



United States Department of Agriculture

Food and Nutrition Service

HEALTHIERUS SCHOOL CHALLENGE

Criteria & Instructions

Application

Purpose of HealthierUS School Challenge

- Schools should take a leadership role in helping students to make healthy eating and activity choices.
- USDA wants to nationally recognize a school's commitment to the health and well being of its students.
- Schools can be certified bronze, silver, or gold for this commitment.

Certification Procedures

- Begins with a self assessment
- Local certification review panel
 - School foodservice manager
 - School Team Nutrition leader
 - Principal or administrator
 - School foodservice director
 - PTA representative
 - School nurse, coordinated school health rep., PE teacher, or classroom teacher

Application Packet

- Application Cover Sheet
- Application Check-off Sheet
- Application Form (two sides)
- **Prior month's menus**
 - Must be four weeks of menus
- Lunch Menu Criteria Worksheet
- Nutrition Ed Criteria Worksheet
- Physical Activity Criteria Worksheet
- Verification of 70% or more participation for silver or gold and 62% for bronze

Lunch Menu Weekly Criteria – Bronze and Silver

- 3 different fruits/5 different vegetables
- Dark green/orange fruit or vegetable-3 or more per week
- Fresh fruit/raw vegetable-3 or more per week
- Vitamin C offered daily
- Whole grain foods-3 or more per week
- 4 different entrées or meat/meat alternate; limit higher fat entrées to once a week
- Dried beans/peas at least once a week
- Iron-2 or more sources daily
- Low-fat/nonfat milk offered daily

Lunch Menu Weekly Criteria – Gold

- 3 different fruits/5 different vegetables
- Dark green/orange fruit or vegetable-3 or more per week
- Fresh fruit/raw vegetable - Daily
- Vitamin C offered daily
- Whole grain foods - Daily
- 4 different entrées or meat/meat alternate; limit higher fat entrées to once a week
- Dried beans/peas at least once per week
- Iron- 2 or more sources daily
- Low-fat/nonfat milk offered daily

Criteria/Nutrition Standards for Competitive Foods and Beverages

- Any fruit or non-fried vegetable
- Reduced fat, low-fat, and nonfat milk
- 100% full-strength fruit and vegetable juice
- Water
- Any other food or beverage
 - $\leq 35\%$ of calories from fat
 - $\leq 10\%$ of calories from saturated fat
 - $\leq 35\%$ total sugar by weight
 - Portion for a la carte sales not to exceed NSLP portion; vended package or container not to exceed 200 calories

Nutrition Education

- Nutrition Education is provided to students in multiple grades of your school and must
 - be provided to at least half, but no fewer than 2, of the grade levels;
 - be delivered as part of a structured unit; and
 - involve multiple channels of communication with at least classrooms, cafeteria, and parents/home for each grade provided.
- Complete the **Nutrition Education Worksheet** included in your application packet.

Physical Activity

- Physical activity is provided to students in every grade of your school, except kindergarten, and meets/exceeds following:
 - PE classes or the equivalent must be provided on a regularly scheduled basis each school week during the entire school year.
 - Examples of equivalents include school walking clubs, bike clubs, intramural sports, walk-to-school programs, approval of community physical activity programs for academic credit, etc.
- Complete the **Physical Activity Worksheet** included in your Application Packet.

Submission of Application Packet

- Certified and signed by all review panel members
- Submit to state agency

Approval Process

- Local level – certifies and signs
- State level
 - Team Nutrition school
 - SMI review within last 5 years
 - All meals in menus are reimbursable
 - All menus meet bronze, silver, or gold criteria
 - Written description of nutrition ed. activity
 - Written description of PE activity
 - Average daily participation for October
 - Foods & beverages served/sold a la carte, vended and in school stores, snack bars, etc. meet criteria

Approval Process

- Regional Office
 - State agency sends only approved packets to regional office.
 - Submit all required documents.
 - Signed forms and supporting documentation
- Unapproved Applications
 - State agency returns unapproved application packets to school.

Criteria for Bronze, Silver, or Gold

- All must complete questions 1-6 at top of form
- Bronze/Silver criteria – questions 1-6 plus 7 (a) or (b)
- Gold criteria – questions 1-6 plus questions 2-3 at bottom of form

Differences Between Bronze/Silver Criteria and Gold Criteria

- Bronze/Silver Criteria 7 (a) or 7 (b)
 - Relates to foods in the foodservice area during meal periods only
- Gold Criteria 2 (a) or 2 (b)
 - Relates to all foods sold on the school campus during the school day
- Criteria for Sales/Service of A La Carte and/or Vended Items (p. 6 of instructions)

Menu Criteria for Lunch

- Gold Criteria Question #3 - Lunches must meet or exceed the menu criteria on page 4 of the instructions.

Contact Information

- Provide the name and contact information of someone at school.

Application Records

- During certification process, the school must keep on file copies of:
 - Completed and signed application packet, including attachments
 - Food production records to support submitted menus
 - Nutrition facts labels or recipes for all foods sold/served to support bronze, silver, or gold criteria
 - In order to facilitate a speedy review process, please include recipes, ingredients statements, and Nutrition facts labels to support the information provided. These will be used to clarify whether the food meets the HealthierUS School Challenge criteria for food products.

Team Nutrition HealthierUS School Challenge Web Page

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the address bar displaying <http://teamnutrition.usda.gov/HealthierUS/index.html>. The page header features the USDA logo and the text "United States Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service". A navigation bar includes links for "Home", "About Team Nutrition", "FNS Newsroom", "Help", and "Contact Us".

The main content area is titled "Healthy Schools" and features a section for the "HealthierUS School Challenge: Recognizing Nutrition Excellence in Schools". This section includes a star icon and a paragraph explaining the challenge's purpose: "Obesity is a growing concern for school children in the United States. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) believes that schools should be taking a leadership role in helping students learn to make healthy eating and active lifestyle choices. (To see a copy of Under Secretary Bost's letter to Chief State School Officers, download this [PDF file](#).) Many schools have already made changes to their school nutrition environments, improved the quality of the foods served, and now provide students with more nutritious, healthy choices. USDA's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) wants to encourage schools to achieve such results, and has established the HealthierUS School Challenge to encourage schools to go further and to recognize those who chose to do so. (To print a copy of the HealthierUS School Challenge brochure, download this [PDF file](#).)"

On the right side of the page, there is a list of resources:

- o [Application Packet \[PDF\]](#)
- o [Application Packet \[Excel\]](#)
- o [Criteria and Instructions \[PDF\]](#)
- o [Food and Nutrient Guidance \[PDF\]](#)
- o [Frequently Asked Questions \[PDF\]](#)
- o [Healthier US School Challenge Whole Grains Resource \[PDF\]](#)
- o [Introduction and Overview \[PowerPoint\]](#)
- o [Silver and Gold Schools](#)

At the bottom of the page, there is a section titled "HealthierUS Schools" which states: "HealthierUS Schools can be certified as either **Silver or Gold Schools**, according to standards established by FNS. The objective is to recognize schools that take specific

Team Nutrition HealthierUS School Challenge Web Page

[http://teamnnutrition.usda.gov/
HealthierUS/index.html](http://teamnnutrition.usda.gov/HealthierUS/index.html)

Summary

- Completed application packet certified & signed by local panel
- Application is sent to state agency
- State agency reviews:
 - Sends approved application to regional office
 - Returns unapproved application to school with explanation
- Regional office reviews and sends to Headquarters

If You Have Any Questions, Please Call:

- Becky King, Child Nutrition Specialist, ND Department of Public Instruction
- 1-888-338-3663