



# Breakfast Trailblazer Award



School breakfast can be the foundation to student success. The Breakfast Trailblazer fuels a student's day by providing a nutritious breakfast with limited added sugars and engages students in planning breakfast menus that are fun and enjoyable.

School Food Authorities (SFA) are eligible to apply for this Recognition Award if they participate in the School Breakfast Program (SBP) in the contiguous United States, Hawaii, Alaska, District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, or the United States Virgin Islands.

## Award Criteria

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

The following list includes example strategies that the SFA can use to reduce added sugars (additional strategies can also be used):

- Only unflavored milk is offered.
- All breakfast cereals contain  $\leq 6$  grams of added sugars per dry ounce.
- All yogurts contain  $\leq 12$  grams of added sugars per 6 ounces.
- No grain-based desserts are offered, as defined by superscripts 3, 4, or 5 in the Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Program's Exhibit A: Grain Requirements for Child Nutrition Programs.
- Weekly breakfast menus have been modified to reduce added sugars to less than 10 percent of the calories.

Note: Strategies may include products with less added sugars that do not use high-intensity sweeteners, such as artificial or non-nutritive sweeteners, as replacements.

At least half ( $\geq 50$  percent) of the schools within the SFA\* that participate in the SBP must meet the criteria and all grade levels must be represented.

\*If your SFA only has one school site, you may submit documentation for just that site. If your SFA has three school sites, you must submit documentation for at least 2 sites to meet the 50 percent requirement.

The SFA has used student engagement techniques (taste tests, student surveys, cooking demonstrations, or advisory groups) and/or culinary techniques (using herbs and spices, offering flavor stations, etc.) to ensure school meals are enjoyed by students.

Learn more about the Healthy Meals Incentives Recognition Awards at:  
[www.healthymealsincentives.org](http://www.healthymealsincentives.org)

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# Breakfast Trailblazer Award



## Required Documentation

Provide a description of each strategy selected including:

- How it was implemented;
- When the change occurred; and
- What the impact was on the added sugar content of school breakfasts (e.g., the strategy reduced added sugars in the breakfast menu by X grams).

Submit breakfast 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.

Provide a list detailing names and corresponding grade levels for each school in the district participating in the School Breakfast Program (indicating which schools were used to qualify for the award).

Provide a description of student engagement activities and/or culinary techniques implemented to assist in the reduction of added sugars in school breakfast menus, details about the activities, number of participants, the outcomes, and school names, and grades.

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



School breakfast can be the foundation to student success. The Small and/or Rural SFA Breakfast Trailblazer fuels a student's day by providing a nutritious breakfast with limited added sugars and engages students in planning breakfast menus that are fun and enjoyable.

SFAs are eligible to apply for this Recognition Award if they participate in the School Breakfast Program (SBP) 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 Breakfast 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 SBP 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 breakfast menus to lower added sugars, using at least **two** strategies.

The following list includes example strategies that the SFA can use to reduce added sugars (additional strategies can also be used).

- Only unflavored milk is offered.
- All breakfast cereals contain  $\leq 6$  grams of added sugars per dry ounce.
- All yogurts contain  $\leq 12$  grams of added sugars per 6 ounces.
- No grain-based desserts are offered, as defined by superscripts 3, 4, or 5 in the [Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Program's Exhibit A: Grain Requirements for Child Nutrition Programs](#)
- Weekly breakfast menus have been modified to reduce added sugars to less than 10 percent of the calories.

Note: Strategies may include products with less added sugars that do not use high-intensity sweeteners, such as artificial or non-nutritive sweeteners, as replacements.

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# ***Small and/or Rural School Food Authority (SFA) Breakfast Trailblazer Award***



## Required Documentation

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

Provide a description of each strategy selected including:

- How it was implemented;
- When the change occurred; and
- What the impact was on the added sugar content of school breakfasts (e.g., the strategy reduced added sugars in the breakfast menu by X grams).

Submit breakfast 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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# Lunch Trailblazer Award



Small changes in your lunch menu can shake up big flavors and get you to your target. The Lunch Trailblazer has reduced sodium in school lunch and engages students in planning nutritious meals that are delicious.

School Food Authorities (SFA) 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.

## Award Criteria

Within the past 12 months, the SFA has reduced sodium in school lunch.

- At least half (> 50 percent) of the schools within the SFA\* that participate in the NSLP must meet the criteria and all grade levels must be represented.
- 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.

\*If your SFA only has one school site, you may submit documentation for just that site. If your SFA has three school sites, you must submit documentation for at least 2 sites to meet the 50 percent requirement.

The SFA has used student engagement techniques (e.g., taste tests, student surveys, cooking demonstrations, or advisory groups) and/or culinary techniques (e.g., using herbs and spices or offering flavor stations) to ensure school meals are enjoyed by students.

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# Lunch Trailblazer Award



## Required Documentation

Provide a list detailing names and corresponding grade levels for each school in the district participating in the National School Lunch Program (indicating which schools were used to qualify for the award).

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.

