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FOURTH ANNUAL HEALTHY WEIGHT COMMUNITY CHAMPIONS APPLICATION WINDOW OPEN



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Tallahassee, Fla. —The Florida Department of Health is accepting submissions for the fourth annual Healthy Weight Community Champion Recognition Program. Last year, 80 cities and counties were recognized by the department for efforts to increase physical activity and improve nutrition as part of the Healthiest Weight Florida Initiative.

“It is inspiring to see Florida’s local governments invest in environments that enhance quality of life and positively influence health outcomes in their communities,” said State Surgeon General and Secretary of Health Dr. Celeste Philip. “In places designed to promote healthy behaviors, it is easier for residents to stay physically active and choose healthier foods consistently; these behaviors help prevent and reduce chronic disease and lead to greater productivity and satisfaction, and I am proud to recognize these innovative efforts to improve health and wellness across Florida.”

Local governments can implement a variety of policies that help people become more physically active and eat healthful foods, and create environments that promote a sense of cohesion and well-being. The Healthy Weight Community Champion Recognition Program recognizes these best practices. Examples of criteria for the recognition include maintaining a system of parks, incentivizing fruit and vegetable options in underserved neighborhoods that are considered food deserts, and ensuring personal safety in areas where people can increase physical activity. Neighborhoods with these characteristics are desirable to many residents, and companies seek to open businesses in these communities to attract and retain competitive employees.

All of Florida’s 413 active municipalities (cities, towns and villages) and 67 counties are eligible to submit best practices. Submissions will be accepted through December 2, 2016. The best practices will be posted and communities will be recognized on January 13, 2017. For more information on how to apply, please visit www.HealthiestWeightFlorida.com.

About the Florida Department of Health

The department works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

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About Healthiest Weight Florida

Healthiest Weight Florida is a public-private collaboration bringing together state agencies, not-for-profit organizations, businesses and entire communities to create environments that allow Florida's children and adults to make consistent, informed choices about healthy eating and active living. To learn more about how to be active and make nutritious food choices, visit www.healthiestweightflorida.com.