

Follow up from Universal Meals testimony

The following School Food Authorities (SFAs) currently have contracts with food service management companies (FSMCs) that have a per-meal cost lower than the current per meal reimbursement rate: Barre SU, Franklin West, Lamoille North (only one school uses the FSMC, the rest are self-operated), Maple Run USD, Mill River Unified USD (3 schools use an FSMC, 2 are self-operated), Missisquoi Valley SD, Norwich SD, Rutland City SD, Southwest Vermont, Windham Southeast (1 school is self-operated, the rest use an FSMC), and Winooski SD. Of those, Franklin West, Maple Run, Mill River USD, Missisquoi Valley, Rutland City and Southwest Vermont reported excess net cash resources (more than 3 months of operating expenses) on hand in June 2023. We are working with them on appropriate spend-down plans that will improve their programs.

To encourage higher food quality and use of local foods with SFAs using FSMCs, we do the following things:

- The template FSMC RFP (attached) includes an optional item (1.15) requiring that the FSMC track and report on local foods purchases for the purposes of the local foods incentive.
- The template FSMC RFP evaluation worksheet (attached) includes an optional item providing points for bids that commit to purchasing X% of food from Vermont local sources and have a tracking systems for local foods purchases.
- In our FSMC contracting training, which is required for SFAs that are going out to bid, we discuss food quality specifications that go beyond the minimum required by USDA, and we share the specs developed by Windham Southeast SU (attached), which are the most detailed we've seen for specifying food quality.
- In our FSMC contracting training, we suggest that SFAs use the menus from our [Vermont Seasonal Cycle Menu toolkit](#) as the 21-day cycle menu that they provide to the FSMC to base pricing on. The winning FSMC is required to adhere to that menu for the first 21 days of the contract, and after that changes must be approved by the SFA.