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July 24, 2026

MEMORANDUM

TO: Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) Sponsors

FROM: Aimee F. Beam, MS, RD 
Director, Nutrition Programs Workgroup

RE: **2026 Operational Memo #17**
USDA Food and Nutrition Service's 2026 Turnip the Beet Award

This information is for all Sponsors who participated in the 2026 Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) through the Delaware Department of Education (DDOE) Nutrition Programs.

We are pleased to share with you the USDA Food and Nutrition Service's **2026 Turnip the Beet Award** information. The Turnip the Beet Award recognizes *outstanding Summer Meal Program Sponsors across the nation who work hard to offer high quality meals to children that are appetizing, appealing, and nutritious during the summer months*. We know that this is happening across Delaware, as we have seen the great meals being served to Delaware's children this summer!

Sponsors may submit a self-nomination or be nominated by another party. All nominations are due to our office by **Monday, September 21, 2026**. Details can be found on the attached documents and links below. The nomination form and additional information can also be found on the Turnip the Beet website at: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/sfsp/turnip-the-beet>.

Please note for this year, all nominations have a five (5) document limit.

When completing the nomination form, please keep in mind that the nomination reviewers consist of USDA staff from other regions who might not be familiar with you, your district, or your organization's activities.

Please contact our office with any questions at 302-857-3356.

Attachments: Turnip the Beet 2026 Nomination Form
TUB 2026 SA and RO Checklists

cc: DDOE Nutrition Team

Turnip the Beet: High-Quality Summer Meals Award Program

2026 Nomination Form

Instructions: Please complete the information below to be considered for a 2026 Turnip the Beet Award. Only nominations that contain **all** the requested information will be considered. Submit this completed form via email to your summer meals State agency point of contact (<https://www.fna.usda.gov/sfsp/program-contacts>).

Submission deadlines vary by State, so please contact your State agency to learn their submission deadline. Nominations must be sent by the State agency to the appropriate FNA regional office by October 2, 2026.

Note: USDA has the right to reproduce, publish, or otherwise use the data in the application for this award, and authorize others to reproduce, publish, or otherwise use the data in the application for this award for Federal purposes.

Section 1: General Information

Sponsor's Name or Program Name:	
Contact Information	
Name and Title	
Phone Number	
Email Address	
Mailing Address (Street, City, State, and Zip Code)	
This address may be used to mail the award certificate. P.O. Box addresses are not acceptable.	
Select Sponsorship Type	☐ Summer Food Service Program (SFSF) Sponsor ☐ Seamless Summer Option (SSO) Sponsor
Select Meal Service Type	☐ Congregate ☐ Rural Non-Congregate Submit a separate menu for each meal service type.

OMB Burden Disclosure Statement: This information is being collected to assist the Food and Nutrition Administration (FNA) in recognizing high-quality summer meals. This is a voluntary collection and FNA will use the information to determine Turnip the Beet award winners. This collection does request personally identifiable information under the Privacy Act of 1974. According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, an agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 0584-0658. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Administration, Office of Policy Support, 1320 Braddock Place, 5th Floor, Alexandria, VA 22306 ATTN: PRA (0584-0658). Do not return the completed form to this address.

Section 2: Short Answers

Please answer the following short-answer questions to demonstrate how the meals served at the nominated sponsor's summer sites were high quality. Please be as specific as possible; specific details will be given greater value than generalities. Questions are worth up to two (2) points each.

Visit the *Tips for Sponsors: Completing the Nomination Packet* at:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/sfsp/turnip-the-beet/tips> for tips on what information to include.

- 1. How were the meals prepared to be age-appropriate for the population being served?** (Describe how meals served were appropriate for the age of the children being served. For example, food was cut into bite-size pieces for young children, or the sponsor offered different meals to appeal to various age groups that attended the site.)

- 2. How did you gather feedback from children about the meals served at the summer sites?** (Describe any methods used [e.g., taste tests, surveys, or voting boxes] to gather feedback from children.)

3. How were nutritious foods such as vegetables, fruits, and whole grains incorporated into menus and promoted to children at summer sites? (Describe how the sponsor promoted nutritious foods. For example, fun descriptors were used on menus and signage, or healthier choices were placed prominently in the service area to encourage consumption.)

4. What, if any, food and nutrition-based activities were offered at the summer sites (or included with rural non-congregate meals)? (Describe activities and resources related to USDA materials, cooking, local foods, gardening, farming, or other food and nutrition topics.)

