



# 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.*

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

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## 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."

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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