



Mayor's Health & Fitness Council Program Design Toolkit

HOW TO DEVELOP PROGRAMS TO SUPPORT HEALTH & WELLNESS IN
YOUR LOCAL COMMUNITY

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Austin Public Health

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The Austin Public Health MHFC Program Toolkit

- ✓ This toolkit is designed to help you develop your own MHFC programs by:
 - Describing how Austin Public Health supports the Mayor’s Health & Fitness Council.
 - Highlighting how MHFC supports sustainable policy changes in workplace and school wellness.
 - Sharing best and promising practices in developing and implementing a partner certification and recognition program.

- X The toolkit is not designed to help with the formation of an MHFC (in other words, a governing board or non-profit organization). For more information about the functioning of the MHFC and its board, visit the website at <https://www.mhfcaustin.org/board-of-directors/> or email info@mhfcaustin.org with the subject line – “Interest in Forming an MHFC and Board of Directors”.

Introduction

The Austin Mayor's Health and Fitness Council (MHFC)

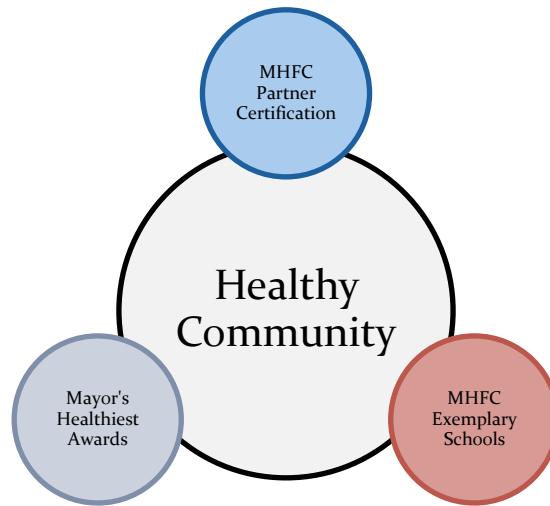
Need for the MHFC

In Austin/Travis County over 60% of residents are overweight or obese, 11% are current smokers, 10% have been diagnosed with diabetes, and 22% report no leisure-time physical activity (Texas BRFSS 2017). Additionally, 80% of adults do not eat the recommended number of fruits and vegetables each day, and 64% consume one or more sugar-sweetened beverage each day. Workplaces and schools are key partners in health promotion. The Austin Mayor's Health and Fitness Council (MHFC), originally launched in 2004, coordinates lasting and far-reaching organizational policy changes towards preventing tobacco use and promoting breastfeeding, healthy eating, and physical activity in workplaces and schools across Austin/Travis County.

MHFC Programming

The MHFC's programs comprise the following: 1) a workplace Partner Certification program, 2) an Exemplary Schools Program, and 3) a Mayor's Healthiest Awards program to promote, enact, and celebrate organizational policy change across Austin/Travis County workplaces and schools.

- The **MHFC Workplace Partner Certification Program** incorporates four workplace policy change areas: tobacco-free, health education/preventive services (including Texas DSHS Mother-Friendly Worksites), nutrition and healthy eating, and physical activity promotion and provides Bronze, Silver, and Gold levels of certification.
- The **MHFC Exemplary School Program** incorporates four required areas of school wellness policy and practice in Texas – health education, physical education and physical activity, nutrition, and community involvement.
- The **Mayor's Healthiest Awards Program** celebrates innovative and holistic approach to health and wellness in workplaces and schools.



Role of Austin Public Health

Austin Public Health (APH), the health department serving the residents of the city of Austin and Travis County, plays a supporting role to the programs of the Austin MHFC, including education and assistance to all workplaces and schools on policy implementation and scoring and data analysis for certification applications and the awards program.

Summary of Impact

As of 2018, 44 workplaces in Austin have been certified, with a total estimated reach of over 95,000 employees. Eighty-seven schools from three school districts were certified as exemplary in 2018, impacting an estimated 90,000 elementary and middle school students.

Background

PROGRAM HISTORY

2004-2007

Council formed/Austin Fitness Index developed

- Mayor's Fitness Council established
- Pilot Partner Certification Program begins – uses Austin Fitness Index to assess employee health status against HPHP 2010

2008 - 2010

Partner Certification launched

- Austin Business Group on Health established – employer-based leadership collaborative focused on “value based benefit design” and best practices.

