

New Hampshire Buying Group

Produce for Schools

Request for Proposals



IFB #NHBG 2024 Produce

Solicited on behalf of the following school districts: Allenstown School District, Alton School District, Amherst, Mont Vernon, and Souhegan Cooperative School Districts, Auburn School District, Barnstead School District, Bartlett School District, Bedford School District, Berlin Public Schools SAU3, Brentwood School District, Chester School District, Chichester School District, Concord School District, Deerfield School District, Derry Cooperative School District, Epping School District, Epsom School District, Exeter Region Cooperative School District, Exeter School District, Franklin School District, Gilford School District, Gilmanton School District, Goffstown School District, Gov. Wentworth Regional School District, Hampton Falls School District, Hampton School District, Hillsboro-Deering School District, Hollis-Brookline School District, Hooksett School District, Hopkinton School District, Hudson School District, John Stark Regional High School, Kenneth A. Brett School, Kensington SAU#16, Laconia School District, Litchfield School District, Londonderry School District, Madison Elementary, Mason School District, Merrimack School District, Merrimack Valley School District, Milford School District, Monadnock School District SAU #93, Nashua School District, New Boston School District, North Hampton School District, Oyster River Cooperative School District, Pelham School District, Pembroke School District, Pinkerton Academy, Portsmouth School District, Prospect Mountain High School, Raymond School District, Rye School District, Salem School District, Seabrook School District, Shaker Regional School District, Stratham School District, White Mountain Regional School District, Wilton Lyndeboro Coop. School District, Windham School District, Winnacunnet High School, Winnisquam Regional School District, and any other school districts within the State of New Hampshire.

New Hampshire Buying Group

www.thebuyinggroup.org

(603) 630-7322

info@food4schools.com

Legal Notice

The New Hampshire Buying Group (NHBG) invites proposals for the supply of Produce to be provided F.O.B. the participating school districts listed below. An agreement will be awarded to one vendor per zone for the 2-year period of July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2026.

Solicited on behalf of the following school districts: Allenstown School District, Alton School District, Amherst, Mont Vernon, and Souhegan Cooperative School Districts, Auburn School District, Barnstead School District, Bartlett School District, Bedford School District, Berlin Public Schools SAU3, Brentwood School District, Chester School District, Chichester School District, Concord School District, Deerfield School District, Derry Cooperative School District, Epping School District, Epsom School District, Exeter Region Cooperative School District, Exeter School District, Franklin School District, Gilford School District, Gilmanton School District, Goffstown School District, Gov. Wentworth Regional School District, Hampton Falls School District, Hampton School District, Hillsboro-Deering School District, Hollis-Brookline School District, Hooksett School District, Hopkinton School District, Hudson School District, John Stark Regional High School, Kenneth A. Brett School, Kensington SAU#16, Laconia School District, Litchfield School District, Londonderry School District, Madison Elementary, Mason School District, Merrimack School District, Merrimack Valley School District, Milford School District, Monadnock School District SAU #93, Nashua School District, New Boston School District, North Hampton School District, Oyster River Cooperative School District, Pelham School District, Pembroke School District, Pinkerton Academy, Portsmouth School District, Prospect Mountain High School, Raymond School District, Rye School District, Salem School District, Seabrook School District, Shaker Regional School District, Stratham School District, White Mountain Regional School District, Wilton Lyndeboro Coop. School District, Windham School District, Winnacunnet High School, Winnisquam Regional School District, and any other school districts within the State of New Hampshire.

The Request for Proposals (RFP) may be obtained from our website, www.thebuyinggroup.org or by contacting Tim Goossens by email at tgoossens@food4schools.com beginning Friday, April 12, 2024. NHBG reserves the right to cancel this RFP, waive informalities, and to reject any or all RFPs.

Advertisements placed as follows:

NH Union Leader:

Friday, April 12, 2024

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Section 1 - General Information

1. OVERVIEW

The New Hampshire Buying Group seeks proposals for the purchase of Produce from responsive and responsible vendors for the 2024-2025 and 2025-2026 school years, beginning July 1, 2024, and ending June 30, 2026. The group is divided into 7 produce zones – Northern, Central, Eastern, Western, Seacoast, Concord and Nashua. Vendors may RFP on one or more zones but must submit a separate proposal for each zone. A listing of the participating districts by zone is provided as part of this solicitation as **Attachment 4**, and a listing of schools by zone is **Attachment 5**.

Participation in the Produce RFP is at the sole discretion of the Food Service Director in each district.

2. TIMETABLE AND KEY DATES

The dates provided below are important to understand. The deadlines must be followed, both in responding to this IFB and in meeting the contract terms.

Union Leader Posted:	Friday, April 12, 2024
RFP Documents Available on NHBG website	Friday, April 12, 2024
Last day to submit formal questions to NHBG	Thursday, May 2, 2024
Final formal addenda and question responses provided by NHBG	Monday, May 6, 2024
RFPs are due via email to NHBG	4:00 PM, Tuesday, May 14, 2024
RFP opening, Laconia NH	9:30 AM, Wednesday, May 15, 2024
Delivery times and arrangements between vendor and districts set:	Thursday, August 1, 2024

3. RFP DOCUMENTS AVAILABLE

RFP documents will be made available by Friday, April 12, 2024 on the NHBG website at www.thebuyinggroup.org, by e-mail to tgoossens@food4schools.com, or by phone to Tim Goossens at (603) 630-7322.

