

# SERVING STUDENTS

This research was commissioned by Service Employees International Union, Local 32BJ

*A Survey of Contracted Food Service Work in  
New Jersey's K-12 Public Schools*

By  
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## Acknowledgements

I give most of my thanks to the New Jersey public school food service workers, each of whom took several hours of their own time after school in the afternoon or evening to talk with me. In all cases, I found a commitment to the work of providing safe and nutritious and appealing food to all students, and a surprising degree of enthusiasm for the opportunity to support student needs, despite the very low pay and lack of benefits. In general, these individuals proved to be interesting, interested, and full of ideas, and they were a pleasure to listen to.

I also would like to thank my colleagues, Karen White and Dr. Mary Gatta, of the Rutgers University Center for Women and Work, who steered me to this project and worked with me in searching out information, managing certain focus groups, and overseeing the project as a whole. I also owe thanks to David Whitman, a graduate assistant in the Center, who did a good deal of the background research.

Of course, the conclusions represented here are my own.

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## Executive Summary

In New Jersey, contracted food service workers in K-12 public schools play a critical role in delivering healthy meals to the state's children. School lunches offer many children, particularly the 250,000 living in low-income families, the only assurance that they will receive at least one well-balanced and healthy meal a day.<sup>1</sup> Federally- and state-funded free and reduced price lunch programs—and the breakfast that nearly 50 percent of New Jersey schools also serve—are essential to our children's well-being.<sup>2</sup> Despite their important work, New Jersey's public school food service workers are struggling to support their own families: pay is low, benefits are rare, and opportunities for advancement are limited. In short, in New Jersey the school food program intended to help poor children rests upon the shoulders of workers who themselves earn poverty-level wages.

In New Jersey, the median hourly wage for food preparation workers in educational services was only \$8.15 in 2007, and many of these jobs pay no more than the New Jersey minimum wage of \$7.15.<sup>3</sup> Contracted food service workers are paid only for their work during the school year and are not paid for school holidays or other days when school is closed. Most workers receive few, if any, health care benefits, leaving many of them uninsured or with no other option than to enroll in New Jersey public health insurance programs. In fact, the food service industry ranked third in 2002 among industry sectors with the highest percentage of employees and their children – over 6,300 – using New Jersey FamilyCare.

While contracted food service workers struggle to get by, they nevertheless have significant respon-

sibilities in the school cafeteria. From preventing food contamination and identifying foods that cause allergies, to proper storage and disposal of food, these workers are at the front-line of keeping school children safe from food-borne illnesses. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) recognizes their critical role; in recent years, the agency has directed that food service workers be trained to recognize potential bio-hazards.<sup>4</sup> In their regular contact with students, these workers – a majority of them female<sup>5</sup> – also have the opportunity to encourage children to eat well and to make healthy food choices, an important role as obesity rates among children in New Jersey and across the country continue to climb. It is important to note, however, that there is no requirement that contracted K-12 food service workers be granted sick days, a concern for both the health and safety of the students and the workers themselves when there is an economic incentive for these low-wage employees to go to work while ill.

This report provides a unique look at contracted food service workers in public schools in New Jersey and nationally. The data, drawn from federal and state sources and other research, is supplemented by findings from a number of focus groups held in New Jersey in November 2008 and February 2009. In the course of developing this report, two things stand out: first, the virtual absence of data and information on these public school employees who play a significant role in student health and safety; and second, the strong commitment of these workers to the value of their job and to the students, despite low wages, lack of benefits and often difficult working conditions.

Contracted food service workers deserve the opportunity to make family-sustaining wages with benefits, and have the training required to get good jobs with the opportunity for a career path. The following report and its recommendations are a first step in reaching these goals.

## Policy Recommendations

**Increase wages and benefits to a level to sustain families and to reduce reliance on state-funded safety net programs.** There are several mechanisms, such as legislation or procurement mandates, by which the State and school districts can implement and enforce wage and benefit standards for food service contracts in K-12 schools. Using this leverage is key to raising these workers out of poverty and into the middle class. Benefits, such as sick days, should be required. A food service worker should never have an economic incentive to go to work when ill.

**Establish transparency and accountability** by requiring school districts and private contractors to provide information on wages and benefits, training certification and enrollment by school district. Schools and districts already provide data on a general category of "support staff," which includes food service workers, custodial staff and others. This data needs to be broken out by occupation within particular categories, such as the occupation of food service workers employed for public schools.