2011-2013

Continued Growth for Partnerships

- Partner Certification Program expands to include Standard and Gold levels.
- MFC becomes Mayor's Health and Fitness Council (MHFC) & gains 501(c)3 status
- Adds Mother-Friendly Workplace policies to the criteria for the Partner Certification Program

2014-2016

Keeping Austin Healthy

- ABGOH hosts regular meetings for workplaces covering member-selected topics
- MHFC Partner Certification application updated to reflect 4 pillars of health: Tobacco-Free policies, Mother-Friendly policies, Nutrition and Healthy Eating policies, and Physical Activity promotion.

2016-2019

Mayor's Health & Fitness Awards Celebrates Excellence

- Partner Certification Program expands to include Bronze, Silver and Gold certification levels.
- Mayor's Healthiest Workplaces and Mayor's Healthiest Schools programs are launched

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MHFC & AUSTIN PUBLIC HEALTH

- The Austin MHFC is an independent 501(c)3 with a Board of Directors & an Advisory Council.
- Since the beginning, APH has had representation on the MHFC Board.
- Austin Public Health facilitates the Measurement & Review committee.
- APH staff provide programmatic and administrative support to the programs and initiatives of the Board.
- APH does not assist with any management or fiscal aspects of the non-profit or Board of MHFC.

GENERAL NEEDS FOR PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

The following list includes things you will need to consider or obtain during the development of your MHFC programs:

- Executive support** – Mayor, MHFC board and members, & community leaders
- Communications & Outreach** - to promote the MHFC and its programs
- Technical assistance**
 - To worksites
 - To schools
- Promotion**
- Funding** – for mini-grants, incentives, promotion and awards ceremony
- Online/website presence** – social media, website, online application
- Data and Scoring** – Measurement & Review or Scoring Committee (i.e. experts in workplace wellness, school wellness) and data analyst (for scoring validation)

How the MHFC Programs Work

All MHFC programs require an online application, technical assistance, scoring, and some type of recognition for certification or awards. We recommend the following:

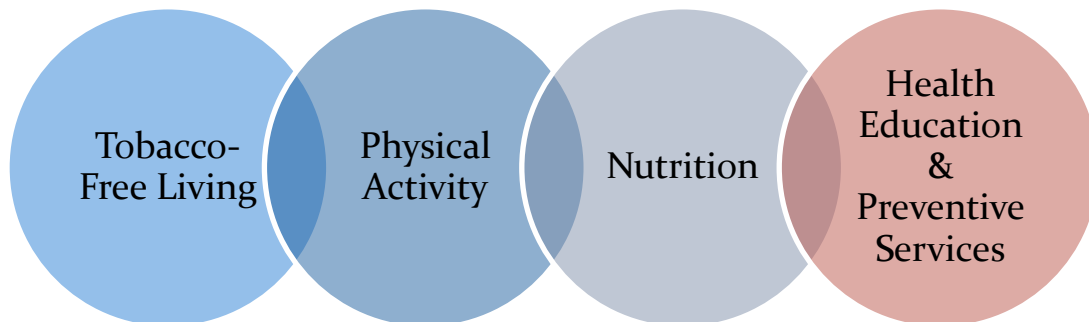
- **Online Application** for all programs
- **Technical assistance** to worksites and schools for 1) policy design and implementation and 2) application completion
- **Mayor's Health & Fitness Awards** ceremony held annually to acknowledge newly certified partners, exemplary schools & announce the Mayor's Healthiest winners

MHFC PROGRAM – FOUR PILLARS OF HEALTH

Using the four pillars of health as the backbone of worksite wellness policies and programs allows you to use evidence-based best practice for worksite wellness. This structure facilitates worksite policy development and implementation as well as assessment and scoring for certification and recognition.

The 4 Pillars of Health

The four pillars of health include: tobacco-free living, nutrition, physical activity, and health education/preventive services, including mother-friendly. Workplaces that support these four areas of health create a work culture devoted to assisting employees achieve better health at their job – a place where the average working adult spends most of their daylight hours. Higher perceived workplace health support for employees is associated with higher work productivity.¹ This means that employees who feel that their job is supportive of healthy lifestyles will be more productive during the work day. Providing opportunities to support these four areas of health has the potential to increase business productivity, improve overall employee morale and health, and decrease healthcare-related costs.