IFB documents will be emailed unless delivery via U.S. Mail is specified by the Requester.

Section 2 – RFP Submission

4. RFP SUBMITTAL

RFP must be submitted electronically by email to tgoossens@food4schools.com by 4:00 PM on Tuesday, May 14, 2024. No proposals will be accepted after this day and time.

The RFP includes the following sections. Vendors must complete each section to be considered responsive:

To be entered in Excel spreadsheet (Attachment 1):

A fixed, delivered cost for the precut items listed in the Excel spreadsheet. This price is to be firm for both the 2024-2025 and 2025-2026 school years but may be adjusted between school years. The cost of any precut item may not increase by more than 5% between years. To be considered responsive, you must enter a price for every line on the precut sheet.

There are 7 tabs at the bottom of the worksheet, one for each zone. Please complete a tab for whichever zone(s) you are bidding.

To be entered on RFP Response form (Attachment 2):

Quote on a fixed fee for delivery on each full case.

This fee will be added to the midpoint of the Mostly High / Low price from the previous Thursday's Market Report from the Boston Terminal Market to calculate the final delivered case cost.

- The fee will be held firm for the entire term of the award.
 - The fee shall be the same, regardless of the item delivered.
 - A list of commonly ordered fruits and vegetables is included, (**Attachment 3**), however the same fee shall apply to items explicitly listed on this RFP as well as any other items the district may order.
 - Thursday's Terminal Market pricing will be posted on the NHBG website for the districts' review.
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- Delivery schedule (order and delivery days and times) for the schools in the zone(s) you are bidding.
 - Lead time on bid and non-bid precut items.
 - Availability and pricing of non-bid precut items.
 - Availability and pricing of broken cases.
 - Minimum delivery size.
 - Pickup and credit policy.
 - Availability of local products

The group will also consider the vendor's past relationship with the member districts, if any.

When the forms are completed, please save them, and include them with your electronic submission.

The RFP sheet data is not to be copied to a new sheet or altered in any way.

5. BUY AMERICAN PROCEDURE

Section 12(n) of the NSLA defines “domestic commodity or product” as an agricultural commodity that is produced in the U.S. and a food product that is processed in the U.S. substantially using agricultural commodities produced in the U.S. Report language accompanying the legislation noted that “substantially means over 51% from American products.” Therefore, over 51% of the final processed product (by weight or volume) must consist of agricultural commodities that were grown domestically. Thus, for foods that are unprocessed, agricultural commodities must be domestic, and for foods that are processed, they must be processed domestically using domestic agricultural food components that are comprised of over 51% domestically grown items, by weight or volume as determined by the SFA.

Compliance with and enforcement of the Buy American Provision in the National School Lunch Program requires school food authorities (SFAs) to purchase, to the maximum extent practicable, domestic commodity or products. There are limited exceptions to the Buy American provision which allow for the purchase of products not meeting the “domestic” standard (“non-domestic”) in circumstances when use of domestic products is truly not practicable. These exceptions should be used as a last resort:

- The product is not produced or manufactured in the U.S. in sufficient and reasonable available quantities of a satisfactory quality; and or
- Competitive bids reveal the costs of a U.S. product are significantly higher than the non-domestic product. **For this IFB, significant is defined as 10% or more expensive than a like non-domestic item.**

The participating school districts will accept non-domestic items only if they meet one of the two criteria above. The decision to consider other countries of origin is at the sole discretion of the purchasing district.

Exception letters will be provided by the winning vendor for all items which are either seasonally or regularly not available domestically, or for which the price of a domestic item is either seasonally or regularly significantly higher than a non-us sourced item.

Exceptions are to be submitted using the attached form (**Attachment 6**) at the time of RFP submission and as needed for additional items throughout the course of the award. Exceptions issued after the RFP award shall be sent by email to Tim Goossens at tgoossens@food4schools.com.

The vendor certifies with the submission of the **Buy American Attestation** that all items included in this proposal for which an exception is not provided comply with the above definition of “domestic” at the time of the submission.

6. REQUIRED RFP DOCUMENTS

All RFPs are required to contain the following forms fully completed and signed (see relevant forms in the Appendices at the end of this document):

1. Precut Spreadsheet (**Attachment 1**)

2. RFP Response Form (**Attachment 2**)
3. General RFP Form
4. Statement of Competency
5. Certificate of Non-Collusion
6. Certificate of Tax Compliance
7. Certificate of Compliance for Federally Funded Procurement
8. Conflict of Interest Certification
9. Certificate of Non-Debarment
10. Lobbying Activities
11. Equal Opportunity Requirements
12. HUB Certification
13. Acknowledgement of Specifications
14. Buy American Attestation
15. List of Subcontractors (if necessary)
16. HACCP Plan

7. MODIFICATIONS TO RFPs

A bidder may correct, modify, or withdraw an RFP by written notice received by NHBG, prior to the time and date set for the RFP opening. RFP modifications must be emailed to tgoossens@food4schools.com.

After the RFP opening, a bidder may not change any provision of the RFP in a manner prejudicial to the interests of NHBG, and the participating Cities, Towns and School Districts.

Districts may join the group at any time during this award. The winning vendor agrees to add these districts to the contract under the terms outlined in these specifications and provide them with contract pricing for the term of the award.

