



Sacred Heart Nativity School Wellness Policy

Table of Contents

Preamble	2
School Wellness Committee	3
Wellness Policy Implementation, Monitoring, Accountability, and Community Engagement	3
Nutrition	5
Physical Activity	8
Other Activities that Promote Student Wellness	11
Appendix A: School Level Contacts	13

Sacred Heart Nativity School Wellness Policy

Preamble

Sacred Heart Nativity School (hereto referred to as the District) is committed to the optimal development of every student. The District believes that for students to have the opportunity to achieve personal, academic, developmental, and social success, we need to create positive, safe, and health-promoting learning environments at every level, in every setting, throughout the school year.

Research shows that two components, good nutrition and physical activity before, during, and after the school day, are strongly correlated with positive student outcomes. For example, student participation in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) School Breakfast Program is associated with higher grades and standardized test scores, lower absenteeism, and better performance on cognitive tasks.^{1,2,3,4,5,6,7} Conversely, less-than-adequate consumption of specific foods including fruits, vegetables, and dairy products, is associated with lower grades among^{8,9,10}

students. In addition, students who are physically active through active transport to and from school, recess, physical activity breaks, high-quality physical education, and extracurricular^{11,12,13,14}

activities – do better academically.

This policy outlines the District's approach to ensuring environments and opportunities for all students to practice healthy eating and physical activity behaviors throughout the school day. Specifically, this policy establishes goals and procedures to ensure that:

- Students in the District have access to healthy foods throughout the school day—both through reimbursable school meals and other foods available throughout the school campus—in accordance with Federal and state nutrition standards;
- Students receive quality nutrition education that helps them develop lifelong healthy eating behaviors;
- Students have opportunities to be physically active before, during, and after school;
- Schools engage in nutrition and physical activity promotion and other activities that promote student wellness;
- School staff are encouraged and supported to practice healthy nutrition and physical activity behaviors in and out of school;
- The community is engaged in supporting the work of the District in creating continuity between school and other settings for students and staff to practice lifelong healthy habits; and
- The District establishes and maintains an infrastructure for management, oversight, implementation, communication about, and monitoring of the policy and its established goals and objectives.

I. School Wellness Committee

Committee Role and Membership

The District will convene a district wellness committee (hereto referred to as the DWC) that meets at least four times per year to establish goals for and oversee school health and wellness policies and programs, including development, implementation, and periodic review and update of this district-level wellness policy (heretofore referred to as “wellness policy”).

DWC membership will include (to the extent possible): parents/guardians, students, district and school administrators, physical education teachers, classroom teachers, school health professionals, school support personnel, Child Nutrition Services staff members, school board members, and community health professionals. To the extent possible, the DWC will include representatives from each school building and reflect the diversity of the community.

Each school within the District will designate a School Wellness Committee (SWC) that convenes to review school-level issues, in coordination with the DWC. Each school will specify a school wellness policy coordinator, who will ensure compliance with the policy. Refer to Appendix A for a list of school level wellness policy coordinators.

II. Wellness Policy Implementation, Monitoring, Accountability, and Community Engagement

Implementation Plan

The District will develop and maintain a plan for implementation to manage and coordinate the execution of this wellness policy. The plan delineates roles, responsibilities, actions, and timelines specific to each school, and includes information about who will be responsible to make what change, by how much, where, and when, as well as specific goals and objectives for nutrition standards for all foods and beverages available on the school campus, food and beverage marketing, nutrition promotion and education, physical activity, physical education, and other school-based activities that promote student wellness. It is recommended that the school use the [Healthy Schools Program online tools](#) to complete a school level assessment based on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s School Health Index, create an action plan that fosters implementation, and generate an annual progress report.

This wellness policy and the progress reports can be found at: insert URL for WEBSITE.

Recordkeeping

The District will retain records to document compliance with the requirements of the wellness policy at insert physical location and/or on insert electronic location.

Documentation maintained in this location will include but will not be limited to:

- The written wellness policy;
- Documentation demonstrating compliance with community involvement requirements, including (1) Efforts to actively solicit DWC membership from the required stakeholder groups; and (2) These groups’ participation in the development, implementation, and periodic review and update of the wellness policy;

- Documentation of annual policy progress reports for each school under its jurisdiction; and
- Documentation of the triennial assessment* of the policy for each school under its jurisdiction;
- Documentation demonstrating compliance with public notification requirements, including: (1) Methods by which the wellness policy, annual progress reports, and triennial assessments are made available to the public; and (2) Efforts to actively notify families about the availability of wellness policy.

