

# PERS Fruit and Veggie Challenge

## Coordinator Instructions and Timeline

### Application and Planning Process

1. Request an application form from PERS. To obtain an application and additional information, please send your request to the PERS office either in writing or by email to [ndpers@state.nd.us](mailto:ndpers@state.nd.us)

2. View the PERS Fruit and Veggie Challenge website for further information to help you plan your program:  
[www.ag.ndsu.edu/pers](http://www.ag.ndsu.edu/pers)

3. Begin the application process.

Check with your fiscal agent for possible funding guidelines that apply to your worksite. See the form “**Using Novelty Items to Spark Interest**” available at [www.ag.ndsu.edu/pers](http://www.ag.ndsu.edu/pers)

Determine if you are able to provide incentives or novelty items for employee participants. Set aside funds in your budget for incentive purchases or consider assessing a participation fee to cover costs of the Fruit and Veggie Challenge. Order incentives well ahead of time to be sure that you have them when needed.

4. Customize and distribute the employee interest survey called “**We Want to Hear from You!**” It is recommended that you allow at least 10 business days for employees to complete and return the surveys.

5. Collect the employee interest surveys, complete the application and send to PERS. PERS will reply to you within 60 days of the receipt of your application.

6. Plan for activities to promote the program. Consider forming a committee or work group to help you. If possible, plan for at least one special activity or event each week. See the form “**Promotional Ideas to Make the Fruit and Veggie Challenge Work!**” for ideas (available at [www.ag.ndsu.edu/pers](http://www.ag.ndsu.edu/pers)). Your enthusiasm and assistance in getting information and messages out to your participants can help them successfully make lifestyle changes.

7. Register participants. Be sure employees know how to sign up and get information and incentive details.

8. Plan the nutrition education sessions. Choose a nutrition professional in your area from the list found at the website. Call that person to set up dates for two one-hour education sessions. It will be advantageous to the training if the room is large enough for all participants to sit comfortably.

a. The kick-off session called “**What Color is Your Food?**” will feature the wonderful flavors and health benefits of fruits and vegetables. (All employees participating in the Fruit and Veggie Challenge program **must** attend the kick-off session and will receive their program materials at that time.)

b. Communicate to the nutrition presenter the number of employees participating in the PERS Fruit and Veggie Challenge kick-off session. Each participant will receive a packet of materials; the value of each packet is \$6.00. The NDSU Extension Service will bill PERS for the packets. This amount will come out of the funding provided to your agency by PERS.

c. The wrap-up session features ideas to keep the effort going and ways to make your worksite a healthier place.

The nutrition professional is paid a fee of \$50.00 for the kick-off session and \$50.00 for the wrap-up session (\$100.00 total); this

\$100 comes out of the funding from PERS. The nutrition professional sends their own invoice (see the example at the PERS Fruit and Veggie Challenge website), signed by the coordinator, directly to PERS at this address:

Kathy Allen  
North Dakota Public Employees  
Retirement System  
400 East Broadway Avenue  
Suite 505  
P.O. Box 1657  
Bismarck, ND 58502-1657

9. Choose a four-week period to conduct your Fruit and Veggie Challenge and place it on your workplace calendar. Allow about a week between the kick-off educational session and the four-week Challenge to allow participants to measure their baseline fruit and vegetable intake and set goals by using the form in their packet called "Get Ready for the PERS A Day Challenge".

10. Publicize the program through posters, signs, paycheck notices and email.

11. Encourage participants to complete the online pre-survey at:  
[www.ag.ndsu.edu/pers](http://www.ag.ndsu.edu/pers)  
Consider sending an email reminder listing the web site address.

12. Publicize the date and time of the kick-off session. Advise participants to bring \$1.00 to the session to cover the cost of fruit and vegetable samples that will be provided by the nutrition presenter. If you have food preparations facilities, on-site, you may choose to have the food samples prepared at your facility, especially if there will be a large number of participants.

13. Hold the kick-off session.

14. Begin the four-week Challenge program. Encourage participants to track their daily intake of fruits and vegetables on the Fruit and Veggie Tracking form.

15. Forward daily or weekly email messages to participants. These may be copied and pasted from the website:  
[www.ag.ndsu.edu/pers](http://www.ag.ndsu.edu/pers)

16. Publicize the date and time of the wrap-up session. Advise participants to bring \$1.00 to cover the cost of food samples.

17. Hold the wrap-up session.

18. Help us to evaluate the program. Consider sending an email reminder listing the web site address and encourage participants to complete the online post-survey at [www.ag.ndsu.edu/pers](http://www.ag.ndsu.edu/pers)

19. Consider collecting copies of the tracking form at the end of the four-week Challenge period. This will allow you to communicate to your co-workers the number of participants who completed the Challenge. You may also use these forms to draw a grand prize winner.

Thank you for your leadership  
in improving healthy eating habits  
for your worksite!