8. PROVIDING A HACCP PLAN

The vendor must submit written documentation accompanying their submission stating and defining their HACCP food safety program – sending their full HACCP plan is the best way to satisfy this requirement. Submission of this information is a minimum requirement and failure to do so may result in the RFP's disqualification.

9. ESTIMATED QUANTITIES

Estimates of purchases are indicated on the Precut Spreadsheet, providing information from each participating school district based on projected usages. Actual quantities may be adjusted due to government regulations, delivery of federal commodities including, student preference changes, or meal program participation changes.

This IFB recites estimated quantities to be supplied by the vendor, which may or may not be purchased during the Contract period. Neither the participating school districts nor NHBG guarantees a minimum or maximum number of purchases through this IFB. No enforceable obligation exists under any resulting Contract beyond an individual Member's appropriated funds.

The RFP Coordinator is not responsible for membership changes that might take place during the RFP award or deviations in purchase amounts from the projected volume/estimated quantities.

District purchases may also be affected as a result of their participation in DOD produce programs.

10. Local items

Certain locally grown items may be available from local vendors on a seasonal basis. Each district may decide to procure local items outside the scope of this RFP using applicable procurement methods.

11. COMPLIANCE WITH IFB

Bidders must comply with all requirements of this IFB in order to be eligible for an award.

Minor informalities will be waived, or the bidder will be allowed to correct them. If a mistake in an RFP is evident and the intended RFP is clear on the face of the Produce Price Sheet, the mistake will be corrected to reflect the intended correct RFP and the bidder will be notified in writing. The bidder may not withdraw such an RFP. NHBG may reject or a bidder may withdraw an RFP if the mistake is clearly evident on the face of the RFP Price Form, yet the intended correct RFP is not similarly evident.

Conditional RFPs will not be accepted. A conditional RFP is one that imposes any condition or conditions on an RFP or changes the price or any other provision of an RFP in a manner prejudicial to the interests of the jurisdiction or fair competition.

12. QUESTIONS

Bidders are requested to immediately and thoroughly review the IFB and specifications and promptly notify NHBG of any ambiguity, inconsistency, or error which they may discover. Direct all inquiries or questions to Tim Goossens via email at tgoossens@food4schools.com. No substantive inquiries will be accepted after Thursday, May 2, 2024, beyond those that seek simple clarifications about the RFP. Responses to inquiries that affect all bidders will be issued as addenda. NHBG will not provide, authorize, or honor any alleged oral interpretations.

If questions are received after Thursday, May 2, 2024, NHBG, in its sole discretion, will determine if additional addenda are required and whether to alter the RFP due date. NHBG will advise all prospective bidders of such activity.

NHBG reserves the right to disqualify any bidder that it believes to be interfering with this procurement by raising irrelevant, nuisance, or diversionary issues in order to delay or render the procurement invalid, whether timely or not.

Failure of any bidders to read and become familiar with any portion of this IFB will not relieve them from any of the obligations described herein, whether they may be required during review of the RFPs, or performance required under a contract.

13. ADDENDA

Responses to inquiries regarding interpretation or clarification that affect all bidders and corrections or changes to the IFB will be issued as Addenda. Addenda will be distributed via email to all parties that NHBG is aware have obtained the IFB and will be posted on the NHBG website. Bidders should contact Tim Goossens via e-mail or phone if they believe an addendum has not been received. The last addend is expected to be provided no later than Monday, May 6, 2024, if necessary.

A copy of all addenda that are issued should be included in the RFP package and each addendum should be initialed by the bidder.

14. RFP OPENING

Electronic submissions will be accepted until 4:00 PM on Tuesday, May 14, 2024. They will be publicly opened and read aloud at 9:30 AM on Wednesday, May 15, 2024. The public opening is expected to end 30 minutes after the start time. Electronic copies of vendor submission will be posted on the NHBG website as soon as practicable after the bid opening.

The location will be:

Laconia, NH School District Conference Room

39 Harvard Street

Laconia, NH 03246

Unforeseen Deterrents - If at the time of the scheduled RFP opening, the designated site is unavailable due to circumstance beyond the control of NHBG, the RFP opening will be automatically postponed (with or without notice to potential bidders) until 9:30 AM AM at the same location on the next normal business day. In the event the same location cannot be used to accommodate a postponement, the RFP opening will be formally postponed with notification to all parties provided the RFP documents by NHBG. RFPs will be accepted until any postponement time.

Section 3 - Bidder Qualification Requirements

15. PERFORMANCE CAPABILITIES

Bidders must be capable of providing the specified goods and/or services on schedule, in working order, in an intact and undamaged condition, and providing any support services in a professional and workmanlike manner.

16. REFERENCES

NHBG reserves the right to require any vendor to submit reference letters from 3 current school or institutional customers before any award is made.

17. EXPERIENCE

Bidders must demonstrate competency in the business of providing the goods and/or services specified in this IFB by conformance with the following criteria:

- a. Bidders must be authorized sellers of Produce.
- b. In business for a minimum of 1 year.
- c. Provision of the specified goods and/or services is consistent with normal lines of business.
- d. Bidders that do not meet these minimum qualifications will not be considered.

18. SUBCONTRACTORS

The use of subcontractors is acceptable. If the bidder intends to perform any or all work related to this contract through subcontractor(s), said subcontractor(s) names, business affiliations, and addresses must be attached with the RFP and referenced to the appropriate work to be performed. Bidders agree to be responsible to ensure the legal and contractual compliance of named subcontractor(s). Use of subcontractor(s) not named in the bidder's RFP is prohibited.