**Establish a state system for requiring and providing a "food handler permit" for all food service workers in New Jersey.** All food service workers should be required to obtain this permit within three years of enactment of this law. School districts must ensure

that each food service worker has such a permit. As is the case in a number of other states (California, Oregon and Arizona, for example), such a permit would serve both the interests of employees, by providing a validation of necessary knowledge, and the interests of schools, by ensuring that current and potential employees have verified their knowledge of food safety and nutrition. This would not be a substitute for the current State regulation that requires food service locations to have a manager/supervisor on site who is certified in food safety.

**Require that contracted food service workers receive training from qualified training programs.** Food service workers should have the opportunity for training that is more advanced than that required for a food handler's permit, enabling them to advance in the food service occupation. Training would include information about regulations governing school meal programs, menu planning, and other issues in addition to food handling. Such training should be allied with additional certification and wage increases so that food service workers have the option for advancing in the occupation and the opportunity to move up the career ladder.

**Post all food service job announcements on school cafeteria bulletin boards, local One Stop Centers.** Food service workers in focus groups knew little about job openings and the wages and benefits that were associated with them. Workers often heard of openings through word of mouth or the local newspaper. Public and uniform posting of open positions within a school district and/or county would provide greater transparency to workers about other opportunities.

## Introduction

Food service workers in public K-12 schools play a critical role in ensuring that students have the opportunity for safe and healthy meals at school. For many poor children, school meals may be the only meal they have all day. In New Jersey, almost one-third of students are eligible for the federally- and state-funded free or reduced price lunch program.<sup>6</sup> A growing number of schools now serve breakfast as well as lunch, although students/schools participating remain below 50 percent.<sup>7</sup> The workers – a majority of them female – who prepare and serve these meals often get to know the students they see on a daily basis and have an opportunity to encourage them to eat well and to make healthy food choices.

Food service worker responsibilities for food safety are equally important and include: recognition of and response to a growing number of food-borne illnesses and food allergies; understanding of the requirements for proper storage and preparation of food – whether pre-packaged, prepared elsewhere or cooked on site; and knowledge about nutrition and how to incorporate it into preparation. In recent years, the U.S. Department of Agriculture has directed that food service workers be trained to recognize potential biohazards.

Despite the importance of this role, the low wages and lack of benefits for most contracted food service jobs in public schools ensure that these employees and their families remain "working poor." The median hourly wage

for food preparation workers in educational services was only \$8.15 in 2007 and many of these jobs pay no more than the New Jersey minimum wage of \$7.15.<sup>8</sup>

School districts that manage their own food services in-house and employ workers directly typically provide benefits, but most private food service contractors do not. The impact of this in New Jersey is substantial: 64 percent of New Jersey school districts outsource food service to private contractors – the second highest percentage in the nation and almost 30 percent higher than Pennsylvania, ranked third. Nationally, the average is only 13 percent.<sup>9</sup>

The increase in federal and state mandates for food nutrition and safety, along with continuing reductions in school budgets, have put increasing pressure on district and school-level employees with responsibility for food service to do more with less. The high numbers of districts that have chosen to outsource food service to private contractors, such as Aramark, Sodexo and Compass, frequently have done so in hopes of reducing costs.<sup>10</sup> Contractors operating in multiple districts and states can reduce expenses with bulk pricing and other economies of scale, but the majority of cost savings derive from the significant cuts in wages and benefits for food service workers who previously were employed by the school district – as much as \$4.00 to \$6.00 an hour, according to some food service workers who were interviewed for this report.



# I. Food Service Industry Profile

Occupation Title	Est. Employ	Median Hourly
Education Services Cooks, Institution & Cafeteria	840	\$13.70
Food Preparation Workers	380	\$8.15
Accommodation Cooks, Institution & Cafeteria	2100	\$13.10
Food Preparation Workers	8830	\$8.85

There is limited data about food service workers in New Jersey public schools, in part because the private contractors who employ two-thirds of this workforce incorporate the data with their other businesses in private accommodation and food serving establishments. Even public school districts do not provide specific data for cafeteria workers. However, federal and state data for the “food preparation and serving-related occupations” categories include “cooks – institution and cafeteria” and “food preparation workers,” which together likely reflect an accurate picture of these workers.

