



Feeding Bodies. Fueling Minds.

Annual Conference Session Suggestions

2024 Survey Feedback

“Please let us know what education session topics you would like to see offered in the future:”

1. Culinary Skills & Kitchen Management

- Knife skills and knife care
- Culinary skills/scratch cooking
- Cooking techniques and recipe development (best recipes)
- Food preparation techniques (e.g., fruit and vegetable displays)
- Proper lifting techniques
- Understanding and maintaining kitchen equipment
- Combi oven shortcuts
- Menu planning and recipe sharing
- Creative ways to incorporate commodities into recipes
- New food items available

2. Nutrition & Special Diets

- Allergen management and special diets
- Reducing sodium and sugar with spices
- Farm to School and sustainable food sourcing
- Understanding USDA nutrition standards
- New school meal pattern updates (SBP and NSLP sessions)
- Portion control and serving sizes
- School food waste solutions
- Improving food quality for students
- Common allergens in ingredient labels

3. Leadership & Staff Management

- Team building and interactive leadership training
- Managing staff with different strengths and personalities
- Dealing with difficult employees
- Understanding generational differences in the workplace
- Mentoring and developing managers
- Strengthening relationships with custodial and administrative staff
- Staff motivation and retention strategies
- HR-related issues and workplace communication
- Promoting leadership skills for site managers
- Conflict resolution and staff engagement

4. Mental Health & Self-Care

- Stress management and mindfulness techniques
- Self-care strategies for school food service staff
- Work-life balance for school nutrition professionals
- Breathing exercises and relaxation techniques
- Managing public perception and professional well-being
- Coping with burnout and job stress

5. Customer Service & Student Engagement

- Improving customer service in school cafeterias
- Communicating effectively with students and staff
- Engaging with students affected by COVID-related social challenges
- Connecting with students to improve meal participation
- Strategies for making the lunch line move faster

6. Financial & Business Management

- Offer vs Serve compliance
- Production records
- Understanding Fund 02 and financial regulations
- School finance and budget management
- Administrative review preparation
- UFARS and non-program food management
- Procurement and local sourcing strategies
- Common audit findings and compliance strategies
- Cost-effective meal planning and inventory management

7. Compliance & Regulatory Updates

- USDA Code 2000 and policy updates
- Emergency preparedness
- Mandatory reporting and legal responsibilities
- MDE updates for directors and kitchen staff
- Health and safety regulations
- ServSafe updates and food safety reminders
- CACFP-specific training

8. Professional Development & Training

- Director training: "What I Wish I Knew as a New Director"
- Retirement
- Understanding career progression and key training areas
- Leadership training and mentorship programs
- CEU-eligible training for RDNs
- Talking with political representatives

9. Technology & Efficiency

- Using artificial intelligence (AI)
- Using Google (hands-on)
- Managing projects using available software
- Using technology to streamline kitchen operations
- Understanding and using electronic equipment effectively
- Digital tools for menu planning and compliance tracking