

**REQUEST FOR Full Meal Solutions BID
(RFB 2025-2026)**

**ETHRA - EAST TENNESSEE HUMAN RESOURCE AGENCY
Full Meal Solutions BID**

July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026

INSTRUCTIONS TO BIDDERS

1. **INVITATION:** The ETHRA - East Tennessee Human Resource Agency (ETHRA), 9111 Cross Park Drive Suite D-100, Knoxville Tennessee 37923, invites you to submit a bid for full meal solutions, as identified in the attached list (Attachment 1), in accordance with the following specifications.

The Request for Bid has been released for the provision of full meal solutions, for a one-year period, for a non-profit agency with various locations within a six- (6) county service area. Quantities and food specifications are set forth in Attachment 1.

Full meal solutions shall be defined as:

- Procurement and purchase of ingredients and packaging materials
- Preparation of meals
- Packaging of meals
- Adherence to Tennessee Department of Health Rules and Regulations pertaining to Food Service Establishments and all other federal, state, and local health, sanitation, fire, safety and building codes, regulations and licensure requirements.
- Staffing for performance of all aforementioned tasks

2. **SUBMISSION OF BIDS:** All bids must be received no later than 12:00 noon EST, on Monday June 23, 2025 at the ETHRA office. Bids must include the Bid Cover Sheet with the signature, name, address, email, and phone number of the company, and the name of the person submitting the bid. Submission must also include the “Price Quote” in the exact format set forth in Attachment 1. Marked on the front of the bid envelope must be the statement:

**ETHRA Full Meal Solutions Bid
(RFB 2025-2026)**

The date and time will be stamped on the bids as they are received by ETHRA. Bids received later than the deadline will not be considered. The vendor is responsible for ETHRA’s timely receipt of their bid.

3. **SPECIFICATIONS:** All bid items must be available in at least the approximate quantities specified in Attachment 1, for the entire contract term, to include the calendar months of July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026. All bid items must be equal to or better than

the quality specified. Poultry USDA Grade A, Beef USDA Grade A, Pork USDA Grade 1, Fruit and Vegetables USDA Grade A. Fancy.

4. **COST:** ETHRA, as a 501(c)3 organization is subject to all applicable discounts and is tax exempt.

5. **TERMINATION:** The Request for Bid (RFB) in no way obligates ETHRA to the eventual purchase of any items described, implied, or which may be proposed, until confirmed by a dually executed contract between the parties. ETHRA reserves the right to cancel this RFB at any time, for any reason, and to reject any or all bids.

6. **EVALUATION:** To qualify for evaluation, a bid must be responsive and must have been submitted on time. To be considered responsive, a bid must reasonably and substantially conform to all of the specified requirements in the RFB. Any deviation from requirements indicated herein must be stated on an attached sheet(s), otherwise, it will be considered that bids are in strict compliance with all requirements, and any successful vendor will be held responsible therefore. ETHRA will select for contract award a qualified and responsive vendor who submits the best bid, considering the following factors: unit price.

7. **BID AWARD AND NOTIFICATION:** Written notification to all respondents will be mailed or emailed by Wednesday, June 25, 2025. Any respondent may review the bids at the ETHRA office for 7 calendar days following the award notice date.

8. **QUESTIONS CONCERNING BID REQUEST AND AWARD:**

Address all communications regarding food items and specifications to:

Krista Mason

Senior Nutrition Program Director

kmason@ethra.org

(865) 691-2551 x4210

or

Nick Pappada x4207

IT Director/Chief Procurement Officer

NPappada@ethra.org

BID COVER SHEET

FOOD SERVICE AND CONSUMABLE SUPPLY RFB 2025-2026

Company: _____

Name: _____ Position: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____ Fax: _____

Email: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

ATTACHMENT I

FOOD SERVICE PRODUCTS

Bidders must bid on both full meal solution options. Option one is a frozen or hot meal solution (specifications listed below). Option two is a frozen meal solution (specifications listed below). Option three is a shelf stable meal solution (specifications listed below). Meals have to be available for pick up Monday-Friday (with the exception being closed for holidays) between the hours of 8:00am-2:00pm. Bidders should also include details related to accessibility for ETHRA vehicles to pick up orders from their location, and provide any special instructions if necessary. Meals should contain a minimum of 33 1/3 percent of the dietary reference intakes (DRIs) established by the Food and Nutrition Board of the Institute of Medicine of the National Academy of Sciences, for the provision of one meal daily. All options must also meet the following Nutritional requirements.

