

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.

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 school breakfast menus to meet at least **four (4)** of the following criteria.

1. Only unflavored milk is offered.
2. Breakfast cereals, if offered, contain ≤ 6 grams of added sugars per dry ounce.
3. Yogurts, if offered, contain ≤ 12 grams of added sugars per 6 ounces.
4. 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.
5. No high-intensity sweeteners (e.g., artificial sweeteners, non-nutritive sweeteners) are used to replace added sugars.

The SFA must also meet the following criteria:

- Breakfast meals must meet all other meal pattern requirements, including weekly specifications for calories, sodium, and saturated fat.
- At least half (≥ 50 percent) of the schools within the SFA* that participate in the SBP must meet the criteria, and, all grade levels of the SFA must be represented in the selected schools.

**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 two (2) sites to meet the 50 percent requirement.*

- At least one (1) of the schools must implement the breakfast using an alternative meal service delivery model (e.g., Breakfast in the Classroom, cafeteria, breakfast kiosks).
- 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. Student engagement may occur at any time during the school day.

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

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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 improves the nutritional quality of their school breakfast menus meeting at least four (4) specific criteria.

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.

Award Criteria

Within the past 12 months, the SFA has changed their school breakfast menus to meet at **least four (4)** of the following criteria:

1. All breakfast cereals contain ≤ 6 grams of added sugars per dry ounce.
2. All yogurts contain ≤ 12 grams of added sugars per 6 ounces.
3. No more than 2-ounce equivalents of grain-based desserts, as defined by superscripts 4 or 5 in the [Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Program's Exhibit A: Grain Requirements for Child Nutrition Programs](#), are offered per week. Grain-based desserts defined by superscript 3 are not offered.
4. At least $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of dark green and/or $\frac{1}{2}$ cup red/orange vegetables are offered throughout the week.
5. All milk offered is unflavored.
6. Breakfast-style sandwiches not on biscuits contain no more than 500 mg of sodium per 100 grams (~3.5 ounces) of sandwich. Breakfast-style sandwiches provided on biscuits contain no more than 710 mg of sodium per 100 grams (~3.5 ounces) of sandwich (criteria are based on [FDA Food Categories and Voluntary Targets](#)).
7. Within the past 12 months, the SFA and/or a partner organization working in collaboration with the SFA has conducted at least two school breakfast nutrition education activities (e.g., taste-test event, social media campaign) for students. Activities can be district wide.

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Lunch Trailblazer Award



Small changes in your menu can shake up big flavors and get you to your target. The Lunch Trailblazer provides school lunches that meet Healthy Meals Incentives weekly sodium limits and implement student engagement techniques.

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 provided **reimbursable** school lunches that meet the Healthy Meals Incentives weekly sodium limits and are enjoyed by students.

- At least half (≥ 50 percent) of the schools within the SFA* that participate in the NSLP, provide school lunches that meet the Healthy Meals Incentives weekly sodium limits (as indicated in the chart). All school lunch meals must meet the criteria and all grade levels of the SFA must be represented in the selected schools.

**If your SFA only has one school site, you may submit documentation for just that site. If your SFA has three (3) school sites, you must submit documentation for at least two (2) sites to meet the 50 percent requirement.*

Age/ Grade Group	Healthy Meals Incentives Average Weekly Sodium Limits for School Lunches
K-5	$\leq 1,000$ mg
6-8	$\leq 1,105$ mg
9-12	$\leq 1,150$ mg

- 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. Student engagement may occur at any time during the school day.

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



Small changes in your menu can shake up big flavors and get you to your target. The Small and/or Rural Lunch Trailblazer improves the nutritional quality of their school lunch menus meeting at least four (4) specific criteria.

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 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 NSLP must meet the award criteria.

Award Criteria

Within the past 12 months, the SFA has changed their school lunch menus to meet **at least four (4)** of the following criteria:

1. Lunch menus include fresh or frozen poultry, fish, pork, and lean meat (with no saline or salt solution added), rather than cured, salted, smoked, and other processed meats.
2. Vegetables must be fresh and/or frozen and canned vegetables with no salt or sauce added.
3. Fruits must be fresh and/or frozen and canned fruits with no added sugars.
4. The SFA chooses lower sodium forms of products from vendors. For tips, check out the Institute of Child Nutrition's *Sodium Swaps: Utilizing Product Substitutions* available at the [Shaking It Up website](#).
5. The SFA uses alternatives 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.
6. Eighty percent (80%) of grains are whole grain-rich as defined by the [Grain Requirements for School Meals](#).
7. 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](#).
8. All milk offered is unflavored.
9. The SFA engages students in the development of school lunch menus, such as through student cafeteria "ambassador" programs, student-led school meal surveys, or advisory councils.
10. Within the past 12 months, the SFA and/or a community partner has conducted at least two school lunch nutrition education activities (e.g., taste-test event, farm to school activities, social media campaign) for students. Activities can be district wide.