Annual Progress Reports

The District will compile and publish an annual report to share basic information about the wellness policy and report on the progress of the schools within the district in meeting wellness goals. This annual report will be published around the same time each year in May and will include information from each school within the District. This report will include, but is not limited to:

- The website address for the wellness policy and/or how the public can receive/access a copy of the wellness policy;
- A description of each school's progress in meeting the wellness policy goals;
- A summary of each school's events or activities related to wellness policy implementation;
- The name, position title, and contact information of the designated District policy leader(s) identified in Section I; and
- Information on how individuals and the public can get involved with the DWC or SWC.

The annual report will be available in English and Spanish.

The District and individual schools will actively notify households/families of the availability of the annual report.

The DWC, in collaboration with individual schools/SWCs will establish and monitor goals and objectives for the District's schools, specific and appropriate for each instructional unit (elementary or secondary OR elementary, middle, and high school, as appropriate), for each of the content-specific components listed in Sections III-V of this policy.

The District will track, analyze, and report on any correlations between improvements in health-promoting environments with education outcomes, such as absenteeism, disciplinary referrals, test scores, average grades, or health measures such as consumption of whole grains, fruits, or vegetables through the school meal programs or BMI, or psycho-social measures such as self-reported "connectedness," or other school climate measures. The District is encouraged to collaborate with local research institutions and universities.

The District will also track and annually report other related information, such as findings from food safety inspections, aggregate participation in school meals programs, income reported from competitive food sales, fundraising revenues, and other such information, as feasible.

Triennial Progress Assessments

At least once every three years, the District will evaluate compliance with the wellness policy to assess the implementation of the policy and include:

- The extent to which schools under the jurisdiction of the District are in compliance with the wellness policy;

- The extent to which the District's wellness policy compares to the Alliance for a Healthier Generation's model wellness policy; and
- A description of the progress made in attaining the goals of the District's wellness policy.

The person responsible for managing the triennial assessment and contact information is the Supervisor of Child Nutrition Services.

The DWC, in collaboration with individual schools, will monitor schools' compliance with this wellness policy.

The District will actively notify households/families of the availability of the triennial progress report.

Revisions and Updating the Policy

The DWC will update or modify the wellness policy based on the results of the annual progress reports and triennial assessments, and/or as District priorities change; community needs change; wellness goals are met; new health science, information, and technology emerges; and new Federal or state guidance or standards are issued. **The wellness policy will be assessed and updated as indicated at least every three years, following the triennial assessment.**

Community Involvement, Outreach, and Communications

The District is committed to being responsive to community input, which begins with awareness of the wellness policy. The District will actively communicate ways in which representatives of DWC and others can participate in the development, implementation, and periodic review and update of the wellness policy through a variety of means appropriate for that district. The District will also inform parents of the improvements that have been made to school meals and compliance with school meal standards, availability of child nutrition programs and how to apply, and a description of and compliance with Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards. The District will use electronic mechanisms, such as email or displaying notices on the district's website, as well as non-electronic mechanisms, such as newsletters, presentations to parents, or sending information home to parents, to ensure that all families are actively notified of the content of, implementation of, and updates to the wellness policy, as well as how to get involved and support the policy. The District will ensure that communications are culturally and linguistically appropriate to the community, and accomplished through means similar to other ways that the district and individual schools are communicating other important school information with parents.

The District will actively notify the public about the content of or any updates to the wellness policy annually, at a minimum. The District will also use these mechanisms to inform the community about the availability of the annual and triennial reports.

III. Nutrition

School Meals

Our school district is committed to serving healthy meals to children, with plenty of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and fat-free and low-fat milk; moderate in sodium, low in saturated fat, and zero grams *trans* fat per serving (nutrition label or manufacturer's specification); and to meet

the nutrition needs of school children within their calorie requirements. The school meal programs aim to improve the diet and health of school children, help mitigate childhood obesity, model healthy eating to support the development of lifelong healthy eating patterns, and support healthy choices while accommodating cultural food preferences and special dietary needs.

