



2026 SUMMER NUTRITION CHAMPION AWARDS



Celebrating you! The NCDPI School Nutrition team and the Carolina Hunger Initiative invite all sponsors to showcase your success. Apply for a 2026 Summer Nutrition Champion Award!

ELIGIBILITY

Sponsors must be in good standing with all School and/or Summer Nutrition Programs: no major findings or violations, all corrective actions from the last compliance review completed, no serious deficiency in the past two years, and no history of termination from the Summer Nutrition Programs.

WHICH AWARD APPLICATION IS RIGHT FOR YOU?

Rising Star Award

Apply if you're a NEW Summer Nutrition Program sponsor (1st or 2nd year) operating a CONGREGATE or NON-CONGREGATE Summer Nutrition Program. Do not apply if you have previously operated congregate sites and are only new to non-congregate. What made your program stand out? Examples include appealing, healthy menus, engaging enrichment, and participation-boosting strategies or partnerships.

Farm to Summer Best Practice Award

Apply if you implemented FARM TO SUMMER initiatives in your summer program, including serving locally grown, caught or raised foods, and conducting agricultural and nutritional education activities. Open to sponsors who operated either a CONGREGATE or NON-CONGREGATE meal site.

Superior Congregate Site Award

Apply if you have one specific open CONGREGATE SITE (not sponsor) that performed above and beyond this summer to gain and maintain participation at the site.

Superior Non-Congregate Site Award

Apply if you have one specific open NON-CONGREGATE MEALS (NCM) SITE (not sponsor) that performed above and beyond this summer to gain and maintain participation from the local community at the site.

Rural Non-Congregate Meals Innovation Award

Apply if you served SUN Meals To-Go (RURAL NON-CONGREGATE MEALS), meals in summer 2026 and used one or more innovative concepts and marketing strategies to increase participation in non-congregate meals distributed.

Congregate Meals Innovation Award

Apply if you used a strategic plan with one or more innovative concepts and marketing strategies to increase participation in CONGREGATE meal service.

HOW TO APPLY

- **Choose your award** – Pick the one that fits your successes best. Review its rubric (at summermeals4ckids.org) closely, since it's used to score your application.
- **Build your slides** – These are your application. Use PowerPoint, Google Slides, Canva, or PDF, and cover every rubric criterion.
- **Label everything** – Slides and supplemental materials: "Award Name" – "Organization Name."
- **Submit** – Email all materials to carolinahungerinitiative@unc.edu with the subject "2026 Summer Nutrition Champion Awards (Your Organization Name)."
- **Deadline** – **Monday, November 30, 2026 by 5 PM.** Winners notified week of December 14, 2026. Awards presented at SummerPalooza! in January 2027.