

## **HealthierUS School Challenge: Smarter Lunchrooms**

### **Getting Started**

#### **Background**

Childhood obesity is still a major problem in the United States. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the prevalence of obesity is about 17 percent and affects about 12.7 million children and adolescents.<sup>1</sup> Efforts by the USDA have been taken to tackle obesity by helping schools to take a leadership role by encouraging healthier eating and active lifestyles. As a result, many schools have already improved their school nutrition environments and have found ways to increase physical activity.

#### **The HealthierUS School Challenge**

The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) has established the HealthierUS School Challenge (HUSC) to recognize schools that improve their environments with nutritious foods, physical activity and nutrition education.

#### **How does my school get involved in the HealthierUS School Challenge?**

In order to take the challenge, your school must meet the following criteria:

- Be enrolled as a Team Nutrition School.
- Participate in the School Breakfast Program (SBP) and the National School Lunch Program (NSLP).
- Provide nutrition education to students.
- Give students the opportunity to get involved in physical activity.
- Maintain an Average Daily Participation (ADP) for reimbursable lunches.
- Comply with guidelines established by the USDA FNS for all foods served and sold in schools.
- Implement a Local Wellness Policy.

[Review the criteria on the Team Nutrition website](http://www.fns.usda.gov/hussc/healthierus-school-challenge-smarter-lunchrooms) (<http://www.fns.usda.gov/hussc/healthierus-school-challenge-smarter-lunchrooms>).

View helpful tips for completing the application, including a sample application, on the [Action for Healthy Kids](http://www.actionforhealthykids.org/tools-for-schools/game-on) website (<http://www.actionforhealthykids.org/tools-for-schools/game-on>). Select Step 6 and register. Click on resources and checklists to help complete your HUSC application.

<sup>1</sup>Reference: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Childhood Obesity Facts. Accessed August 16, 2015. <http://www.cdc.gov/obesity/data/childhood.html>

## Starting the Application

[View the requirements chart to ensure eligibility](http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/tn/2014huscc_criteria.pdf)

([http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/tn/2014huscc\\_criteria.pdf](http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/tn/2014huscc_criteria.pdf))



[Enroll as a Team Nutrition School to be eligible to apply or check if your school is already enrolled](http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/join-team) (<http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/join-team>)



Download the [Smarter Lunchrooms Application](http://healthymeals.nal.usda.gov/hsmrs/HUSSC/) and save it to your computer (<http://healthymeals.nal.usda.gov/hsmrs/HUSSC/>)

If applying for more than one school in the district, also download the District School List form from the same webpage.



Review General Criteria on page 5, including Smarter Lunchroom scorecard document.



Calculate your breakfast and lunch Average Daily Participation (ADP).



Obtain a copy of your most recent district or school wellness policy to include with application.



Gather Smart Snacks information which includes: a la carte options, vending, school store, snack or food carts and any food-based fundraising. Use the [Smart Snack Calculator](http://healthymeals.nal.usda.gov/smartsnacks) to analyze foods and beverages sold to students during the school day (<http://healthymeals.nal.usda.gov/smartsnacks>) and save a copy of the calculator results.



After completing all pages of the application, review the checklist below and follow submission steps.

## Application Checklist

When you are ready to submit your application, please review each area to ensure it is complete:

- Application cover sheet
- General criteria worksheet
- Smart Snacks worksheet
- Nutrition education worksheet
- Physical education worksheet
- Physical activity worksheet
- Provide a copy of the district's local wellness policy
- Other criteria for excellence checklist
- Committee verification form

### Additional documentation to submit:

- Smart Snacks documentation which includes Alliance for a Healthier Generation Smart Snacks Calculator results, along with product nutrition fact labels and ingredient statements or recipes to verify that the Smart Snacks criteria have been met. This includes a la carte, vending (if on during the school day), school store and snack carts.
- Completed Smarter Lunchrooms Scorecards for each school included in the application. Also include a brief summary with two to three photos describing the school's overall Smarter Lunchroom effort.

### How to submit the completed application:

1. *Preferred method:* Scan the application and supporting documentation. Send electronically to [MDE.TeamNutrition@state.mn.us](mailto:MDE.TeamNutrition@state.mn.us).
2. If you are unable to send your application electronically, submit the application and supporting documentation in a three ring binder to the Minnesota Department of Education.

Minnesota Department of Education  
Nutrition, Health, and Youth Development  
Attn: Team Nutrition  
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Roseville, MN 55113