

Contracting for Food Services
Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services
Child and Adult Care Food Program
July 2008

Organizations participating in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) who plan to purchase meals served to program participants from a caterer, vendor, or Food Service Management Company must follow proper procedures in purchasing these services. Organizations that will expend \$100,000 or more per year on catered meals must follow a formal competitive bid process to obtain their meals (see sub-paragraph A). Organizations that will expend less than \$100,000 per year on catered meals may follow an informal bid process to obtain their meals (see sub-paragraph B on page 2). Both the formal and informal bid processes are described below and in the [CACFP Policy and Procedure Manual](#), Chapter 11.

The non-competitive bid process may be used by organizations who obtain their meals through a public or private school participating in the National School Lunch or School Breakfast program and organizations who receive meal services obtained through a competitive process by another department of the same organization (sub-paragraph C on page 3).

A. Formal Competitive Bid Process

[Prototype for Contract Greater Than or Equal to \\$100,000](#)

1. Use the bid and contract prototype provided by the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services - Community Food and Nutrition Assistance Unit (MDHSS-CFNA) organizations that will expend \$100,000 or more per year on catered meals. Read through the entire packet. Complete the necessary information on the specific contract requirements for the facility to which meals are to be catered.
2. Develop, at a minimum, a two-week cycle menu. A longer cycle may be developed. Keep in mind, however, that the more complex the food items and the menu are, the costlier the meals will be. Do not let potential bidders provide the menus. Each potential bidder must be given a fair and equal opportunity to bid on the SAME meals.
3. Complete Schedule A in the bid packet, the meal order and delivery schedule for each center or home that will be receiving catered meals.
4. Place an advertisement in the local newspaper announcing that you are accepting bids for the preparation and delivery of meals. Most newspapers have a special section for bid announcements. A staff person on the newspaper may be able to help you with your advertisement. The advertisement must include the location or phone number where bid packets can be obtained, as well as a date, time and location for the bid opening. The center must allow at least 14 days for potential bidders to bid on the food service. This means that there must be at least 14 days from the date the bid announcement is run in the newspaper to the date that the bids are opened.
5. Make copies of the entire bid packet, including the menus, for each company that requests a bid packet.
6. After the bids are due, open all bids. Bids over \$10,000 must be opened publicly at the date, time and location specified in the bid advertisement. The bidders must include a pricing page in the bid, included in the bid packet as schedule D. Instructions for schedule D are included on page 10 of the bid packet, under Section E: Unit Price Schedule and Instructions.

7. The award of the bid goes to the lowest bidder unless the organization has documentation and justification to support awarding the bid to someone other than the lowest bidder. Any bid that the organization wishes to accept that is not the low bid must have the approval of MDHSS-CFNA prior to acceptance.
8. Send a copy of the accepted bid to MDHSS-CFNA.

Note: If the total bid price is more than \$100,000 per year, the bid must be approved by MDHSS-CFNA before it is accepted by the organization. Please forward a copy of all bids received to MDHSS-CFNA along with a recommendation of the bid to accept, and MDHSS-CFNA will then approve or disapprove the recommendation in writing.

9. The organization is ultimately responsible for assuring that all requirements are being met by the food service caterer, including the responsibility for maintaining menus and production records. These records should be collected by the organizations on a weekly, or no less than monthly, basis. The records should be reviewed for accuracy and adequacy to assure the meals meet minimum requirements. It is also highly recommended that the organization conduct an on-site visit to the food preparation facility prior to award of a bid to assure meals are being prepared in a clean and safe environment.

B. Informal Competitive Bid Process

[Prototype for Contract Less Than \\$100,000](#)

1. Organizations that will expend less than \$100,000 per year on catered meals may follow an informal bid process to obtain their meals. As with the formal competitive bid process, the goal is to allow free and open competition in obtaining meal services from the lowest and best bidder. Use the contract prototypes provided by MDHSS-CFNA.
2. Contact at least three reputable catering companies and obtain price quotes on the meals you propose to serve. You will need to supply the company with your menus, location(s) of facility(ies), meal types to be provided, CACFP meal pattern requirements, anticipated number of meals to be purchased each day, delivery schedule, and anticipated length of time for which food services will be required. All of these factors will impact the cost of the meals to the organization. Resources needed to develop the menu include: [Food Chart Child](#), [Food Chart Infant](#), [Food Chart Adult](#) (if applicable) [Four Food Components](#) and [Creditable Foods Guide](#).
3. Document the information and price quotes obtained from the companies contacted. Choose the company that offers the best quality meals at the lowest price. Sign a contract with the company using one of the contract prototypes provided by MDHSS-CFNA.

C. Non-Competitive Process

[Sample Agreement](#)

Organizations who obtain their meals through a public or private school participating in the National School Lunch or School Breakfast program may sign an agreement with the school to provide meals to the organization. Federal regulations exempt organizations from having to competitively bid for catered meals when those meals are purchased through schools participating in the National School Lunch or School Breakfast Programs. Use the sample agreement provided by MDHSS-CFNA when obtaining meals in this manner.

Organizations who receive meal services obtained through a competitive process by another department of the same organization, such as a university child care center whose meal services are provided by the campus dining hall or campus student union, may also use a noncompetitive process

to obtain their meals. Such organizations may sign an agreement with the food service caterer contracted by the organization to provide meals for the entire organization. This type of situation is common in large organizations such as hospitals, nursing homes, schools, governmental entities and universities, where food services are centralized. As long as the meals provided to the centralized food service were obtained in a competitive manner through a formal bid process, those same services may be used by the CACFP organization. Use the sample agreement provided by MDHSS-CFNA when obtaining meals in this manner.