



2024 America's Healthiest Schools Award Application Communication Guide

Encourage school teams in your community to apply for national recognition!

[America's Healthiest Schools](#) is Healthier Generation's prestigious annual recognition program that celebrates schools for implementing evidence-based practices to support the physical, mental, and social-emotional health needs of students, staff, and families.

Schools function best when students and educators are happy and healthy. After a child's home, school is the most important place to learn and practice healthy habits in order to be ready to succeed. America's Healthiest Schools is one of the nation's longest-running recognition programs honoring schools for the key role that they play in advancing the health and well-being of the entire learning community.

Thank you for championing healthier school environments and spreading the word in your community.

Quick Links

- [Flyer or One-Pager](#)
- [Award Homepage](#)
- [Application Resources](#), including [presentation slides](#)
- [Award Guide](#)
- [Healthier Generation Action Center](#)
- [Member Engagement & Support Team](#)

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Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Why do healthy schools matter?

Schools function best when students and educators are happy and healthy. [America's Healthiest Schools](#) honors schools for the key role that they play in advancing the health and well-being of the entire learning community.

What is America's Healthiest Schools?

[America's Healthiest Schools](#) is a prestigious annual recognition program that celebrates schools for implementing evidence-based practices to support the physical, mental, and social-emotional health needs of students, staff, and families.

Schools may apply for recognition in up to nine topic areas:

1. Supporting School Health Services
2. Implementing Local School Wellness Policy
3. Improving Nutrition & Food Access
4. Bolstering Physical Education & Activity
5. Enriching Health Education
6. Strengthening Social-Emotional Health & Learning
7. Promoting Tobacco-Free Schools
8. Cultivating Staff Well-Being
9. Increasing Family & Community Engagement

Why apply for America's Healthiest Schools?

Awardees earn national recognition in addition to a digital award package to help share their accomplishment with the local community.

Who can apply for America's Healthiest Schools?

Any public or private school under the direction of a Local Educational Agency, Charter Management Organization (CMO), or Bureau of Indian Education in the United States is eligible to apply for recognition as one of America's Healthiest Schools, including elementary, middle, and high schools.

Early childhood centers, virtual, and non-traditional schools may apply in the topic areas applicable to their learning environment. Schools may apply each year, and there is no limit to how many schools can apply and be awarded.

School administrators, teachers, or school staff need to complete the online application.

School teams may apply for recognition in one or more topics areas—up to nine total. School system staff may provide professional learning and implementation support for the award criteria.

How can my school team apply for America's Healthiest Schools?

1. Decide which topic area(s) to apply for using the [America's Healthiest Schools Readiness Tool](#).
2. Gather the required evidence listed in the [Award Guide](#).
3. Submit the 2024 Award Application by April 16 in the [Healthier Generation Action Center](#).

What is the review process and timeline?

After the application closes, Healthier Generation's team of national subject matter experts verify the implementation of the award criteria included in each application. Schools that meet the criteria will be informed during the summer, and the [annual list of America's Healthiest Schools](#) will be announced in the fall.

What if I have a question or need support?

The Healthier Generation team provides technical assistance, training, and resources to health champions, like you, to support equitable whole-child health.

Call 888-543-4584, [email](#), or schedule a [virtual chat](#) with our [Member Engagement & Support Team](#) or your Program Manager. For more information, visit the [Award homepage](#).

Sample newsletter blurb

Has your school implemented evidence-based practices in physical, mental, or social-emotional health? Healthier Generation is accepting applications for [2024 America's Healthiest Schools](#).

School teams may apply for one or more topic areas to celebrate their outstanding efforts to support the health and well-being of students, staff, and families. The deadline to apply is April 16. Get started with the [America's Healthiest Schools Readiness Tool](#).

Sample social media messages

Is your school one of America's #HealthiestSchools? Apply now to be recognized in up to 9 topic areas for advancing the health and well-being of students, staff, and families:

<https://www.healthiergeneration.org/award> @HealthierGen

Has your school implemented evidence-based practices in physical, mental, or social-emotional health? Apply now to be recognized as one of America's #HealthiestSchools:

<https://www.healthiergeneration.org/award> @HealthierGen

Sample email to school administrators & school wellness teams

Subject: Get nationally recognized as one of America's Healthiest Schools

Hello _____,

Has your school implemented evidence-based practices in physical, mental, or social-emotional health? If so, you can now apply to be one of [America's Healthiest Schools](#).