Nutritional Requirements

(1) Meals shall comply with the most recent Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGAs; Appendix M), published by the Secretary of Agriculture, including the following guidance:

- (a) for all food items served, nutrient-dense, lean, and/or low-fat forms are preferred.
- (b) Locally grown and seasonal items should be incorporated whenever possible.
- (c) A variety of fruits and vegetables shall be served. This shall include at least one serving (two if two meals are served per day and three if three meals are served per day) of each of the following on a weekly basis: dark green vegetables, red/orange vegetables, legumes (beans and peas), and starchy vegetables.
- (d) Added sugars, refined starches, saturated fats and salt shall be used sparingly. The 2020-2025 DGAs specify that an individual should get less than 10% of calories from added sugars, get less than 10% of calories from saturated fats, and not consume more than 2,300mg of sodium per day.
- (e) Use of whole fresh or frozen fruits is preferred over canned fruits to avoid added sugars. When using canned fruit, it should be packed in its own juice, with light syrup, or without sugar.
- (f) Fruit is the preferred desert option.
- (g) Whole grain items are preferred and should constitute at least half of all grain items served.
- (h) Use of plant-based oils that are high in unsaturated fats is preferred when adding fats and oils to meals.
- (i) Use a variety of herbs and spices to replace added salt.
- (j) Use of fresh or frozen vegetables is preferred over canned vegetables to avoid added sodium. Utilize low-sodium canned products or rinse before using. If using processed foods, balance the meal with fresh or frozen items to keep total sodium below 1,000 mg.
- (k) to balance the effect of sodium on blood pressure, offer potassium-rich foods. Many fruits and vegetables are rich in potassium including bananas, sweet potatoes, orange juice, white beans, and tomatoes.
- (l) All juices whether unsweetened fruit juice or vegetable juice shall be full-strength (i.e. 100% juice). Vitamin-fortified juices, low-sodium vegetable juice or sodium-reduced tomato juice are preferred over other juices.
- (m) Calcium and vitamin D fortified full-strength juice may be used as a milk alternate for participants. It may not be considered as both a serving of fruit and a serving of milk

in the same meal.

(n) A variety of protein sources shall be served including meats, poultry, seafood, eggs, nuts, seeds, and other vegetarian proteins.

(2) Meals shall contain:

(a) a minimum of 33 1/3 percent of the dietary reference intakes (DRIs) established by the Food and Nutrition Board of the Institute of Medicine of the National Academy of Sciences, for the provision of one meal daily (Table 1);

(b) a minimum of 66 2/3 percent of DRIs for the provision of two meals daily; and

(c) 100 percent of DRIs for the provision of three meals daily.

Table 1: DRI Requirements for One Meal Daily¹	Amount Required (Averaged over one week)	Notes
Nutrient		
Calories	≥ 655 calories	No less than 600 calories per meal
Fat	≤ 35% of calories	
Protein	≥ 17 g	
Fiber	≥ 8 g	
Sodium	≤ 1000 mg	No more than 1200 mg per meal
Calcium	≥ 400 mg	
Vitamin A	≥ 300 mcg (RE)	
Vitamin B12	≥ 0.8 mcg	
Vitamin C	≥ 30 mg	

Nutritional Requirements Compliance

(1) Assurance of compliance with DGA and DRI requirements may be achieved by one of the following methods:

(a) Conduct a computer nutrient analysis based on DRI requirements in Table 1 noting that requirements may be averaged over a week of meals. The meal pattern in Table 2 or an alternative meal pattern outlined in the most recent Dietary Guidelines for Americans may be used as a guide in developing meals that meet nutrient requirements but is not required to be followed if meals meet nutrient requirements.

