

Questions and Responses to the FY 2027 Caterer's RFP

For sites that operate only weekly or monthly (e.g., Café Emmanuel Thursdays, AABA Village third Wednesday), are these served on the same delivery routes as daily sites, or are they treated as add-on stops? What is the minimum meal count per delivery that justifies a stop? **The meal vendor, not Ethos, will determine routing to meal sites. Current meal vendor treats it as an add-on stop. Minimum delivery is bulk meals to feed 10 consumers.**

Should the cold suppers & medically tailored meal cost be submitted on the existing 'Hot Home Delivered Meal Cost Analysis' form, or should the bidder create a separate cost analysis form for these meals? **You may use the "Hot Home Delivered Meal Cost Analysis" form to list all meal types that you're bidding for.**

Regarding the "Grab and Go" meals referenced in the RFP, what volume does Ethos anticipate and at which sites? Is this meal type expected to make up a growing or declining share of total service? **We currently do not anticipate a need for "Grab & Go" meals for our Cafes in the near future. All our sites offer bulk, community-style meals that are to be consumed onsite by the consumer. On occasion we do order pre-packed meals for our cafes.**

At congregate sites where meals are currently bulk portioned by Program staff, is there a minimum count that meals are sent in HDM vs bulk? **Congregate sites have their meals delivered in pans and are portioned on-site. The minimum number of meals is 10.**

Frozen meals - where do we submit the handling fee & cold pack cost? **Frozen meals are to be accompanied by a cold pack. The rate of your frozen meals should include your handling fee, door-to-door fee and cold pack cost.**

The cost analysis forms show only hot meal categories. Should bidders who offer both hot and cold ready-to-eat meals create additional cost analysis forms for cold meal categories, or should all meal types be averaged into a single per-meal price on the existing forms? **If you anticipate a separate cost for cold meals, please complete a separate cost analysis.**

Can a delivery vehicle mix both HDM and Congregate meals in the same Vehicle? **Yes. if Yes,** please provide the average number of vehicles used daily per route and the average daily number of meals per vehicle per route. **At Ethos we have 22 HDM door-to-door Routes delivering prepacked hot-, prepackaged cold, and frozen meals. Average number of stops per route is 35. Average clients per Route is +40-50 (more clts if stops include a building with multiple HDM clts). Average number of meals per route varies (Thursday and Friday meals are increased due to weekend meals being delivered on Thursday and Friday). Average HDM meals delivered by Ethos on Fridays are 1235 meals. The number of vehicles and number of stops is affected by the ability to maintain meals at a safe temperature.**

If No, please answer the following questions which address HDM and Congregate meals separately.

Regarding Home Delivered Meals (HDM): Please note that Ethos does not deliver all meals on behalf of the Boston Consortium. We currently deal with multiple different meal vendors. Each vendor plans their own routes. There are well over 80 vehicles delivering door-to-door on behalf of the Boston Consortium.

How many total vehicles are currently routed daily for the entire Consortium. Over 80 across multiple vendors.

What is the five-day average number of stops per vehicle for the entire Consortium. Routing is up the meal vendor.

What is the five-day average number of meals per vehicle for the entire Consortium. Average number of meals per day (hot-cold-frozen) is +7000 HDM.

What type of warming units or vehicles are currently utilized to maintain temperature for the HDM meals. We use insulated bags and heat packs.

Regarding Congregate Meals:

How many total vehicles are currently routed daily for the entire Consortium. Some vendors use their HDM vehicles to deliver congregate meals as an add-on stop. We deal with multiple vendors to deliver meals to our Cafes. Routing is up the meal vendor.

What is the five-day average number of stops per vehicle for the entire Consortium. Routing is up the meal vendor.

What is the five-day average number of meals per vehicle for the entire Consortium. Average number of meals per day (hot-cold) is +700 Café meals.

What type of warming units or vehicles are currently utilized to maintain temperature for the Congregate meals. We currently use insulated bags and heat packs. Every congregate site has an oven.

Page 22 of the RFP provides definitions for five (5) factors to consider in “Determining Base Cost.”

Factor 2 states “Labor Cost - Production, Preparation, Service, Packaging, Food Service Management, Transportation Labor (drivers), and Nutritionist. *(highlight added)*”

Factor 5 states “Disposable Cost – Meal trays, Disposables, Napkins, Wrap, Site Supplies, Misc. Includes storage and handling of disposables unless Program picks-up and stores own disposables.”

Please confirm that Factor 2 should only include any labor costs required/associated with the function of packaging meals and that Factor 5 should only include the costs of materials associated with packaging meals.

Factor 2 is commissary labor.

Factor 5 is packaging materials used by the caterer.

