



Nevada Department of Agriculture

Guide for Registered Meal Vendors

August 21, 2025

National School Lunch Program,
School Breakfast Program,
Child and Adult Care Food Program,
Summer Food Program
Division of Food and Nutrition



Guide for Registered Meal Vendors

Division of Food and Nutrition

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1. **Mail:** U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Mail Stop 9410, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
2. **Fax:** (202) 690-7442; or
3. **Email:** program.intake@usda.gov.

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To Meal Vendor:

The purpose of this guide is to explain how you can become an approved meal vendor with the Nevada Department of Agriculture's (NDA) Division of Food and Nutrition (DFN). This is a guidance document prepared to answer your questions, as well as outline your responsibilities. For the rest of this guide, meal vendor/caterer will be referred to as "vendor".

The NDA Child Nutrition Programs are Federal programs through the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) that provide healthy meals and snacks to children and adults receiving care. The Division of Food and Nutrition's mission is to help Nevadans embrace a healthier life. One of our many goals is to ensure and improve access to safe, nutritious, balanced meals for Nevada's children, families and the elderly.

The Division of Food and Nutrition is required to ensure that participating National School Lunch Program (NSLP) sponsors, Child & Adult Care Feeding Programs (CACFP), and Summer Food Service Sponsors (SFSP) and their selected vendors comply with State and Federal program regulations and procurement methods.

Please take a few minutes to review this guide for applying to become a registered vendor with the Division of Food and Nutrition. If you would like additional information, please write or call or visit our website:

Nevada Department of Agriculture
Division of Food and Nutrition
405 S. 21st Street
Sparks, NV 89431
Phone: (775)353-3749
Fax: (775) 668-4580
Email: FND@agri.nv.gov

Thank you for your interest in providing nutritious meals and snacks to Nevada's children.

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Vendor Registration Process

The following items must be submitted to the DFN for a vendor to become registered and included on the Registered Meal Vendor List.

- A. Completed Meal Vendor/Caterer Registration form.
- B. Copy of current Nevada Business License.
- C. Copy of most recent health permit and copy of most current food service facility inspection report from the appropriate health regulatory agency for the facility in which you plan on preparing meals.
- D. Copy of any certifications for your current certified food handlers.
- E. Sample production records for each age group.
- F. Supporting documents for item compliance (Child Nutrition Labels, product formulation sheets, product nutrition labels, recipes)
- G. Set of sample cycle menus (minimum of four weeks) for all meal types (breakfast, lunch, snack, supper) provided by the company.
 - i. If applying for NSLP and SBP attach four weeks of menu certification worksheets or equivalent nutrient analysis reports from an approved USDA software.
 - ii. Worksheets can be found here: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/certification-compliance>
 - iii. USDA Approved Nutrient Analysis Software can be found here: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/usda-approved-nutrient-analysis-software>

A kitchen facility inspection tour may be scheduled with DFN upon receipt of documents as part of the approval process. DFN will contact you directly if needed.

Upon receipt of the above items and if approved by the appropriate program (NSLP, CACFP, and/or SFSP), the vendor's contact name will be included on the Division of Food and Nutrition's Registered Meal Vendor List.

To maintain registration status, vendors are required to reapply every year and annually submit items (B), items (C) and items (D) identified above. Vendors must also perform their responsibilities as outlined in their contract with the Program sponsor.

Vendors must remain in compliance with Nevada Administrative Code, chapter 446 and Federal Regulations 7 CFR Parts 210, 220, 225, 226 & 2 CFR 200. Contact the Division of Food and Nutrition for more information.

USDA Foods (formerly known as commodity foods) may be available to some program sponsors. For more information on USDA Foods Entitlement please check out the link here: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/usda-fis>.

Reimbursement Rates

All federal payments to sponsors are based on the type of meal served and the child's eligibility for free, reduced-price, or paid meals, while shelters and after-school meals and snack programs in low-income areas are reimbursed at the free rate. Please find links below to the program specific reimbursement rates. Reimbursement rates are revised every July. The reimbursement rates are listed here so you may be aware of the pricing range which may guide you on the meal plan components and items, and the pricing method ranges for you, the prospective meal vendor. The actual amount you are paid for the meals you provide to the sponsor will depend on your proposal/contract if you are the meal vendor selected by the sponsor.

NSLP Rates:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/schoolmeals/reimbursement-rates>

CACFP Rates:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/reimbursement-rates>

Summer Food Service Program Rates:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/summer/sunmeals/reimbursement-rates>

Vended Meal Contracts

All DFN program sponsors (school districts, charter schools, residential child care institutions, preschool programs, Head Start programs, before & after care school programs, child care centers, shelters, adult day care centers, summer camps, and summer feeding sites) may choose to vend for meal services. Each sponsor must use an agency specific contract to acquire those vended meals and federal, state, and local procurement methods must be followed. A vended meal contract is allowed per Federal guidelines for a period of up to one year in length. It may begin anytime but may not exceed a 12 month period.