## Responsibilities

Food service jobs in K-12 schools generally require only a high school degree and fingerprint background check, a cost of \$60-\$100 paid by the individual and typically reimbursed if hired; although jobs beyond entry level and/or that are full-time may require applicants to provide previous experience.

The federal and state occupation descriptions for “cooks, institution and cafeteria” are to

“prepare and cook large quantities of food for institutions, such as schools, hospitals, or cafeterias.” For “food preparation workers,” the tasks are to “perform a variety of food preparation duties other than cooking, such as preparing cold foods and shellfish, slicing meat, and brewing coffee or tea.” A critical component in each of these tasks is to ensure that the food is safe for consumption. School meals may be prepared in the school itself or in a central kitchen for delivery to the school.<sup>11</sup>

School food service workers have many other responsibilities as well that can range from: clearing and cleaning tables; cleaning dishes, food preparation equipment or utensils and the kitchen itself; serving as cashiers or overseeing separate parts of the lunch service, such as the deli counter. Working conditions can be hazardous, with the risk of burns, cuts, falls, and similar mishaps. Moving and carrying heavy containers and/or equipment are often necessary, as is almost constant standing.

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*Working conditions can be hazardous, with the risk of burns, cuts, falls—and the need to move and carry heavy containers and equipment.*

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Focus group participants who were interviewed for this report feel strongly that there is little awareness of the difficulties of their work. One mother described her son’s reaction to “bring your child to work day”: “Mom, how in the [heck] do you stand on your feet all day like that? My feet are killing me!” He added that he had “no clue what it’s all about until you go in one of those kitchens and you see what all of those girls [other workers] do. It’s not just about standing there and serving lunch!”

The absence of differentiated job titles and descriptions makes it difficult to secure better pay or benefits by advancing from one job to another. In data sets, “cooks” is a separate category that appears to have higher wages but focus group participants described work situations in which the responsibility for cooking, oversight for food safety and other “leader” activities rotated among the workers or a volunteer without any additional pay. In some cases, individual site managers gave increases based on a “performance evaluation” (although without an evaluation session), but most had no increases in pay either for added responsibilities or time and experience on the job.

## Numbers of Jobs and Employees

Food service occupations are included in two separate industry sectors, “educational services” and “accommodation and food service.” This presents a significant challenge in estimating the number of workers because the “accommodation” industry covers private sector establishments of all kinds, including hospitals, businesses, hotels, restaurants, casinos, and others.

Using a sample of school districts with a known number of food service workers, we can derive an estimate of approximately one worker per every 125 students. Given that roughly two-thirds of the state’s total enrollment of 1.38 million is in districts that have outsourced food service management, the estimate is just over 7,000 food service employees working for contractors in public schools, and 4,000 employed directly by school districts.<sup>12</sup>

Food service occupations will be growing in number in New Jersey, with a projected increase in jobs of almost 12 percent (an additional 32,350 jobs) between 2006-2016 in the overall category of Food Preparation and Serving

Related Occupations. The detailed occupations most representative of public school food service workers are expected to increase as well: “Cooks, Institution and Cafeteria” are projected to increase 16.3 percent (1,110 jobs) resulting in total employment in 2016 of 7,700; while “Food Preparation Workers” are projected to increase by 15.8 percent (2,650 jobs) for a total 2016 employment of 18,650.<sup>13</sup> The majority of this workforce, 56.6 percent, is female according to national data, which typically is similar on state levels.

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*There are an estimated 7,000 food service employees working for contractors in New Jersey’s public schools.*

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## Wages, Hours and Benefits

Contracted New Jersey food service workers are paid only for their work during the school year and are not paid for school holidays or other days when school is closed for unexpected reasons such as weather. One focus group participant said that “we use our personal sick days just to get paid so we can pay rent for the next month...” In New Jersey, the median hourly wage for food preparation workers in educational services was only \$8.15 in 2007, and many of these jobs pay no more than the New Jersey minimum wage of \$7.15.<sup>14</sup>

Individual workers representing a number of schools in New Jersey described wage rates, benefits and hours that varied from county to county and school to school, even when the employer was the same private contractor. Some who had worked in schools for some time had been employed in earlier years by the school district itself. When the food service was outsourced to a private contractor, they

were offered a new hourly wage rate \$4-\$6 less than they had been paid by the school district. The “Scotch Plains/Fanwood” chart provides an example of a school district’s food service outsourcing RFP (Request for Proposal), in which workers employed by a private contractor (Pomptonian) have a significantly lower wage rate than those employed directly by the school district.

