

RISING STAR AWARD

The Rising Star Award recognizes new sponsors that delivered an exceptional first- or second-year SFSP or SSO program that promoted healthy menu options. The nomination should provide a summary of your operations with evidence of running a superior program. This award is open to all eligible sponsors who are new to Summer Nutrition Programs, that operated a CONGREGATE OR NON-CONGREGATE meal site in their first or second year. This is not for sponsors that have previously operated congregate sites and is only new to non-congregate.

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 give an overview of your summer program, explain how your menu promoted healthy options, site-level and/ or sponsor-level activities and events, and what you are planning for your program in 2027. Note any nutrition education and promotion you provided. Please include details about your operating dates, number and types of sites, and meals served.
- **A one-month cycle menu** that was used in your program and helped you promote healthy options. Please note the menu cycle interval, i.e., 2-week, 3-week, 4-week, etc. The rubric on the next page details the menu evaluation criteria. Make sure your menu answers the questions the rubric will pose (i.e. Was water available at no cost at all sites? Was locally grown, caught, or raised food used?). The menu does not need to meet all additional criteria.
- **Bonus: Supporting Documentation.** Include relevant materials such as news clips, social media posts, photos, testimonials, outreach materials, community or State Agency feedback, special events, and meal-site activities.

See the next page's rubric for point values and submission guidance.

SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS: Email your presentation and all attachments in one message to carolinahungerinitiative@unc.edu. Use the subject line: **"2026 Summer Nutrition Champion Awards – Your Sponsor/Stakeholder Name."** Label each file with the award title and sponsor/stakeholder name (e.g., **"Rising Star Award – Apple County Schools"**). See the awards overview page for details.

All nominations should be submitted no later than Monday, November 30, 2026 by 5 PM.

Awardees will be recognized at the January 2027 SummerPalooza training summits and may be invited to give a brief presentation. Presentation details will be provided to awardees. Nominees will be evaluated by the Carolina Hunger Initiative. Questions? Email carolinahungerinitiative@unc.edu. Good luck!



Rising Star Award Rubric

Presentation Components (up to 8 points)	0 points (Sponsor does not describe this topic)	1 point (Sponsor adequately explains and describes one example if	2 points (Sponsor explains in detail and describes two or more examples if	Total Points				
Clear overview of program								
Menu promotes healthy options								
Site-level and/ or Sponsor-level activities and								
Future plans for Summer 2027								
Menu (up to 7 points)	1 point	1 point	1 point	1 point	1 point	1 point	1 point	Total Pts
Promotion of healthy options through program's one month menu	Provided fresh, locally grown, caught, or raised foods. Farm must be GAP certified	Provided at least one hot meal per week	50% or more of fruits and veggies served per week were fresh	Did not provide any sweet grains (cookies, cakes, brownies, etc.)	Only provided low-fat (1%) or fat-free dairy products	Water is available at no cost	50% or more whole grain or whole-grain rich food	
Bonus: Supporting Documentation	0 points	1 point	2 points					
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					
Bonus: Community Partnerships (1 point)				Total points:	out of 18			
Describe how you partnered with other organizations to expand your reach and impact								