Pillar 1: Tobacco-Free Living

Tobacco use remains the number one preventable cause of death and disability throughout the entire nation.² Encouraging tobacco cessation in places where people spend many hours of their day, such as the workplace, has the potential to save lives. In addition to the higher mortality rate associated with tobacco use, businesses are affected when employees use tobacco products. Losses in productivity, increased employee healthcare costs, and absenteeism plague employers of tobacco users. Instituting and enforcing a tobacco-free environment is beneficial to the physical health of employees, the financial health of a company, and contributes to population health.

Pillar 2: Nutrition

The pillar of nutrition promotes and encourages healthy food choices, nutritionally appropriate meals, and healthy eating habits. It is estimated that up to one-third of all deaths related to cancer stem from poor eating habits and a lack of physical activity.³ Making healthy food choices can reduce the risk for many serious illnesses, including cancers.⁴ Appropriate, healthy nutrition can improve the physical and psychological health of employees, thereby reducing absenteeism and increasing productivity. In the workplace, several actions can boost healthy eating habits and limit unhealthy nutrition. An emphasis on consuming more vegetables, fruits, and whole-grains and less salt, sugar, and saturated fats through worksite policies such as healthy vending and healthy meeting policies, and offering employees nutrition education, contribute to supporting healthy eating in employees.

Pillar 3: Physical Activity

Physical activity has been shown to provide a host of positive health benefits, including lowering the risk of cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, depression, and some cancers. Additionally, it can decrease workplace presenteeism (working while sick with some type of illness), absenteeism, and disability rates.^{5,6} Regular physical activity can control weight, strengthen bones and muscles, help manage stress, and improve self-esteem.⁷ The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) both recommend that healthy adults exercise at least 30 minutes per day, 5 days per week.⁷ Because many adults work in job environments where physical activity is limited, achieving these recommendations while working long hours is difficult. A common misconception of employers is that providing employees with opportunities for physical activity will take away from workplace productivity. However, incorporating physical activity into the workplace can lead to greater productivity and positive economic returns to the company.⁸ With proper planning, implementation, and creative strategies, an organization can encourage healthier employees and more productivity through physical activity opportunities.

Pillar 4: Health Education & Preventive Services, including Mother-Friendly Worksites

A workplace that is supportive and encouraging of a mother-friendly environment for their employees demonstrates that the company is serious about the health of its employees and their families. Fostering a culture that is receptive and honors the values of their employees is essential to employee retention.⁹ In addition, children's health benefits due to breastfeeding results in fewer sick days that mothers and fathers take for their children's illnesses, lower absenteeism, higher productivity, and lower health care costs overall.¹⁰ Likewise, mothers gain benefits from breastfeeding such as weight loss following pregnancy, reduced risk for postpartum depression, cancers, type 2 diabetes, and osteoporosis.⁷ Benefits do stop at babies and mothers. A healthy mother translates into a healthy employee that can effectively contribute her time and energy at work, resulting in greater productivity. Since mothers usually return to work within 12 weeks following birth, and breastfeeding is recommended through the first year, workplaces should provide reasonable accommodations for mothers to express breast milk while they are on the job. Ultimately, mother-friendly policies and practices contribute to healthy babies, employees, and overall business productivity.



MHFC PARTNER CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

Introduction

The Partner Certification Program is a mutually beneficial workplace wellness recognition program for Austin/Travis County-based organizations of all types and sizes. Created by MHFC in 2007, its goals are to promote the implementation of nutrition, physical activity, tobacco-free living and mother-friendly policies in workplaces.

Components

❑ Four Pillars of Health

- To achieve MHFC Partner Certification, organizations must have health initiatives that comprehensively address each of the following four pillars of health ([see previous section](#)).