**Scotch Plains/Fanwood, 2005-06**

	School District Employees	Food Service Contractor Employees
	High School	
General Worker	\$14.02-14.14	\$7.75-9.00
Cashier	\$14.36	\$7.75-12.35
Cook	\$15.00	\$14.00

Of equal concern was a loss of health benefits for those employees who were not full-time. There is little information on whether or not sick and/or personal days are offered school by school. According to focus group participants, some employees are eligible for personal and/or sick days, although this benefit appears to be irregular across schools and contractors. Also, whether or not the process by which employees requested personal/sick days varies according to the individual school on site manager.

Hours and shifts have an impact on the wages and conditions of work for food service. In some cases, there are no or only one or two full-time workers in a school; a circumstance that other workers believe is designed to enable the contractor to avoid paying the health benefits due to a full-time employee. Part-time and even some full-time workers can be assigned split

shifts for the breakfast service and then lunch or snack and/or lunch aid role.<sup>15</sup> Three of the larger private contractors offer benefits only to full-time employees,<sup>16</sup> which in food services in schools is approximately eight hours a day for a five-day week. As described by a number of focus group participants, the norm is to limit employees to 37.5 hours a week, in order to avoid triggering a benefits option.

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*“It took me 10 years to get a \$2.46 [raise]. [Supervisors] are supposed to get \$1 raise more than the people that they first bring in, and I’m still waiting for my dollar.”*

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There is no requirement that contracted food service workers be given sick days as part of employment, though their health is of critical importance to their job performance and, more importantly, the health of the students who eat the food they prepare. Although New Jersey’s January 2007 *Chapter 24 Food Safety Training and Certification*<sup>17</sup> requires relieving employees of duties related to food handling or food contact services if they are suspected of having or carrying a communicable disease that has potential to result in food-borne diseases, some employees reported that if they called in sick, they often were told to come in anyway.

A recent study by the New Jersey Policy Perspective found that a number of large employers in New Jersey that did not provide health coverage for all employees benefited from the existence of New Jersey Kid and FamilyCare. The food service industry was third among industries with the most employees and their children using FamilyCare.<sup>18</sup>

**Staying in the Job**

Even with the hard work, low pay and lack of benefits, workers accept these jobs for a variety of reasons, in addition to their need for paid work to support themselves and/or their families. Among focus group participants, those with children were willing to accept limited hours because they could be at home when their children returned from school. Most of the food service workers in our focus groups like working with the children and young people, some of whom they get to know as the child progresses from grade to grade. Anecdotal and some survey evidence from across the country support this concern for students. As one worker put it, “They know us and we knew them when they were babies... elementary all the way to high school... I love the kids. If it wasn’t for them, I wouldn’t be working... kids come back in after they graduate and say hi to you.”

Workers take their responsibilities for student well-being seriously. In response to questions about whether or not they have conversations with students about nutrition and/or food quality, some did: “...we have a few vegans that come through when I worked the line a couple times, they want to know why they can’t get something vegan... they get peanut butter and jelly...” “...They [the kids] want what they want, they don’t understand why it’s the way it is. For example nachos, they ask for extra cheese on it, you can’t give them the extra cheese because it’s calculated by the guidelines of the state.”

**Training and Certification**

Unlike a number of other states, such as Oregon, Arizona, Arkansas and parts of California, New Jersey does not require “food handler” permits for all food service staff, only that a supervisor have formal certification. Food

service jobs in New Jersey only require a high school diploma and fingerprint background check. A new hire typically is trained about food safety and other relevant aspects of the job, such as using equipment; although focus group participants commented that the training often meant following an experienced worker around. School site managers will update workers on food safety and other issues at the beginning of the school year, but again, anecdotal evidence from our focus groups suggests this is not always the case.

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*“You can’t give them the extra cheese [on nachos] because it’s calculated by the guidelines of the state.”*

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In several cases, focus group participants described a system in which “leads” oversaw handling and storage of food: “The company puts leads at every school. The lead tells us what to prepare... the lead also inspects the food. When our orders come in, everything that’s in the order sheet, we have to make sure, go through everything. The lead also makes sure the food has been cooked to the right temperature, kept cold enough, [but] everybody can do that. Everybody can check the temperature on the food... so that’s everybody’s responsibility...” In response, however, another participant commented, “You’re supposed to [know] but everybody doesn’t know how to do it.”



