

## Definitions Related to Public Health Nutrition and Community Nutrition

**Public health nutrition** is the application of nutrition and public health principles to improve or maintain optimal health of populations and targeted groups through enhancements in programs, systems, policies, and environments.

**Public health nutritionists** are professionals trained in both nutrition and the core competency areas of public health. These individuals have advanced level didactic and experiential training in public health and nutrition practice and are registered dietitians or licensed dietitians/nutritionists.

The main functions of public health nutritionists include:

- taking a leadership role in identifying nutrition-related needs of a community;
- planning, directing, and evaluating health promotion and disease prevention efforts;
- administering and managing programs, including supervising personnel;
- developing and/or assisting in the preparation of a budget;
- identifying and seeking resources (e.g., grants, contracts) to support programs and services;
- providing therapeutic and rehabilitation nutrition services, when these needs are not adequately met by other parts of the health care system;
- providing technical assistance/consultation to policy makers, administrators, and other health agency personnel;
- collaborating with others to promote environmental and systems changes;
- assuring access to healthful and affordable food and nutrition-related care;
- advocating for and participating in policy development and evaluation of the impacts and outcomes; and,
- participating in research, demonstration and evaluation projects.

### Examples:

1. Collaborating with city planners to change environments to increase access, availability, affordability of healthful food options, such as, providing tax incentives to full service grocery stores to locate in rural areas.
2. Developing and utilizing surveillance systems to monitor the nutritional state of a population group.
3. Developing policies to impact healthy eating and physical activity, such as, working with transportation departments to promote safe and reliable access to healthy and affordable food venues.
4. Developing and implementing policies and procedures to promote and support breastfeeding in the workplace.

**Community nutrition** encompasses individual and interpersonal-level interventions focused on creating changes in knowledge, attitudes, behavior and health outcomes either individually or in small groups within a community setting.

**Community nutritionists** are professionals trained in the delivery of preventive and therapeutic nutrition services within community settings. These individuals have training in nutrition throughout the life-span, nutrition education and counseling, and program development, and are registered dietitians or licensed dietitians/nutritionists.

The main functions of community nutritionists include:

- conducting and evaluating nutrition education and counseling for small groups and individuals;
- planning, implementing, and evaluating primary and secondary prevention interventions;
- providing therapeutic and rehabilitation nutrition services;
- administering programs; and,

- participating in care coordination or providing case management.

Examples:

1. Conducting food demonstrations/classes for individuals enrolled in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).
2. Training peer counselors and promotoras to promote breastfeeding.
3. Conducting in-service education for school foodservice personnel.
4. Developing nutrition education activities for the school classroom.
5. Providing technical assistance/consultation to health providers on case management for nutrition and dietetics-related issues ;
6. Participating in an interdisciplinary team conducting home visits.