Healthier Generation is now accepting 2024 award applications. School teams may apply for one or more topic areas to celebrate their outstanding efforts to advance the health and well-being of students, staff, and families. The deadline to apply is April 16.

How to apply to be one of [America's Healthiest Schools](#)?

1. Decide which topic area(s) to include in your application using the [America's Healthiest Schools Readiness Tool](#).
2. Gather the required evidence with your school team. [Download the Award Guide](#).
3. Submit your 2024 Award Application in the [Healthier Generation Action Center](#).

If I can support you in any way as your school team starts the application process, please let me know. Also, reach out to the Healthier Generation team. Call (888) 543-4584, e-mail awards@healthiergeneration.org, or [schedule a virtual chat](#).

Thank you, _____

Sample agenda for award application workshop with school teams (1 hour)

Hosting an in-person or virtual workshop or attending a principals' meeting is a great way to encourage multiple school teams to start their award applications.

District staff or a community partner may invite a school representative, such as the principal, members of the school leadership team, or school health committee to attend.

Prior to the meeting you can [set up an online meeting](#) with a Healthier Generation team member to walk school teams through the application and get their questions answered.

Ensure participants will have access to a laptop or computer and an internet connection, so they can start their application during the workshop with their [Healthier Generation Action Center](#) account.

Invitation to school teams and/or school administrators to award application workshop:

Become One of America's Healthiest Schools - Start Your 2024 Award Application
[Insert Day of the Week, Month and Date, Time]

We know you've worked hard this year to prioritize the health needs of your students, staff, and families, but did you know that could make you one of [America's Healthiest Schools](#)?

Healthier Generation's prestigious, annual recognition program celebrates schools for implementing evidence-based practices to support the physical, mental, and social-emotional health needs of the learning community.

During this informational meeting, you'll start your school team's award application and get your questions answered. Applications must be submitted by April 16, 2024. **Please bring a laptop and join your school team in the [Healthier Generation Action Center](#).**

Any public or private school under the direction of a Local Educational Agency, Charter Management Organization (CMO), or Bureau of Indian Education in the United States is eligible to apply for recognition as one of America's Healthiest Schools, including elementary, middle, and high schools.

To receive an award, all criteria in a single topic area must be "Fully in Place" during the 2023-24 school year. School teams may apply in one, more than one, or all nine topic areas. For more information, [download the Award Guide](#).

Sample agenda

1. Introduce America's Healthiest Schools (5 minutes)

- [Presentation slides](#) with speakers notes.

2. Choose topic area(s) (20 minutes)

- Play the [Video Tour of America's Healthiest Schools Readiness Tool](#).
- Have participants log in (or create an account, if needed) to the [Healthier Generation Action Center](#) and join their school team.
- Ask participants to complete the [America's Healthiest Schools Readiness Tool](#) to decide which topic area(s) to include in their application.

3. Start the application (20 minutes)

- Play the [Video Tour of the Award Application](#).
- Ask school teams to complete the School Information and Contact Information sections. Provide participants with the district's wellness policy/student health and communication/media relations representative name and email address.

- *Instruct teams to select “include” or “exclude” for each of the nine topic areas.*
- *Then, teams will enter information to verify the award criteria are fully in place for this school year by describing implementation methods or improvements made and uploading procedures or communication sent to students and families.*

4. Plan next steps (5 minutes)

- *Direct school teams to assign team members to provide required evidence for each award criteria using the Team’s Notes column in the [Award Guide](#).*

5. Share-out (8 minutes)

- *Ask each school team to share their responses to the following questions to increase accountability and foster collaboration.*
 1. *How many topic areas will your school team include in your application?*
 2. *When will your school team submit your application?*

6. Close (2 minutes)

- *Remind school teams how to get help to complete their application by calling (888) 543-4584, emailing awards@healthiergeneration.org, or contacting their Program Manager.*

District Team Members may review award applications before school teams submit their application by going to each school’s organization listed at the bottom of their Dashboard in the [Action Center](#).

Additional strategies to encourage school teams to apply

Set up an online meeting with our Member Engagement & Support Team

[Schedule a virtual chat](#) with a Healthier Generation team member and your school team to walk through the application and get your questions answered. You can also call (888) 543-4584, or e-mail awards@healthiergeneration.org.

Ask local communication organizations to help school teams with their application

The local health department, PTA/PTO, or other community organizations want to help school teams verify implementation of evidence-based practices and celebrate their accomplishments. Connect community partners with school teams that have implemented healthier practices but may lack the staff capacity to complete the application.