19. INSURANCE

The selected vendor shall at all times during the term of the contract maintain insurance in full force and effect acceptable to the participating school districts. The selected vendor agrees to furnish NHBG with certificates of insurance or other evidence satisfactory to NHBG if requested.

Section 4 - Award and Contract

20. RULE OF AWARD

The Produce RFP will be awarded to a single responsive and responsible vendor for each zone for the 2024-2025 and 2025-2026 school years based on the criteria on the RFP scoring sheet (**Attachment 7**).

NHBG, in consultation with participating school districts, reserves the right to reject any RFP in part or in whole based on past performance of the vendor and/or the best interests of any or all of the members of the group.

The group retains the right to excuse insignificant submission errors that do not affect the outcome of the bid award at its discretion.

21. TIMEFRAME FOR AWARD

The RFP award will generally take place no later than a week after the RFP opening date at which time all parties will be notified.

22. RESERVED RIGHTS

NHBG reserves the right to:

1. Cancel this IFB at any time, with or without notice to prospective bidders. Reasonable efforts will be made to give timely notice.
2. Accept or reject, in whole or in part, any and all RFPs as permitted by law.
3. Award agreements as it deems best serves the interest of NHBG and/or the Cities, Towns and School Districts.
4. Act as its own reference and make such investigation as it deems necessary to determine the ability of the bidder to perform prior to execution of the award.
5. Waive or adjust non-statutory RFP requirements before or after RFPs are opened in whatever ways it deems best serves the interests of the participating school districts.

23. AWARD TERM AND PRICING

This solicitation is seeking fixed pricing for the each of the items on **Attachment 1**, the precut spreadsheet, and a fixed delivery fee for all other cases purchased for the 2024-2025 and 2025-2026 school years. The fixed price per case on precut items may be adjusted at the midpoint of the award which is between school years 2024-2025 and 2025-2026. This may be a price increase or a price decrease, based on market conditions, however the cost may not increase more than 5% on any precut item.

The delivery fee quoted on the RFP Response form is to remain fixed for the entire 2-year award.

A signed agreement with NHBG will result from this IFB. The agreement will be in effect from July 1, 2024, until June 30, 2026.

This award may be extended for the 2026-2027 school year at terms mutually agreeable to all parties.

If the award is extended beyond the 2025-2026 school year, the winning vendor may adjust pricing. This may be a price increase or a price decrease, based on market conditions.

All price entries and calculations submitted on this RFP are considered by NHBG and the participating school districts to represent the intent of the bidder. The group WILL NOT allow changes to any entry due to an error on the part of the bidder at the time of the RFP opening. If an error is discovered by the vendor awarded the RFP subsequent to the RFP opening, the RFP in question may be withdrawn in its entirety or the RFP price must be honored regardless of profit or loss to the distributor.

There shall be no additional charges levied to any school or district for fuel surcharge.

24. FORCE MAJEURE

In the event of market or growing conditions that drastically impact the price, quality, and or availability of an item, the NHBG may grant temporary relief to the winning vendor in terms of a price escalation or surcharge until conditions moderate. The amount and duration of such relief will be at the discretion of the members of the NHBG being serviced by each vendor and will be considered on a case-by-case basis. The vendor may be asked to submit objective documentation to substantiate any request for relief.

25. AWARD CONDITIONS

A sample copy of NHBG's standard award can be found in Appendix B. Bidders must be willing to sign NHBG's award. NHBG will not accept a bidder's own terms & conditions.

The pricing and terms of the winning proposal will be available to any NHBG district within the Produce zone, regardless of when they are listed on the original RFP.

If during the Vendor's Time of Performance, Buyer requires revisions or other changes to be made in the scope or character of the work to be performed, Buyer will promptly notify Vendor in writing. For any changes to the scope of work, Vendor shall provide Buyer with a written quote of change in price and/or change in time of performance and shall proceed with such changes only upon written consent of Buyer

Eligible parties will be the buyers under contract(s) awarded through this IFB. All transactions between eligible parties and contracted vendor(s) will be solely between those parties. Neither NHBG, the participating municipalities nor any other eligible party will be held liable by the vendor(s) or another eligible party for any loss or liability, other than payment for delivered products as may be limited herein, incurred as a result of this procurement.

This award will be administered by NHBG on behalf of the participating school districts. Any eligible party that purchases the goods of a selected vendor under any resulting contracts will be responsible for managing and directing the work of the selected vendor for all purchase orders and work orders initiated by the municipality. If for some reason, a participating municipality/school district finds that any provisions of the signed contract are not being observed by the selected vendor, they can seek remedy directly from said vendor and notify NHBG of any issue relating to non-performance under the signed contract.

26. WITHDRAWAL AFTER AWARD

If an agreement has been awarded and the awarded vendor, for any reason seeks to withdraw from the award, a 30-day written notice of intent must be submitted to NHBG. The 30-day notice will begin on the date of receipt of the notice, and during this 30-day period all RFP prices and specifications must be honored by the distributor. If a vendor, after having been awarded the RFP, chooses to withdraw their RFP, the vendor acknowledges that all of their RFPs may be eliminated from consideration for the next RFP cycle.