❑ Sustainable changes are achieved by:

- **Environmental Change:** Creates a long-term improvement in a person's immediate environment that increases their ability to participate in exercise, be in a tobacco-free area, or eat more fruits and vegetables.
- **Social Support:** Creates a network of people who participate together and encourage one another in healthy behaviors.
- **Incentives & Rewards:** A system for recognizing or rewarding people who engage in healthy behaviors.
- **Decision Prompts:** A prompt that is located at the point of decision which encourages a healthy choice.
- **Marketing & Promotion:** A class, newsletter article, poster, email, or other informational piece or event that raises awareness.
- **System or Policy Change:** A system or policy change is designed to impact the health of everyone in an organization and does not require active participation to benefit.

❑ Partner Certification Program Application

- Objective/quantitative measures
- Points for having policies and programs under the 4 Pillars
- Must achieve minimum requirements under each pillar to be Partner Certified

- Organizations with a comprehensive tobacco-free policy eligible to become Silver/Gold certified
- Summed score of all the points, plus tobacco-free policy type, determine certification level
- Areas for improvement or policy change can be identified in each pillar/section

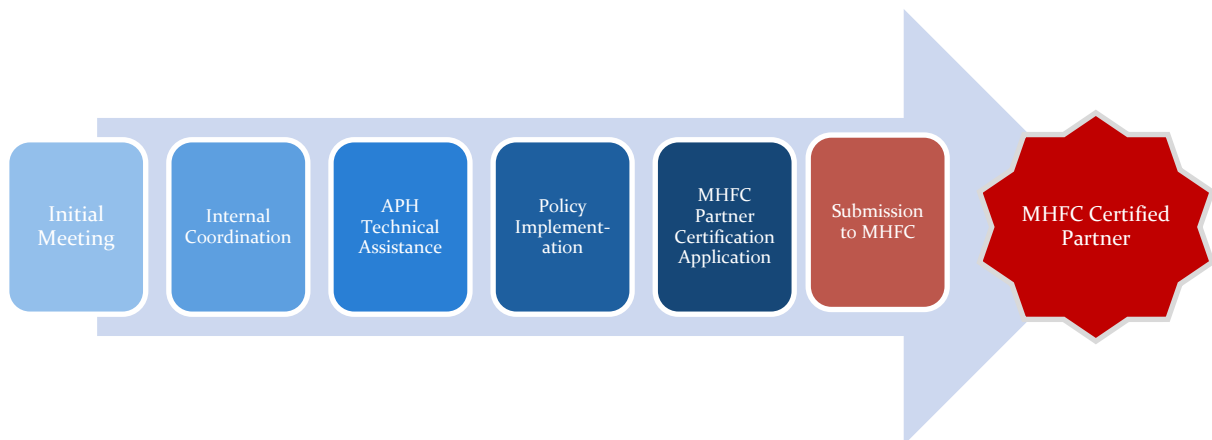
❑ **Bronze, Silver & Gold Certification Levels**

- Organizations can be certified at the Bronze, Silver & Gold levels

❑ **Recertification**

- Organizations will recertify every 2 years – this is an opportunity to be certified at a higher level

How it Works – Process for Becoming MHFC Certified Partner



1. **Initial meeting** – meet with MHFC Program Coordinator (Austin Public Health) for program overview, application review, and organizational goals/next steps.
2. **Internal coordination** – the organization sets goals, drafts policy changes, and completes a draft application.
3. **Technical assistance** – MHFC Program Coordinator provides sample policies, sample policy implementation timeline, and additional resources as needed.
4. **Policy Implementation** – the organization implements health and wellness policies in its worksites.

5. **MHFC Partner Certification Application** – the organization completes online application and provides required documentation.
6. **Submission to MHFC** – the Measurement & Review Committee reviews the submission and determines the certification level.
7. **Certification** – based on the points assigned during the review process, an organization will be certified as bronze, silver, or gold.
8. **Recognition** - each newly MHFC Certified Partner is recognized at an annual awards ceremony.

MHFC EXEMPLARY SCHOOLS PROGRAM

Introduction

The **MHFC Exemplary Schools Program** highlights schools that have implemented healthy changes to create school environments that support the health and well-being of students. Schools that demonstrate practices above the state and federal standards are eligible to be certified as exemplary schools. Additionally, these schools can participate in the Mayor’s Healthiest Schools Award program by completing an additional set of questions about the health and wellness initiatives on their campus.

