

FNS Northeast Regional Office 2016 Summer Meals Sunshine Awards

The Summer Meals Sunshine Awards recognize the outstanding achievements of those who work hard to administer the Summer Meals Program (SFSP/SSO) and/or provide nutritious meals to children during the summer months. Every year key stakeholders work to continuously improve and expand upon their services and programming. Meal quality, expansion, site activities, community partnerships, and farm to summer initiatives are all priorities for the SFSP. The Northeast Regional Office (NERO) would like to raise awareness and recognize sponsors, sites, organizations, or individuals who have made outstanding strides toward these efforts in the Northeast Region.

Eligible Applicants and Award Categories

Nominations will be accepted for any site, sponsor, partnering organization, or individual who has made exceptional strides in their work with SFSP in the summer of 2016. Nominations will be considered by their state agency and the NERO office for an award in the following categories:

1. Meal quality
2. Site Activities
3. Expansion
4. Community Partnerships
5. Farm to Summer

Three levels of recognition will be awarded in each category: **Gold, Gold Premier, Gold Elite**. Other outstanding nominated programs will be considered for **Honorable Mention**.

Nominations can be made by individuals, outside parties, or the site/sponsor/partnering organization itself. Detailed information of the award categories and how to submit nominations are provided in this packet. *It is important to note that nominees can submit for several categories, but each category must have its own entry form and narrative.*

How to Apply for the Sunshine Awards and Deadlines

All information contained in the *2016 NERO Summer Sunshine Awards Entry Form* should be completed for each nomination. Submit your entry form(s) by September 5, 2016, to the:

Child Nutrition Program Administration-Summer Food Service Program
89 Washington Avenue, EBA Room 375
Albany, NY 12234

Nominations will then be submitted to NERO by the State Agency no later than October 21, 2016.

Application and Evaluation Process

All applications submitted for nomination must be complete. The narrative section should not exceed 500 words. Enough information should be submitted in order to fully showcase the efforts and impacts that have been made. Incorporating enough evidence of the program highlights will allow for effective evaluation by the State Agency and NERO teams.

Nominations: Separate narratives (no more than 500 words) should be submitted by each nomination for the category(s) to which they wish to apply. The category described in each narrative must be clearly noted at the top of the page. Narratives should be concise yet organized and provide enough detail to clearly showcase the program. Sponsors should consider submitting photos and possibly cycle menus (if applying for meal quality) to enhance their application and strengthen their narratives.

Nominees will be scored based on the program's ability to demonstrate innovation/uniqueness, engagement, transferability, sustainability, and effectiveness in their selected category.

Each of the five areas listed below will be scored individually. These scores will then be added together for an overall score. (1 = lowest score to 10 = highest score; Total Maximum Score: **50 points**)

1. **Innovative and/or unique (1-10 points):** did the program use new or "outside of the box" ideas?
2. **Engaging (1-10 points):** was the program well received by the community?
3. **Transferable (1-10 points):** are other programs able to replicate these ideas?
4. **Sustainable (1-10 points):** was the program replicated more than once over the summer? Will the program be able to thrive in future years?
5. **Effective (1-10 points):** does the program demonstrate that its efforts were effective in increasing foot traffic to the site or accomplishing further strides to the overall mission of SFSP?

The *2016 Northeast Region Summer Sunshine Awards* committee will select winners for each of the following five categories:

1. Meal Quality

This award will go to those who have actively helped increase and offer high quality meals at summer sites. High quality meals will be visually appealing, appetizing, and highly nutritious. Meal quality will be assessed on a variety of factors, including use of fresh ingredients, utilization of whole grains, offering varieties of lean protein sources, and local farm products throughout the cycle menu.

2. Site Activities

This award will go to those who have demonstrated a strong use of physical and enrichment activities all summer long to keep kids engaged and increase participation. Examples could include establishing recreational sports games that are held at least once per week or provide events such as book drives and read alongs at the site.

3. Expansion

This award will go to those who are actively helping to expand program sites by utilizing mapping tools and data to offer sites in underserved locations and rural areas. Programs may be considered for helping to ease transportation issues or incorporate mobile feeding. In order to be considered, the site should demonstrate frequent and consistent site participation.

4. Community Partnerships

This award will go to those that have collaborated with one or more organizations or sponsors in the community to help yield an increase in resources, resulting in improved awareness and attention to local needs and an expansion of access to summer meals. These partnerships will have helped improve program services and access on multiple levels.

5. Farm to Summer

This award will go to programs that actively utilize local farm products to incorporate fresh fruits and vegetables into their summer meal pattern, incorporate farming/farmers in their enrichment activities, and/or create sites at local farmers markets. They may even utilize resources such as local meat, grain, and/or dairy. To be considered, frequent use of seasonal fruits and vegetables, school gardens, agricultural activities, and/or nutrition education will have been present at the site(s).

Notification of Winners

NERO will notify winners of each category and the State Agency by email. Along with a certificate, awards will be featured in the FNS regional "At the Table" Newsletter, statewide publications, and forwarded to the FNS National Office to be considered as a national best practice. They will also be invited to participate in local meetings that promote the SFSP.

Summer Sunshine Award Entry Form

Instructions: Please complete the information below to be considered for a 2016 Summer Sunshine Award or Honorable Mention. Completed entry forms should be emailed to your Summer Meals State Agency contact by its set due date.

Section 1: Selection of Award Category

Please check the award category in which the narrative is being submitted (select only one (1) category):

- Meal Quality
- Site Activities
- Expansion
- Community Partnerships
- Farm to Summer

Section 2: Narrative

Please submit a short summary (no more than 500 words) thoroughly showcasing how a site, sponsor, organization, or individual worked to successfully provide outstanding service for the award category selected. Please address how the work completed was innovative/unique, engaging, transferable, sustainable, and effective.

Section 3: Pictures and Cycle Menu

Please provide as many pictures as you want to help demonstrate initiatives that were taken. If a participant is in the photo, please make sure that each of them has signed a permission slip for the use of their photo, and submit those forms at the end of this packet.

Nominees for meal quality also have the opportunity to submit a cycle menu. Other nominees that feel a cycle menu would support their nomination may also submit one.