27. TERMINATION OF AGREEMENT

Either NHBG or the Vendor may terminate this agreement for cause upon written notice given by the non-defaulting party. For the purposes of this provision, "cause" shall include the failure of a party to fulfill its material duties hereunder in a timely and satisfactory manner.

NHBG shall have the right to terminate this AGREEMENT for its convenience upon fourteen (14) calendar days of written notice.

Section 5 - Product and Performance Terms

28. QUALITY REQUIREMENTS AND PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

Produce of high quality are required to be furnished and delivered inside the cafeteria storerooms.

All items offered shall be of the required specification in this IFB and shall be subject to all federal and state regulations applicable thereto.

The right is reserved to request samples of any or all items for which an RFP is submitted for testing in determining awards; samples to fully represent the items proposed. The brand and grade offered and accepted shall be supplied during the entire award period, and no substitution shall be made except upon written approval of the NHBG coordinator.

Quantities of items are estimated and not guaranteed to be purchased in full during the award period.

Pricing shall include delivery charges, prepaid by the vendor.

Bidders shall utilize only properly insulated, mechanically or thermostatically temperature controlled refrigerated transport equipment. Such equipment must be capable of maintaining temperature to protect products. Districts reserve the right to reject the use of any trucking equipment by a carrier if it is not in a clean, sanitary condition and suitable for the hauling of all goods. All delivery personnel must demonstrate good customer service and should be neat and clean with good grooming practices.

Vendors must have a Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point Program (HACCP) for all areas of service and products including but not limited to purchasing, temperature control, receiving, holding, storage, transportation and delivery. All HACCP records must be documented and available for review.

If the awarded vendor fails to comply with the requirements of this section, "Performance Standards", the Participating municipality or school district shall have the right to cancel its purchase without recourse by the vendor, provided the municipality/school district serves the vendor with a written demand to perform, citing its intent to cancel its purchase order and invoke this IFB provision if performance does not occur within three full business days of delivery of the demand. Such notice may be conveyed by e-mail, fax or other method that verifies delivery by electronic or witnessed means.

Additionally, failure on the part of the vendor awarded the proposal to comply with any of the above terms contained in this IFB and the resulting award could result in:

- A letter of nonperformance documenting the specific issues involved and the actions necessary to resolve the situation(s).
- Voiding the proposal award in whole or in part; and/or;
- Eliminating the vendor from future award consideration

29. PRODUCT INFORMATION

The winning vendor shall assist the RFP Coordinator in securing all required nutritional, ingredient and CN information as requested, in a timely manner

30. WARRANTY

Vendors warrant (1) that the goods they sell are merchantable, (2) that they are fit for the purpose for which they are being purchased, (3) that they are absent any latent defects, and (4) that they are in conformity with any sample that may have been presented to the Participating municipalities/school districts.

31. METHOD OF ACQUISITION

At the discretion of each Participating municipality, commercial credit cards (e.g., American Express, MasterCard, etc.) may be used to make purchases. All pricing will remain in effect, as will the buyers' tax-exempt status.

32. ORDERING AND DELIVERY OF GOODS

Delivery dates and times will be agreed upon by the district and the winning vendor, but shall normally take place Monday-Friday between 6:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m.

Deliveries arriving outside times agreed upon may result in refusal of delivery or billing of distributor for excess labor charges.

The winning vendor shall communicate with the Food Service Director or other designee of each district for a contingency plan at the beginning of the year for instances of snow days or other unforeseen school cancellations and how deliveries will be made/adjusted to accommodate these circumstances.

Product must be delivered at the correct internal temperature (frozen 0 degrees, refrigerated 34-40 degrees, milk 34-45 degrees between cartons, and dry goods at room temperature). All products are to have a sufficient code date for normal usage.

All items will be delivered to an inside storage location acceptable to the receiver. No tailgate delivery will be accepted. No products shall be left outside the building at any time or in any place other than within the school kitchens.

Districts are not required to accept any product that is visibly damaged or adulterated in any manner. The winning vendor shall replace any item received in unacceptable condition at no cost to the ordering facility in a timeframe acceptable to the district.

The vendor must provide full credit on and pickup of food incorrectly ordered or delivered by the next regular delivery. Full credit must be given, in a timely fashion, for foods that are discovered missing from the order, damaged, spoiled, adulterated, or expired.

33. RETURNS

The awarded vendor will guarantee that upon inspection, any defective or inferior supplies shall be replaced without additional costs to the Participating municipality/school district. The vendor will assume any additional cost accrued by the Participating municipality/school district due to defective or inferior supplies.

34. PRODUCT RECALL

The awarded vendor must, upon receipt of a recall notice from the manufacturer or government, notify NHBG and the RFP coordinator immediately by e-mail. Appropriate credit must be given for all recalled products.

35. INVOICING/DELIVERY SLIPS

A delivery slip must be left at each school upon delivery, complete with the unit price, extensions, and totals. Delivery slips must be signed by the Food Service manager or designee before responsibility will be accepted for payment of bills for these schools. If a delivery slip is not signed and the product delivered is in excess of what has been ordered, the participating municipality/school district will be required to only pay for the amount ordered.

36. PAYMENT BY ELIGIBLE PARTIES

NHBG is not an eligible party under this IFB or any resulting contract(s). Neither is it a party to any resulting transactions, nor can it be held liable for false representations or non-payment by eligible parties.