All schools within the District participate in USDA child nutrition programs, including the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), the School Breakfast Program (SBP), the Afterschool Snack Program (ASP), the At-Risk Afterschool Meal Program (ASMP), the Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Program (FFVP), and the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP). The District also operates and/or supports additional nutrition-related programs and activities including Farm to School Programs, school gardens, and Breakfast in the Classroom. All schools within the District are committed to offering school meals through the NSLP and SBP programs, and other applicable Federal child nutrition programs, that:

- Are accessible to all students;
- Are appealing and attractive to children;
- Are served in clean and pleasant settings;
- Meet or exceed current nutrition requirements established by local, state, and Federal statutes and regulations. (The District offers reimbursable school meals that meet [USDA nutrition standards](#).)
- Promote healthy food and beverage choices

In addition,

- Menus will be posted on the District website or individual school websites and will include nutrient content and ingredients.
- Menus will be created/reviewed by a Registered Dietitian or other certified nutrition professional.
- School meals will be administered by a team of child nutrition professionals.
- The District child nutrition program will accommodate students with special dietary needs.
- Students will be allowed at least 10 minutes to eat breakfast and at least 15 minutes to eat lunch, counting from the time they have received their meal and are seated.
- Students will be served lunch at a reasonable and appropriate time of day.
- Schools will be encouraged to schedule the recess period before lunch to better support learning and healthy eating.
- Participation in Federal child nutrition programs will be promoted among students and families to help ensure that families know what programs are available in their children's school.

Staff Qualifications and Professional Development

All school nutrition program directors, managers, and staff will meet or exceed hiring and annual continuing education/training requirements in the [USDA professional standards for child nutrition professionals](#). These school nutrition personnel will refer to [USDA's Professional Standards for School Nutrition Standards website](#) to search for training that meets their learning needs.

Water

To promote hydration, free unflavored drinking water will be available to all students throughout the school day. The District will make drinking water available where school meals are served during mealtimes. All water sources, including drinking fountains, will be maintained on a regular basis to ensure good hygiene standards. In addition, students will be allowed to bring and carry (approved) water bottles filled with only water with them throughout the day.

Competitive Foods and Beverages

The District is committed to ensuring that all foods and beverages available to students on the school campus during the school day support healthy eating.

To support healthy food choices and improve student health and well-being, all foods and beverages outside the reimbursable school meal programs that are sold to students on the school campus during the school day will meet or exceed the USDA Smart Snacks nutrition standards as well as the Arizona Nutrition Standards (ANS). These standards will apply in all locations and through all services where foods and beverages are sold, which may include, but are not limited to, a la carte options in cafeterias, vending machines, school stores, and snack or food carts. A summary of the standards and information are available at: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/healthierschoolday/tools-schools-smart-snacks> and <http://www.azed.gov/health-nutrition/the-arizona-nutrition-standards-and-competitive-foods/>. The Alliance for a Healthier Generation provides a set of tools to assist with implementation of Smart Snacks available at www.healthiergeneration.org/smartsnacks.

Celebrations and Rewards

It is recommended that all foods offered on the school campus will meet or exceed the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards and the ANS including:

1. Celebrations and parties. A list of healthy party ideas for parents and teachers, including non-food celebration ideas is available from the [Alliance for a Healthier Generation](#) and from the [USDA](#).
2. Classroom snacks brought by parents. The District will provide to parents a [list of foods and beverages that meet Smart Snacks nutrition standards](#); and
3. Rewards and incentives. The District will provide teachers and other relevant school staff a [list of alternative ways to reward children](#). Foods and beverages will not be used as a reward, or withheld as punishment for any reason, such as for performance or behavior.

Fundraising

Foods and beverages that meet or exceed the USDA Smart Snacks in Schools nutrition standards and ANS may be served or sold through fundraisers on the school campus. However, schools will use non-food fundraisers and encourage those promoting physical activity (such as walk-a-thons, jump rope for heart, fun runs, etc.) when possible. The District will make available to parents and teachers a list of healthy fundraising ideas.

