**JUNIOR CHEF GUIDELINES – ELEMENTARY**

**Teams**

Teams should consist of 2-4 students and have at least one adult coach to help with filling out the application forms, cooking practice, as well as to chaperone the team at the competition. The coach can be a school food service team member, a teacher, other school employee, or a parent/guardian. Here is the process for applying and team selection:

* Teams must submit the following documents by [submission date]:
  + Junior Chef Team Application
  + Junior Chef Recipe Entry Form
  + Junior Chef Ingredient Budget List
* Of these applicants, [# of teams] teams will be picked to move on to the actual cooking competition at [location] on [competition date].

**Recipes**

Adults are encouraged to work with their student team members on recipe development. You are planning a meal that must be kid-friendly and will be given [amount] to purchase your ingredients. Teams are encouraged to use original, family recipes. Recipes must meet the following requirements:

* Meet plated meal cost of **$1.25** **per serving**
* Include the five meal components required in the USDA National School Lunch Program: meat/meat alternate, grain, fruit, vegetable, and milk.
* Meet the USDA Meal Regulations Guidelines for the five food items that are required for a daily lunch:
  + **Meat or meat alternates**—one serving of the following:
    - Meats: 2 oz.
    - Cheese: 2 oz.
    - Tofu: 2 oz. protein equivalent (for tofu to meet 1 oz. of protein equivalent, a 2.2 oz. serving must contain a minimum of 5 grams of protein)
    - Egg: one large, whole equals 2 oz. protein equivalent
    - Beans: 1/2 cup, cooked equals 2 oz. protein equivalent
    - Yogurt: 8 oz. or 1 cup equals 2 oz. protein equivalent
  + **Grains/breads:**
    - 51% whole grain is required
    - A minimum of one grain equivalent (two grain equivalents is allowable depending on the dish, i.e. pasta, sandwich, fried rice)
    - For a grain serving to meet the 1 oz. equivalent it must be at least 28 grams and 16 of those must be whole grains
    - Grains include sliced bread, rolls, buns, tortillas, pita, or biscuits; or 1/2 cup cooked rice, pasta, noodles, or other grains
  + **Vegetable:** A minimum ¾ cup
  + **Fruit:** A minimum ½ cup
  + **Milk:** One cup of fat free or 1% milk
* Include at least one locally sourced ingredient and two ingredients that can be sourced through the [USDA Foods Program](http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/SY15_Foods_Available_List_5_14_14.pdf)
* May not include peanuts, tree nuts, fish, or desserts

**Judging**

The cooking competition will be evaluated and judged based on the following criteria:

**Application Review**

* **USDA Meal Requirements:** Meal must contain the required five meal components: meat/meat alternate, grain, vegetable, fruit, and milk.
* **Meal Cost:** A serving of the complete meal must not exceed $1.25.

**Competition Day**

* **Appearance:** Is the meal plated well? Does it have a variety of colors? Does it look appetizing?
* **Taste:** Is the dish pleasing to the taste buds? Is it seasoned properly? Do the ingredients complement one another? Was any component over or under cooked?
* **Food Safety:** Teams must follow basic food safety procedures, work cleanly, and dress clean and professionally. This includes pulling hair back, wearing gloves, and using sanitizer provided. Food must be properly handled and proper temperatures must be followed.
* **Replicable:** Can this dish be replicated in our district? Do we have the time and labor to replicate this for large batch cooking? For example, if your recipe requires the cook to individually prep each serving unit (like stuffing a pasta shell or dumpling) that may not be a practical recipe for expanding the recipe from 12 servings to 13,000 servings.

**Day of the Event**

* Teams should plan to arrive at [time] on [competition date]. The event is expected to last two and half hours.
* Teams will have 90 minutes to prepare, cook, and plate their meal. They will be required to present it to the judges and explain the components represented. Adults are allowed to cook with elementary students during the competition.
* Each team will have a cooking station setup with a portable burner, sauté pan, chef’s knife, spatula, whisk, tongs, tasting spoons, serving spoon, cutting boards, ½ sheet pans, dish towel, sanitation gloves, sanitation bucket, side towels, paper towels, and all purpose cleaner. Teams will have access to kitchen ovens under the supervision of food service staff.

**Resources**

* **Meal Costs:** Visit [USDA’s Food Buying Guide Calculator for Child Nutrition Programs](http://fbg.nfsmi.org/" \t "_blank) for help with purchasing and quantities.
* **Local Ingredients:** About.com’s [State-Specific Seasonal Produce Guides](http://localfoods.about.com/od/searchbystate/) can help you determine seasonal produce in your state. Cooking a recipe out of season for the competition is permitted, but make sure that one of the items in your recipe can be sourced locally at some time throughout the year.
* **Commodity Ingredients:** See the current [list of commodity foods](http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/SY15_Foods_Available_List_5_14_14.pdf) that are available to schools by the USDA.

**Please submit all application materials or questions to [name] at [email].**