Send out helpful calendar invites for school teams

These can include reminders of when the application is due and office hours to answer questions and help school team members finish the application.

Send out a monthly e-blast or newsletter update

Include a [blurb](#) in a district or community email digest or newsletter highlighting how to apply in one of

the nine topic areas or include a [success story](#) from a previous awardee. Shout out school teams that have already started or submitted their application.

Create and send out a tailored version of the Award Guide

The [Award Guide](#) outlines the award criteria and required evidence for each of the nine health topics. Add links and notes in the Team’s Notes column. Collect the evidence in a common drive to share with your school teams. For example, a survey that gathered family input that was distributed widely through each school.

Save your updated Award Guide with implementation notes and link to documentation. Then, share your customized Award Guide with administrators and school health teams or wellness committees to help them apply.

Analyze School Reports in the Healthier Generation Action Center

Set a deadline for school teams to complete the America’s Healthiest Schools Readiness Tool. The 29 questions help teams know which of the nine topic areas to include in their award application.

District Team Members can navigate to the Reports section in the [Action Center](#). Then, click on ‘View School Reports’. Next, click on ‘America’s Healthiest Schools Readiness Tool’ under the list of assessments. Download or print the report as a CSV file, Excel spreadsheet, or PDF printout.

Review the data to notice which evidence-based practices most schools have fully in place and where there are opportunities for improvement. Use this information to encourage school teams to apply in one or more topics. To receive an award, all criteria in a single topic area must be “Fully in Place” during the 2023-24 school year before the submission deadline on April 16, 2024.

The schools’ responses provide valuable input when deciding on district’s priorities and what support and training can be provided to implement healthier practices in the future. [Learn more about how to use district-level reports.](#)

Message to school teams to complete America’s Healthiest Schools Readiness Tool:

I know your school team has implemented many practices to support the health and well-being of students, staff, and families.

To help us find out if your school is ready to apply to be one of [America’s Healthiest Schools](#), please answer the 29 evidence-based questions in [America’s Healthiest Schools Readiness Tool](#) by [insert deadline].

You will need to create a free account and join your school team in the [Healthier Generation Action Center](#). Watch this [3-minute video](#) on how to use the readiness tool.

Need help? Call (888) 543-4584, e-mail awards@healthiergeneration.org, or [schedule a virtual chat](#).



AMERICA'S HEALTHIEST SCHOOLS

Recognizing schools who lead the way in health and wellness

Healthier Generation's signature award program honors schools for the key role they play in advancing the health and well-being of students, staff, and families.

The honor of being named one of America's Healthiest Schools is seen by millions nationwide through awardees' promotion of the distinction through national media and in their local community.

Apply for recognition in up to nine topic areas

All criteria in a single topic area must be "Fully in Place" during the 2023-24 school year before the submission deadline.



Increasing Family & Community Engagement

presented by *Kohl's*

Gather input from the school community, engage parents and caregivers in meaningful ways to support student successes, and connect families to resources related to social drivers of health



Strengthening Social-Emotional Health & Learning

presented by *Kaiser Permanente*

Implement an evidenced-based social-emotional learning curriculum, positively motivate students, and implement opportunities for students to regulate their emotions and learn from their mistakes



Improving Nutrition & Food Access

presented by *Del Monte Foods*

Implement best practices to maximize school meal participation, meaningfully collaborate with teachers on nutrition education, and partner with community organizations to increase food access for students



Cultivating Staff Well-Being

presented by *Kaiser Permanente*

Actively promote relationship building with staff, foster a culture of gratitude, and provide resources to support breaks for all staff during the instructional day



Implementing Local School Wellness Policy

Implement the district's wellness policy with the support of a diverse set of stakeholders, set measurable goals, and reflect on progress, successes, and challenges



Promoting Tobacco-Free Schools

Address tobacco use in youth through prevention education and cessation intervention and actively engages youth in promoting a tobacco-free campus



Enriching Health Education

Provide health education to all students, using an evidence-based curriculum and prioritize opportunities for students to practice skills to maintain and improve their health



Supporting School Health Services

Address chronic health conditions, routinely conduct health screenings, and provide a pathway for students with health concerns to receive additional support from the school or community-based providers



Bolstering Physical Education & Activity

Provide physical education using an evidence-based curriculum and integrate physical activity opportunities throughout the school day with all students, including students with special health needs



Schools that achieve recognition in all nine topic areas are designated All-Star Awardees.



Application Deadline: April 16, 2024

Applications must be complete in order to be submitted for consideration.

Start your application today at HealthierGeneration.org/apply