Within the DFN, each Child Nutrition Program (NSLP, CACFP, SFSP) issues a vended meal contract specific to that program's needs. The actual contract will be sent by the sponsor to the awarded vendor upon state agency approval in response to evaluated a Invitation for Bid (IFB) or Request for Proposal (RFP). For more information, contact NDA.

Formal Procurement Process

DFN program sponsors may be required to follow a formal procurement process before selecting a meal vendor/caterer. A formal procurement is a competitive method of procurement prescribed by the USDA and is required if annual purchases exceed the federal small acquisition threshold, or more restrictive state, local or institution threshold. The sponsor with a meal contract exceeding \$150,000 must follow the Invitation for Bid (IFB) or Request for Proposal (RFP) formal purchasing requirements. If an IFB is issued, price is the only factor that is evaluated. If an RFP is issued, price must be the highest weighted factor however, other criteria are evaluated such as menu offerings, experience, references, and service models.

The formal procurement process is made up of several steps.

1. The sponsor will prepare a proposal which will include all of the pertinent information.

2. The invitation for bid or request for proposal is advertised publicly. Only current registered vendors will be allowed to submit a bid/proposal to the sponsor per the bid/proposal specifications.
3. Bids or proposals are received and opened
4. Evaluation of responses by the sponsor's committee. All vendors must be "responsive and responsible" to be considered.
5. Contract approval by NDA.
6. Contract execution between the sponsor and vendor.
7. Contract monitoring and compliance of the vendor by the sponsor. After the contract has been awarded, all documents submitted are considered public information and may be viewed.

Small Purchase Procedure

If the Division of Food and Nutrition sponsor has not met the threshold for formal procurement, the agency may award a contract in a less formal method by requesting price quotes from vendors registered in Nevada. The sponsor will determine what qualities are important in the meal vendor. However, the NDA vended meal contract template must still be used.

Timeline of Events- NLSP

Contracting out with a meal vendor is a lengthy, and involved process with sponsors, the meal vendor and the state agency. Please expect 4 to 6 weeks for a meal vendor approval, including the on-site inspection review. Please expect a sponsor to need 6 to 8 weeks for the RFP development, release, and review of responses before making a meal vendor choice. Additional time may be needed for additional approval if required by a school board or charter school board. All contract documents require state agency approval for use of Federal funds. Please find below an *estimate* of time to become a meal vendor. Meal programs and sponsor timetables may vary, and thus this is only an estimate.

[Pre-assessment of current meal program](#): Sponsors evaluate if they wish to vend meals. Meal count figures are established for past school year, including current program cost and costs per meal analysis. If sponsors currently have a meal vendor in place, contract monitoring is ongoing with current year meal vendor contract.

[Month 1 to 3](#): Sponsors contact DFN for approved meal vendor registration list, vended meal RFP templates, vended meal required contract(s) and develop their scoring matrixes. Evaluation committee is formed. RFP documents are reviewed by NDA and to prepare for public release by the sponsor.

[Month 3 to 6](#): Sponsor releases RFP documents and advertises solicitations for 14 days minimum. Sponsors review and evaluate proposals. Sponsors receive technical assistance from state agency on the process. NDA reviews proposals and scoring matrixes (7-10 days) prior to intent to award and contract award. Upon written approval from NDA, sponsor prepares the contract with vendor. NDA issues approval letter prior to execution of the vended meal contract. Sponsor then may fully execute vended meal contract. Sponsor sends signed contract to NDA for final approval. This process may take 2-3 weeks. Sponsors may need board of approval of the contract which may take an additional 4 weeks (or more) for final contract approval.

Months 6 to 7: Final arrangements are made with sponsors and meal vendor on delivery schedules, equipment purchases (if needed), operational and administrative functions such as meal counting, billing, and transport records. Training and staff orientation may be scheduled at this time.

Months 7 to 8: the sponsors and meal vendors are fully prepared for the upcoming school year for meal service.

Timeline of Events- CACFP/SFSP

A meal vendor must be approved and registered with NDA prior to signing a meal contract with a sponsor. This could take 2-4 weeks including the on-site inspection by NDA. The sponsor can contact DFN for a meal contract for CACFP or SFSP. The CACFP contract can start anytime throughout the year after DFN approval, but usually follows the annual application renewal process. For SFSP the contract is usually in place for the Summer Meal Service (June through August) for most sponsors; some sponsors are year round.