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Innovative School Lunch Makeover



The Innovative School Lunch Makeover improves the nutritional quality of a popular school lunch meal for at least one grade group, 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 SFA has improved the nutritional quality of a popular school lunch meal for at least one grade group, while maintaining student acceptance of the meal. The makeover meal must meet all meal pattern requirements.

- The makeover meal meets 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

- The makeover meal includes only whole grain-rich grains, as defined by the Grain Requirements for School Meals, and no grain-based desserts.
- The menu features a local agricultural product* meal component. When the meal is served, the local agricultural product is procured locally when available.
- The SFA engages students in the development and marketing of the makeover meal.
- The makeover meal is implemented in at least one (1) school, for at least one (1) grade group, within the SFA that participates in the NSLP and offered as part of school lunch meal service at least three (3) different times during the twelve (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 the Cultural Diversity of School Meals



Innovation in the Cultural Diversity of School Meals entails collaborating with students and/or the community to offer nutritious school meal menu options that reflect the cultures of students, while meeting weekly meal pattern requirements.

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 has offered nutritious school meal menu options that reflect the different cultures of students at the school.

- At least one (1) school within the SFA has collaborated with students and/or the community to offer nutritious school meal menu options (at least one (1) entrée and two (2) sides) that reflect the cultures of students at the school, while meeting weekly meal pattern requirements.

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

- Menus must have been used and nutrition education must have been provided within the past twelve (12) months, and collaboration must be ongoing in support of these efforts. However, the menu development and start of the collaboration could have been earlier.

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Innovation in the Preparation of School Meals



Innovation in the Preparation of School Meals entails the implementation of meal service of at least three (3) new menu items (entrées or sides) prepared from scratch using a local agricultural product* or USDA food.

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 twelve (12) months, the SFA implemented the meal service of at least three (3) new menu items (entrées or sides) prepared from scratch using a local agricultural product* or USDA food. The new menu items must have been offered as part of school meal service in at least one (1) school.
- The scratch-prepared menu items must be prepared from recipes developed in accordance with the USDA recipe standardization process, provide the minimum creditable amount of at least one (1) meal component, and fit into weekly meal pattern requirements. The recipe may be from a source other than the award applicant (e.g., a USDA Standardized Recipe from the Child Nutrition Recipe Box).
 - Semi-homemade or speed-scratch menu items, condiments, salad dressings, grain-based desserts, sauces, etc. are not qualifying menu items for purposes of this award.
 - Scratch food production incorporates ingredients as close to their original state as possible. 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, and unseasoned canned fruits/vegetables are acceptable ingredients in menu items prepared from scratch for this award.
- If the menu items contain grains, the grains must be whole grain-rich, as defined by the Grain Requirements for School Meals.
- The SFA engages students in the marketing of the new menu items.

**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



Innovation in Nutrition Education involves 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

The SFA ensures nutrition education is offered at schools by completing the following activities AND chooses one (1) of the three (3) activities listed below.

- The SFA's Local School Wellness Policy (LSWP) includes specific goals for nutrition education at elementary, middle, and high school grade levels. The Local School Wellness Implementation Plan for the school year includes specific nutrition education activities at elementary, middle, and high school grade levels.
- 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 whole grain content of school meals. This may be one presentation, such as at back-to-school night.
- Local agricultural products* are highlighted on the school menu and/or in school cafeterias, in all schools within the SFA, when served.
- Within the past 12 months, the SFA implemented at least one (1) of the following nutrition education activities:
 1. The SFA's LSWP Coordinator or other designated nutrition education coordinator ensures school nutrition education activities are coordinated with school nutrition services (school meals) and any farm to school activities.
 2. All schools within the SFA display nutrition education posters and signage promoting healthy food and beverage choices wherever food and drinks are sold to students on the school campus, during the school day.
 3. Students are engaged in the development and delivery of school nutrition promotions and campaigns, such as through student cafeteria "ambassador" programs, student-led school meal surveys or advisory councils, and taste-testing events.

**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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