



Healthy Community Lifespaces

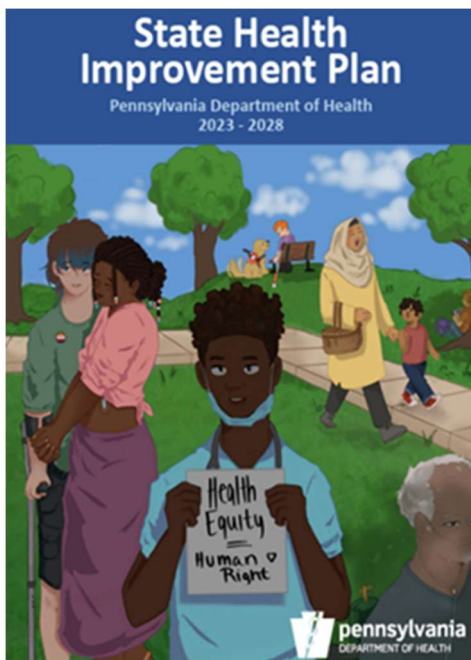
Pennsylvania School Student Contest

Creating a State Symbol - State Fungi and Vegetable Contest 2026/2027

Parents and Educators,

This year's State Vegetable Contest continues our commitment to integrating health, agriculture, and civic learning into meaningful classroom experiences. This contest incorporates the importance of eating more fruits and vegetables into lessons in science and social studies, aligning with state standards for studying the legislative process, state symbols, and the origins of plants to determine a native state fungi or vegetable.

Creative displays to accompany a written draft proposal are welcome. Multiple presentation formats are encouraged to support diverse learning styles. Students may submit entries individually or in small groups.



Public and private partners across Pennsylvania are working to reduce health disparities, promoting wellness and health as a priority.

Pennsylvania also has a State Health Improvement Plan (SHIP). Healthy Community Lifespaces participates in a SHIP work group focused on creating environments that support healthy priorities, student engagement, and collaboration across sectors to integrate health into projects, programs, and policies. Research consistently shows that communities achieve better health outcomes when health is woven into all environments—policies, agencies, and curriculum.

Thank you for joining us in building a healthier community for all children.

For more information on the Pennsylvania SHIP:
<https://www.pa.gov/content/dam/copapwp->

[pagov/en/health/documents/topics/documents/ship/SHIP_2023-2028.pdf](https://www.pa.gov/en/health/documents/topics/documents/ship/SHIP_2023-2028.pdf)



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First prizes are several \$25 dollar scholarships towards the student winners to participate in a physical fitness activity of their choice.

Honorable mention – 2nd and 3rd place prizes -Bike helmet or water bottle

HCL will facilitate the winners to talk with State legislators to pass the legislation for their chosen Fungi or vegetable. A fruit is currently being considered.

Find out more 

Official Rules

- Students in Grades 4- 7 can enter with parent and teacher permission.
- Contest students must submit a proposal for a vegetable and/or a fungi to be a State symbol.

The proposal should include:

- Vegetables or Fungi with the most health benefits.
- Most native to Pennsylvania or that all Pennsylvanians will have access to eat.
- Reasons why Pennsylvanians should eat this fungi or vegetable(s).
- Reasons why we should have fungi and vegetables as a state symbol.

Basic contest Rubric

Feature	4	3	2	1	Score
Ideas	Strong Informative with clear focus and supporting reason for choice of fruit or vegetable	Developing Develops a focus Uses some descriptive language Details support idea Communicates original ideas	Emerging Attempts focus Ideas not fully developed	Beginning Lacks focus and development	
Organization	Establishes a strong beginning, middle, and end Demonstrates an orderly flow of ideas	Attempts an adequate introduction and ending Evidence of logical sequencing	Some evidence of a beginning, middle, and end Sequencing is attempted	Little or no organization Relies on single idea	
Expression	Uses effective language Uses high-level vocabulary Use of sentence variety	Diverse word choice Uses descriptive words Sentence variety	Limited word choice Basic sentence structure/speech	No sense of sentence structure/ in speech if presented as video	



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Email entry to Healthy Community Lifespaces (or arrange pick up or mailing) to Healthycommunitylifespaces@gmail.com

- Contest entries should be received by December 31, 2026

Student Name:

Email to send contest results:

Teacher

School

Grade

Parent permission:

By signing this Consent Form, you understand and agree that the student-project intends to give an unlimited license to Healthy Community Lifespaces to, at a minimum, use the student's submitted project for publication, advertising, or any other purpose related to furthering the goals of Healthy Community Lifespaces and promoting healthy lifestyles. Additionally, you understand, acknowledge, and agree that the student name, grade, and/or school may be associated with the submitted project whenever it is displayed. If your child wins, I agree to use the prize money towards participation in a physical activity in my community and I take responsibility for any and all liability including liability pertaining to transportation to and from the activity should my child win the contest.

Parent signature

- Contact HCL with any questions or for lesson plan on civil engagement and health

Power point – <https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1L-arckn4z-B03OAYzzG2rz9vAruu7DmPj1ET8B3FIXQ/edit?usp=sharing>

Lesson plan- <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1jh5W0rZnPH9v81KJsaM5o2a0Z-hKag00/edit?usp=sharing&oid=104096949007092993695&rtpof=true&sd=true>

In Collaboration to make Pennsylvania a healthy environment for all children,

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Have a 😊 healthy day!

Get involved in making your local student wellness policy in line with the PA state model wellness plan

[PSBA Local School Wellness Policy Template](#)