

# BEST PRACTICES FOR WORKING WITH VENDORS & FOOD SERVICE MANAGEMENT

## MEAL SERVICE OPTIONS

Sponsors have a few options for meal service in the Child Nutrition Programs:

- 1. Self-prep:** Prepare and serve meals on-site each day.
- 2. Contract with a Food Vendor:** Purchase meals from a vendor and use your organization's staff to serve the vended meals.
- 3. Contract with a Food Service Management Company:** A food service management company (FSMC) is a commercial enterprise or nonprofit organization that manages one or more activities of the food service operation on behalf of the sponsor. Services may include everything from menu creation to meal prep and service to bookkeeping.

## WHAT TO LOOK FOR

When scanning a community for partners, look for the following entities:

- Food service management companies
- Food banks
- Universities
- Community colleges
- Arenas or stadiums
- Culinary institutes
- Catering companies
- School food and nutrition services
- Nonprofits

## WHAT TO KNOW

Before contacting a vendor or FSMC, consider the following:

1. What do you need from a vendor or FSMC?
  - Meal preparation?
  - Delivery to a central location or to each site?
  - Meal service at each site?
  - Site cleanup after the meal?
  - Menu creation?
  - Bookkeeping?
2. What types of food will you serve?
  - Hot meals or cold meals?
  - Meals and/or snacks?
  - Meals that are culturally appropriate?
  - Multiple meal options to accommodate dietary restrictions?