Section 3: Menus and Other Supporting Documents

Along with submitting this completed nomination form, you must submit a one-month menu to be considered for a Turnip the Beet Award. Please see the attached sample menu for guidance on menu documentation. All menus must meet meal pattern requirements per SFSP or SSO regulations and policy, as applicable.

The menus should also include sufficient detail for reviewers to assess them based on the criteria below. For example, please indicate whether vegetables and fruit are fresh, frozen, canned or dried, the type of milk (i.e., fat content and whether it is flavored), which items are whole grain-rich*, a clear statement of whether water is available at no cost (applies to congregated sites only), and which items are sourced locally.

Sponsors earn two points for every menu evaluation criterion met and one point for every bonus criterion met.

You may submit other supporting documents to further demonstrate the quality of the meals, such as ingredient lists, recipes to verify a food item is whole grain-rich, Child Nutrition (CN) Label or a manufacturer's Product Formulation Statement (PFS), invoices for local food purchases, news clips about the program, photos, etc. If photos contain pictures of children, please include a signed photo release form with your application. Please do not submit more than five (5) supporting documents.

** Whole grain-rich is the term designated by FNA to indicate that the grain content of a product is between 50 and 100 percent whole grain with any remaining grains being enriched.*

For reference, menu evaluation criteria include:

- Locally produced vegetables, fruits, grains, milk, or meats/meat alternates are served as part of the reimbursable meal and promoted as local foods at least one (1) time per week, per meal type.
- Entrees repeat two (2) times or fewer per month, per meal type.
 - **Bonus:** Entree types (e.g., sandwiches, pasta dishes, breaded poultry dishes, etc.) are repeated two (2) times or fewer per week, per meal type.
- Menu includes at least one (1) hot food item per week, per meal type.
- At least four (4) different vegetables and/or fruits are served per week, per meal type.
 - **Bonus:** At least one (1) serving each of dark green vegetables, red and orange vegetables, beans and peas (legumes), starch vegetables, and other vegetables is served per week. (This is a requirement for SSO sponsors.)
- Fifty (50) percent or more of vegetables and fruits are fresh per week, per meal type.
- Juice is served to meet the fruit and vegetable component two (2) times or fewer per week, per meal type.

- Fifty (50) percent or more of grains served are whole grain-rich per week, per meal type (e.g., the grain content of a product is between 50 and 100 percent whole grain with any remaining grains being enriched). (SSO requirement: At least eighty (80) percent of the weekly grains offered need to be whole grain-rich.)
- Grain-based desserts are not served.
- Only unflavored milks are served to children aged 2 and older. If one-year-old children attend the summer site, they are served whole milk.
 - **Bonus:** Yogurt contains no more than 12 grams of added sugars per 6 ounces.
- Water is available at no cost. (Applies to congregate sites only.)

Privacy Act Statement

Authority: Section 13 of the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act (NSLA) 42 U.S.C. § 1758, as amended, authorized the Summer Food Service Program (SFS) and the Seamless Summer Option (SSO) of the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). **Purpose:** Information is collected for use by the USDA Food and Nutrition Administration to support the Turnip the Beet award within the SFS and the SSO. **Routine Use:** Information may be disclosed in USDA publications exclusively for the purposes of recognizing award winners and directing the public to award-winning meal sites. **Disclosure:** Furnishing the information on this form is voluntary, but failure to do so will result in ineligibility for a Turnip the Beet Award.

TUB Sample Menu (SFSP)

June 1 - June 26, 2026

Water is available at every meal and snack.

Week 1	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Breakfast	Rise n' Shine Parfaits: -Whole grain granola Low-fat plain yogurt Mixed berries (frozen) Whole, 1%, and fat-free unflavored milk	Scrambled eggs Whole-wheat toast Watermelon slices (fresh) Whole, 1%, and fat-free unflavored milk	Whole-wheat English muffin with peanut butter Whole grain cereal Banana (fresh) Whole, 1%, and fat-free unflavored milk	Team Nutrition Strawberry Smoothie Bowl: -Low-fat Greek yogurt -Local Oranges (fresh) Whole wheat toast Whole, 1%, and fat-free unflavored milk	Choice of whole grain cereal Local peaches (fresh) Whole, 1%, and fat-free unflavored milk
Lunch	Zesty Spaghetti Casserole: -Enriched Spaghetti -Ground Beef (90% lean) -Marinara Sauce -Parmesan Cheese Mixed greens salad with local cherry tomatoes (fresh) Corn (frozen) Orange slices Whole, 1%, and fat-free unflavored milk	Southwest Chicken Wrap: -Whole wheat tortilla -Grilled chicken -Lettuce -Salsa Black beans (canned) Steamed broccoli (frozen) Pineapple chunks (canned) Whole, 1%, and fat-free unflavored milk	Turkey sandwich on whole grain bun (with lettuce and tomato) Roasted potato wedges (frozen) Steamed green beans (fresh) Whole, 1%, and fat-free unflavored milk	Grilled cheese sandwich on enriched bread Baby carrots (fresh) Local sugar snap peas (fresh) Whole, 1%, and fat-free unflavored milk	Black bean burger on whole grain bun (with lettuce and tomato) Roasted sweet potato wedges (fresh) Grapes (fresh) Whole, 1%, and fat-free unflavored milk
Snack	Whole-grain crackers Whole unflavored milk	Low-fat yogurt Mango (frozen)	Crunchy carrot and celery sticks (fresh) Hummus	Banana (fresh) Whole unflavored milk	Low-fat yogurt Local mixed berries (fresh)