Nutrition Promotion

Nutrition promotion and education positively influence lifelong eating behaviors by using evidence-based techniques and nutrition messages, and by creating food environments that encourage healthy nutrition choices and encourage participation in school meal programs. Students and staff will receive consistent nutrition messages throughout schools, classrooms, gymnasiums, and cafeterias. The District will promote healthy food and beverage choices for all by:

- Implementing evidence-based healthy food promotion techniques throughout the school
- Promoting foods and beverages that meet the USDA Smart Snacks in School and ANS nutrition standards.

Nutrition Education

The District aims to teach, model, encourage, and support healthy eating by students. Schools will strive to provide nutrition education and engage in nutrition promotion that:

- Is designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to promote and protect their health;
- Is part of not only health education classes, but also integrated into other classroom instruction through subjects such as math, science, language arts, social sciences, and elective subjects;
- Include enjoyable, developmentally-appropriate, culturally-relevant, and participatory activities, such as cooking demonstrations or lessons, promotions, taste-testing, farm visits, and school gardens;
- Promote fruits, vegetables, whole-grain products, low-fat and fat-free dairy products, and healthy food preparation methods;
- Emphasize caloric balance between food intake and energy expenditure (promotes physical activity/exercise);
- Link with school meal programs, cafeteria nutrition promotion activities, school gardens, Farm to School programs, other school foods, and nutrition-related community services;
- Include nutrition education training for teachers and other staff.

Essential Healthy Eating Topics in Wellness Education

The following essential topics on healthy eating will be included in wellness education.

- Eating a variety of foods every day
- Eating more fruits, vegetables, and whole grain products
- Choosing foods that are low in fat, saturated fat, and cholesterol and do not contain *trans* fat
- Choosing foods and beverages with little added sugars
- Eating more calcium-rich foods
- Reducing sodium intake
- Importance of water consumption
- Importance of eating breakfast
- Reading and using USDA's food labels
- Balancing food intake and physical activity
- The relationship between healthy eating and personal health and disease prevention
- Social influences on healthy eating, including media, family, peers, and culture

IV. Physical Activity

Children and adolescents should participate in 60 minutes of physical activity every day. The district is committed to providing: physical education, recess, classroom-based physical activity, and out-of-school time activities.

Physical activity during the school day (including but not limited to recess, physical activity breaks, or physical education) **will not be withheld** as punishment for any reason. (This does not include participation on sports teams that have specific academic requirements.) The district will provide teachers and other school staff with a [list of ideas](#) for alternative ways to discipline students.

To the extent practicable, the District will ensure that its grounds and facilities are safe and that equipment is available to students to be active. The District will conduct necessary inspections and repairs.

Through formal joint or shared use agreements, indoor and outdoor physical activity facilities will be open to students, their families, and the community outside of school hours. Inventories of physical activity supplies and equipment will be maintained.

Physical Education

The District will provide students with physical education, using an age-appropriate, sequential physical education curriculum consistent with national and state standards for physical education. The physical education curriculum will promote the benefits of a physically active lifestyle and will help students develop skills to engage in lifelong healthy habits, as well as incorporate essential health education concepts (discussed in the “Essential Physical Activity Topics in Health Education” subsection).

All District students in each grade will receive physical education for at least 45 minutes per week throughout the school year. The District will strive to increase this amount to the national recommendation of 150 minutes for grades K-6 and 225 minutes for grades 7-8. Students will be moderately to vigorously active for at least 50% of class time during most physical education class sessions. The District will make appropriate accommodations to allow for equitable participation for all students and will adapt physical education classes and equipment as necessary.

The District physical education program will promote student physical fitness through individualized fitness and activity assessments (via the [Presidential Youth Fitness Program](#) or other appropriate assessment tool) and will use criterion-based reporting for each student.

All physical education classes will be taught by licensed teachers who are certified or endorsed to teach physical education. Waivers, exemptions, or substitutions for physical education classes will not be permitted. Students will be excused from class only for extenuating circumstances (i.e. an IEP, 504 plan, doctor’s note). All physical education teachers will be required to participate in at least one professional development in physical education session a year.

Essential Physical Activity Topics in Wellness Education

The following essential topics on physical activity will be included in wellness education.