Any sponsor with a meal contract exceeding \$150,000 must follow the Invitation for Bid (IFB) or Request for Proposal (RFP) formal purchasing requirements that could take the sponsor 2-3 months to complete and award a contract. Refer to the Timeline of Events-NSLP for a general overview or steps when considering registered non-school meal vendors. Contact the NDA CACFP or SFSP representative for assistance.

Contract Monitoring

Contract monitoring is a requirement by USDA. Program sponsors need to actively monitor meal vendors to meet program needs. In addition, USDA requires NDA to conduct an accountability system through an Administrative Review process to evaluate program requirements. These reviews happen for sponsors at a minimum every three to five years. As a meal vendor, you will be required to submit necessary documentation to support this review process such as food labels, production records and/or other menu planning documents as requested by the designated sponsor. This comprehensive evaluation ensures program integrity by the state agency (NDA) and its sponsors and meal vendors to ensure program compliance.

Renewal Process for Contracts

After the first year, if the sponsor or the vendor desires to renew their contract, a Renewal Contract must be used. Renewal options must be spelled out in the original request by the sponsors in the initial procurement documents. If no renewal options were in the original documents, a sponsor must go out to bid for the following year. The original contract should not lapse, before a renewal contract is in place if you require continuous meal service. For example, if the original contract ending date is June 30, 2025, your contract renewal date begins on July 1, 2025 if continuous meal service is desired.

Meal Pattern

Each program has its own meal pattern. Though similar, differences do exist in some of the food items, portion sizes, and allowable foods. Different program sponsors may have preferences within their specific program area for their program participants in terms of meal service options. For example, a school district may want hot & cold food items as well as a fruit & vegetable bar; the Summer Food Service program may only be able to serve cold lunches in a park due to the equipment limitations and the hot weather. A CACFP program may want to avoid certain foods due to the choking hazards with small children. It is up to each sponsor to customize their meal service within the specific meal pattern. For specific information, please see the links below by program.

NSLP Meal Pattern

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/nutrition-standards/nslp-meal-pattern>

SBP Meal Pattern

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/nutrition-standards/sbp-meal-pattern>

NSLP Snack Meal Pattern

https://foodbuyingguide.fns.usda.gov/Content/TablesFBG/Chart2_FBG_Afterschool_Snacks_Program.pdf

CACFP Meal Patterns for Children, Infants, Adults

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/nutrition-standards>
<https://www.cacfp.org/meal-pattern-guidance/>

SFSP Meal Pattern

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/summer/sunmeals/mealpatterns>

Food Safety

As a meal vendor in the state of Nevada, you work very hard to serve healthy, nutritious meals to children. Sponsors across the country are finding creative ways to serve meals to meet the needs of public schools, charter schools, residential child care institutions, child and adult care centers, shelters and summer and after school meal feeding programs in our community. The safety of the food you serve is a top priority. You want foods served to contribute to children's well-being; you don't want them to cause harm. Areas to consider are preparing meals safely, transporting and delivering meals safely to varied locations, such as schools, day care centers and community locations, and maintaining food temperature logs.

Familiarize yourself with local food safety regulations that apply to a vended meal operation. The local health department (or your regulatory agency) is often a good resource for food safety information and guidance. In addition, we have provided some resources here:

<https://www.usda.gov/about-food/food-safety/health-and-safety>

<https://theicn.org/icn-resources-a-z/food-safety/>

<https://www.foodsafety.gov/>

Additional Resources

NSLP Recipes

<https://theicn.org/cnrb/state-agency-developed-recipes/>

<https://healthyschoolrecipes.com/source/usda-standardized-recipes/>

<https://theicn.org/cnss/resources>

Child Care Recipes

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/standardized-recipes-cacfp>

<https://theicn.org/cnrb/recipes-cacfp-centers/>

<https://theicn.org/cnss/resources>

Menus for Child Care

<https://theicn.org/icn-resources-a-z/cycle-menus-for-child-care-preschoolers/>

Whole Grain Resource

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/whole-grain-resource>

https://foodbuyingguide.fns.usda.gov/Content/TablesFBG/Exhibit_A_Grain_Requirements_For_Child_Nutrition_Programs.pdf

USDA Food Buying Guide

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/fbg>

Child Nutrition Labels and Product Formulation Statements

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/manufacture-documentation>

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/labeling>

The Institute of Child Nutrition

<https://theicn.org/>

<https://theicn.docebosaas.com/learn>

- Suggested Training Topics:
 - Meal Patterns
 - Whole Grain Rich
 - Production Records
 - Over Verses Serve
 - Child Nutrition Labels and Product Formulation Statements