Provide a description of student engagement activities and/or culinary techniques to assist with reducing sodium in school meals including, details about the activities, number of participants, outcomes, school name, and grade level.

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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# 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.

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



## 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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# Innovative School Lunch Makeover



Innovative School Lunch Makeover recognizes improvement in the nutritional quality of a school lunch meal while maintaining student acceptance.

School Food Authorities (SFA) 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.

## Award Criteria

Within the past 12 months, the makeover meal was served at least three different times. The makeover meal must meet ALL the following criteria:

- Reimbursable meal including all components (i.e., meats/meat alternates, vegetables, fruits, grains, and milk).
- Grains must be whole grain-rich grains, as defined by the Grain Requirements for School Meals, and no grain-based desserts can be used, as defined by superscripts 3, 4, or 5 in the Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Program's Exhibit A: Grain Requirements for Child Nutrition Programs.
- Changes can be made to entrees and/or sides.
- The SFA engages students in the selection/development and marketing/promotion of the makeover meal.
- The Healthy Meals Incentives sodium limits for the meal:

Age/ Grade Group	Healthy Meals Incentives Sodium Limits
K-5	≤1,000 mg
6-8	≤1,105 mg
9-12	≤1,150 mg

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# Innovative School Lunch Makeover



## Required Documentation

Please provide a description of what changes were made to the lunch to meet the criteria, including:

- How they were implemented;
- When the changes occurred including three different times they were implemented; and
- What the impact was on reducing sodium (e.g., menus have reduced sodium by X grams).

SFA must submit at least one of the following for the entire meal:

- Nutrient analysis of recipe(s) OR
- Nutrition facts label(s) OR
- Nutrition information for the new meal

Information about the school(s) used to qualify for the award including name and grade levels. Lunch menus for the original meal and new meal. No production records.

Describe actions taken to engage students including:

- Student acceptance reflected in increased participation for that meal.
- Student acceptability findings (e.g., student survey results showing percent acceptability of the new meal, taste test results), and/or
- How students were engaged in the marketing/promotion of the lunch meal.

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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# ***Innovation in the Cultural Diversity of School Meals***



Innovation in the Cultural Diversity of School Meals recognizes nutritious school meal menu options that reflect the different cultures of students.

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

## **Award Criteria**

Within the past 12 months, at least one school within the SFA has collaborated with students and/or the community to offer nutritious school meal menu options (at least one entrée and two different sides) that reflect the cultures of students at the school, while meeting weekly meal pattern requirements. The one entree and two side dishes can be from different cultures that make up the student demographic population and can be served on different days.

- As part of the collaboration, the school provides culturally appropriate education for all students and their families on the new menu offerings and their cultural significance.

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# Innovation in the Cultural Diversity of School Meals



## Required Documentation

Provide name and grade levels for the school(s) used to qualify for the award.

Describe the collaboration with students and/or the community including:

- A brief overview of the culture represented in the new menu items;
- Who was involved in the collaboration and how the school(s) collaborated with students and/or community members from that culture to develop the school meal menus;
- Explain the culturally appropriate education provided to students and their families (e.g., taste-test event, social media campaign, newsletter);
- The impact it had on students (e.g., based on student participation rate increases, student taste testing results or student survey results); and
- Include how this information was made available in languages other than English, if needed.

Submit school meal menus (for lunch and/or breakfast) showing all three food items were served at least three different times during the 12 months prior to award application submission.

- Identify the culturally-inspired menu items, including at least one entrée and two sides for all three menu additions; For each culturally-inspired menu item, submit either standardized recipes or product documentation.

\*A standardized recipe is a recipe that has been tried, adapted, and retried several times for use and has been found to produce the same good results and yield every time when the exact procedures are used with the same type of equipment and the same quantity of ingredients.

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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# Innovation in the Preparation of School Meals



Innovation in the Preparation of School Meals recognizes schools who plan and prepare scratch recipes for school breakfast and lunch.

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

## Award Criteria

Within the past 12 months, the SFA implemented the meal service of at least three new menu items (entrées and/or sides) prepared from scratch. Using a local agricultural product\* or USDA food is encouraged but not required.

*\*Local Agricultural Product: The definition of "local agricultural products" can depend on geographic, social, governmental, physical, or economic parameters; seasonality; and/or other factors. Local procurement options differ greatly across communities depending on district and school size; proximity to agricultural areas; growing season; and demographics. USDA expects that State agencies will have varying definitions of "local agricultural products" that align with their particular needs and goals. The intent of schools utilizing local agricultural products is to serve more locally produced foods in school cafeterias, improve student nutrition, provide nutrition education opportunities, and support local and regional farmers, ranchers, and fishers. Local agricultural products can be meats, seafood, fruits, vegetables, grains, nuts, seeds, dairy foods, or legumes.*

The new menu items must have been offered as part of school breakfast or lunch meal service in at least one school.

The scratch-prepared menu items must be prepared from standardized recipes\*\*, provide the minimum creditable amount of at least one meal component, and fit into weekly meal pattern requirements. The recipe may be from a source other than the award applicant (e.g., from the Child Nutrition Recipe Box, Chef Ann Foundation Lunch Box, Healthy School Recipes).