- How physical activity can contribute to a healthy weight
- How physical activity can contribute to the academic learning process
- How an inactive lifestyle contributes to chronic disease
- Decreasing sedentary activities
- Preventing injury during physical activity
- Weather-related safety, for example, avoiding heat stroke, hypothermia, and sunburn while being physically active
- Phases of an exercise session, that is, warm up, workout, and cool down
- How much physical activity is enough
- Overcoming barriers to physical activity
- How to resist peer pressure that discourages physical activity
- How to find valid information or services related to physical activity and fitness
- Opportunities for physical activity in the community

Recess (Elementary)

All schools will provide at least **15 minutes of recess** for all grade levels on all or most days during the school year. Recess **will not be withheld** as punishment for any reason. If recess is offered before lunch, schools will have appropriate hand-washing facilities and/or hand-sanitizing mechanisms located just inside/outside the cafeteria to ensure proper hygiene prior to eating and students are required to use these mechanisms before eating. Hand-washing time will be built in to the recess transition period/timeframe before students enter the cafeteria.

Outdoor recess will be offered when weather is feasible for outdoor play. In the event that the school or district must conduct **indoor recess**, teachers and staff will follow the indoor recess guidelines that promote physical activity for students, to the extent practicable.

Recess will complement, not substitute, physical education class. Recess monitors or teachers will encourage students to be active, and will serve as role models by being physically active alongside the students whenever feasible.

Physical Activity Breaks (Elementary and Secondary)

The District recognizes that students are more attentive and ready to learn if provided with periodic breaks when they can be physically active or stretch. Thus, students will be provided **periodic opportunities** to be active or to stretch throughout the day on all or most days during a typical school week. The District recommends teachers provide short (3-5 minute) physical activity breaks to students during and between classroom time. These physical activity breaks will complement, not substitute, for physical education class, recess, and class transition periods.

The District will provide resources and links to resources, tools, and technology with ideas for physical activity breaks. Resources and ideas are available through [USDA](#) and the [Alliance for a Healthier Generation](#).

Active Academics

Teachers will incorporate movement and kinesthetic learning approaches into “core” subject instruction when possible (e.g., science, math, language arts, social studies, and others) and do their part to limit sedentary behavior during the school day.

The District will support classroom teachers incorporating physical activity and employing kinesthetic learning approaches into core subjects by providing annual professional development opportunities and resources, including information on leading activities, activity options, as well as making available background material on the connections between learning and movement.

Teachers will serve as role models by being physically active alongside the students whenever feasible.

Before and After School Activities

The District offers opportunities for students to participate in physical activity either before and/or after the school day (or both) through a variety of methods.

Active Transport

The District will support active transport to and from school, such as walking or biking. The District will encourage this behavior through activities such as:

- Designation of safe or preferred routes to school
- Promotional activities such as participation in International Walk to School Week, National Walk and Bike to School Week
- Secure storage facilities for bicycles and helmets (e.g., shed, cage, fenced area)
- Instruction on walking/bicycling safety provided to students
- Promotion of safe routes program to students, staff, and parents via newsletters, websites, local newspaper
- Crosswalks on streets leading to schools

V. Other Activities that Promote Student Wellness

The District will strive to integrate wellness activities across the entire school setting, not just in the cafeteria, other food and beverage venues, and physical activity facilities. The District will endeavor to coordinate and integrate other initiatives related to physical activity, physical education, nutrition, and other wellness components so all efforts are complementary, not duplicative, and work towards the same set of goals and objectives promoting student well-being, optimal development, and strong educational outcomes.

All school-sponsored events will adhere to the wellness policy. All school-sponsored wellness events will include physical activity opportunities.

Community Partnerships

The District will develop, enhance, and continue relationships with community partners in support of this wellness policy's implementation. Existing and new community partnerships and sponsorships will be reviewed to ensure that they are consistent with the wellness policy and its goals.

Community Health Promotion and Engagement

The District will promote to parents/caregivers, families, and the general community the benefits of and approaches for healthy eating and physical activity throughout the school year. Families will be informed and invited to participate in school-sponsored activities and will receive information about health promotion efforts.

As described in the "Community Involvement, Outreach, and Communications" subsection, the District will use electronic mechanisms (such as email, the District website, and social media), as well as non-electronic mechanisms, (such as newsletters, presentations to parents, or sending information home to parents), to ensure that all families are actively notified of opportunities to participate in school-sponsored activities and receive information about health promotion efforts.

