



## Southwestern Ohio Educational Purchasing Council Food Service Updates for March 2024

- The EPC Bid Committee voted to extend the Commercial Food & Beverage, Bakery, Dairy, Ice Cream, and Cafeteria Essentials/Custodial Items for the 2024-2025 School year. Vendors will be asked to submit updated pricing for the 24-25 extension contracts in mid-March.
- The committee also voted to put out a new Request for Proposal for Produce for the 24-25 school year. We have been contacted by 2 new vendors who would like to bid on produce. Currently, we only have one produce vendor so the committee felt it would be prudent to get more respondents in a new RFP.
- The EPC Bid Award Meeting for the 2024-2025 school year is scheduled for May 15, 2024, at 10 AM at Aullwood. All are welcome!
- We are finalizing the results of the EPC Equipment Service Request for Quote and the EPC Equipment Purchase Catalog. This will be sent to food service directors soon and also filed in the EPC Foodservice News Dropbox. The equipment service and purchasing information will also be reviewed at our May Food Service Meeting.
- Districts should have recently received Supply Chain Assistance Funds. An attestation statement had to be submitted a few months ago to receive these funds. These are federal funds and should be deposited into the food service account. The amount can be verified in CRRS under the payment summary.
- Community Eligibility Program is an option for all districts where 25% or more of enrollment is “directly certified” for Free Meals, lives in the house with a directly certified student, is homeless, foster or a head start student. All meals are served for free, and districts are reimbursed for a portion of those meals at the free rate and the remaining meals at the paid meal rate. Bonnie Muckenthaler, EPC Director of Foodservice Programs, will host a CEP presentation and Q&A session after today’s meeting.
- It is time to start thinking about pricing for the 24-25 school year. There is no doubt that school food service operations across the nation are struggling with rising food prices. A recent EPC study showed that food prices were up 38% from the first half of the 22-23 to the first half of the 23-24 school year. As you consider meal and ala carte pricing you will need a balance between raising prices and pricing accepted by your board and community. We often refer to this as “what the market will bear”.

**Please contact us if we can help you!**

EPC Commercial Bid Program & SWEPC Commodity Co-Op, District Food Service Management Assistance, Procurement Reviews, Administrative Reviews, Profit/Loss Analysis, Consulting & Training Needs, Networking Events, EPC Google Group, Vendor Fair & more!