Eligible parties are not obligated to make payment to vendors other than in a manner consistent with their normal payment schedules and as bound by normal commerce. Payments shall be made in U.S. dollars. Vendors may not require cash payment nor accept cash for any transaction associated with this IFB.

Payment terms vary by district policy and will be agreed upon by the vendor and individual district.

Purchases made by the school districts are exempt from payment of federal excise taxes and any such taxes must not be included. Federal excise tax exemption certificates, if required, will be furnished by the school district on request. The school districts are further exempt from payment of Federal Transportation tax and any sales tax.

37. REBATE AND COUPON INFORMATION

The winning vendor assumes responsibility to pass on all rebate and coupon information to all members of the participating school districts.

38. AUDITING

The Group retains the right to audit distributor's invoices for any and all RFP items. The audit may take place at any location suitable to the participating school districts, including at the offices of the

distributor. The distributor will be given no less than 2 weeks' notice to assemble all relevant documents for review.

39. RFP COORDINATION

The participating Cities, Towns and School Districts receive the support of a RFP Coordinator, Tim Goossens of Food for Schools, tgoossens@food4schools.com, to determine the products they seek to purchase through this IFB. The awarded vendor is required to work with the RFP Coordinator in managing product changes.

Not every district in each zone may be participating in the RFP, and the ultimate decision on whether to participate rests with the individual foodservice director.

The Bid Coordinator is not responsible for changes in membership or purchasing quantities that might take place during the bid award.

40. RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARTICIPATING SCHOOL DISTRICTS

As per 7 CFR 210.21 Subpart E, participating school districts in their role as school food authorities are the party that must comply with the requirements of 7 CFR Part 3016 and 7 CFR Part 3019 as applicable, which implement the applicable Office of Management and Budget Circulars, concerning the procurement of all goods and services with school food service account funds. School food authorities remain responsible for settlement and satisfaction of all contractual and administrative issues arising out of procurements entered into in connection with the federal school lunch program. NHBG will support participating school districts in whatever way it can to satisfy such issues.

41. FEDERAL CONTRACTING REGULATIONS APPLICABLE TO VENDORS

Debarment and Suspension (Executive Orders 12549 and 12689) — A contract award (see 2 CFR 180.220) must not be made to parties listed on the government wide exclusions in the System for Award Management (SAM), in accordance with the OMB guidelines at 2 CFR 180 that implement Executive Orders 12549 (3 CFR part 1986 Comp., p. 189) and 12689 (3 CFR part 1989 Comp., p. 235), "Debarment and Suspension." SAM Exclusions contains the names of parties debarred, suspended, or otherwise excluded by agencies, as well as parties declared ineligible under statutory or regulatory authority other than Executive Order 12549.

Byrd Anti-Lobbying Amendment (31 U.S.C. 1352) — Vendors may not use Federally appropriated funds to pay any person or organization for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a member of Congress, officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a member of Congress in connection with obtaining any Federal contract, grant or any other award covered by 31 U.S.C. 1352. Vendors must also disclose any lobbying with non-Federal funds that takes place in connection with obtaining any Federal award.

Equal Employment Opportunity — Except as otherwise provided under 41 CFR Part 60, all contracts that meet the definition of "federally assisted construction contract" in 41 CFR Part 60-1.3 must include the equal opportunity clause provided under 41 CFR 60-1.4(b), in accordance with Executive Order 11246, "Equal Employment Opportunity" (30 FR 12319, 12935, 3 CFR Part, 1964-1965 Comp., p. 339), as amended by Executive Order 11375, "Amending Executive Order 11246 Relating

to Equal Employment Opportunity,” and implementing regulations at 41 CFR part 60, “Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs, Equal Employment Opportunity, Department of Labor.”

Contract Work Hours and Safety Standards Act (40 U.S.C. 3701-3708) – Where applicable, all contracts awarded by the non-Federal entity in excess of \$100,000 that involve the employment of mechanics or laborers must include a provision for compliance with 40 U.S.C. 3702 and 3704, as supplemented by Department of Labor regulations (29 CFR Part 5). Under 40 U.S.C. 3702 of the Act, each contractor must be required to compute the wages of every mechanic and laborer on the basis of a standard work week of 40 hours. Work in excess of the standard work week is permissible provided that the worker is compensated at a rate of not less than one and a half times the basic rate of pay for all hours worked in excess of 40 hours in the work week. The requirements of 40 U.S.C. 3704 are applicable to construction work and provide that no laborer or mechanic must be required to work in surroundings or under working conditions which are unsanitary, hazardous or dangerous. These requirements do not apply to the purchases of supplies or materials or articles ordinarily available on the open market, or contracts for transportation or transmission of intelligence.

Buy American Provisions - Section 104(d) of the William F. Goodling Child Nutrition Reauthorization Act of 1998 (Public Law 105-336) added a provision, Section 12(n) to the NSLA (42 USC 1760(n)), requiring school food authorities (SFAs) to purchase, to the maximum extent practicable, domestic commodity or product. Section 12(n) of the NSLA defines “domestic commodity or product” as an agricultural commodity that is produced in the United States and a food product that is processed in the United States using substantial agricultural commodities that are produced in the United States. “Substantial” means that over 51 percent of the final processed product consists of agricultural commodities that were grown domestically. Products from Guam, American Samoa, Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, and the Northern Mariana Islands are allowed under this provision as territories of the United States. The Buy American provision (7 CFR Part 210.21(d)) is one of the procurement standards SFAs must comply with when purchasing commercial food products served in the school meals programs.