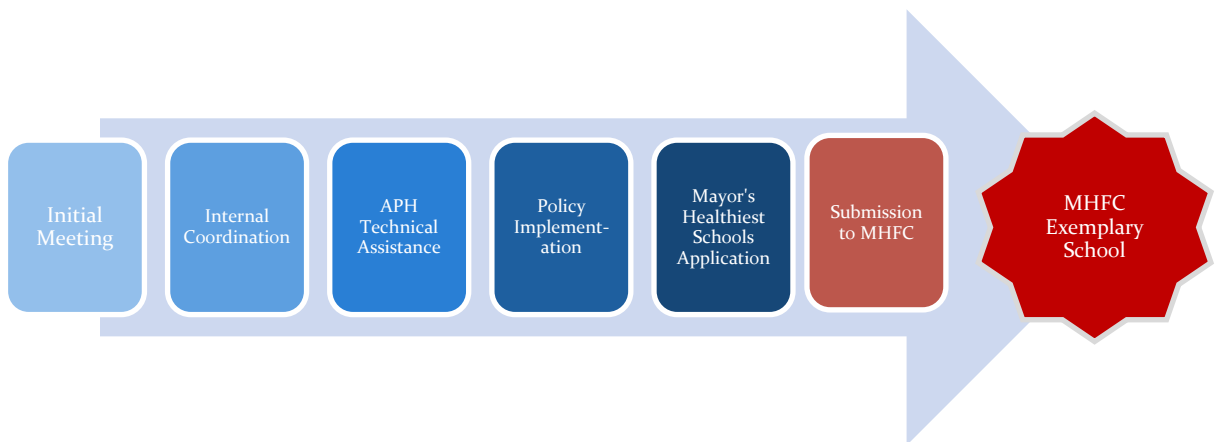
Components

- ❑ The application is based on the **Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child (WSCC)** or **Coordinated School Health (CSH)**¹⁴ approach to student health and wellbeing.
- ❑ Application questions incorporate areas of school wellness policy and practice in Texas, including **health education, physical education and physical activity, nutrition and community involvement**.
- ❑ Applications are completed **online** on an **annual basis** and reflect health initiatives occurring within that school calendar year.
- ❑ Survey questions are **applicable to any size district**, regardless of how they approach the coordinated school health components.
- ❑ On the application, schools received a summed score for “Yes” answers in **10 major areas** related to the WSCC/CSH model:
 - Implementation of Physical Education
 - WSCC/CSH Planning
 - WSCC/CSH Implementation
 - Health Lessons (Human Maturation, Sexuality & Responsibility)
 - Physical Activity & Recess
 - Nutrition
 - Activity in the Classroom
 - Other Physical Activity Opportunities at School



- School Health Environment
- Parent & Community Participation
- ❑ **Exemplary schools** are defined as meeting all the selected metrics for both students and staff in the following areas: physical education, opportunities for physical activity, healthy food and beverage options, and restrictions on unhealthy food and beverages.
- ❑ All schools with an ‘**Exemplary**’ rating receive:
 - Eligibility to win Mayor’s Healthiest School award and mini-grant
 - Outdoor vinyl banner
 - Recognition at the annual awards ceremony
 - Recognition on the [MHFC website](#) as an exemplary school
- ❑ In addition, schools who complete a set of supplementary questions are eligible to participate in the **Mayor’s Healthiest Schools Awards** program ([see next section](#))

How it Works – Process for Becoming MHFC Exemplary School



1. **Initial meeting** – MHFC Program Coordinator (Austin Public Health) and District Health & Wellness Coordinator meet to discuss program overview, application review, and organizational goals/next steps.
2. **Internal coordination** – District sets goals and drafts policy changes (if needed).
3. **Technical assistance** – MHFC Program Coordinator provides sample policies, sample policy implementation timeline, and additional

resources as needed. MHFC Program Coordinator also serves as resource to school campuses for health initiative ideas and technical support.

4. **Policy Implementation** – District implements health and wellness policies (as per district procedures). MHFC Program Coordinator serves as an advocate and resource during this process.
5. **Mayor’s Healthiest Schools Application** – School campuses within the district complete the online application.
6. **Submission to MHFC** – Applications are automatically scored and verified.
7. **MHFC Exemplary Schools** are defined as meeting selected metrics based on school type (i.e. primary, elementary, or middle school) in the major areas related to the WSCC/CSH model.
8. **Recognition** – all MHFC Exemplary Schools are recognized at an annual awards ceremony.

