

OSPI Child Nutrition Services Information Sheet

Rooted in Excellence Awards

The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) offers Rooted in Excellence awards to recognize outstanding Washington school nutrition programs. School Food Authorities (SFAs) are invited to apply for an award within either the Culinary Cultivator track or the Nurturing Navigator track.

Culinary Cultivator Awards

The Culinary Cultivator awards recognize SFAs that demonstrate excellence in culinary innovation, culturally inclusive menu development, and Farm to School practices. These efforts help connect students to fresh, local foods and celebrate the diverse cultures and communities that the SFAs serve. As a reminder, Child Nutrition Program sponsors are responsible for ensuring standardized recipes and menus meet meal pattern requirements. For more information on how to standardize recipes, visit the Institute of Child Nutrition's USDA Recipe Standardization Guides for the [Child and Adult Care Food Program](#) or [School Nutrition Programs](#).

Breakfast Excellence

This award recognizes sponsors that go above and beyond in delivering exceptional breakfast service. Applicants should highlight innovative strategies and creative approaches to meal service, including programs such as Breakfast After the Bell. Applications should include supporting documentation, such as participation rate comparisons, photos of meals served, menus, recipes utilized, student or staff testimonies, etc.

Application Checklist

Sponsors who can check **two boxes** from this section are eligible for the Breakfast Excellence award.

- ☐ Conducted at least two school breakfast nutrition activities for students, such as taste testing a new recipe.
- ☐ Developed and implemented an innovative approach to Breakfast After the Bell which resulted in an increase in participation.
- ☐ Did not offer grain-based desserts at breakfast for one month.
- ☐ Utilized the vegetables at breakfast flexibility at least two times in one month. Vegetables must be from two different subgroups.



- ☐ Featured meat/meat alternates at breakfast at least four times in one month.

Application Question

Information provided will be used to draft a success story for sharing with community partners and administration.

- In a few sentences, please describe how your organization uses innovative approaches in serving breakfast.

Culturally Inclusive Meals

This award honors sponsors that increase the cultural diversity of their meal offerings. Recipes may be sourced externally, such as from the [Child Nutrition Recipe Box](#), [Chef Ann Foundation Lunch Box](#), [Healthy School Recipes](#). Applications should include supporting documentation, such as menus, standardized scratch cooking recipes, documentation of taste testing (such as scoring sheets/data, quotes from students, photos of foods served), flyers, training certificates, photos, etc.

Application Checklist

Sponsors who can check **one box** from this section are eligible for the Culturally Inclusive Meals award.

- ☐ Developed a new culturally inclusive scratch recipe based on student interest that provides the minimum creditable amount of at least one meal component and fits into weekly meal pattern requirements.
- ☐ Featured a culturally inclusive scratch recipe (entree or sides) at least once per month.
- ☐ Hosted a culturally inclusive meals event for students, families, and/or the community.

Alternatively, sponsors who can check **two boxes** from this section are also eligible for the award.

- ☐ Engaged in taste testing of new culturally inclusive recipes with students two to three times during the year.
- ☐ Gathered feedback from students and families on recipes to feature on the menu through surveys and polls.
- ☐ Included cultural education during taste tests or meal service to increase awareness of the meal's cultural significance.

Application Questions

Information provided will be used to draft a success story for sharing with community partners and administration.

- In a few sentences, please describe how your organization supports cultural diversity in its meal offerings.

Farm to School

This award celebrates sponsors maximizing their Farm to School program and use of local foods. Applications should include supporting documentation, such as photos, invoices, recipes featuring local ingredients, flyers for events, menus, etc.

Application Checklist

Sponsors who can check **two boxes** from this section are eligible for the Farm to School award.

- ☐ Procured products directly from a local farm or food hub.
- ☐ Sourced school meal ingredients from the school farm or garden.
- ☐ Highlighted locally grown, caught, and raised foods using signage, menus, newsletters, web or social media content, or other materials for students or families.
- ☐ Hosted a farmer to provide education, such as a classroom discussion, presentation, or information table.
- ☐ Held taste tests of local foods for students two or more times a year.
- ☐ Used [geographic preference](#) (local as a specification or defined scoring advantage) for procurement of local unprocessed agricultural products.
- ☐ Formalized policies or procedures to support sustainability of Farm to School activities, such as including Farm to School activities in the Local School Wellness Policy.

Application Question

Information provided will be used to draft a success story for sharing with community partners and administrators.

- In a few sentences, please describe how your organization is maximizing Farm to School and the use of local foods.

Scratch Cooking

This award recognizes sponsors that feature scratch-made recipes at least two times a week for a month or have developed one new standardized recipe during the year. Sponsors may source recipes from Child Nutrition Program recipe databases, such as the [Child Nutrition Recipe Box](#), [Chef Ann Foundation Lunch Box](#), or [Healthy School Recipes](#) or develop a new recipe in-house. New scratch recipes should be developed in accordance with the [USDA recipe standardization process](#). Applications should include supporting documentation, such as menus,

standardized recipes, documentation of taste testing (scoring sheets/data, photos, student quotes, photos, etc.), photos of new scratch menu items, etc.