Staff Wellness and Health Promotion

The District will strive to implement strategies to support staff in actively promoting and modeling healthy eating and physical activity behaviors. The District encourages staff member participation

in health promotion programs and will provide information for staff members on healthy eating/weight management programs.

Professional Learning

When feasible, the District will offer annual professional learning opportunities and resources for staff to increase knowledge and skills about promoting healthy behaviors in the classroom and school (e.g., increasing the use of kinesthetic teaching approaches or incorporating nutrition lessons into math class). Professional learning will help District staff understand the connections between academics and health and the ways in which health and wellness are integrated into ongoing district reform or academic improvement plans/efforts.

Appendix A: School Level Contacts

School	Name	Title	Email Address	Role

Definitions:

School Day – midnight the night before to 30 minutes after the end of the instructional day.

Extended School Day – time before and after school when activities such as intramural sports, band, choir, drama, and tutoring occur

School Campus – areas that are owned or leased by the school and used at any time for school-related activities

¹ Bradley, B, Green, AC. Do Health and Education Agencies in the United States Share Responsibility for Academic Achievement and Health? A Review of 25 years of Evidence About the Relationship of Adolescents' Academic Achievement and Health Behaviors, *Journal of Adolescent Health*. 2013; 52(5):523-532.

² Meyers AF, Sampson AE, Weitzman M, Rogers BL, Kayne H. School breakfast program and school performance. *American Journal of Diseases of Children*. 1989;143(10):1234-1239.

³ Murphy JM. Breakfast and learning: an updated review. *Current Nutrition & Food Science*. 2007; 3:3-36.

⁴ Murphy JM, Pagano ME, Nachmani J, Sperling P, Kane S, Kleinman RE. The relationship of school breakfast to psychosocial and academic functioning: Cross-sectional and longitudinal observations in an inner-city school sample. *Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine*. 1998;152(9):899-907.

⁵ Pollitt E, Mathews R. Breakfast and cognition: an integrative summary. *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*. 1998; 67(4), 804S-813S.

⁶ Rampersaud GC, Pereira MA, Girard BL, Adams J, Metz J. Breakfast habits, nutritional status, body weight, and academic performance in children and adolescents. *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*. 2005;105(5):743-760, quiz 761-762.

⁷ Taras, H. Nutrition and student performance at school. *Journal of School Health*. 2005;75(6):199-213.

⁸ MacLellan D, Taylor J, Wood K. Food intake and academic performance among adolescents. *Canadian Journal of Dietetic Practice and Research*. 2008;69(3):141-144.

⁹ Neumark-Sztainer D, Story M, Dixon LB, Resnick MD, Blum RW. Correlates of inadequate consumption of dairy products among adolescents. *Journal of Nutrition Education*. 1997;29(1):12-20.

¹⁰ Neumark-Sztainer D, Story M, Resnick MD, Blum RW. Correlates of inadequate fruit and vegetable consumption among adolescents. *Preventive Medicine*. 1996;25(5):497-505.

¹¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The association between school-based physical activity, including physical education, and academic performance. Atlanta, GA: US Department of Health and Human Services, 2010.

¹² Singh A, Uijtendewilligne L, Twisk J, van Mechelen W, Chinapaw M. Physical activity and performance at school: A systematic review of the literature including a methodological quality assessment. *Arch Pediatr Adolesc Med*, 2012; 166(1):49-55.

¹³ Haapala E, Poikkeus A-M, Kukkonen-Harjula K, Tompuri T, Lintu N, Väistö J, Leppänen P, Laaksonen D, Lindi V,

Lakka T. Association of physical activity and sedentary behavior with academic skills – A follow-up study among primary school children. PLoS ONE, 2014; 9(9): e107031.

¹⁴ Hillman C, Pontifex M, Castelli D, Khan N, Raine L, Scudder M, Drollette E, Moore R, Wu C-T, Kamijo K. Effects of the FITKids randomized control trial on executive control and brain function. Pediatrics 2014; 134(4): e1063-1071.

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the [USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, \(AD-3027\)\(link is external\)](#) found online at: [https://www.usda.gov/oascr/how-to-file-a-program-discrimination-complaint\(link is external\)](https://www.usda.gov/oascr/how-to-file-a-program-discrimination-complaint(link is external)), and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

- (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
- (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or
- (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov(link sends e-mail).

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.