## II. The Workers' Point of View:

### Findings from Interviews with Food Service Workers in New Jersey Public Schools

#### Focus Group Description and Process

Food service workers describe their experience and the conditions they face better than any statistics. Thus to better understand conditions in the industry and how these affect workers' ability to support their own families, in November 2008 and February 2009, we conducted a series of professionally facilitated group interviews with 29 people currently employed as food service workers in five New Jersey public schools.

Although three of the groups currently work in high schools and one included workers from both K-3 and a middle school, most of the focus group participants have worked in multiple schools and with multiple grades. They have between two and twenty years of experience working in the public school food service industry. All are employed by private contractors, although a few had previously been employed directly by school districts.

These highlights reveal a complex reality: food service workers are committed to their jobs and to the children they serve, yet by every measure—pay, benefits and training—work conditions are poor, practices are inconsistent (the same contractor might have one practice in one school district and another practice elsewhere), and standards are absent.

#### Low Pay, Unpredictable Raises

For many food service workers, wages have been cut and raises are rare and seemingly

random, at best. Many of those who were once employed directly by the school district experienced significant pay cuts when their jobs were outsourced to a private contractor. Some experienced a second cut when a second contractor took over. Workers described getting yearly raises of between 11¢ and 25¢ an hour. And when school is closed because of inclement weather or a half day, workers don't get paid at all.

*Working for the school district "was better financially. I got \$10 an hour to start, compared to \$7.15."*

*"When [a private contractor] took over, it was \$8 an hour to start... 10 years [later] and it's still only \$8/hour."*

*"When a new contractor came in, "they changed the terms of the contract. You had to take a pay cut, or look for another job."*

*"At the beginning of each school year we get an increase, it's supposed to be an evaluation, and each person gets something different, because it's according to your evaluation, but you've never sat there face to face with anybody."*

*"It took me 10 years to get a \$2.46 [raise]. [Supervisors] are supposed to get \$1 raise more than the people that they first bring in, and I'm still waiting for my dollar."*

*"I started out at \$5 an hour, and I don't even make \$9 now, after twelve years."*

#### Work Hours and Access to Benefits

While some food service workers prefer part-time hours so that they can be at home when their own children return from school, many would like additional hours and believe that contractors intentionally keep them below the cutoff that would trigger eligibility for benefits like health care. As a result, many workers turn to public programs for health care, or they go without.

*"I have [no health care] since my husband passed away... I mean I'm working two jobs now to try to make up the difference."*

*"There aren't any full-time food service workers in the elementary schools; that's just the way it is. I work*

*from 7 until 2:30, but if they call me full-time, then I get benefits. So I'm part-time."*

*"Anything 30 hours or more is considered full-time (with benefits). There's only two girls at our school that work 40. Average hours are 22."*

#### Personal and/or Sick Days

Personal and/or sick days (usually one and the same) appear to be offered in some schools and not others, even when the contractor is the same. Also, in the case of each focus group participant, the school's on site manager determined when, how and whether or not a worker would be able to take a sick or personal day.

*"[We get] four 'personal' days, you could use them as sick or personal, [but] ... we have to give 5 days notice to use the days."*

*"Half of the time when you call in, they try to encourage you to come [to work anyway] and they tell you that somebody's out and, you know, we need you to come in, sick and all."*

#### Training

Training for food service workers is inconsistent across school districts, and often haphazard. Some focus groups participants said they had received no training at all, "just a fingerprint."

*"I had training on the slicer. We got trained to be on equipment."*

*"We have monthly meetings on safety, and every summer we have everybody together, and we go over everything... we're there four hours going over all our rules, regulations, and safety hazards and stuff."*

#### Working Conditions

Work in the food service industry is difficult. There are myriad safety issues for workers—standing uninterrupted for hours, heat and burns, spills and slips, heavy lifting and more. Many feel that they get little recognition or respect for their effort. Food safety concerns are, of course, very serious.

