

ADM Cares Grant Proposal

Covington Independent Public Schools Health & Well-Being through OST Nutrition Education & Cooking

CONTACT

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PROJECT REQUEST

Covington Independent Public Schools respectfully requests \$10,000 in grant funding to support the implementation and expansion of healthy cooking and nutrition education programming during out-of-school time (OST) at seven school sites across our urban school district. This initiative will engage students in grades K-12 in hands-on, age-appropriate culinary activities that promote lifelong healthy eating habits, nutritional literacy, and family engagement.

We aim to expand three existing successful programs with current community partners and launch new programs at four additional sites, covering five elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school. This initiative will directly impact approximately 650 students annually, with an emphasis on culturally responsive programming, skills-based learning, and health equity.

NEED

Covington Independent Public Schools serves a predominantly economically disadvantaged population, with 92% of students qualifying for free or reduced-price lunch. Many families face barriers to accessing fresh foods, nutrition education, and wellness resources. This contributes to higher rates of childhood obesity, diet-related chronic illnesses, and limited health literacy among students and families.

Out-of-school time offers a key opportunity to address these disparities. By integrating cooking, gardening, and nutrition education into OST programs, we can help students make informed choices, build self-sufficiency skills, and improve their long-term well-being. The initiative will incorporate positive, practical, and enjoyable learning that supports academic, physical, and social-emotional development.

This initiative meets a timely and urgent need in our community by connecting health education with hands-on learning in safe, supportive out-of-school environments. With your support, we can help hundreds of students and families gain essential skills for healthier, more empowered lives.

PILLAR ALIGNMENT

This proposal directly supports the Health & Well-Being pillar of ADM Cares by promoting both nutrition access and education for students and families.

Through hands-on cooking instruction and engaging nutrition lessons during out-of-school time, the program empowers youth to make healthier food choices while also introducing them to a variety of nutrient-rich, culturally diverse foods. By using fresh, affordable ingredients and teaching practical meal preparation skills, the program not only increases awareness but also removes barriers to accessing healthy diets—particularly in a community where 92% of students qualify for free or reduced lunch.

Family engagement components further extend the impact by encouraging wellness practices at home, aligning with the goal of providing nutritious meals and promoting healthy eating among youth and their families.

OBJECTIVES

1. Improve student understanding of nutrition and healthy eating.
 - a. Deliver age-appropriate nutrition education that helps students understand the fundamentals of healthy eating, including food groups, portion sizes, label reading, and the relationship between diet and overall well-being. Lessons will emphasize the importance of balanced meals, hydration, and mindful food choices, empowering students to make informed decisions about their health both in and outside of school.
2. Expose students to a variety of new, culturally diverse, and nutrient-rich foods to expand their palate, reduce food aversions, and build curiosity around healthy eating.
 - a. Incorporate taste tests, cooking demonstrations, and interactive discussions to introduce students to unfamiliar foods—particularly fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and traditional dishes from a variety of cultures. The program encourages students to try new foods in a safe and positive environment, helping them broaden their food preferences and foster greater openness to healthy eating.
3. Provide hands-on cooking instruction using fresh, affordable, and culturally relevant foods.
 - a. Engage students in experiential learning by teaching basic cooking skills, kitchen safety, and recipe preparation using ingredients that are both nutritious and accessible. Recipes will reflect the cultural diversity of the school community and focus on affordable, home-cook-friendly meals that students can recreate with their families, reinforcing healthy habits in everyday life.
4. Engage families in learning and wellness activities that extend into the home.
 - a. Promote family participation through cooking nights, take-home recipe kits, newsletters, and tasting events designed to strengthen the home-school connection around health and nutrition. These activities will encourage families to adopt healthier eating habits together and support a whole-child, whole-family approach to wellness.

PROGRAM STRUCTURE

Expansion Sites (3):

- Build on existing club partnerships with Baker Hunt Art & Cultural Center and Kenton County Cooperative Extension at two schools (Holmes High School, John G. Carlisle Elementary School)
- Expand existing club with educator at one school (Latonia Elementary School)
- Student reach estimate: 250

New Sites (4):

- Launch new cooking and nutrition programs at four additional sites in Covington Schools led by trained staff and partner educators (Glenn O. Swing Elementary School, Sixth District Elementary School, Ninth District Elementary School, Holmes Middle School)
- Student reach estimate: 400

Schedule:

- Weekly 60-minute OST sessions for 8-10 weeks per quarter
- Focus on different grade levels each quarter at elementary sites

Program Elements:

- Nutrition education (e.g., MyPlate, reading labels, budgeting for groceries)
- Cooking and food preparation skills with take-home recipes
- Garden-to-kitchen connections, where applicable
- Family cooking nights/workshops and community tastings
- End-of-year program recipe book

Staffing & Partnerships:

- Nutrition educators, culinary instructors, and OST site staff
- Partner organizations (e.g., local nonprofits, health department)
- Volunteer chefs and family liaisons, where available

EVALUATION & OUTCOMES

We will measure success through:

- Pre- and post-program surveys assessing student knowledge and attitudes
- Participation data including attendance and engagement

- Anecdotal reports and testimonials from families, students, staff, and partners
- Qualitative observations from programming

Anticipated outcomes include:

- Students demonstrate increased knowledge of nutrition and food literacy
- Students prepare simple, healthy recipes independently or with family
- Families report greater confidence in making healthy meals
- Stronger school-community partnerships around health and wellness

USE OF FUNDS

ADM Cares grant funds will be used to support:

- Cooking supplies, ingredients, and equipment
- Instructor stipends or partner organization fees
- Family engagement events (food, supplies)