There are limited exceptions to the Buy American provision which allow for the purchase of products not meeting the “domestic” standard as described above (“non-domestic”) in circumstances when use of domestic products is truly not practicable. These exceptions should be used as a last resort:

- The product is not produced or manufactured in the U.S. in sufficient and reasonable available quantities of a satisfactory quality; and or
- Competitive RFPs reveal the costs of a U.S. product are significantly higher than the non-domestic product. **For our purposes, we are defining significant as 10% or more expensive than a like non-domestic item.**

The participating school districts will accept non-domestic items only if they meet one of the two criteria above. The decision to consider other countries of origin is at the sole discretion of the purchasing district.

Exception letters will be provided by the winning vendor for all items which are either seasonally or regularly not available domestically, or for which the price of a domestic item is either seasonally or regularly significantly higher than a non-us sourced item.

Exceptions are to be submitted using the attached form (**Attachment 6**) at the time of RFP submission and as needed for additional items throughout the course of the award. Exceptions issued after the RFP award shall be sent by email to Tim Goossens at tgoossens@food4schools.com.

The vendor certifies with the submission of the **Buy American Attestation** that all items included in this proposal for which an exception is not provided complies with the above definition of “domestic” at the time of the submission.

Appendix A – Required Forms

The following forms on the pages below are required for submitting an RFP.

General RFP Form

The accompanying Forms & Documentation are hereby submitted as an RFP in response to the subject IFB. All information, statements and prices are true, accurate, and binding representations of the bidder's intentions and commitments in responding to this IFB.

Company Name

Contact Person

Street

Phone

City, State, Zip

Fax

Email

Bidder acknowledges receipt of the Invitation for RFPs (IFB) and Addendum No(s)._____, dated _____, and submits the attached RFP for this Invitation for RFPs to the New Hampshire Buying Group (NHBG), on the authority of the undersigned and as dated below who by signing confirms and pledges to abide by and be held to the requirements of this IFB and its resulting award.

Authorized Agent of the Bidder:

Signature

Name (as used for tax filing)

Printed Name

SS# or Federal ID#

Title

Date

Statement of Competency

I hereby certify that the bidder meets or exceeds the competency criteria set out in this IFB.

I further attest to the following assertions:

- The bidder has been in business for a minimum of 1 year.
- Provision of the items specified in this IFB is consistent with the bidder's normal lines of business.
- The bidder is incorporated, and if required licensed, to do business in New Hampshire.

Authorized Agent of the Bidder:

Signature

Name (as used for tax filing)

Printed Name

SS# or Federal ID#

Title

Date

Certificate of Non-Collusion

“The undersigned certifies under penalties of perjury that this RFP has been made and submitted in good faith and without collusion or fraud with any other person. As used in this certification, the word person shall mean any natural person, business, partnership, corporation, union, committee, club or other organization, entity, or group or individuals.”

Authorized Agent of the Bidder:

Signature

Name (as used for tax filing)

Printed Name

SS# or Federal ID#

Title

Date

Certificate of Tax Compliance

"I certify under the penalties of perjury that to my best knowledge and belief the undersigned has complied with all laws of the State relating to taxes, reporting of employees and contractors, and withholding and remitting child support."

Authorized Agent of the Bidder:

Signature

Name (as used for tax filing)

Printed Name

SS# or Federal ID#

Title

Date

Certification of Compliance for Federally Funded Procurement

Certification of Compliance for Federally Funded Procurement

The Contractor, if paid from federal funding sources, certifies that it complies with: E.O. 11246, "Equal Employment Opportunity," as amended by E.O. 11375, "Amending Executive Order 11246 Relating to Equal Employment Opportunity," and as supplemented by regulations at 41 CFR part 60, "Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs, Equal Employment Opportunity, Department of Labor;" 18 U.S.C. 874 and 40 U.S.C. 276c (Copeland "Anti-Kickback" Act); 40 U.S.C. 276a to a-7 (Davis-Bacon Act, as Amended); 40 U.S.C. 327-333 (Contract Work Hours and Safety Standards Act); 37 CFR part 401 (Rights to Inventions Made Under a Contract or Agreement); 42 U.S.C. 6201 (Energy Policy and Conservation Act); 42 U.S.C. 7401 et seq., as amended (Clean Air Act); 33 U.S.C. 1251 et seq., as amended (Federal Water Pollution Control Act); 31 U.S.C. 1352, as implemented 34 CFR Part 82 (Byrd Anti-Lobbying Amendment); E.O.s 12549 and 12689 (Debarment and Suspension); Section 106 of "TVPA" (Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000); American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009; Pub. L. 111-5 ("ARRA"), Section 1605 of ARRA; and 2 CFR part 176.140 (Buy American.)

