

ERIE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

RFP # 2024-006VF:

Food Service at the Erie Secure and Specialized Secure Youth Center

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Questions submitted via email and at the Informational Meeting on February 24, 2024

1. Is it required that the meals be prepared onsite or may they be prepared offsite?
A fully equipped kitchen is onsite, so historically vendors found it easier to prepare and serve onsite, but it may be possible to prepare offsite and warm and serve onsite at a competitive cost.
2. Does the vendor prepare and serve the food?
Yes, the vendor prepares plates the food and serves trayed food to the youth through the window in the cafeteria.
3. Are meals served at once or staggered?
Service is done by pod. There are five pods, so approximately 7-8 youth and a worker are served at a time.
4. Is the snack distributed by the vendor or staff?
The snack is distributed by the staff. The vendor is done after dinner and cleanup.
5. Are there timeframes that the kitchen is accessible.
The facility is 24/7, so arrangements can be made for the vendor to have access as needed.
6. Does the vendor need to be onsite on holidays as well to serve and prepare?
The facility is 24/7 and food service is required every day, including holidays.
7. What background checks are required?
A criminal history check is required for all prospective employees/volunteers and periodically throughout the course of their employment, at a minimum of every 18 months. In addition, an annual physical examination, including a tuberculin skin test with a chest x-ray where such test is positive and serological tests as indicated, shall be required of all staff who are providing services at Erie County Secure and Specialized Secure Detention (ECSSD).
8. If there is a kitchen equipment failure, whose responsibility is it to repair?
The vendor is responsible for ensuring all kitchen equipment and kitchen facility are working properly. In the event a repair is needed, they would contact the Chief Financial Record Services at Youth Services and obtain repair services. The County will pay for approved equipment repair and maintenance.
9. On page 25, the County provided a sample menu. On this menu, it has food items with specific brand names (Example: Tyson Chicken Nuggets, Kool Aid, Captain Crunch, Fruity Pebbles, Cookie Crisp). Are these items required? Are there any other brand name products that the County is

requiring vendors to use? If so, can the County please list such items so that vendors may propose accurate menus, with corresponding pricing.

The sample menu is just an example. Name brand products are not required, but all food items are to be of name brand quality.

10. On page 26 **Minimum Specifications - Bakery Items**, it states that all products must be comprised of at least 60% whole-grain. Does this requirement extend to dessert items such as cakes, cookies, and muffins? Or is it only for breads and rolls? Is the requirement for items served for both the regular meal and snacks?

The whole grain requirement is for bread/rolls served during regular meals only (breakfast, lunch, dinner).

11. On page 26, it states that vendors must supply an alternative meal choice of tuna sandwiches (3 days per week) and peanut butter and jelly sandwiches (daily). Will the county implement a count system to allow vendors advanced notice of how many sandwiches to make daily? Currently, no such system exists creating waste and additional expense to the vendor.

Yes, daily meal count sheets will include hot meals requested as well as the number of alternate meal choices. If a youth requests an alternative meal and the advanced count has been exhausted, the youth will receive the regular meal.

12. In the past, the County has requested that meal receipts be allowed to receive unlimited, extra portions of food items upon request. Will that practice continue under this new contract? If so, will the county implement a count system to allow vendors advanced notice of how many portions of each food item to make daily? Currently, no such system exists creating waste and additional expense to the vendor.

The meal should be sufficient in calories and nutrition to satisfy the average teenager. There is no requirement or additional reimbursement allowance for extra portions. Meal counts will be provided to the vendor daily, at least an hour before breakfast and two hours before lunch and dinner. Usually, the count does not vary from lunch to dinner.

13. If the County requires that meal recipients receive extra portions, as described above, how will vendors be compensated for the extra items received?

There is no requirement or additional reimbursement allowance for extra portions.

14. In the event of a lockdown, is there food service?

The facility is 24/7 and food service is required every day. Meals may be served in the pods, depending on the circumstances of the lockdown.

15. Can there be a tour of the kitchen?

A collective tour for interested bidders has been scheduled for February 21, 2024 at 10:00 am. We will meet in the Admin Conference Room at 810 East Ferry. Please contact Ruby Jain at raveela.jain@erie.gov or (716) 923-4047 if you will be attending.

16. What is the start date of the service

Service delivery begins January 1, 2025.