have documented the positive effect that a nutritious breakfast has on students; however, student participation in school breakfast generally lags behind that of school lunch. We would like to hear about the successful methods you have incorporated to improve breakfast participation in your district. Please include statistical data which indicates the increase in participation.

- Have you sponsored events that have resulted in long term improvements in breakfast participation? Please provide statistical data.
- Has a particular method of breakfast service been more successful than others, i.e. breakfast in a bag?
- How has the school administration supported the breakfast program?
- How have you been successful in promoting the breakfast program within the community, i.e., grandparent day, parent day, etc.?
- Were you able to increase your paid participation? How? Include statistical data.

Afterschool Snack Program Achievements

Nutritious snacks are important for effective learning. As food service providers, ensuring the health and well-being of our students is one of your highest priorities. You can guide children to think and behave better by organizing structured and supervised Afterschool Snack Programs that provide nutritious snacks after school. These programs can also help students improve their work during the school day. We are interested in hearing about your accomplishments in developing and organizing the Afterschool Snack Programs under the National School Lunch Program in your district.

- What educational or enrichment activities do you provide to students in your program?
- What obstacles, if any, did you need to overcome in order to start your program?
- Did you solicit community support for your program? If so, how were you successful?
- What type of foods do you provide to students in the program?
- What type of accountability system do you utilize?

Successful Food Safety and Sanitation Practices

Food safety is everybody's business. Protecting your students from food-borne illness is a constant challenge for today's food service providers. There are a variety of training methods available to school districts to provide the necessary information to ensure food safety. The USDA is very interested to know what districts are doing to provide this vital information to school food service staff.

- What food safety training methods does your district follow?
- How often is food safety and sanitation training provided?
- What staff is involved in the training? Does it involve teachers, students, or the community?
- Do you employ training materials provided by USDA?
- Do you use any specialized equipment to ensure food safety? i.e, thermometers, cleaning solutions, etc.

Nomination Form
YEAR 2000 BEST PRACTICES AWARD PROGRAM
U.S. Department of Agriculture/Food and Nutrition Service

Name of school or school food authority: _____

Address: _____

Average Daily Participation: _____ Number of Schools: _____

Grades Served: _____ Enrollment: _____

CATEGORY (check one)

- Creative Implementation of the School Meals Initiative
- Innovative Food Service Practices
- Establishing Cooperative Partnerships
- Increasing Nutrition Awareness
- Training & Professional Development
- Community Involvement
- Improved School Breakfast Participation
- Afterschool Snack Program Achievements
- Successful Food Safety & Sanitation Practices

If applicable, please include information on cost, history, and impact. Supporting documents or additional pages may be attached.

Description of Practice:

Submitted by :

Nominations must be submitted to your State administering agency by June 30, 2000.