

Healthy School Environments Action Learning Collaborative Award Application

Funding Title

Healthy School Environments Action Learning Collaborative: Promoting Healthful School Food, Nutrition Education, Physical Activity and Physical Education.

Funding Source

Office of Minority Health Resource Center (OMHRC)

Award Amount

\$5,000 for each award, with a total of five awards

Eligible Applicants

Applicants must be individual (non-charter) public schools located in the 50 states, and the District of Columbia that participate in the National School Lunch Program and have a low-income student population of 80% or greater (as determined by percentage of students eligible for free and reduced school meals). Not-for-profit organizations that have been directed by a school to apply for the award are also eligible. Applicants must also be official USDA [Team Nutrition Schools](#).

Preference will be given to applicants that demonstrate youth engagement and leadership; have committed project partners that reflect the school community; include plans for sustaining the program after the

conclusion of the award; and leverage additional project resources.

Application Deadline

Thursday, October 13, 2011, 5:00 p.m. E.S.T.

Award Announcement Date

December 1, 2011

Project Period

January 1, 2012- December 31, 2012

Funds may be utilized within any given month during the project period, or the project may be implemented over the entire project period. Since this is a learning endeavor, mid-year and final reports of lessons learned and input in the final report of the Collaborative are conditions of the utilization of the funds. A template for the submission of lessons learned will be forwarded shortly after receipt of the award letter.

Background

It is now estimated by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention that poor diet and physical inactivity, the leading contributors to obesity, are responsible for over 100,000 deaths per year in the U.S. Additionally, childhood overweight and obesity have risen at an alarming rate over the past three decades. Obesity puts children and adolescents at risk for developing several diseases and health conditions that can follow them into adulthood. While obesity rates have increased among all members of society in the U.S., it appears to disproportionately affect certain groups. Among children and adolescents, prevalence rates are highest among African American females, Mexican American males and the poor.¹ While roughly 12% of Caucasian children are obese, the

percentage in the Latino population spikes to nearly 20%.ⁱⁱ The prevalence of obesity in Mexican American boys aged six to 11 increased from 17.5% from 1988-1994 to 27.3% for 1999-2000.ⁱⁱⁱ

As documented by Action for Healthy Kids in its report *The Learning Connection*, many studies have begun to find a link between both nutritional intake and academic performance, and between physical activity and academic achievement.^{iv} A growing body of research shows that multi-component school-based interventions that include changes in the food environment, nutrition and fitness promotional activities, classroom-based education and instruction about food and food systems, and parental involvement, produce healthful food choices among students and are key to preventing weight gain and obesity in youth. Nevertheless, these programs are not in place in most schools.

HealthierUS School Challenge

The [HealthierUS School Challenge](http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/healthierus/HUSSCkit_pp13-24.pdf) was established by the USDA in 2004 to recognize schools that create healthier environments through improvements to school food, nutrition education, physical activity and physical education. The HealthierUS School Challenge recognizes and rewards schools for meeting high standards in school food, nutrition education, physical activity, and physical education and has four levels of recognition: Gold of Distinction, Gold, Silver and Bronze. Each level of recognition has different requirements for the challenge elements. Follow this link for details on the criteria and challenge elements: http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/healthierus/HUSSCkit_pp13-24.pdf

Summary

Through *Healthy School Environments: Promoting Healthful School Food, Nutrition Education, Physical Activity and Physical Education*, the Office of Minority Health Resource Center will award five, one-year competitive awards of \$5,000 each to individual public schools that are promoting student wellness through the adoption of the USDA's HealthierUS School Challenge. Projects must address the successful implementation of one or more components of the challenge.

Awardees must agree to participate in an ongoing learning environment coordinated by the Office of Minority Health and its Action Learning Collaborative. This will include regular conversations and site visits with Action Learning Collaborative members who are national leaders and local advocates in the fields of school food, nutrition education and physical activity/education.

Purpose

The purpose of *Healthy School Environments: Promoting Healthful School Food, Nutrition Education, Physical Activity and Physical Education* is to support schools in low income communities as they strive to improve the long-term health and success of students through the successful adoption of the USDA's HealthierUS School Challenge standards. Successful projects will focus on one or more element of the HealthierUS School Challenge, engage the school community including students, and include an evaluation component and plans for program continuation beyond the conclusion of the award period.

Project Examples

A School could apply for a project that supports the successful implementation of one or more categories of the USDA's HealthierUS School Challenge. For example, a school could apply for a project that involved partnering with students, parents and community partners to bring daily physical activity/recess to the school day. Or, a school could apply for a project to provide training and support for school teachers that resulted in the implementation of a structured and ongoing nutrition education program.

Application Review

1. Criteria

Awards will be evaluated based on the following: clarity and potential for success of the project purpose, goals, action plan and evaluation; project team's readiness to successfully implement the project; and, the level/quality of collaboration and partnerships integrated into the project plan.

