

## Application period opens for Certified Healthy Oklahoma Programs

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By: Staff Reports

The Jackson County Health Department and Jackson County Community Health Action Team announced the application process for Certified Healthy Oklahoma programs is open. Businesses, communities, educational institutions, and congregations that may qualify for certification are encouraged to apply for recognition of their efforts toward making Oklahoma a healthier place to live.

A crucial factor in improving the health of Oklahomans is providing a variety of opportunities for residents to make healthier choices where they live, work, learn and play. The Certified Healthy Oklahoma programs meet this challenge by recognizing businesses, campuses, communities, congregations, early childhood programs, restaurants, and schools that encourage health-focused behaviors and policies.

“The Certified Healthy Oklahoma programs provide opportunities for Jackson County’s businesses, campuses, communities, congregations, early childhood programs, restaurants, and schools to create environments that support policies and individual decision that ultimately will improve Oklahoma’s health outcomes,” said Karen Weaver, Regional Director for Jackson, Harmon, Tillman, Greer and Beckham County Health Departments. “We encourage potential applicants to consider what they are doing to make the healthy choice the easy choice for their employees, customers, students, and citizens, and to submit an application for Certified Healthy Oklahoma status. In the past five years 55 businesses have received certification in Jackson County, a success we plan to continue.”

Applications are now being accepted for Certified Healthy Oklahoma’s seven categories of certification:

- \* The Certified Healthy Business program recognizes workplaces that provide health and wellness opportunities for their employees.
- \* The Certified Healthy Campus program recognizes colleges and career technology centers that provide a healthy environment for faculty, staff and students.
- \* The Certified Healthy Community program recognizes communities that offer citizens a healthy place to live, work, learn and play.
- \* The Certified Healthy Congregation program recognizes communities of all faiths that provide health and wellness opportunities to their members and/or attendees and staff.
- \* The Certified Healthy Early Childhood Program recognizes early childhood programs that are providing a healthy environment for children and their families, as well as their staff.
- \* The Certified Healthy Restaurant program recognizes restaurants that provide healthy options for their patrons and employees.
- \* The Certified Healthy School program recognizes schools working to improve student and employee health.

Each program has three levels of certifications: Basic, Merit, and Excellence. Applications must be submitted by Nov. 1 for certification consideration. Award winners will be notified in December, and acknowledged at an awards ceremony in Norman Feb. 24, 2016.

The Certified Healthy Oklahoma programs are a joint effort of the Oklahoma State Department of Health, the Oklahoma State Chamber, the Oklahoma Academy, the Oklahoma Turning Point Council, and other partners who are helping to shape a healthier future for Oklahoma. Last year, more than 1700 applicants received certification.

Criteria details and application information for all Certified Healthy Oklahoma programs are now available on the Certified Healthy Oklahoma website at [www.certifiedhealthyok.com](http://www.certifiedhealthyok.com).

For local information or assistance with the application process, please contact: 482-7308.