



2026 Category Criteria & Questions

Golden Director Award

A school nutrition professional with **more than 12 years of experience as a director** who demonstrates outstanding achievement in leadership, spirit/dedication, innovation, career awards, management/systems, humanitarianism/community involvement, and bettering the lives of students.

1. Describe three of your nominee's most outstanding leadership skills.
2. In what ways does your nominee show dedication to school nutrition and better the lives of children.
3. Give specific examples of your nominee's innovation in management/systems. (include measurable results achieved).
4. Give an example of a fiscal achievement accomplished by your nominee (include specific financial results such as end-of-year fund balance or other financial indicator).
5. Describe how your nominee delivers innovative menu solutions despite labor and equipment obstacles.

Silver Director Award

A school nutrition professional with **fewer than 12 years of experience as a director** who demonstrates outstanding leadership, dedication, fiscal achievement, and innovation in menuing and merchandising.

1. Give an example of how your nominee demonstrated commitment to their school nutrition program or profession (include measurable results achieved).
2. Explain the marked changes in the district's school nutrition program due to contributions made by your nominee in the five or fewer years he/she has been the director.
3. Describe how your nominee delivers innovative menu solutions despite labor and equipment obstacles.
4. In what ways does your nominee show dedication to school nutrition and better the lives of children.

Silver Spirit Award

A school nutrition professional in a **management position** – such as an assistant director or coordinator – who shows commitment to the people and programs of school nutrition and distinguishes her/himself through innovative programs, marketing, training, customer service, and/or staff motivation.

1. Describe how your nominee demonstrates a high level of professional commitment to school nutrition programs.
2. Give an example of how your nominee has made a difference for people in their school community (include measurable results achieved).
3. Give an example of an innovative program (e.g., marketing, training, customer service) implemented by your nominee (include measurable results achieved).
4. Describe how your nominee contributes to high morale of work associates and/or professional colleagues.

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