

## **Bidder Questions 5/17/24**

- **Implementation Details:**

- Could you specify any particular challenges encountered in past meal programs that you would like the new provider to address in their proposal? *WMEC expects adherence to the EOEA Nutrition Standards, correct portion size, proper texture and adherence to agreed upon recipes and products. Prompt communication concerning any menu changes or deviations from menu items/products that affect the nutritional analysis is very important.*

- **Cultural and Dietary Adaptations:**

- Are there recent feedback or trends among program participants that could guide the adaptation or creation of new culturally tailored meals? *WMEC has no trends or feedback at this time regarding new culturally tailored meals. As we serve a large Puerto Rican community here in Holyoke, a key program priority is the provision of authentic Latino meals.*

- **Sample menus:**

- Please provide menus for special meals, holiday meals you have served in the past with success. *WMEC current and next month's menus for all meal types are found on the WestMass ElderCare website.*

- **Quality Assurance and Feedback:**

- Can you provide more details on the process and frequency of quality audits for meal services? *Meals are taste tested and inspected daily by nutrition staff for compliance with menus and recipes as well as portion sizes, textures, etc. Inspection of caterer's kitchen are conducted twice a year.*

- **Contract Adjustments:**

- How flexible is WMEC regarding contract adjustments in response to fluctuating participant numbers or unforeseen economic factors affecting meal service costs? *Prices may be adjusted no earlier than twelve (12) months following the effective date of the executed contract; or no earlier than twelve (12) months after the effective date of the previous price adjustment, whichever is later. The Provider may submit a request in writing to WMEC for a price adjustment that is consistent with and relative to price changes originating with and compelled by manufacturer and/or market trends and which changes are outside of Provider's control. The Provider must fully document its request, attaching to the request, without limitation, such manufacturer and market data, as support for the requested adjustment. In no event shall any proposed annual increase exceed 3% based on the Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Price Index (CPI) "Food Away From Home". WMEC, may in its sole discretion, approve or disapprove the requested adjustment, in whole or in part.*

- **Reporting and Communication:**

- What are the preferred communication channels and reporting formats for routine updates and compliance documentation? *Issues requiring immediate attention should be communicated by phone. Communication by email is acceptable for non-urgent issues and may be daily or weekly. Monthly in person/Zoom meetings for menu planning are required.*

- **Nutritional and Food Safety Training:**

- What specific expectations does WMEC have regarding the nutritional and food safety training of the meal service staff? *Caterer staff must be compliant with federal, state and local laws, including ServSafe Certification and Food Allergy Certification as well as attend regular monthly inservices and HACCP training.*

- **Innovative Practices:**

- Are there specific innovative practices or technologies that WMEC has found beneficial in past or current contracts that you would encourage bidders to consider? *WMEC encourages bidders to include any innovative practices or technologies in their proposals, especially those which will produce cost savings or other efficiencies*

- **Local Sourcing and Sustainability Initiatives:**

- Could WMEC elaborate on any specific goals or expectations related to local sourcing and sustainability initiatives within the meal service program? *WMEC encourages bidders to maximize inclusion of foods that are fresh, local sourced, and sustainable while maintaining cost effectiveness.*

- **Emergency Preparedness:**

- What specific scenarios should be addressed in the emergency preparedness plan, and are there particular inventory levels or resources that WMEC expects to be maintained? *Bidders should have an emergency plan in place to provide meals in the event of a disaster or unforeseen event which will impact operations such as a public health emergency or weather-related emergency.*

- **Subcontracting:**

- Regarding the scope of services for this contract, could you please clarify the agency's policies and guidelines around subcontracting or outsourcing any aspects of food production, preparation, and packaging? We want to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the permissible operational practices for WMEC *Bidders should address any plans to subcontract and outsource any aspect of the scope of service in their proposal.*

- Meal Counts**

Attached please find a workbook that we believe summarizes accurately key aspects of the scope of work. could you confirm its accuracy and include it in the Response? If something is wrong, could you correct it accordingly? The numbers are taken from Attachment B of the RFP with the exception of the HDM Mon-Fri Lunch which is taken from the body of the RFP. I acknowledge the workbook does not address Breakfast (5), Vegetarian (5), and Ground Meals (7); they were left off for simplicity's sake. *The HDM Lunch Count of 1100/day is incorrect. 1100 meals is the total number of meals per day, inclusive of all meal types. Attachment B lists our current average counts. HDM Lunch count is 700 regular, 70 Latino, 60 Cardiac, 9 Renal and 5 Puree, which is 844 hdm lunch.*

	<u>Meal</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Volume</u>	<u>For Consumption</u>	<u>Total Volume Weekly</u>	<u>Total Volume Annual</u>	<u>Prepares</u>	<u>When</u>	<u>Delivers to Holyoke</u>	<u>When</u>	<u>Heats</u>	<u>When</u>	<u>Delivers to Customer</u>	<u>When</u>
HDM	Lunch	Chilled	1100/day	Mon-Fri	5500/wk	286,000	Caterer	Daily	Caterer	Daily	N/A	N/A	WestMass	Daily
Congregate	Lunch	Warm	~70/day	Mon-Fri	350/wk	18,200	Caterer	Daily	Caterer	Daily	Caterer	Daily	Caterer	Daily
HDM	Lunch	Frozen	390/1x/wk	Sat+Sun	390/wk	20,280	3rd Party	N/A	Caterer	Prior to Thu	N/A	N/A	WestMass	Thu
HDM	Supper	Chilled	190/day	Mon-Fri	950/wk	49,400	Caterer	Daily	Caterer	Daily	N/A	N/A	WestMass	Daily
HDM	Supper	Chilled	160/1x/wk	Sat+Sun	160/wk	8,320	Caterer	Thu	Caterer	Fri	N/A	N/A	WestMass	Fri
HDM	Other	Shelf Stable	800 3packs/yr	Emergency	800/yr	800	Caterer	1x/Fall	Caterer	Fall	N/A	N/A	WestMass	1x/Fall