



# TURNIP THE BEET

**with high quality summer meals!**

Summer Meal Programs can positively impact children's development by offering nutritious meals and encouraging healthy habits. The **Turnip the Beet Award**, by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), recognizes outstanding Summer Meal Program sponsors who work hard to offer high quality meals that are appetizing, appealing, and nutritious.

## Who is eligible, and how do they apply?

All Summer Meal Programs sponsors, including Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) sponsors and National School Lunch Program (NSLP) Seamless Summer Option (SSO) sponsors, may be eligible for a **Turnip the Beet Award**. Sponsors may submit a self-nomination or be nominated by another party. Each State determines their deadline for submissions of nominations. Most deadlines are in the fall. The nomination must include a completed Nomination Form and a detailed one-month menu. The nominations are then forwarded to and evaluated by FNS. FNS notifies the winners in writing in early winter. The Nomination Form is available on the **Turnip the Beet** webpage: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/sfsp/turnip-the-beet>.

## How are nominations evaluated?

Nominations must clearly illustrate how the meals are appetizing, appealing, and nutritious. The Nomination Form includes five short-answer questions. These short-answer questions and the menu are evaluated against a range of criteria that are based on the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. The criteria include serving local foods, serving a variety of vegetables and fruit, serving whole grains and low-fat and fat-free dairy products, serving culturally-appropriate meals, and hosting taste tests. For more detailed information on the **Turnip the Beet Award** and the evaluation criteria, check out the **Turnip the Beet** webpage: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/sfsp/turnip-the-beet>.

## What are the prizes?

Three award levels are available: bronze, silver, and gold. All winners receive a certificate and are featured in FNS's Summer Newsletter. Silver and gold winners will be featured on USDA's blog, and gold winners will be identified as **Turnip the Beet** winners on FNS's Capacity Builder (<https://www.fns.usda.gov/capacitybuilder>).

## Questions?

Questions regarding the **Turnip the Beet Awards** should be directed to your Summer Meals State Agency:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/sfsp/sfsp-contacts>.

## Resources

FNS has an abundance of resources available for sponsors to help make the summer meals they serve more appetizing, appealing, and nutritious:

- The **Nutrition Guidance for Sponsors** (<http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/sfsp/NutritionGuide.pdf>) includes tips for serving high quality meals and incorporating local foods, as well as sample cycle menus.
- **Offering Healthy Summer Meals That Kids Enjoy** (<http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/offering-healthy-summer-meals>), available in English and Spanish, is a colorful resource with practical ideas for small changes to improve the nutritional quality of meals and make foods more appealing to kids and teens.
- The **Farm to Summer website** (<https://www.fns.usda.gov/farmtoschool/farm-summer>) has an abundance of ideas for using local foods to improve meal quality and keeping kids engaged with hands-on activities.
- The **Summer Meals Toolkit** page (<http://www.fns.usda.gov/sfsp/summer-meals-toolkit>) offers healthy menu planning ideas and tips for serving meals family style.
- The **Team Nutrition Resource Library** (<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/resource-library>) has free nutrition education materials.
- **Smarter Lunchroom Strategies** (<https://www.smarterlunchrooms.org/>) are free or low-cost solutions that nudge children to voluntarily select healthier food.