MAYOR'S HEALTH & FITNESS AWARDS

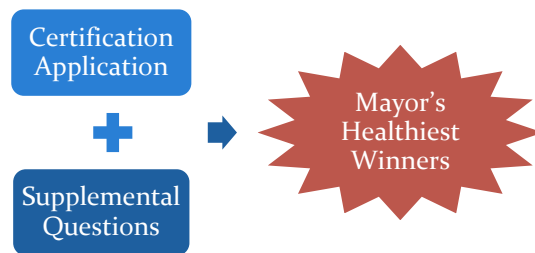
Mayor's Healthiest Awards Program

The **Mayor's Healthiest Awards Program** is an extension of both the Partner Certification Program and the Exemplary Schools Program and was designed to help shining stars in workplace and school health and wellness rise to the top.

- For **workplaces**, the healthiest awards emphasize and highlight **community partnerships** utilized by the worksite to promote health in the larger community.
- For **schools**, the healthiest awards allow each to campus to highlight specific student health and wellness initiatives **beyond state, federal and district-level requirements**.
- Both award programs highlight **innovation**.



- Winners are determined based on **total scores** on their applications (certification application + supplemental questions).



- The **MHFC Healthiest Awards Program** gives recognition and mini-grants to extraordinary workplaces and schools, promotes idea-sharing, and offers a roadmap to workplaces and schools who are building their health and wellness programs.

Mayor's Healthiest Workplaces Awards

Introduction

The **Mayor's Healthiest Workplaces Awards** recognize Austin/Travis County's top employers that have fostered a work environment that encourages health and wellness. Any organization (for-profit, non-profit, school district, government organization, etc.) within Austin or Travis County is eligible to apply.

To compete for the **Mayor's Healthiest Workplaces Awards**, organizations must first be Mayor's Health and Fitness Council Certified (Bronze, Silver, or Gold certification levels qualify) or have been partner certified within the previous two years. There is no fee to participate in the program.

Components

- ❑ Awards are determined by combining scores from the Partner Certification Application and Mayor's Healthiest Workplaces Award Questionnaire, focusing on:
 - Community Engagement
 - Innovation
 - Worksites with the largest gain in their score from the previous year
 - Bonus points are given to worksites certified at Silver or Gold levels
- ❑ Organizations interested in applying for the Mayor's Healthiest Workplaces Awards must complete the [online application](#).
- ❑ Each year, the MHFC hosts an awards ceremony at City Hall to recognize the efforts of schools and workplaces.
- ❑ Mayor's Healthiest Workplace Awards are given out in the following categories:
 - *Mayor's Healthiest Workplace: For-profit or Non-Profit**

* This award is provided in each of the following size categories:

- Under 50 (less than 50 employees)
- Small (50-249 employees)
- Medium (250-499 employees)
- Large/X-Large (>500 employees)

- *Mayor's Healthiest Workplace: School District or Government Organization*
- *Most Innovative Wellness Program*
- ☐ Winners receive
 - \$1,000 mini-grant to support ongoing workplace health wellness initiatives.
 - Individual recognition & photo at the awards ceremony with the Mayor.
 - Recognition on the [MHFC website](#) as a certified partner and a winner
- ☐ Applications are due by close of business on the last business day of July each year.

Mayor's Healthiest Schools Awards

Introduction

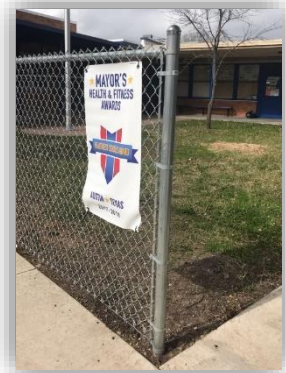
As an extension of the Mayor's Health and Fitness Council (MHFC) Exemplary Schools Program, the **Mayor's Healthiest School Awards** highlight schools that have implemented healthy changes to create school environments that support the health and well-being of students.



No preference is given to school size, location, public/private sector, school district, etc. Winners are determined using a point system based off responses to the online application (exemplary schools application + supplemental questions). Awards are given at the elementary and middle school levels.

