

# Food Service Guidelines Organizational Assessment Tool



This Food Service Guidelines Organizational Assessment Tool can be tailored and used by state health departments and their partners to collect information about where food is served or sold in the agency and to assess the current status of food service guidelines and nutrition standards in places where food is served and sold. This tool has six categories of questions that address (1) agency background; (2) food service venues; (3) nutrition policies, standards, and practices in place; (4) authority over food services; (5) the contracting process; and 6) food environment and capacity.

This tool was partially adapted from the Assessment of Food Service Environments in County of Los Angeles Departments/Programs, a survey developed by the Division of Chronic Disease and Injury Prevention in the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health.

When the food service environment is assessed, it is important to engage procurement officers, food service staff, senior leadership, and work site wellness staff with knowledge and understanding of the agency's food procurement and food preparation practices, work site wellness programs, and nutrition policies.

## To complete this assessment, please gather the following materials:

- Documentation of the types and number of food service venues in your agency.
- Documentation of the number of meals, snacks, and/or vending machines for food items sold/served in the food service venues.
- Food service policies, permits, contracts, and/or agreements for the food service venues.
- Documentation of any food service guidelines/nutrition standards used in food service venues, including procurement contracts.

Please use the following definitions when answering the questions in this assessment:

**Work site cafeterias:** food-dispensing facilities capable of providing a broad variety of prepared foods and beverages (including hot meals), primarily through the use of a line where the customers serve themselves from displayed selections. May also include a grab-and-go section for patrons to select salads and prepackaged items. Meals in workplace cafeterias have a variety of options that may be selected by customers.



**U.S. Department of  
Health and Human Services**  
Centers for Disease  
Control and Prevention

**Vending machines:** automated currency-operated facility dispensing a variety of food and refreshment items. There is not an on-site manager, and the vendor does not provide customers with eating accommodations.

**Concession stands, snack bars, and/or carts:** facilities engaged in selling limited lines of refreshment and prepared food items necessary for a light meal service, such as soups, salads, and sandwiches. Food and refreshment items may be prepared on or off the premises and usually are wrapped or placed in containers at point of sale. There is an on-site manager, and customers may or may not be provided with eating accommodations.

**Meals served to institutionalized populations:** meals served to people residing in jails, prisons, probation camps/juvenile halls, nursing homes, or other facilities such as psychiatric hospitals. Patrons are limited to what's provided to them.

**Distributive meal programs:** meals distributed to seniors or children such as after-school snack programs and senior congregate and home-delivered meals.

**Patient meals:** served to patients in the hospital or long-term care settings such as nursing homes.

---

## Agency Background Information

This section of the tool may be used to capture background information about your agency. Please fill out the contact and agency information sections in the space provided below if you are completing this tool for your agency or are working with other partners.

---

### 1. Contact information (Complete in the space provided.)

- Survey completed by (name): .....
- Job title: .....
- Telephone number: .....
- E-mail address: .....

---

### 2. Agency information (Complete in the space provided.)

- Agency name: .....
- Agency facility: .....
- Number of employees: .....
- Mailing address: .....
- Agency contact person (for future communication): .....
- Job title: .....
- Telephone number: .....
- E-mail address: .....

---

### 3. Does your agency serve or sell food in cafeterias, vending machines, concession stands/ snack bars, distributive meal programs, meals served to institutionalized populations, or hospital patient meals? (Select one answer)

Yes                      No                      Don't know

**Please STOP if your answer to Question 3 is "No." Thank you for your willingness to participate! You do not need to complete the rest of this survey.**

---

## 4. Which types of health promotion strategies does your agency engage in?

(Check all that apply)

Nutrition policies to increase the availability of healthier foods

Health education (e.g., skills development and behavior change classes, awareness-building brochures, posters)

Links to related employee services (e.g., referral to employee assistance programs)

Integration of health promotion into your agency's culture (e.g., health promotion being part of mission statement)

Employee screenings with adequate treatment and follow-up (e.g., health risk assessments, biometric screenings)

Other (please specify): .....

