

## **Health and Sustainability Guidelines for Federal Concessions and Vending Operations Q&A for HHS Employees**

**1. Q: What are the “Health and Sustainability Guidelines for Federal Concessions and Vending Operations”?**

**A:** The Health and Sustainability Guidelines propose specific food, nutrition, and sustainability standards that apply to food service operations and vending machines managed by Health and Human Services (HHS) and General Services Administration (GSA). They were developed cooperatively by HHS and GSA.

**2. Q: Why did HHS and GSA develop these Guidelines?**

**A:** The Guidelines will provide vendors with a clear definition of how to make menus and daily operations healthier and more sustainable. HHS employees and other concessions customers can make healthy and sustainable meal choices every day while on campus.

**3. Q: What are the goals of the Guidelines?**

**A:** The Guidelines aim to

- Increase the healthy options available at cafeterias and vending machines.
- Align food available at HHS and GSA facilities with the *2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans*.
- Inform customers about what they are eating and which choices are healthier and more sustainable.
- Increase sustainability of HHS and GSA operations and support sustainable agricultural practices.

**4. Q: How will the Health and Sustainability Guidelines be used?**

**A:** The Guidelines will be written into new contracts as they are awarded for food service operations in HHS and GSA facilities. The Guidelines will provide the vendor with a clear definition of how to make menus and daily operations healthier and more sustainable.

**5. Q: Can entities other than HHS and GSA use the Guidelines?**

**A:** Yes. Other federal agencies, state and local governments, businesses, and non-governmental organizations can use the Guidelines to make cafeteria menus and other food services healthier and more sustainable. In addition, agency leadership can use these Guidelines as a resource for worksite wellness programs.

**6. Q: How do the Guidelines promote healthier choices?**

**A:** The Guidelines encourage provision of

- More fruits and vegetables.
- More whole grains.
- Seasonal, local, and organic options on daily menus.
- More low-fat and fat-free dairy products.
- More low calorie beverages, 100% juices, low sodium juices, and water.

- Fewer foods high in salt, and more low salt items.
- No synthetic trans fat.
- More low sugar items.

The Guidelines also call for menu labeling, or provision of nutrition information for employees at point of purchase.

**7. Q: How will the Guidelines promote the sustainability of HHS and GSA operations?**

**A:** The Guidelines offer more sustainable food service practices, such as

- Incentives for using reusable beverage containers.
- Green cleaning and pest control practices.
- Compostable and bio-based trays, flatware, plates and bowls.
- Offering food that is organically, locally or sustainably grown and labeled accordingly.
- Where seafood options are offered, provide those procured from responsibly managed, sustainable, healthy fisheries

**8. Q: How will the food in cafeterias and vending machines be different once the Guidelines are in place?**

**A:** More healthy choices in cafeterias and vending will be available because the Guidelines bring the overall food environment at HHS and GSA facilities in line with the *2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans*.

**9. Q: Do the Guidelines permit vendors to sell fried foods such as French fries?**

**A:** Yes.

**10. Q: How will the Guidelines impact the price of foods sold in HHS and GSA concessions and vending?**

**A:** The Guidelines encourage vendors to make healthy foods more affordable compared to less healthy options. They do not impose specific pricing requirements on vendors.

**11. Q: When will the Health and Sustainability Guidelines go into effect?**

**A:** Over time, employees will see new healthier and more sustainable choices at their favorite concession stand or vending machine as new contracts are awarded. GSA is encouraging vendors to adopt the Guidelines before contracts expire so in some cases, employees may have healthier and more sustainable choices immediately. Employees responsible for new contractual agreements and renegotiations may use these Guidelines immediately.

Current contractors will be encouraged by GSA and HHS to follow the Guidelines. HHS and GSA will work with contractors to facilitate this transition.

**12. Q: Will the Health and Sustainability Guidelines change as the Dietary Guidelines for Americans change?**

**A:** Yes. The Guidelines will be revised periodically to reflect current nutrition science, environmental science, and consumer demands.

**13. Q: Will I have an opportunity to comment on the Guidelines?**

**A:** Yes. Comments will be solicited through periodic employee surveys, patrons meetings, or responses through the Intranet. Your comments will help concessions vendors provide you with the healthy choices you want.

**14. Q: How can I learn more about the Health and Sustainability Guidelines?**

**A:** You can read the Guidelines at <http://www.gsa.gov/portal/content/104429>.

**15. Q: When and why did the federal government begin making its facilities healthier and more sustainable?**

**A:** In May 2009, President Obama tasked the Office of Personnel Management with developing wellness best practices and a plan for the federal workforce. President Obama also signed Executive Order 13514 in October 2009, requiring federal agencies to purchase and operate in a more sustainable manner.

As a result, the White House Office of Management and Budget and Office of Health Reform began working with federal agencies to provide healthier food choices to federal employees. GSA led the effort to improve food choices, and collaborated with HHS to produce the Health and Sustainability Guidelines.