*\*\*A standardized recipe is a recipe that has been tried, adapted, and retried several times for use and has been found to produce the same good results and yield every time when the exact procedures are used with the same type of equipment and the same quantity of ingredients.*

If the menu items contain grains, the grains must be whole grain-rich, as defined by the Grain Requirements for School Meals and cannot be a grain-based dessert.

Scratch food production incorporates ingredients as close to their original state as possible.

The following are acceptable ingredients to include in menu items prepared from scratch for this award:

- Pre-packaged tortillas, pizza dough, rolls, buns, and breads, including proof and bake breads and sandwich bread,
- dry pasta,
- canned beans,
- fajita chicken meat, beef crumbles, unseasoned cooked meat, chicken, fish,
- individually quick frozen (IQF) fruits/vegetables,
- unseasoned canned fruits/vegetables

The following are not qualifying menu items for purposes of this award:

- Semi-homemade or speed-scratch menu items,
- condiments,
- salad dressings,
- grain-based desserts, and
- sauces

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# Innovation in the Preparation of School Meals



## Required Documentation

Information about the school(s) used to qualify for the award including name and grade levels.

Provide a description of actions undertaken to provide the scratch-prepared menu items including:

- Outcomes including plans to repeat the three new menu items in future school meal menus.
- Optional: Indicate if local or USDA Foods are key ingredients.

Submit standardized recipes of each scratch-prepared menu item, indicating the creditable meal component(s) and the source of the recipe.

Submit school meal menu(s) identifying scratch-prepared menu items as part of a reimbursable school breakfast or lunch meal.

Provide a description of student engagement activities, marketing strategies, and their outcomes. Include school name, grade levels, and number of students.

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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# Innovation in Nutrition Education



Innovation in Nutrition Education recognizes the implementation of nutrition education activities that make classroom, cafeteria, community, and home connections for students and parents/guardians.

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

## Award Criteria

Within the past 12 months, the SFA offered nutrition education at schools by choosing **two** of the five activities listed below.

1. The SFA includes specific goals for nutrition education in their Local School Wellness Policy. In addition, nutrition education is provided to elementary, middle, and high school students.
2. At elementary, middle, and high school levels, the SFA provides nutrition education to the parents/guardians of students that includes a discussion of the sodium, added sugars and/or whole grain content of school meals. This may be one presentation, such as at back-to-school night or a nutrition focused newsletter that is sent to all households in the district and/or placed on the district's website in regard to these nutrition topics.
3. The SFA's Local School Wellness Policy Coordinator or other designated nutrition education coordinator works with School Nutrition Services to ensure school nutrition education activities are incorporated in the school meals program and any farm to school activities.
4. Students are engaged in the development and delivery of school nutrition promotions and campaigns, such as through nutrition education posters and signage promoting healthy food and beverage choices, student cafeteria "ambassador" programs, student-led school meal surveys or advisory councils, and taste-testing events.
5. Local agricultural products\* are identified on the school menu and/or in school cafeterias, in all schools within the SFA, when served. The local food items can be a main entree, grain, fruit, or vegetable, and must be featured at least three different times during the 12 months prior to award submission.

*\*Local Agricultural Product: The definition of "local agricultural products" can depend on geographic, social, governmental, physical, or economic parameters; seasonality; and/or other factors. Local procurement options differ greatly across communities depending on district and school size; proximity to agricultural areas; growing season; and demographics. USDA expects that State agencies will have varying definitions of "local agricultural products" that align with their particular needs and goals. The intent of schools utilizing local agricultural products is to serve more locally produced foods in school cafeterias, improve student nutrition, provide nutrition education opportunities, and support local and regional farmers, ranchers, and fishers. Local agricultural products can be meats, seafood, fruits, vegetables, grains, nuts, seeds, dairy foods, or legumes.*

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# Innovation in Nutrition Education



## Required Documentation

Submit a copy of the SFA's Local School Wellness Policy.

Provide a description of nutrition education for students including:

- The objective;
- Details about the education;
- Number of schools where education was provided, including grade levels;
- Number of students;
- The name of the curriculum or activities;
- Partners involved; and
- Overview of how students were engaged.

Provide a description of nutrition education activities for parents including:

- The objective,
- Details about the activity,
- Number of participants, and
- The results of the activity, demonstrating the value of it and how parents benefited.

Provide a description of how nutrition education is coordinated within the school and community and includes a connection to school meals. Examples of connections include the school menu, newsletters, local foods featured, etc.

Provide a description of student engagement in nutrition education and promotion activities including:

- The objective,
- Details about the activity,
- Number of participants, and
- The results of the activity, demonstrating the value of it and how students benefited.

If nutrition education posters and signage are used for this award, submit two to 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."

Submit:

- Copies of the menu identifying local agricultural products for each grade group, AND/OR
- Two to three clear, high resolution photos from the cafeteria identifying local agricultural products. Photos can be pictures of the meal tray, of the serving line to showcase the local food, or of students consuming a local food. If photos are used, include 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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