Components

- Schools interested in applying for the Mayor's Healthiest School Awards must complete the [online application](#).
- Each year, the MHFC hosts an awards ceremony at City Hall to recognize the efforts of schools and workplaces.
- Mayor's Healthiest School Awards are presented to the top 3 elementary and 1 middle schools.
- Winners receive:
 - \$1,000 grant to support school health and wellness initiatives
 - Outdoor vinyl banner
 - Individual recognition & photo at the awards ceremony with the Mayor
 - Recognition on the [MHFC website](#) as an exemplary school and winner.
- Winners are required to return a reflection regarding their initiatives and use of award money.



Lessons Learned

GENERAL

- ✓ **When developing your application:**
 - Engage key stakeholders from local wellness community
 - Use rubric with quantitative/objective measures
 - Utilize open-ended questions to learn more about the activities and programs scored in the quantitative measures
- ✓ **Sustainable changes can look different at each organization**
 - For example: policy, standards within a contract, employee handbook, etc.
- ✓ **Have an online presence – website, online application, social media**
- ✓ **Only revise your applications when needed**
 - You don't want to be measuring different things every year
- ✓ **Offer incentives for participation, if possible**
- ✓ **Find meaningful ways to promote your partners & winners**
 - For example, celebrate health and wellness with an awards ceremony highlighting winners during the ceremony to promote idea-sharing and innovative ideas
- ✓ **Grow your program**
 - To have a true culture of health, the work must extend beyond worksites
- ✓ **But...only roll out one component per year**
 - For example: Workplaces, Schools, Faith Communities, Neighborhoods

WORKPLACES:

- ✓ **Focus concentration areas on items that can influence policy for sustainable changes (e.g. 4 pillars of health)**
 - Tobacco-free living policy
 - Nutrition and Healthy Vending standards
 - Physical Activity promotion
 - Texas DSHS Mother-Friendly Worksite designation
- ✓ **Provide a pathway to wellness**
 - Bronze, Silver, and Gold levels provide meaningful challenge
 - Achievable for different organization sizes
- ✓ **Engage key stakeholders from the local wellness community**
 - MHFC Board members
 - Staff
 - Volunteers for committees (e.g. Measurements & Review Committee) who can
 - Provide expertise/know-how in wellness programs implemented at the corporate level
 - Help score subjective/free-response questions

SCHOOLS

- ✓ **Schools want local recognition!**
 - Banners to hang outside school
 - Award ceremony at city hall with the mayor
 - Mini-grants for winners
 - Promotion on social media, in press, and on website
- ✓ **Every district has a distinct way of implementing wellness for their students, staff and community**
 - Cultivate relationship with the district health & wellness coordinator
 - In smaller districts, wellness person may have many hats to wear
 - Wellness person can champion the program and encourage school campuses to participate
 - Get involved with your local schools/districts via SHAC and/or other committees open to community volunteers
- ✓ **Consider school/district events when planning the awards ceremony**
- ✓ **Seek feedback on process, application, award ceremony**
 - We've only gotten better because we asked the districts

Appendix - Resources

➤ AUSTIN MAYOR'S HEALTH & FITNESS COUNCIL WEBSITE

<https://www.mhfcaustin.org/>

*Find information on the MHFC board, Austin Business Group on Health, MHFC Program applications, and resources for worksites and schools.

➤ CDC'S WORKPLACE HEALTH PROMOTION WEBSITE

<https://www.cdc.gov/workplacehealthpromotion/index.html>

*Learn more about workplace health promotion and how to design, implement, and evaluate effective workplace health programs.

➤ CDC'S WORKSITE HEALTH SCORECARD

<https://www.cdc.gov/workplacehealthpromotion/initiatives/healthscorecard/index.html>

*Learn more about the CDC Worksite Health ScoreCard, a tool designed to help employers assess whether they have implemented evidence-based health promotion interventions or strategies in their worksites to improve the health and well-being of their employees.

➤ COORDINATED SCHOOL HEALTH

<https://dshs.texas.gov/schoolhealth/csh.shtm>

*Learn more about the Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child (WSCC) Model as an expansion and update of the Coordinated School Health (CSH) approach.

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