

# GOING THE DISTANCE IN CONGREGATE MEALS INNOVATION AWARD

The **Going the Distance in Congregate Meals Innovation Award** will be presented to a returning sponsor who used innovative strategies and saw increased participation in their SFSP or SSO program at CONGREGATE meal sites in 2025. Additionally, the nomination should demonstrate how using a strategic plan for growth increased program participation. The award is open to all returning eligible sponsors.

To apply for this award, please submit:

- **A slide presentation**, 3-5 slides, no more than 40 words per slide plus notes as needed. **These slides are your application!** Make sure you address all of the criteria from the rubric in your slides. The presentation should explain how using marketing and other innovative strategies increased participation in your program in 2025. Innovative concepts could include but are not limited to the use of the NC Capacity Builder Map to strategically identify site locations, social media for outreach, diverse partnerships, mobile feeding options, new sites in rural or underserved areas, appealing meals, engaging, educational enrichment, and participant feedback. Please include information regarding the number of sites, number of days served, and youth served.
- A written explanation of your **Strategic Plan**. Provide comments about your plans for 2025 related to: assessment of previous program and vision and goals for 2025; key tasks, activities, and strategies; important dates and possible promotional activities; and, integral staff and roles. Add in any documentation of successes and lessons learned.
- **Bonus: Supporting Documentation**. Supporting documentation could include but is not limited to news clips about your program, social media posts, photos, testimonials and feedback from youth, outreach and promotion materials, community statements, State Agency feedback, special events, activities at meal sites, etc.

See the rubric on the next page for the distribution of points and additional guidance in preparing your materials for submission. Note: NCDPI will calculate your change in participation based on claims data from 2024 and 2025.

**SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS:** Please send the presentation and all attachments in ONE email to [carolinahungerinitiative@unc.edu](mailto:carolinahungerinitiative@unc.edu) with the title “**2025 Summer Nutrition Champion Awards – Your Sponsor/Stakeholder Name**” in the subject line of the email. Label the documents and/or attachments with the title of the award you are entering and your sponsor/stakeholder title, Ex. “**Going the Distance Award – Apple County Schools**”. See the awards overview page for additional info.

**All nominations should be submitted no later than Tuesday, October 21 by 5 PM.**

Awardees will be recognized at the November 2025 SummerPalooza! planning summits, and may be asked to make a short presentation at a SummerPalooza! Summit. Further information regarding the presentation content will be provided to awardees. The Summer Nutrition Champion nominees will be evaluated by an independent party outside of the NCDPI School Nutrition Staff. For questions, please email [carolinahungerinitiative@unc.edu](mailto:carolinahungerinitiative@unc.edu).

**Thank you and good luck!**



# Going the Distance in Congregate Meals Innovation Award Rubric

<b>Presentation Components (up to 6 points)</b>	<b>0 points</b> (Sponsor does not describe this topic)	<b>1 point</b> (Sponsor describes one example)	<b>2 points</b> (Sponsor describes two or more examples)	<b>Total Points</b>
Innovative Concepts				
Marketing Strategies				
Connection to Growth				

<b>Strategic Plan (up to 4 points)</b>	<b>1 point</b>	<b>1 point</b>	<b>1 point</b>	<b>1 point</b>	<b>Total Points</b>
Refer to sponsor's Strategic Plan	Identified a clear goal/vision for growth in 2025	Identified key tasks, activities, or strategies	Assigned tasks and due dates to team members	Documented results or completion of tasks	

<b>Change in Participation from 2024 to 2025 (5 possible points)</b> NCDPI will provide this information	<b>1 point</b>	<b>2 points</b>	<b>3 points</b>	<b>4 points</b>	<b>5 points</b>	<b>Points</b>
	1% to 9% growth	10% to 19% growth	20% to 29% growth	30% to 39% growth	40% or more growth	

<b>Bonus: Supporting Documentation</b>	<b>0 points</b>	<b>1 point</b>	<b>2 points</b>
Circle one	Sponsor does not provide any relevant supporting documentation	Sponsor provides one form of relevant supporting document	Sponsor provides two or more forms of relevant supporting documentation

<b>Bonus: Community Partnerships (1 point)</b>	<b>Total points:</b>	out of 18
Describe how you partnered with other organizations to expand your reach and impact		