*"They do tell you you're supposed to use a cart, but you could never find a cart to use. It's like pick the*

*thing up and go. And if the truck dumps everything in the storeroom, dumps everything in the freezer... we have to go in there and put it all away."*

*"We work our butts off and get no recognition or nothing."*

*"I never forget when they first started that 'bring your child to work,' I brought my youngest son... When we walked out he says, "Mom, how in the [heck] do you stand on your feet all day like that? My feet are killing me!"*

*"I work over six hours and I never sit down."*

*"None of our exhaust systems work... they just make noise... We've got a lot of broken down things that aren't working."*

*"We don't get the respect that we supposed to get, because you know we're in the background."*

#### Staying in the Job

New Jersey's contracted food service workers stay in their jobs for many reasons—foremost among them: their commitment to the children they serve and their need to make a living and meet family obligations at the same time.

*"We got contact with the kids. They know us and we knew them when they were babies... elementary all the way to high school."*

*"I love the kids. If it wasn't for them, I wouldn't be working."*

*"A lot of times these kids have some problems and they need a hug or something, and we're there emotionally for them too... Sometimes more than we want to be."*

*"I stay [in this job] because it works around my daughters."*

*"[The kids] don't understand why it's the way it is. For example nachos, they ask for extra cheese on it, you can't give them the extra cheese because it's calculated by the guidelines of the state."*

New Jersey's contracted food service workers struggle to make ends meet on poverty-level wages without benefits. Yet their importance to schools and students is evident. Especially during difficult economic times, these workers deserve the opportunity to make family-sustaining wages, receive benefits, and have the training and reward for experience and skills to

get good jobs with the option of a career path. Improving the lives of these workers is good for New Jersey's economy, good for these workers and their families, and good for the thousands of students who depend on safe and nutritious meals in K-12 cafeterias.

### III. Policy Recommendations

**Increase wages and benefits for contracted food service workers** to a level to sustain families and to reduce reliance on state-funded safety net programs. There are several mechanisms, such as legislation or procurement mandates, by which the State and school districts can implement and enforce wage and benefit standards for food service contracts in K-12 schools. Using this leverage is key to raising these workers out of poverty and into the middle class. Benefits, such as sick days, should be required. A food service worker should never have an economic incentive to go to work when ill.

**Establish transparency and accountability** by requiring school districts and private contractors to provide information on wages and benefits, training certification and enrollment by school district. Schools and districts already provide data on a general category of "support staff," which includes food service workers, custodial staff and others. This data needs to be broken out by occupation within particular categories, such as the occupation of food service workers employed for public schools.

**Establish a state system for requiring and providing a "food handler permit"** for all food service workers in New Jersey. All food service workers should be required to obtain this permit within three years of enactment of this law. School districts must ensure that each

food service worker has such a permit. As is the case in a number of other states (California, Oregon and Arizona, for example), this permit would serve both the interests of employees, by providing a validation of necessary knowledge, and the interests of schools, by ensuring that current and potential employees have verified their knowledge of food safety and nutrition. This would not be a substitute for the current State regulation that locations service food must have a manager/supervisor on site who is certified in food safety.

**Require that contracted food service workers be trained by qualified training programs.** Food service workers should have the opportunity for training that is more advanced than that required for a food handler's permit, enabling them to advance in the food service occupation. Training would include information about regulations governing school meal programs, menu planning, and other issues in addition to food handling. Such training should be allied with additional certification and higher wages so that food service workers have the option of advancing in the occupation and the opportunity to move up the career ladder.

**Post all food service job announcements on school cafeteria bulletin boards, local One Stop Centers.** Food service workers in focus groups knew little about job openings and the wages and benefits that were associated with them. Workers often heard of openings through word of mouth or the local newspaper. Public and uniform posting of open positions within a school district and/or county would provide greater transparency to workers about other opportunities.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> State of the States 2007, Food Research and Action Center. Found a [www.frac.org](http://www.frac.org) New Jersey Department of Education, 2007-2008 Enrollment by County, with numbers for free and reduced price lunch.

<sup>2</sup> Characteristics of New Jersey:

- Almost 1/3 of public school students eligible for free/reduced price lunch: 28% (2007)
- Compared with school lunch participation of 46%, only 36% of students eligible for school breakfast participate - 44<sup>th</sup> among states (2005-06).
- Only 64.5% of New Jersey schools that participated in the National School Lunch program provided school breakfast - 48<sup>th</sup> among states.
- NJ Division of Food and Nutrition serves approximately 588,000 school children daily
- Over 2,600 schools participate in federal nutrition programs (either lunch, breakfast, or both)

Top Ten States in Lost Federal Funds (Amounts Foregone Because State Falls Short of Reaching 60 Free and Reduced Price (F&RP) Students in the School Breakfast Program per 100 F&RP Students in the School Lunch Program)

State	Additional Students	Dollars Lost
California	422,297	\$90,291,486
New York	252,241	\$54,184,219
Illinois	190,902	\$41,424,192
Texas	151,191	\$32,579,249
Florida	131,398	\$28,148,275
Pennsylvania	118,267	\$25,431,942
Michigan	99,895	\$21,577,421
Ohio	89,000	\$19,194,791
New Jersey	78,823	\$16,941,101
Arizona	78,022	\$16,722,505

Source: Food Research Action Council, State of the States 2007.

