

# Food Options for NYC Charter Schools



**SCHOOL FOOD  
and WELLNESS**  
GROUP

# What Are My Options?

- A. Participate under DOE School Food program and receive meals from DOE
- B. Become your own School Food Authority (SFA) and contract meal services with a private meal vendor



What Are The Pros and Cons?



# Participate under DOE School Food

## PRO

- ★ DOE began participating in the Community Eligibility Program (CEP) in 2017, and all participating sites under DOE receive meals at no cost (all kids eat for free without regard to their eligibility)
  - Your school is responsible for reporting to DOE the number of meals served on a daily basis
- ~~★ Reduced paperwork involved (do not need the “Free and Reduced Meal Application”)~~
- ★ All NYSED audits are the responsibility of DOE
- ★ All state reporting and program monitoring is conducted by DOE
- ★ Seamless operations in beginning of the year, when your time is stretched thin



## Participate under DOE School Food

### CON

- ★ Zero input on the menu, meal choices, number of options, quality of food
- ★ Limited serving options if your charter is in a private space with limited or no kitchen
- ★ If your school calendar differs from DOE Schools, limited meal service will occur on days DOE is not in service
- ★ If in a shared space with a DOE school, your meal serving times must fit around the DOE schools; little to no flexibility in creating your breakfast and lunch serving periods
- ★ After school meal programs not always available if DOE is not serving a snack or supper in your space (no staffing available); must pay for snacks/supper out of pocket



# Become a School Food Authority

## PRO

- ★ Increased control over meal program: Budget, Food Quality, Menu variety and choices
- ★ Can opt into after school meal programs (snack or supper) and summer meal program
- ★ Eligible for state and USDA grants: Equipment grants, Fruit and veggie grants, Garden grants, Breakfast program expansion grants
- ★ Choice of working with 6-7 different food vendor options and service styles
- ★ Benefit from food vendor partnership on nutrition education, food tastings, promotional materials



# Become a School Food Authority

## CON

- ★ Heavy paperwork/administration support needed
  - Responsible for all state reporting, audits, monthly claims, site monitoring, staff training, financial reporting
  - Receive reimbursements from NYSED and directly pay vendor on monthly basis
- ★ May not qualify for CEP and will need to either charge “paid” and “reduced” students or pay out of pocket for this cost
  - Would need to process all meal applications independently of DOE
  - Would need to purchase a Point of Sale software to track meals by eligibility
- ★ Many deadlines and program regulations to adhere to throughout school year
  - Would need a dedicated staff member as the “Food Service Director”
- ★ Cumbersome NYDOE Audit in year one, and every three years after; financial risk if program is not operating compliantly



# Tell Me More About Being a SFA

- Process must start in early Spring (NOW!)
- Deadline for all application documents is **JUNE 30th** to NYSED
- What is needed for the application?
  - ◆ Current health permit from DOH in the space you will be serving
  - ◆ Identified Food Service Director and a food safety course completed
  - ◆ Compliant procurement process followed to select and secure a food vendor (contract must be submitted to NYSED)
  - ◆ The first month's menu with all nutritional analysis, showing it meets USDA meal pattern guidelines (requested from meal vendor to have prepared prior to June 30th)
  - ◆ Food Service Director must complete the 12 annual hours of training - documentation due to state
  - ◆ Must establish and submit a School Wellness Policy





## Procure a Vendor in NYC

Federal and State procurement regulations must be followed to contract with a meal provider. **CANNOT** contract directly with a vendor and skip the process.

### 2 Types of Food Service Contracts:

- A. **Vended Meal**: Food company delivers and drop off meals; school staff preps, serves and counts
- B. **Food Service Management Company**: Food company provides staff at your school to prepare/cook/deliver/serve meals (works with a kitchen or no kitchen)



# Tell Me More About “CEP”

## Community Eligibility Provision

- A charter school that becomes a School Food Authority (SFA) can also participate in CEP [USDA CEP Information](#)

## Requirements

- Must be in at least second year of operation
- Must have at least 40% of enrolled students qualify as “directly certified”, meaning they are automatically free via state match system (A code on ATS list)
- CEP application due to NYSED by JUNE 30<sup>th</sup>  
[NYSED CEP Application and Instructions](#)



## Resources

[School Food and Wellness Group Website](#)

**Emily Chatelain** [echatelain@sfwgroup.org](mailto:echatelain@sfwgroup.org)

[School Food Wellness Blog](#) \*tips on procurement

**Browse the many lists of resources and responsibilities on the**  
[NYSED Child Nutrition Home Page](#)

[NYSED Training Workshops](#) are not offered until July, past the  
deadline to submit for this school year

**NYSED contracts and new SFA inquiries:** [cn@nysed.gov](mailto:cn@nysed.gov)

