JOB CORPS
BUILDING AMERICA'S SKILLED WORKFORCE

NJCA Professional Development Series

Food Service Best Practices

Part One – Tuesday, October 20

Agenda

I. Welcome and Introductions

II. Cooking and Leading with Passion and Care

III. Customer Service

IV. Involving and Engaging Students

V. Questions/Discussion

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Training Notes

- This training is being recorded – a copy of the training and associated materials will be sent to all *REGISTERED* attendees and posted online.

- The slide deck and associated materials will also be available to download via the NJCA Professional Development webpage: https://njcaweb.org/professional-development/.

- Please ask questions via the chat.

- If you would like a certificate confirming your participation in the training, please contact Stacy Green (sgreen@njcaweb.org).

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Disclaimers

The contents of this training do not constitute legal advice with respect to compliance with contract terms. Additionally, this training is being facilitated by the National Job Corps Association and has *no affiliation with the U.S. Department of Labor*.

Please coordinate with your direct manager/supervisor, campus leadership, AND/OR corporate leadership prior to implementing the recommendations or best practices from this training.

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Presenters

Angela Callie

Food Service Supervisor

Talking Leaves Job Corps

Justin Leland

Kitchen Supervisor

Penobscot Job Corps

Carrie Wilson

Culinary Arts Instructor

Penobscot Job Corps

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PENOBSCOT JOB CORPS CENTER

Dining Commons Best Practices

Part One: customer service in our daily work

Justin Leland
Kitchen Supervisor

PART ONE

Dining Commons best practices

I. Cooking and Leading with Passion and Care

a. Consistency b. Quality of food

II. Customer Service

a. Student surveys b. Incorporating student feedback c. Food presentation

III. Involving and Engaging Students

a. Food Committees

The support I received shapes the way I lead

2018

Culinary Arts student

Today

Kitchen Supervisor

a. Consistency

Our word	Make commitments we can keep
Our follow-through	Return with an answer
Our relationships	Earn trust through everyday interactions

At Job Corps, reliability matters because students see us regularly.

When plans change, honesty matters

Explain the change	What happened and what students can expect
Keep staff informed	Students receive a clear, consistent answer
Stay approachable	Give questions a thoughtful response

b. Quality of food

Temperature

Safe to serve

Appearance

Inviting to try

Flavor and texture

Something we are proud to serve

Would our students enjoy the meal we are serving?

a. Student surveys

1 page

10 questions

Questions informed by
Food Committee, management
and other departments

Short enough to complete. Specific enough to guide decisions.

Lunchtime makes participation convenient

A convenient location	A small table away from the serving line
A short invitation	Tell students how their feedback will help
A small thank-you	Cookies have worked well at our center

b. Incorporating student feedback

Review together	Combine surveys and center conversations
Use the findings	Reflect student preferences in upcoming menus
Report back	Explain what changed and what is possible

Students can see that their input receives real consideration.

c. Food presentation

Practice to consider

A presentation plate shows the meal before students choose

The food and portions should match what students actually receive

a. Food Committees

Across the center	Flyers and printable notices for departments
At assemblies	Explain the opportunity and invite ideas
Before the meeting	Repeat reminders as the date approaches

Participation starts with a clear invitation.

A welcoming meeting gives students a voice

A thoughtful welcome	A small snack when the budget allows
Student ideas	Give students room to share ideas
A visible connection	Carry feedback into review and menu planning

What students should experience

People who keep their word

Meals prepared with care

A voice in their dining experience

Food Services Best Practices

Involving & Engaging Students

Give Students a Seat at the Table

- Use Food Committee meetings to gather opinions about meals, quality, variety, and service.
- Offer short surveys, suggestion cards, and taste tests.
- Let students contribute themed meal ideas and recommendations. (We offer the Food Committee Final Friday Meal)
- Report back on which suggestions can be implemented and why.
- Remember: Ask. Listen. Take action. Follow up.

Cooking 101 + HEALS

•Connect nutrition, hydration, physical activity, and everyday wellness.
•Invite students to participate in healthy meal challenges and food demonstrations.(Walk a Thon & Sushi Rolling)
•Recognize participation, effort, and leadership. (Awards and etc.…)

- Goal:

  Make learning practical, interactive, and useful beyond the cafeteria.

Turn Feedback Into Improvement

- **Gather**: Ask about taste, temperature, variety, portions, and service.
- **Review**: Consider feedback alongside nutrition, safety, labor, budget, and waste.
- **Act**: Choose a realistic improvement and assign responsibility.
- **Follow up**: Tell students what changed and what comes next. Student input is most valuable when they can see that their voices matter.

Turn the Cafeteria Into a Classroom

Students learn more when they participate in real workplace experiences.

- Practice teamwork, communication, punctuality, and accountability.
- Develop food safety, sanitation, preparation, and presentation skills.
- Build confidence through meaningful, supervised responsibilities.
- Key message:

We serve meals while helping prepare students for their future.

Work-Based Learning: A Win for Everyone

Students gain: Practical skills, workplace habits, career exposure, confidence, and constructive feedback.

Food Service gains: Additional supervised learning support, stronger teamwork, improved student connections, and opportunities to reinforce consistent standards.

Students remain learners: Work-based learning must be structured and supervised; students do not replace staff or perform tasks beyond their authorization.

Make Engagement Part of Our Culture

Food Committees + Cooking 101 + HEALS + Work-Based Learning

- Create interactive activities students want to join.
- Recognize effort, improvement, and leadership.
- Partner across departments to expand opportunities.
- Track participation, student feedback, and completed improvements.

Food Service Best Practices – Part Two

Tuesday, October 27

Recording available here

I. PRH Compliance
II. Budgeting
III. Managing and Supporting Food Service staff

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Questions/Technical Assistance

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Thank You!

A recording of the training and associated materials will be sent to all registrants and posted to the NJCA Professional Development webpage

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