

Vending Meals to Child Nutrition Programs

Child nutrition programs provide nutritious meals and snacks to kids and teens in schools, summer programs, childcare centers and homes, and afterschool programs. These programs are often operated, or sponsored, by local school districts or community organizations.

When sponsors operating these programs do not have access to a kitchen space to prepare meals, they can contract with a meal vendor to provide food for their program. This resource provides vendors a high-level overview of the benefits of participation, what vendors are required to provide, and how to get involved.

Benefits to Meal Vendors

- Strengthen your connection to your local community
 - Feed youth - your company can support the growth and development of local children by providing nutritious meals
 - Support local farmers and ranchers by incorporating locally grown items into your menus
- Diversify your revenue streams
 - Revenue from child nutrition programs can support your existing restaurant, catering, or foodservice operation
- Consistent sales
 - Child nutrition programs usually have steady participation and use pre-planned menus, which makes it easier to forecast business needs

How to get involved

- Complete training on the CDE School Nutrition Unit website to learn vended meal requirements
- Register to be an authorized meal vendor in Colorado
- Respond to requests for quotes and bids for business you are interested in
- Conduct outreach to local sponsors to gauge interest in vended meals

What does a vendor provide?

- Menus, meals and related documentation showing how the meals meet the USDA meal pattern requirements
 - CDE School Nutrition is available for support as you develop these
- Meal delivery to the serving location(s), if applicable
- Assistance with meal service at the sponsor's site, if applicable
- Adhere to all program regulations and contract requirements

To learn more, visit the vended meals website:
<https://www.cde.state.co.us/nutrition/nutrifsmc>