



Small and/or Rural School Food Authority (SFA) Lunch Trailblazer Award



Small changes in your lunch menu can shake up big flavors and get you to your target. The Small and/or Rural Lunch Trailblazer has reduced sodium in their school menus and recipes.

SFAs are eligible to apply for this Recognition Award if they participate in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) in the contiguous United States, Hawaii, Alaska, District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, or the United States Virgin Islands.

To qualify for the Small and/or Rural School SFA Lunch Trailblazer Award, the SFA must have an enrollment of less than or equal to 5,000 students; OR the majority of students within the SFA are enrolled in a rural school as defined by a locality code of 41, 42, or 43 according to the [National Center for Education Statistics \(NCES\) online tool](#).

All (100 percent) of the schools within the SFA that participate in the NSLP must meet the award criteria, and all grade levels must be represented.

Award Criteria

Within the past 12 months, the SFA has changed their reimbursable school lunch menus to reduce sodium, using at least **two** strategies.

The following list includes example strategies that the SFA can use to reduce sodium in their lunch menus (additional strategies can also be used).

- Fresh or frozen poultry, fish, pork, beef, and lean meat (with no saline or salt solution added) are incorporated to reduce the offerings of cured, salted, smoked, and other processed meats.
- Vegetables are fresh, frozen or canned with no salt added.
- Lower sodium forms of products from vendors are purchased. For tips, check out the Institute of Child Nutrition's Sodium Swaps: Utilizing Product Substitutions available at the [Shaking It Up website](#).
- Natural flavor substitutes are used to replace or reduce the amount of sodium in main dishes and/or sides, such as garlic, citrus juice, salt-free seasonings, herbs, or spices.

Learn more about the Healthy Meals Incentives
Recognition Awards at:
www.healthymealsincentives.org

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Required Documentation

Provide a list detailing names and corresponding grade levels for each school in the district participating in the NSLP.

Please provide a description of each strategy selected including:

- How it was implemented;
- When the change occurred; and
- What the impact was on the sodium content of school lunch menus (e.g., the strategy reduced sodium in school lunch menus by X grams).

Submit lunch menu for one month that has been posted on the district website or other public location representing all grade groups, including sufficient detail for reviewers to assess the changes. Identify which items on the menu reflect the implemented strategies.

Applicants may submit optional photographs including two or three clear, high-resolution photos of the menu items and any relevant activities with release forms providing USDA with royalty free unlimited rights to the use and printing of the photographs and parental permission forms, when applicable. A high-resolution image is one that's at least 300 DPI, or "dots per inch."

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