<sup>3</sup> New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) Wage Survey, August 2008 edition/May 2007 OES Survey Data, found at [http://lwd.state.nj.us/labor/lpa/employ/oeswage/oeswage\\_index.html](http://lwd.state.nj.us/labor/lpa/employ/oeswage/oeswage_index.html)

Food Service Worker @ Sodexo School Services [http://www.americasjobexchange.com/seeker/jobsearch/numbersearch?action=JobSearchViewJob&JobSearch\\_JobId=517218545&JobSearchType=JobSearch&utm\\_source=Indeed&utm\\_medium=organic&utm\\_campaign=Indeed](http://www.americasjobexchange.com/seeker/jobsearch/numbersearch?action=JobSearchViewJob&JobSearch_JobId=517218545&JobSearchType=JobSearch&utm_source=Indeed&utm_medium=organic&utm_campaign=Indeed)

<sup>4</sup> US Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service, A Biosecurity Checklist for School Foodservice Programs (October 2003). Found at [www.njsna.net/pdf/BiosecurityChecklist.pdf](http://www.njsna.net/pdf/BiosecurityChecklist.pdf)

#### Training Directive (selected)

1. Train all employees about the food biosecurity management plan.
2. Create policy and procedures on how and when to conduct drills.
3. Provide food safety training for foodservice personnel. Train personnel to (1) prevent accidental contamination of food, (2) know what "adulteration" means and how to recognize it, and (3) recognize any sign of possible product tampering, deliberate and intentional product contamination, or other breach in the food security system. Be ready to take immediate action so that potentially harmful food is not handled or served.
4. Develop policy and procedures on how employees should prepare and submit incident reports.
5. Train all new employees in food safety and the school's food biosecurity procedures before they start working, so they can recognize threats to security and respond to a crisis if necessary. Have employees sign a statement documenting what training was taken and when. Provide refresher training periodically.

<sup>5</sup> Nationally, women made up 56.6% of the food preparation and serving related occupations category as a whole, and 59.2% of food preparation workers.

**Table 11.** Employed persons by detailed occupation and sex, 2006 annual averages, U.S. Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics, Women in the Labor Force: A Databook (2007 Edition); <http://www.bls.gov/cps/wlf-databook2007.htm>

<sup>6</sup> New Jersey Department of Education, 2007-2008 Enrollment by County, with numbers for free and reduced price lunch.

<sup>7</sup> Food Research Action Council, State of the States 2007.

<sup>8</sup> New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) Wage Survey, August 2008 edition/May 2007 OES Survey Data, found at [http://lwd.state.nj.us/labor/lpa/employ/oeswage/oeswage\\_index.html](http://lwd.state.nj.us/labor/lpa/employ/oeswage/oeswage_index.html)

Food Service Worker @ Sodexo School Services [http://www.americasjobexchange.com/seeker/jobsearch/numbersearch?action=JobSearchViewJob&JobSearch\\_JobId=517218545&JobSearchType=JobSearch&utm\\_source=Indeed&utm\\_medium=organic&utm\\_campaign=Indeed](http://www.americasjobexchange.com/seeker/jobsearch/numbersearch?action=JobSearchViewJob&JobSearch_JobId=517218545&JobSearchType=JobSearch&utm_source=Indeed&utm_medium=organic&utm_campaign=Indeed)



[ewJob&JobSearch\\_JobId=517218545&JobSearchType=JobSearch&utm\\_source=Indeed&utm\\_medium=organic&utm\\_campaign=Indeed](http://www.americasjobexchange.com/seeker/jobsearch/numbersearch?action=JobSearchViewJob&JobSearch_JobId=517218545&JobSearchType=JobSearch&utm_source=Indeed&utm_medium=organic&utm_campaign=Indeed)

<sup>9</sup> [http://www.varietyfoodservices.com/det\\_news\\_article.htm](http://www.varietyfoodservices.com/det_news_article.htm). Rhode Island school districts outsource 86.1 percent.