- Speed-scratch menu items are not qualifying menu items for this award. Speed scratch menu items are dishes prepared with a combination of processed or convenience ingredients and unprocessed ingredients, such as spaghetti sauce made with canned sauce, ground beef, fresh herbs, and diced vegetables.
- Scratch food production uses ingredients as close to their original state as possible. Acceptable processed ingredients in scratch prepared menu items include pre-packaged tortillas, pizza dough, buns and breads, dry pasta, canned beans, unseasoned cooked meat and fruits/vegetables, and frozen fruits and vegetables.

Application Checklist

Sponsors who can check **one box from each section** below are eligible for the Scratch Cooking award.

- ☐ Developed new scratch recipe(s) according to the USDA recipe standardization process that contain the minimum creditable amount of at least one meal component and fit into weekly meal pattern requirements. If menu items contain grains, they must be whole grain rich and cannot be a grain-based dessert.
- ☐ Featured existing scratch-made recipes sourced from Child Nutrition Program recipe databases at least twice per week for one month.

Additional Scratch Cooking Activities

- ☐ Taste-tested scratch-made items with students two to three times during the year.
- ☐ Conducted surveys, polls, or provided other feedback opportunities about menus for students and families.
- ☐ Provided education about the recipe(s) (cultural origins, ingredient sourcing, culinary information, nutrition education, etc.).

Application Question

Information provided will be used to draft a success story for sharing with community partners and administrators.

- In a few sentences, please provide additional details about how increasing the frequency of scratch cooking or the development of new standardized recipes has impacted your organization. Examples include seeing an increase in meal participation, less food waste, positive student feedback, etc.

Nurturing Navigator Awards

The Nurturing Navigator awards recognize SFAs that demonstrate excellence in promoting their

programs through innovative marketing, delivering impactful nutrition education, developing strong partnerships, and engaging their community.

Marketing and Promotion

This award recognizes sponsors that have worked to promote their program and inform families and the community of the great work they are doing. Applications should include supporting documentation, such as press releases, social media posts, flyers, photos, documentation of family nights/programming, articles, etc. If you saw increased participation, include that in your application.

Application Checklist

Sponsors who can check **two boxes** from this section are eligible for the Marketing and Promotion award.

- ☐ Engaged in promotion via social media at least four times during the year.
- ☐ Engaged in promotion via local news sources (radio ads, TV, newspaper, etc.).
- ☐ Engaged in promotion through a parent newsletter.
- ☐ Created a video to promote nutrition programs.
- ☐ Hosted a nutrition event for families and/or the community.
- ☐ Sent home nutrition related activities for families and students to complete together.
- ☐ Engaged students in the marketing of school meal programs (student recipe contests, student contributions to school's social media, student creation of promotional materials, etc.).

Application Question

Information provided will be used to draft a success story for sharing with community partners and administrators.

- In a few sentences, please share how your organization engaged in marketing your program to families and the community.

Nutrition Education

This award recognizes sponsors that have created or expanded nutrition education opportunities for students or families. Applications should include supporting documentation, such as photos, flyers, program planning information, agendas with learning objectives, presentation materials, etc.

Application Checklist

Sponsors who can check **two boxes** from this section are eligible for the Nutrition Education award.

- ☐ Provided nutrition education lesson(s) or presentation(s) to students or families.
- ☐ Sent nutrition information home to families at least once per month for three months.
- ☐ Hosted a culinary class or demonstration for students or families.
- ☐ Participated in Harvest of the Month at least once per month for three months.
- ☐ Provided garden-based nutrition education for students.
- ☐ Incorporated nutrition education in the cafeteria using menus, posters, signage, or displays to highlight nutrition and health benefits, cultural origins, locally-sourced ingredients, cooking methods, etc.
- ☐ Developed other new nutrition education programming outside of the categories above (please describe in application).

Application Question

Information provided will be used to draft a success story for sharing with community partners and administrators.

- In a few sentences, please share how your organization engaged in nutrition education activities with students and families.

Partnerships and Engagement

This award recognizes sponsors that have strengthened partnerships and/or community engagement to improve school nutrition and/or wellness. Applications should include supporting documentation, such as flyers, posters, photos, training documentation, quotes from staff/students, letters of collaboration with external partners, etc.

Application Checklist

Sponsors who can check **two boxes** from this section are eligible for the Partnerships and Engagement award.

- ☐ Collaborated with other departments and/or external organization(s) on goals related to school wellness, nutrition education, promotion, menu diversification, etc.
- ☐ Increased opportunities for student involvement, such as establishing or expanding the role of a student advisory council, working with culinary students, etc.
- ☐ Engaged with families to gather feedback, build connection, or strengthen the school wellness environment, such as holding listening sessions, working with family feedback

groups, designing and implementing new wellness activities, attending/hosting a Parent Teacher Association or other community event, etc.

☐ Increased staff engagement in or awareness of school meal programs, such as presenting to the school board, expanding the wellness committee, etc.

☐ Conducted student, staff, or community wellness surveys, focus groups, or similar and used the results to guide programming and/or wellness policy development.

Application Question

Information provided will be used to draft a success story for sharing with community partners and administrators.

- In a few sentences, please describe the partnership and engagement efforts at your organization.

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

This project has been funded at least in part with Federal funds from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The contents of this publication do not necessarily reflect the view or policies of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Government.