None

---

## Setting and Food Service Venues

This section of the tool may be used to capture information about the food service venues in your agency.

---

### 1. Your agency's setting (Check all that apply)

Work site

Prison, probation camp, or juvenile hall

Assisted living/nursing home community

Park and recreational facility (e.g., baseball field, golf course, beach)

Distributive meal program (e.g., senior meals or after-school snack programs)

Hospital patient meal service

Community agency

Other (please specify): .....

---

### 2. Which food service venue(s) does your agency use to sell or serve food? (Check all that apply)

#### Sold at:

Cafeterias/cafés

Vending machines

Concession stands, snack bars, and/or carts

Other (please specify): .....

#### Served at:

Distributive meal program (e.g., senior meals, after-school snacks)

Meals served to institutionalized populations (e.g., prisons, probation camps/juvenile halls)

Hospital patient meals

Other (please specify): .....

---

**3. For each food service venue, please provide the following information:** (Complete all that apply)

Food Service Venues	Number of Venues	Total Number of Meals and Snacks (Please provide the quantity sold or served in a given time period.)				
Cafeterias/cafés	_____	Total Number: _____	per	Day	Week	Month
Vending machines	_____	Total Number: _____	per	Day	Week	Month
Concession stands, snack bars, and/or carts	_____	Total Number: _____	per	Day	Week	Month
Distributive meal program	_____	Total Number: _____	per	Day	Week	Month
Meals served to institutionalized populations	_____	Total Number: _____	per	Day	Week	Month
Hospital patient meals	_____	Total Number: _____	per	Day	Week	Month
Other (please specify): _____	_____	Total Number: _____	per	Day	Week	Month

**4. Which of the following meals or food does your agency serve or sell on a daily basis?**

(Check all that apply)

Food Service Venues	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Snacks	Beverages	Catering	Other (Please Specify)
Cafeterias/cafés							
Concession stands, snack bars, and/or carts							
Distributive meal program							
Meals served to institutionalized populations							
Hospital patient meals							
Other (please specify): _____							

---

## Nutrition Policies, Standards, and Practices in Place

This section of the tool may be used to capture information about the nutrition policies, standards, and practices in place within your agency.

---

### 1. Does your agency currently follow any food service guidelines/nutrition standards?

(Select one answer)

Yes

No **If no, skip to question 9.**

Don't know

---

### 2. Are the guidelines/standards mandatory or voluntary?

Mandatory

Voluntary

Don't know

---

### 3. What is your agency's rationale for using food service guidelines/nutrition standards? (Check all that apply)

Prevention of obesity and chronic diseases (diabetes, etc.)

Economic benefits for local farms and companies

Improve employee health and wellness

Model healthy and sustainable practices for other agencies

Align with agency mission

Other (please specify): .....

---

### 4. Which topics do your food service guidelines/nutrition standards address?

(Check all that apply)

Water

Calories

Sugar

Saturated fat

*Trans* fat

Sodium

Reduced-size portions/choices

Fried foods

Dairy

Beverages

Promote/offer fruits and vegetables

Calorie information through labeling

Healthier food and beverage choices with signs and symbols

Product placement to encourage healthier options

Pricing incentives that promote healthier food and beverages

Percentage or number of healthy food and beverage choices available

Other (please specify):

.....

**5. What sustainability standards are addressed in your food service guidelines or nutrition standards?** (Check all that apply)

- Participate in waste reduction, recycling, and composting programs
- Promote and incentivize reusable beverages containers
- Use green cleaning and pest-control practices
- Use compostable and bio-based trays, flatware, plates, and bowls
- Offer food that is organically, locally, or sustainably grown and labeled accordingly
- Offer certified sustainable, shade-grown, or bird-friendly coffee and tea
- Offer free drinking water
- Other (please specify): .....
- None

**6. Does your agency include these food service guidelines/nutrition standards in a policy, permit, contract, or similar agreement increasing access to healthier food and beverage choices?** (Select one answer)

