# SNP Memo #2022-2023-30


**COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
Department of Education**

DATE: October 7, 2022

TO: Directors, Supervisors, and Contact Persons Addressed

FROM: Sandra C. Curwood, PhD, RDN, ***Sandy***

## SUBJECT: 2022 Turnip the Beet Award Nomination Requests and 2021 Winners

The Virginia Department of Education, Office of School Nutrition Programs (VDOE-SNP) is excited to announce Virginia’s participation in the 2022 Turnip the Beet Award. The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Turnip the Beet award recognizes summer meals program sponsors who offer high quality and nutritious meals. Sponsoring organizations of the Summer Food Service Program or Seamless Summer Option are encouraged to submit nominations.

### 2022 Nominations

Summer Food Service Program or Seamless Summer Option sponsors, that are in good standing, are eligible for nomination and may self-nominate or be nominated by another party.

Please click here for the USDA’s [Turnip the Beet Award flyer](https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/resource-files/tub-2022-one-pager.pdf) for additional information on nomination and evaluation criteria.

The [nomination form](https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/resource-files/tub-2022-nomination-form.pdf) and supporting documentation, which includes a one-month menu, must be submitted via email to Maggie Parker, VDOE-SNP Child Nutrition Programs Manager, at Maggie.Parker@doe.virginia.gov **by October 17, 2022**. When completing the nomination form, please read all instructions thoroughly and ensure the menu includes all required criteria.

### Previous Virginia Winners from 2021

The VDOE-SNP is proud to honor the Commonwealth’s 2021 Turnip the Beet winners!

**Neighborhood Resource Center of Greater Fulton – Richmond, Virginia – Gold Level**

The Neighborhood Resource Center (NRC) is located in the east end of Richmond, a historically underserved area of the city. During summer 2021 the NRC and its three sponsored sites primarily served preschool and kindergarten populations. Portion sizes were tailored to this age group and menu items, such as pre-cut quesadillas and wraps, could easily be picked up by little hands. The NRC used a family style food service model, which promotes autonomy amongst younger eaters and encourages them to try new foods their peers are eating. This model also fosters a sense of community starting at a young age.

The NRC used Virginia Harvest of the Month program materials. Posters of the monthly produce item were displayed at the center and its sites, and produce items were incorporated into the menu several times throughout the month. Each time, the produce item was cooked differently to encourage the children to try the item and see how the taste changed based on the preparation style.

The NRC used the Virginia Agriculture in the Classroom lesson plans featured in the Harvest of the Month program. The monthly produce item became a theme that was incorporated into nutrition education for program participants and their families. A majority of the NRC’s nutrition-based activities were centered around their garden, referred to as the Learning Garden. Program participants visited the garden and learned how the plants would become part of their meals. For example, they talked about a tomato starting as a seed and eventually growing into a tomato. Items from the garden were also used for taste testing and cooking demonstrations. During taste tests and cooking demonstrations, participants would try foods prepared in different ways and talk about what they were eating.

In front of the NRC is a growing wall with perennial herbs such as lavender, rosemary, basil, and thyme. Also on the premises is a rain garden that grows strawberries and blueberries, and has an apple tree. These items were used in nutrition education and were also included in the menus. Families from the community are allowed to harvest all items on the growing wall and rain garden at any time, in an effort to provide food and nutrition education to the community, in an accessible way.

**Louisa County Public Schools – Louisa, Virginia – Silver Level**

Louisa County Public Schools (LCPS) is located within a rural county approximately one hour northwest of Richmond. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, LCPS primarily operated a grab-and-go meal service during summer 2021, in addition to summer school and home delivery routes, which included approximately 180 households. The grab-and-go and home delivery meal packs were available to the community weekly and included seven days’ worth of breakfasts and lunches.

Food service staff cut and bagged fruits, such as apples and oranges, for easier consumption. Hot foods that were popular during the school year, such as turkey and gravy, mashed potatoes, and spaghetti, were included on the summer menu. Lunch meals were packaged in TV tray-like containers and included simple instructions for reheating, for young children to follow on their own. Randy Herman, the Director of Nutrition Services, took pride in serving hot meals that were appealing to the children, rather than pre-wrapped, cold sandwiches. Certain produce items on the LCPS summer menu were grown in the school garden or were from a local farm. Clippings from the middle school’s aquaponics garden were included on the menu as well.

In a typical summer, LCPS partners with the technology department, Cooperative Extension, the local arts center, and division’s STEAM program to coordinate activities at feeding sites. During the COVID-19 pandemic, LCPS and the STEAM program collaborated to ensure children had continued access to summer activities. Using grant money from No Kid Hungry, LCPS purchased materials to make activity kits to distribute with meals. Each kit included a flyer with information on the summer meals program on one side and instructions for completing the activity on the other. Several activities included winners who would receive prizes centered around food and nutrition, such as activity books with nutrition education activities. During one summer 2021 activity entitled, “Show You Can Grow” children were given bean seeds and supplies for growing the seeds at home. Instructions outlined how to monitor their plants and children submitted weekly photos through a portal.

Please join the VDOE-SNP in congratulation the NRC and LCPS!

For questions regarding the Turnip the Beet Award, please contact Maggie Parker, VDOE-SNP Child Nutrition Programs Manager, via email at Maggie.Parker@doe.virginia.gov.

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