<sup>10</sup> Kate Beem, Hot Potato in the School Cafeteria: More districts outsource their food services, but some raise questions about personnel relations and savings, The School Administrator, The Journal of the American Association of School Administrators, September 2004. Danielle Shapiro, School Food Fight Brewing, Paterson, NJ Herald News, October 20, 2006

<sup>11</sup> **New Jersey Chapter 24:** In January 2007, New Jersey enacted the most sweeping reforms to its retail food codes since the 1970's. Adapting the principles of the FDA Model Food Code, it has joined the majority of other states requiring a standardized certification course and exam for all Persons In Charge of Risk 3 type establishments. As defined by New Jersey Chapter 24, "Risk type 3 food establishment" means any retail food establishment that:

1. Has an extensive menu which requires the handling of raw ingredients; and is involved in the complex preparation of menu items that includes the cooking, cooling, and reheating of at least three or more potentially hazardous foods; or
2. Prepares and serves potentially hazardous foods including the extensive handling of raw ingredients; and whose primary service population is a highly susceptible population. Such establishments may include, but are not limited to, full service restaurants, diners, commissaries, and catering operations; or hospitals, nursing homes, and preschools preparing and serving potentially hazardous foods.

<sup>12</sup> The calculation was made using 2008 data from 51 districts representing an enrollment of nearly 166,000 students. Staffing levels were either obtained directly from the Food Service Management Company or were present in Requests for Proposals obtained from the districts. The number of students per worker was calculated for each district and an average ratio was obtained from these

<sup>13</sup> State of NJ – Department of Labor and Workforce Development - Long-Term Occupational Employment Projections <http://lwd.state.nj.us/lpaapp/app>

<sup>14</sup> New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) Wage Survey, August 2008 edition/May 2007 OES Survey Data, found at [http://lwd.state.nj.us/labor/lpa/employ/oeswage/oeswage\\_index.html](http://lwd.state.nj.us/labor/lpa/employ/oeswage/oeswage_index.html)

Food Service Worker @ Sodexho School Services [http://www.americasjobexchange.com/seeker/jobsearch/numbersearch?action=JobSearchViewJob&JobSearch\\_JobId=517218545&JobSearchType=JobSearch&utm\\_source=Indeed&utm\\_medium=organic&utm\\_campaign=Indeed](http://www.americasjobexchange.com/seeker/jobsearch/numbersearch?action=JobSearchViewJob&JobSearch_JobId=517218545&JobSearchType=JobSearch&utm_source=Indeed&utm_medium=organic&utm_campaign=Indeed)

<sup>15</sup> In Hayward, CA, the superintendent proposed to change to a system of six- and three-hour shifts: Currently, 22 kitchen operators work between six-and-a-half and eight hours a day. The new plan would put them at six hours across the board. There are 18 assistants who work anywhere from three-and-a-half to eight hours each day; six of those positions would be changed to six-hour shifts while the rest would work three hours. The plan would beef up the kitchen staffs during the lunch rush, so that multiple lines of students could be accommodated.

<sup>16</sup> Sodexousa: Eligibility applies to non-temporary, full-time frontline employees & eligible dependents; the web site notes that there is paid vacation and sick leave also for some part-time employees. Sodexho 2009 Benefits found at [www.sodexousa.com/usen/images/2009benefitsataglancefront\\_tcm87-219872.pdf#medi](http://www.sodexousa.com/usen/images/2009benefitsataglancefront_tcm87-219872.pdf#medi). Compass: Similar eligibility. [http://www.compassgroupcareers.com/benefits\\_main.html](http://www.compassgroupcareers.com/benefits_main.html)

<sup>17</sup> <http://njfoodsafetytraining.com/chapter24.htm>

<sup>18</sup> Forsberg, Mary E. "Attention Shoppers: You pay the Health Insurance Bills for some of New Jersey's Largest Employers." New Jersey Policy Perspective, August 2005. The State's FamilyCare program, open to parents as well as children, was established to ensure that families under a certain income threshold could receive health care, including those whose employer no longer provided coverage. Although small business and self-employed individuals are the typical profile for those who take advantage of the program, the New Jersey Policy Perspective found in 2005 that food services ranked third among industry sectors with large numbers of employees using FamilyCare.