- Yes                      No                      Don't know

**7. If yes, what type of food service venues does the policy, permit, contract, or agreement target?** (Check all that apply)

Food Service Venues	Policy	Permit	Contract	Other (Please Specify)
Cafeterias				
Vending machines				
Concession stands, snack bars, and/or carts				
Distributive meal program				
Meals served to institutionalized populations				
Hospital patient meals				
Other				

---

**8. Does your agency have food services operated by the Randolph-Sheppard Vending Facility Program authorized by the Randolph-Sheppard Act?** (Select one answer)

Yes                      No                      Don't know

---

**9. Does your agency have food service guidelines/nutrition standards that make healthier food and beverage choices available during meetings and conferences where food is offered?** (Select one answer)

Yes                      No                      Don't know

---

---

## Authority

This section of the tool may be used to capture information about who in your agency has authority to make changes related to foods sold or served in the agency.

---

**1. What authority currently or potentially could set or determine the food service guidelines/nutrition standards for this agency?** (Check all that apply)

- Federal, state, or local government
  - Contracting or procurement officer
  - Organizational policy
  - Other (please specify): .....
- 

**2. What is the process for adopting food service guidelines/nutrition standards and/or changing current purchasing practices within your agency?** (Answer in the space provided below)

---

**3. Whose approval is needed to set or change food service guidelines/nutrition standards?**

(Answer in the space provided below)

---

**4. If your agency has adopted food service guidelines/nutrition standards does your agency monitor compliance of these guidelines?** (Select one answer)

Yes                      No                      Don't know

---

---

**5. If yes, how do you monitor compliance with the food service guidelines/nutrition standards? Is there a designated person or agency that is responsible for monitoring?**

(Answer in the space provided below)

---

## Contracting Process

This section of the tool may be used to capture information about the contracting process related to food service within your agency. Complete this section if you currently have food service related contracts/permits.

---

**1. How does your agency make food service agreements?** (Check all that apply)

Contract  
Permit

Other (specify): .....

---

**2. Please indicate the date when each food service agreement at your agency will be renewed:**

**Please include length of contracts (i.e., 1 year, 10 years, etc.).**

Cafeterias/cafés .....

Vending machines .....

Concession stands, snack bars, and/or carts .....

Distributive meal program .....

Meals served to institutionalized populations .....

Hospital patient meals .....

Other (please specify) .....

---

**3. Are any of the following options available in your agency for current contracts before their expiration?** (Check all that apply)

Current contract(s) can be amended to include food service guidelines

Contractor(s) can/will voluntarily use food service guidelines

No change possible

Other (please specify): .....

---

**4. Do your agency's contracts contain specific language on food service guidelines/nutrition standards?** (Select one answer)

Yes

No

Don't know

---

**5. Does your agency include sales reporting of food items in your contracts?**

(Select one answer)

Yes

No

Don't know

---

## Environment and Capacity

This section of the tool may be used to capture information about the environment and capacity surrounding food service venues in your agency.

---

### 1. Which challenges does your agency face regarding the development of or compliance with food service guidelines/nutrition standards? (Check all that apply)

- Lack of dedicated food service staff involved in operational processes, such as food preparation
- Lack of trained staff
- Lack of funding support or concerns about cost implications
- Lack of food and nutrition expertise
- Lack of kitchen equipment conducive to healthier food preparation
- Contract/permits obligations that are hard to change
- Customer dissatisfaction with changes
- Lack of consumer demand for healthier food products
- Lack of dedicated leadership staff involved in operational processes, such as supervising food preparation
- Lack of work site wellness programs
- Negative effect on profits earned
- Other (please specify): .....

---

### 2. What information would be helpful to your agency in using food service guidelines/nutrition standards? (Check all that apply)

- How to market and promote healthier items
  - Contract/permit assistance
  - Case examples
  - Website dedicated to food service guidelines and resources
  - Training for food service staff on food service guidelines
  - Other (please specify): .....
-