

District Chef Tompkins County

Department: School-Dryden Central

Classification: Competitive

Approved: 9/2025

By: HB, Deputy Commissioner of Human Resources

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS:

1. An Associates Degree from an accredited Culinary Arts School and a minimum of three years of experience as a Chef - experience in a school setting is preferred.
2. Graduation from high school or possession of a high school equivalency diploma and a minimum of 6 years of experience as a Chef – experience in a school setting is preferred.

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS:

Possession of a valid driver's license at time of application and maintenance of such throughout employment

National Restaurant Association ServSafe Certification at time of appointment

Certified Executive Chef (CEC) certification is preferred

NYSED Fingerprint Clearance is required

DISTINGUISHING FEATURES OF THE CLASS:

As the District Chef, you will oversee all kitchen operations while maintaining a safe, sanitary, and efficient work environment for staff. You will prepare or direct the preparation of meals in accordance with the district's programs and Child Nutrition/USDA guidelines. In collaboration with the Director and other team members, you will help implement the district's scratch cooking initiative and develop a training curriculum to equip current food service employees with the skills needed for this initiative.

TYPICAL WORK ACTIVITIES:

- Assist in planning and creating appealing menus that meet all school nutrition standards, considering factors such as student preferences, popularity, holidays, cost, and other relevant details.
- Develop cost-effective menus that maintain nutritional integrity and comply with all local, state, and federal guidelines and regulations.
- Collaborate with manufacturers to develop and introduce new food items.
- Provide culinary training to school nutrition staff to ensure they can meet students' needs effectively.
- Maintain food cost control through careful planning, forecasting, ordering, and receiving processes.
- Test recipes and food preparation techniques to ensure quality, consistency, and presentation standards are met.
- Coordinate with school staff, teachers, parents, and physicians to plan menus for students with special dietary needs.
- Train employees in all aspects of the school nutrition program, including food preparation, serving, storage, and sanitation; coach employees to build shared understanding of division goals and initiatives.
- Assist with selecting equipment and products used in the school nutrition program.

- Ensure operational fundamentals are followed, including waste management, standardized menus and recipes, and appropriate labor and preparation standards.
- Ensure compliance with all applicable policies, rules, and regulations, including food safety, occupational safety, and environmental safety standards across all culinary operations.
- Organize and maintain records as required by federal, state, and local regulations.
- Oversee special catering events as needed, and provide culinary instruction and demonstrations when appropriate.
- Perform other related duties as assigned.

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, ABILITIES AND PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS:

- Thorough knowledge of established food service standards and best practices, as well as all applicable federal, state, and local regulations related to school nutrition programs.
- Proven experience training food service staff in food preparation, safe equipment use, and food presentation techniques.
- Ability to plan and supervise food preparation based on sound nutritional principles, customer preferences, and cost control.
- Strong organizational skills with the ability to manage multiple projects and priorities.
- Effective and professional communication skills to interact tactfully and cooperatively with students, staff, administrators, and the public.
- Proficiency with standard office computer software.
- Excellent decision-making, customer service, presentation, and verbal and written communication skills.

PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS

- Walking, moving, climbing, carrying, bending, kneeling, crawling, reaching, handling, pushing, and pulling.
- Must have the ability to lift 20-50 pounds, manual dexterity to operate food service equipment, stand for long periods, and withstand heat.
- Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform essential tasks.

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