

Together We Can Build Food-Safe Schools!

Strategy Sheet

Strategies for Cooperative Extension Educators

The Cooperative Extension Service, located at county offices across the United States and at land-grant colleges and universities, receives Federal funds from the USDA to focus on research, education, and extension in the food and agricultural sciences and related environmental and human sciences. Cooperative Extension educators may provide training, materials, and resources on a variety of topics including food safety. You, the Cooperative Extension educator, can play a vital role in providing practical information and reliable training to schools on food safety topics.

Food-safe schools adopt a school-wide approach to food safety, and, with the help of partners in the school community, can create a culture of food safety. Food-safe schools address a broad range of topics beyond the scope of what may be required by legislation. This starts with building and supporting strong food safety policies and procedures, and continues with education and training. Partners can help achieve the ultimate goal of making food safety second nature to everyone in the school community, thus creating a culture of food safety.

Cooperative Extension Educators Are Essential to Creating a Culture of Food Safety

Cooperative Extension Educators can:

- Provide food safety training and materials to the school community.
- Help schools incorporate food safety into existing healthy school plans.
- Contribute to and provide access to scientific knowledge that can inform and assist with the development of school food safety procedures.
- Provide a communication network to inform the community of school food safety efforts.

Thinking About Food Safety

- Are the schools that you serve taking full advantage of your services and resources to maximize their food safety efforts?
- What are some ways that the Cooperative Extension can help the school nutrition team enhance food safety in the school community?

Take Action!

- Take a proactive role in the school district's food safety efforts.
Meet with the school nutrition director and discuss specific types of food safety support and training, including food safety curricula, materials, and updates on current food safety research and practices, that the Cooperative Extension can provide.
- Publicize and provide recognition for food safety activities of schools.
The Cooperative Extension Service has strong connections in the community and can help to publicize and provide recognition for the school district's food safety activities. Working with schools to get their story out could strengthen food safety partnerships throughout the school community. ■