Will the RFP be amended to include a price grid handling of Frozen USDA Meals similar to those provided as “Appendix Cost Sheets (see RFP pages 23-26)? **The RFP will not be amended. See below.**

Is the Provider responsible for providing the Cold Pack (i.e., sides) to complement the frozen meal? **The meal vendor is responsible for providing cold packs to accompany all meals, including frozen meals.**

If so, where do we note this pricing? **Frozen meals are to be accompanied by a cold pack. The rate of your frozen meals should include your handling fee, door-to-door fee and cold pack cost.**

Please confirm that the use of the term “Café” on RFP page 6 “Current Meal Types and Quantities” is synonymous with “Congregate Meal.” **Café Meals are Congregate meals.**

During the 5/20/26 Bidders Conference, Ethos, on behalf of the Consortium, stressed the operational complexity of servicing all neighborhoods across the City of Boston. In planning operational logistics and associated delivery costs for HDMs, can Providers rely on the list of City neighborhoods listed on RFP pages 7-10 (identifying the locations of “Community Cafes”) as a proxy for how the Consortium organizes routes for HDM? Does the Consortium organize/divide its HDM-eligible population by the same neighborhoods listed on RFP pages 7-10 i.e., Back Bay, Brighton, Brookline, Charlestown, Dorchester, East Boston, Hyde Park, Jamaica Plain, Mattapan, North End, Roxbury, South Boston, South End, and West Roxbury? **Ethos does not organize routes for vendors. See below for neighborhoods.**

If the Answer to #10 is **Yes**, can the Consortium provide the same information requested in Question #4 by neighborhood and/or route? **See below.**

How many total vehicles are currently routed daily **by neighborhood and/or route** for the entire Consortium. **The meal vendors are responsible for routing. Total number of vehicles is well over 80 throughout the City of Boston. Some vehicles cover multiple neighborhoods.**

What is the five-day average number of stops per vehicle **by neighborhood and/or route** for the entire Consortium. **The meal vendors are responsible for routing. Total number of vehicles is well over 80 throughout the City of Boston. Some vehicles cover multiple neighborhoods. Route length is determined by transit time because that will affect the temperature control of the meals. Food safety is our major concern. We recommend that a route does not exceed 3 hours. All consumers should receive their meals by 2 p.m**

What is the five-day average number of meals per vehicle **by neighborhood and/or route** for the entire Consortium. **Average number of meals per day (hot-cold-frozen) is +7000 HDM. Average number of meals per day (hot-cold) is +700 Café meals.**

	Zip Code	Total HDM
Beacon Hill	02108	11
Downtown	02109	46
Downtown	02110	32
Chinatown	02111	440
North End	02113	67
West End	02114	179
Fenway	02115	574
Back Bay	02116	624
South End	02118	554
Roxbury	02119	323
Mission Hill	02120	96
Dorchester	02121	221
Dorchester	02122	221
Dorchester	02124	484
Dorchester	02125	265
Mattapan	02126	220
South Boston	02127	249

East Boston	02128	414
Charlestown	02129	267
Jamaica Plain	02130	197
Roslindale	02131	187
West Roxbury	02132	194
Allston	02134	96
Brighton	02135	704
Hyde Park	02136	265
Copley	02199	4
Fort Point	02210	5
Fenway	02215	155
<i>Chestnut Hill</i>	<i>02467</i>	10

RFP page 18 under “*Equipment and Supplies*” mentions “Grab and Go” meals. Please elaborate upon what circumstances “Grab and Go meals apply and the responsibilities of the Provider. **We currently do not anticipate a need for “Grab & Go” meals for our Cafes in the near future. All our sites offer bulk, community-style meals.**

It appears that the “fillable PDF” provided for completing the “Administrative Overview” does not: a. allow for spacing between paragraphs

b. recognize indented paragraphs

c. capture bold text, text font coloring (e.g., black vs. red), or text highlighting

d. allow for tables of information embedded in the narrative response (see the following Questions as examples of where a table of information is beneficial -- Section I Question 18; Section III Question 2, Question 6)

Content appears to upload as one (long) uninterrupted paragraph and while the “text box” could hold 2,000 words during our testing, the size of the text box does not expand, making it difficult for an evaluator to track what he/she has read/is reading in a response.

Will the Consortium allow Providers to both complete the “fillable PDF” as instructed and also submit electronically a companion PDF document with the exact same content but which takes these limitations into account and provides a more readable and comprehensible option for

evaluators. Yes, you may submit a companion/addendum. Please submit it all as one package, with page numbers and a Table of Contents.

If a Provider currently participates in the AGE Nutrition Program for any ASAP in the Commonwealth, can the Provider identify as an “Existing Provider”? (See I. Corporate Information) . Yes.