Week 2		Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Breakfast		Oatmeal with Raisins and Pecans Diced pears (canned) Whole, 1%, and fat-free unflavored milk	Omelet: -Turkey or Ham -Cheese -Onions (frozen) -Bell peppers (frozen) Hash brown potatoes (frozen) Whole wheat toast Whole, 1%, and fat-free unflavored milk	Whole wheat toast with peanut butter Sliced cantaloupe (fresh) Local raspberries (fresh) Whole, 1%, and fat-free unflavored milk	Multi-grain bagel with reduced fat cream cheese Local peaches (fresh) Strawberries (fresh) Whole, 1%, and fat-free unflavored milk	Mini buttermilk pancakes Mixed berries (fresh) Banana (fresh) Whole, 1%, and fat-free unflavored milk
Lunch		Sizzling Stir-Fry: -Chicken -Bell peppers (frozen) -Snow peas (fresh) -Onion (frozen) -Mushrooms (fresh) White rice Pineapple tidbits (canned) Whole, 1%, and fat-free unflavored milk	BBQ Beef Sliders on Whole Grain Buns Local mixed greens and cucumber salad (fresh) Banana (fresh) Whole, 1%, and fat-free unflavored milk	Mediterranean Hummus and Veggie Wraps: -Whole wheat tortilla -Hummus -Cheese -Local lettuce (fresh) -Local tomatoes (fresh) Mixed berries (frozen) Whole, 1%, and fat-free unflavored milk	Burrito Bowls: -Grilled chicken strips -Black beans (canned) -Local lettuce (fresh) -Local tomatoes(fresh) -Avocado (fresh) -Salsa -Brown rice Sliced cantaloupe (fresh) Whole, 1%, and fat-free unflavored milk	State Spotlight: Louisiana Style Red Beans and Rice Baby carrots (fresh) Mixed fruit (canned) Whole, 1%, and fat-free unflavored milk
Snack		Watermelon slices (fresh) String cheese	Low-fat yogurt Local strawberries (fresh)	Apple slices (fresh) Whole unflavored milk	Low-fat yogurt Blueberries (frozen)	Cheddar cheese Whole grain crackers

Week 3		Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Breakfast		Rise n' Shine Parfaits: -Whole grain granola -Low-fat plain yogurt -Mixed berries (frozen) Whole, 1%, and fat-free unflavored milk	Scrambled eggs Whole wheat toast Watermelon slices (fresh) Whole, 1%, and fat-free unflavored milk	Whole-wheat English muffin with peanut butter Whole grain cereal Banana Whole, 1%, and fat-free unflavored milk	Team Nutrition Strawberry Smoothie Bowl: -Low-fat Greek yogurt -Local Oranges (fresh) Whole wheat toast Whole, 1%, and fat-free unflavored milk	Choice of whole grain cereal Local peaches (fresh) Whole, 1%, and fat-free unflavored milk
Lunch		Spaghetti and Meatballs: -Enriched spaghetti -Marinara sauce -Beef meatballs Local mixed greens salad (fresh) Local roasted green beans (fresh) Whole, 1%, and fat-free unflavored milk	Turkey sandwich on whole grain bun (with lettuce and tomato) Carrot and celery sticks (fresh) Diced peaches (canned) Whole, 1%, and fat-free unflavored milk	Tex-Mex Chicken Fajitas: -Whole wheat tortilla -Grilled chicken strips -Bell peppers (fresh) -Onions (fresh) Fruit salad (fresh) Whole, 1%, and fat-free unflavored milk	Grilled cheese sandwich on enriched bread Team Nutrition Tasty Tots: -Sweet potatoes (fresh) -Garbanzo beans (canned) Sliced cantaloupe (fresh) Whole, 1%, and fat-free unflavored milk	Team Nutrition Asian Tuna Burger on whole grain bun (with lettuce and tomato): -Tuna -Local green onions (fresh) -Red pepper (fresh) Roasted broccoli (fresh) Roasted potato wedges (frozen) Whole, 1%, and fat-free unflavored milk
Snack		Low-fat yogurt Pear (fresh)	Banana (fresh) Whole unflavored milk	Apple slices (fresh) Cheddar cheese	Local sugar snap peas and cucumber slices (fresh) Hummus	Watermelon slices (fresh) Whole grain crackers

