

Procuring Local Foods for Child Nutrition Programs Webinar – Q and A

1. We are in Southwestern PA. Can I purchase milk from an Ohio dairy? Local dairies send their milk there.

As the SFA, it is up to you to define local. Many SFAs located near a state border may use a definition that encompasses product from a neighboring state, although it sounds like the product you described is from Pennsylvania. The local definition refers to the product and not the seller.

2. With Amazon there are hundreds of qualifying vendors. How many vendors would it take to show an auditor that purchasing is being done equitably?

You would need to use different vendors for the same type of purchases. You would just want to show that you're not making repetitive purchases from one vendor. Amazon represents one seller, not multiple sellers.

3. What if the prices from Hometown were the cheapest for all three purchases? (This is a reference to an example described during the webinar in which a summer meal program was working with five local farms but did three micro-purchases from one farm. The message was that the purchases should have been spread equitably among qualified farms.)

If you obtain at least 3 quotes and Hometown is the cheapest, you may purchase from them. But, this is informal procurement and not a micro-purchase.

4. Are any of these procurement regulations applicable to a Food Service Management Company providing food to a school?

Yes. The procurement regulations are applicable to full-service Food Service Management Companies. They do not apply to vended services such as pre-plated meals. Procurement regulations need to be followed when procuring vended services, but the vendor itself does not need to adhere to the procurement regulations when purchasing the food.”

5. If one of your schools is not on the NSLP, do procurement regulations still apply?

When using funds from the nonprofit school foodservice account, you must follow the federal regulations because they're comingled with federal reimbursement dollars. However, if you prefer not to follow federal regulations, keep separate accounting for the school that's not participating.

6. So, we do not have to go with the lowest price bid?

Not necessarily. If you're using a Request for Proposal you may not have to go with the lowest price bid because you're considering other factors as well, but cost should be a major consideration. You don't have to go with the lowest bid if you're using geographic preference. The weight assigned by the geographic preference may result in a vendor winning the bid although they may not have offered the lowest price.

7. What type of language needs to be included in a Food Service Management Company contract regarding procurement of local goods?

When you're writing a RFP for a FSMC and you want to procure local foods you can include that in section Q. You can state that you would like to use as much local foods as possible or indicate a certain percentage.