Preference will be given to applicants that demonstrate youth engagement and leadership; have committed project partners that reflect the school community; include plans for sustaining the program after the conclusion of the award; and, leverage additional project resources.

The technical review of the Healthy School Environments Action Learning Collaborative applications will consider the following four factors:

A. Background and Need (25 points)

- Understanding of school and community demographics
- USDA Team Nutrition Enrollment

- Knowledge of the extent and outcomes of past efforts in the school/community
 - Statement of need
- #### B. Project Proposal (35 points/45 points with youth leadership component)
- Appropriateness and merit of proposed approach and specific activities for each objective.
 - The degree to which the project design, and proposed activities are culturally appropriate and relevant.
 - Logic and sequencing of the planned approaches as they relate to the statement of need and to the objectives.
 - Soundness of the established partnership and roles of partnership members in the program, including youth leadership (extra 10 points).
 - Signed letter from the required school official.
 - Degree to which the objectives are stated in measurable terms.
 - Attainability of the objectives in the stated time frames.
- #### C. Evaluation (25 points)
- The degree to which expected results are appropriate for objectives and activities.
 - Suitability of process, outcome, and impact measures.
 - Soundness of the plan to share/report project results.
- #### D. Sustainability (15 points)
- Extent to which the applicant demonstrates ability to build capacity in its community to maintain the project.
 - Degree to which applicant has plans to sustain operation after the one time award has been awarded

1. Review and Selection Process

Accepted applications will be reviewed for technical merit. Applications will be evaluated by the Action Learning Collaborative Advisory Group, whose members were chosen for their expertise in the field of healthy school environments.

Application and Submission Information

Please respond to the following questions according to the specified parameters.

I. List Contact Information

Provide name of school, name of project director/lead, name of principal, school's address, Web site, phone number, fax number, lead person e-mail address and phone number. If the contact person is different than the project director, list that person's name and contact information. Provide contact information for any partner organization.

II. Background and Need (maximum 2,000 words)

1. Please describe your school and include the following: number of students the school serves; the race and ethnicity of the student body; and, percentage of students eligible for free/reduced meals through the National School Lunch Program.
2. Please describe your community and the health and wellness environment students and families experience outside your school. Please describe the racial, ethnic and economic makeup of your community and any community assets, health indicators or statistics that help describe your community.

3. Please describe the current state of your school's meals, nutrition education, physical activity and physical education environments, and the level and types of school, community, student and family engagement you currently have in efforts to improve school wellness.
4. Please give a brief history of what has been done in your school and district to address student health and wellness. Does your school or district have a school wellness policy? Is the policy being implemented and monitored? What programs, practices and policies are in place to create a healthier school environment?
5. What is your overall vision for a healthy school environment? What are the three most important elements of that vision?

III. Project Proposal (maximum 3,000 words)

6. Please describe your proposed project. Include your goal, outcomes, key learning objective project plan, timeline, partners, youth leadership and key individuals.
7. Please describe how project funds will be spent. Please be as specific as possible with a line item budget and describe additional funds that will be leveraged for this effort (if applicable).

IV. Evaluation (maximum 500 words)

8. Please describe how your project will be evaluated.

V. Sustainability (maximum 500 words)

9. Please describe your plan for sustaining the project after the completion of the award.

Application Instructions

- Completely fill out the application.
- Email completed application to iestrada@minorityhealth.hhs.gov
AND
- Send by surface mail the completed application and **cover letter** signed by the project lead and the school principal.

Mail original application to:

Isabel M. Estrada Portales
Director of Communications
Office of Minority Health Resource Center
1101 Wootton Parkway Ste. 650
Rockville, MD 20852
1-800-444-6472 ext. 223

Online applications must be received no later than 5:00 p.m. EST on **Thursday, October 13, 2011**. Print applications must be postmarked no later than **October 13, 2011**.

Schedule of Deliverables and Payments

In accepting this award, applicant agrees to actively participate in the Action Learning Collaborative, and to submit quarterly lessons learned reports and contribute to the final Action Learning Collaborative report. Report forms and due dates will be provided in the award letter.

ⁱ Center for Health & Health Care in Schools. (2005). Childhood obesity: What the research tells us. Available at: <http://www.healthinschools.org/~media/Files/obesityfs.ashx>.

ⁱⁱ Rafkin, L. (2003, January 10). Childhood obesity rates soaring. La Prensa.

ⁱⁱⁱ Schwimmer et al. (2003). Health-related quality of life of severely obese children and adolescents. *JAMA*, (289): 14, 1813-19.

^{iv} Action for Healthy Kids (2004). The Learning Connection: The Value of Improving Nutrition and Physical Activity in our Schools. Available at: <http://www.actionforhealthykids.org/resources/files/learning-connection.pdf>.