**Family Nutrition Program Paraprofessional Core Competencies**

**Understand the Organization**
Understand the mission of Extension within the land-grant university system. Understand and adopt the mission and goals of FNP. Understand the relationship of FNP to Extension, UAF, Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). Understand the eligibility requirements for participation in SNAP, WIC, etc. Understand the importance of the paraprofessional role in achieving program goals. Follow state FNP 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 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 FNP topics as defined in program guidelines and by USDA. Use research-based, state-approved educational materials. Stay current in FNP 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 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. Encourage participants to increase food and nutrition-related skills and become more independent. Acknowledge participants’ successes. Use evaluation results to focus programming and improve teaching skills/techniques.

**Conduct Program Evaluation**
Use 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 and 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 in-kind donations. 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 referrals in a timely manner and follow up with the person/agency that made the referral.
Refer participants to SNAP, WIC, Extension programs and other appropriate community resources.
Strengthen programming by involving volunteers.
Participate in the research mission of the university as approved by supervisors.

Communicate Program Value
Serve as a good representative of the university.
Include required logos, program messages and funding statements 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 coworkers. Be open to new ideas, concepts and information.
Mentor new coworkers as directed by supervisors.
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 email and accessing the Internet.
Use basic office equipment, including the telephone system, scanner, fax and copier.
Use websites approved by supervisor.
Use audio visual equipment and materials appropriately in teaching.
Enter data accurately and send 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 FNP guidelines) and practice good hygiene.
Meet scheduled commitments; arrive prepared and on time; cancel appointments only when 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 the reporting of criminal activity (copyright laws, reporting child abuse, and issues related to court cases).