Week 4	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Breakfast	Oatmeal with Raisins and Pecans Diced pears (canned) Whole, 1%, and fat-free unflavored milk	Omelet: -Turkey or Ham -Cheese -Onions (frozen) -Bell peppers (frozen) Hash brown potatoes (frozen) Whole wheat toast Whole, 1%, and fat-free unflavored milk	Whole wheat toast with peanut butter Sliced cantaloupe (fresh) Local raspberries (fresh) Whole, 1%, and fat-free unflavored milk	Multi-grain bagel with reduced fat cream cheese Local peaches (fresh) Strawberries (fresh) Whole, 1%, and fat-free unflavored milk	Mini buttermilk pancakes (enriched) Mixed berries (fresh) Banana Whole, 1%, and fat-free unflavored milk
Lunch	State Spotlight: New York Style Bagels with Egg and Cheese Mixed greens salad (fresh) Sliced cantaloupe (fresh) Whole, 1%, and fat-free unflavored milk	Black bean burger on whole grain bun (with lettuce and tomato) Roasted sweet potato wedges (fresh) Local sugar snap peas (fresh) Whole, 1%, and fat-free unflavored milk	Sizzling Stir-Fry: -Chicken -Bell peppers (frozen) -Snow peas (fresh) -Onion (frozen) -Mushrooms (fresh) Enriched white rice Pineapple tidbits (canned) Whole, 1%, and fat-free unflavored milk	Tuna salad on whole wheat pita (with lettuce and tomato) Bean salad: -Black beans (canned) -Carrots (fresh) -Local green onions (fresh) -Bell peppers (fresh) Apple slices (fresh) Whole, 1%, and fat-free unflavored milk	Cheese pizza on whole grain crust Local mixed greens and cucumber salad (fresh) Mixed fruit (canned) Whole, 1%, and fat-free unflavored milk
Snack	Low-fat yogurt Granola cereal	Pear slices (fresh) Whole unflavored milk	String cheese Whole grain crackers	Low-fat yogurt Mango (frozen)	Local watermelon slices (fresh) Crackers (enriched) with peanut butter or sunflower butter

**2026 Turnip the Beet Awards
State Agency and Regional Office Checklists**

Sponsor Name: _____

Section 1: State Agency Checklist and Signature

- ☐ The nominated sponsor participated in either the Summer Food Service Program or the Seamless Summer Option in Summer 2026.
- ☐ The nominated sponsor is in good standing (i.e., the sponsor had no major findings and program violations or completed and implemented all corrective actions from the last compliance review, was not found seriously deficient in the past two years as of the time of the nomination, and has never been terminated from the Summer Food Service Program [SFSP] or Seamless Summer Option [SSO]).
- ☐ Through the documentation submitted, the nominated sponsor has demonstrated compliance with meal pattern requirements per USDA Food and Nutrition Administration regulations and policy, based on the type of program (SFSP or SSO).
- ☐ The sponsor's name and address on the application are complete, legible, and correct.
Note: P.O. Box addresses are not acceptable.

As the State agency reviewer, your signature hereby confirms that the attached nomination packet is complete, and all the above statements are true and complete to the best of your knowledge.

Signature

Date

Printed Name: _____

Job Title: _____

State Agency: _____

Email Address: _____

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Section 2: Regional Office Checklist and Signature

- ☐ The nomination packet is complete, including:
- ☐ Sponsor name and contact information (P.O. Box addresses are not acceptable)
 - ☐ Responses to short answer questions
 - ☐ One-month menu (one calendar month or four consecutive weeks) per service type **OR** an explanation of why a one-month menu is not available
 - ☐ Sufficient menu documentation to evaluate based on award criteria
 - ☐ Completed and signed State agency checklist

Signature

Date

Printed Name: _____

Regional Office: _____

Date submitted to RO: _____