Authorized Agent of the Bidder:

Signature

Name (as used for tax filing)

Printed Name

SS# or Federal ID#

Title

Date

Conflict of Interest Certification

The bidder hereby certifies that:

1. The bidder has not given, offered, or agreed to give any gift, contribution, or offer of employment as an inducement for, or in connection with, the award of a Contract pursuant to this IFB.
2. No consultant to, or subcontractor for, the bidder has given, offered, or agreed to give any gift, contribution, or offer of employment to the bidder, or to any other person, corporation, or entity as an inducement for, or in connection with, the award to the consultant or subcontractor of a Contract by the bidder.
3. No person, corporation, or other entity, other than a bona fide full-time employee of the bidder has been retained or hired to solicit for or in any way assist the bidder in obtaining a Contract pursuant to this IFB upon an agreement or understanding that such person, corporation or entity be paid a fee or other compensation contingent upon the award of a contract to the bidder.

Authorized Agent of the Bidder:

Signature

Name (as used for tax filing)

Printed Name

SS# or Federal ID#

Title

Date

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Certificate of Non-Debarment

The bidder hereby certifies that it is presently not debarred, suspended, or otherwise prohibited from practice by any federal, state, or local agency, and that, should any proceeding arise in which it is debarred, suspended, or otherwise prohibited from practice by any federal, state, or local agency, the bidder shall inform the NHBG and involved municipalities within one (1) business day of such debarment, suspension, or prohibition from practice.

Authorized Agent of the Bidder:

Signature

Name (as used for tax filing)

Printed Name

SS# or Federal ID#

Title

Date

Lobbying Activities

Lobbying

The undersigned certifies, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

(1) No federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the undersigned, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any Federal contract, the making of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.

(2) If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this Federal contract, grant, loan or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying", in accordance with its instructions.

(3) The undersigned shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all sub-awards at all tiers (including sub-contracts, sub-grants and contracts under grants, loans and cooperative agreements) and that all sub-recipients shall certify and disclose accordingly.

This certification is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was made or entered into. Submission of this certification is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31 U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required certification shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

Authorized Agent of the Bidder:

Signature

Name (as used for tax filing)

Printed Name

SS# or Federal ID#

Title

Date

Equal Opportunity Requirements

I certify that all information, statements, and pricing made in my RFP are true, accurate, and binding representations of the bidder's intentions and commitment in responding to this IFB. Any such representations that exceed the minimum requirements of the IFB constitute legal obligations on the part of the bidder to perform as stated and that failure to so perform may be used by NHBG as grounds to terminate the award.

I certify that pursuant to 28 CFR Part 42.204 (d) my employment practices comply with Equal Opportunity Requirements and comply with 28 CFR Part 42.202.; that my organization complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Authorized Agent of the Bidder:

Signature

Name (as used for tax filing)

Printed Name

SS# or Federal ID#

Title

Date

HUB Certification

Vendors submitting RFPs that have been certified as Historically Underutilized Business (HUB) entities (Minority, Small Business, Woman Owned), are asked to indicate their HUB status when responding to this Invitation for RFP. I certify that my company has been certified as a Historically Underutilized Business (HUB). (Attach a copy of the HUB Certification to this form.)

Authorized Agent of the Bidder:

Signature

Name (as used for tax filing)

Printed Name

SS# or Federal ID#

Title

Date

Acknowledgement of Specifications

The undersigned certifies that they have read the RFP Specifications and agree to abide by these specifications should they be the successful vendor.

Authorized Agent of the Bidder:

Signature

Name (as used for tax filing)

Printed Name

SS# or Federal ID#

Title

Date

Buy American Attestation

Section 104(d) of the William F. Goodling Child Nutrition Reauthorization Act of 1998 (Public Law 105-336) added a provision, Section 12(n) to the NSLA (42 USC 1760(n)), requiring school food authorities (SFAs) to purchase, to the maximum extent practicable, domestic commodity or product. Section 12(n) of the NSLA defines “domestic commodity or product” as an agricultural commodity that is produced in the United States and a food product that is processed in the United States using substantial agricultural commodities that are produced in the United States. “Substantial” means that over 51 percent of the final processed product consists of agricultural commodities that were grown domestically. Products from Guam, American Samoa, Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, and the Northern Mariana Islands are allowed under this provision as territories of the United States. The Buy American provision (7 CFR Part 210.21(d)) is one of the procurement standards SFAs must comply with when purchasing commercial food products served in the school meals programs.

I hereby certify that each item included in this submission meets the criteria for a domestic commodity or product as defined above, or an exception letter will be provided.

Authorized Agent of the Bidder:

Signature

Name (as used for tax filing)

Printed Name

SS# or Federal ID#

Title

Date

Appendix B – Sample Award Agreement

Award Agreement – Produce for Schools, IFB #NHBG 2024 Produce

Date

1. General

This agreement, made on behalf of New Hampshire Buying Group member districts and **Name of vendor** (Vendor), confirms the vendor's commitment to perform as detailed in IFB #NHBG 2024 Produce. The IFB is included here and is part of this agreement.

2. Timeframe of Award

This agreement is for fixed pricing for Produce for the 2024-2025 and 2025-2026 school years, beginning July 1, 2024, and ending June 30, 2026 as defined in the section Award Term and Pricing. The agreement may be extended for the 2026-2027 school year at terms mutually agreeable to all parties.

3. Resulting contracts

Individual districts reserve the right to issue their own contracts with the vendor.

4. Amendments

There shall be no amendments to this agreement without the written approval of the NHBG on behalf of its member districts.

The undersigned hereby agree to the terms and conditions of this agreement for the term of July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2026.

Vendor:

Signee's Name

Company Name

Authorized Signature

Date

New Hampshire Buying Group:

Timothy Goossens, RFP Coordinator

Date