

NEA ESP K-12 Career Families: A Closer Look



FOOD SERVICE K-12 ESP MEMBERS

We ensure that students have access to safe and nutritious meals. Food service ESPs provide a fundamental component of student success—nutrition—which influences students’ behavior, energy levels, thinking, physical health, and overall wellbeing. We know that students who are undernourished are not able to learn. Some of the more important aspects of food service careers include proper food handling, adapting recipes for children with special dietary needs, and nutrition education and practice. The meals that we provide meet recommended dietary guidelines and help students develop lifelong healthy eating habits.

Food services is one of the nine ESP career families. NEA ESPs make up nearly a half million of NEA’s 3 million members. As a critical part of the education workforce, NEA food service members meet the needs of the whole student, ensuring students and schools succeed.

FAST FACTS

- 63% work full-time
- 94% female
- 67% work in school buildings; 28% work in central kitchen units
- Average age is 54
- NEA member for an average of 10 years
- 8% of the total K-12 NEA ESP membership

We nourish students

We help students grow and stay healthy

We keep prep and serving areas safe and clean

FOOD SERVICE CAREERS:

COOKS AND FOOD AND PREPARATION WORKERS

CASHIERS

DIETITIANS AND DIETARY TECHNICIANS

NON-MANAGERIAL SUPERVISORS

FOOD SERVICE WORKERS

66%

HAVE SPECIAL CERTIFICATES

79%

LIVE IN THE COMMUNITIES WHERE THEY WORK

58%

SUPPORT A PARENT ORGANIZATION

Committed to students and their career. On average, an NEA food service member has been working in the ESP field for over 13 years. **86%** plan to stay in public education, and **74%** plan to stay in their current position until retirement. **54%** have spent their own money to purchase food or school supplies for students.

Well-trained and experienced. Two-thirds (**66%**) have special certificates and **80%** have taken special classes or exams.

Active in the school community. A large majority (**79%**) live in the communities where they work. **58%** have volunteered time to support a parent organization. **40%** have coached or supported a sports program and **32%** have volunteered to read books to students.

Focused on safety. A large majority (**72%**) have responsibilities that involve promoting school safety.