

USDA Foods Processing Timeline

Action	Start time (prior to serving a meal)	Sample timeline
 Plan menus Review past production records and available student feedback Review past USDA Foods received Determine products necessary to produce menus Plan menus incorporating USDA Foods Estimate quantities needed Develop quality standards Develop specifications/descriptions Product testing 	10 months	October
 Analyze market Review past procurements Review past year's USDA Foods entitlement values Search availability and potential costs of items Compare bought items versus processed like items 	8–10 months	October– December
 Determine purchasing system Review projected total costs Determine projected threshold Review vendor availability utilizing the Tennessee Department of Agriculture (TDA) approved vendors Determine item categories Utilize informal (micro or small) or formal (IFB, RFP) or sole source procurement method 	Eight months	December

 Develop a template of potential bid conditions Reserve desired raw USDA product values for processing (diverting of USDA Foods) Notify the TDA of intent to process (potential bid) and entitlement marked (diverted) for processing Publically advertise the issuance of bids with contact information and deadlines Allow reasonable time for vendors (at least four to six weeks for IFB, large food category) to actually submit an IFB/RFP Receive bid documents Open IFB/RFP solicitations Evaluate IFB proposals Evaluate, score, and/or negotiate RFP proposals Evaluate, score, and/or negotiate RFP proposals Evaluate, score, and/or negotiate RFP proposals Maintain all documentation showing the comparison of bid items Notify TDA and vendors of bid award Notify TDA and vendors of bid approval (if applicable) Order food/prepare meals Manage the contract 	Develop colicitation		
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