Compliance shall be verified by completing and submitting the Nutrition Analysis Worksheet (see Dietary Guidelines for Americans, published by the Secretary of Agriculture, Appendix F) for each unique week of meals and for any special meals such as emergency meals, menus, and nutritional analysis to the AAAD for review at least three (3) weeks prior to the initial use of the menu; OR

(b) Plan and prepare meals that conform to the meal pattern in Table 2 or an alternative meal pattern outlined in the most recent Dietary Guidelines for Americans noting:

- That each serving may only be classified in one category (For example, a serving of legumes [beans or peas] may only be classified as a vegetable or a meat alternate, but not both; a serving of cheese may be classified as either a serving of meat alternate or a serving of milk alternate.);

- That the same food item served in sufficient quantity may satisfy more than one serving requirement (For example, two slices of bread would satisfy the requirement for two grain servings).
Compliance shall be verified by completing and submitting the Meal Pattern Worksheet (see Dietary Guidelines for Americans, published by the Secretary of Agriculture, Appendix O) (or a document containing the same information with prior approval from TNDDA and the AAAD) for review at least three (3) weeks prior to the initial use of the menu.

Table 2: Meal Pattern Food Group	Serving per meal1	Current Dietary Guidelines Servings per day for 2000 Calories per day2
Vegetable	2-3 servings*: 1 serving = ½ cup raw or cooked vegetable, ½ c vegetable juice, 1 cup leafy salad greens, ¼ c. dried vegetable	2 ½ C. equivalents or 5 servings daily. Includes dark green, red or orange vegetables, cooked beans and peas, starchy vegetables and others such as green beans.
Fruit	1-2 servings*: 1 serving = ½ cup raw or cooked fruit, ½ c fruit juice, ¼ c. dried	4 servings daily. Includes all fresh, frozen dried fruit and fruit juices.

Price Quote with ETHRA picking up meals:

Option one (Frozen or Hot)

Package will consist of 1 individual meal per package containing the following.

- 1 entrée with vegetables/fruits sealed
- 1 ½ pint milk
- 1 juice
- 1 roll

Price per package of 1 meal \$ _____

Option two (Frozen)

Package will consist of 5 meals per package containing the following.

- 5 entrées with vegetables/fruits sealed
- 5 ½ pint milk
- 5 juice
- 1 Loaf of bread or 5 rolls

Price per package of 5 meals \$ _____

Option three (Shelf Stable)

Package will consist on 5 meals per package containing the following

- Each meal individually boxed and labeled
- Each meal should contain a canned entrée
- Each meal should contain 2 servings of fruit/vegetables
- Each meal should contain sealed bread or crackers
- Each meal should contain ½ pint of UHT milk

Price per package of 5 meals \$ _____

Price Quote for meals delivered to ETHRA meals sites:

Option one (Frozen or Hot)

Package will consist of 1 individual meal per package containing the following.

- 1 entrée with vegetables/fruits sealed
- 1 ½ pint milk
- 1 juice
- 1 roll

Price per package of 1 meal \$ _____

Option two (Frozen)

Package will consist of 5 meals per package containing the following.

- 5 entrées with vegetables/fruits sealed
- 5 ½ pint milk
- 5 juice
- 1 Loaf of bread or 5 rolls

Price per package of 5 meals \$ _____

Option three (Shelf Stable)

Package will consist on 5 meals per package containing the following

- Each meal individually boxed and labeled
- Each meal should contain a canned entrée
- Each meal should contain 2 servings of fruit/vegetables
- Each meal should contain sealed bread or crackers
- Each meal should contain ½ pint of UHT milk

Price per package of 5 meals \$ _____

APPROXIMATE NUMBER OF MEALS PER LOCATION:

<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>FROZEN/HOT Individual Meals PER WEEK</u>	<u>FROZEN 5-Meals PER WEEK</u>	<u>SHELF STABLE 5- MEALS PER YEAR</u>
150 N. Charles G Seivers Blvd. Clinton, TN 37716	20/1-Pack	25/5-Packs	75/5-Packs
96 Mariner Point Dr. Clinton, TN 37716	200/1-Pack	N/A	N/A
1720 Church St. Tazewell, TN 37879	10/1-Pack	50/5-Pack	150/5-Packs
728 Emory Valley Rd. Oak Ridge, TN 37840	N/A	120/5-Packs	360/5-Packs
215 Sunset Dr. Oneida, TN 37841	N/A	30/5-Packs	75/5-Packs
298 Main Street Maynardville, TN 37807	N/A	30/5-Packs	75/5-Packs
2301 Jacksboro Pike Lafollette, TN 37766	N/A	80/5-Packs	240/5-Packs