



University Policy: **Food Services Policy**
Policy Category: Finance and Business
Subject: Food Services for Activities within University Facilities
Responsible Executive: CFO, Vice President and Treasurer
Office(s) Responsible for Review of this Policy: Office of Finance and Treasurer

Supplemental Documents: Food Service Policy Guidelines; Food Served for Non-Catered Events Guidance; Food Recovery Guidelines; Waste Management Guidelines

Related University Policies: Procurement and Contracts Policy; Alcohol Service at University Events Policy; Sustainable Purchasing Policy; Zero Waste Policy, Event Scheduling Policy

I. SCOPE

This Food Services Policy establishes requirements and standards to provide Food Services for Activities within University Facilities. This Policy does not apply to tenants who lease space from the University.

II. POLICY STATEMENT

It is the goal of the University to ensure that food served during Activities in University Facilities is served on the Best Financial Terms to the University; in conformity with applicable standards and best practices for food safety; abides by all applicable University Policies and processes, including but not limited to sustainability, zero waste, events scheduling, and disability support; and supports the unique needs of religious and cultural events.

III. DEFINITIONS

Activities: Any undertaking within University Facilities funded by the University, including those of affiliated organizations.

Best Financial Terms: The financial arrangement that results in the lowest possible total direct and indirect expenses to the University and complies with existing purchasing agreements. Direct expenses are costs directly attributable to an activity and include charges for food, staffing, waste hauling, cleaning, etc. Indirect expenses are those that are attributable to an activity but cannot be easily accounted for such as utilities, insurance, licensure, etc.

Approved Caterer: A licensed company authorized to conduct business within University Facilities, whose operations include the preparation, transport, setup, service, and related activities associated with providing food and beverage services for events.

Dining Services Provider: The company contracted with the University to provide Food Services within the University's dining program and in University Facilities.

Food Services: The supply of consumable food and beverage items at Activities within University Facilities.

University Activity Host: The University unit that is responsible for the University Activity as outlined in this Policy, including but not limited to an office, program, department, or Recognized Student Organization.

University Facilities: Includes all indoor and outdoor spaces owned, leased, or operated by the University.

University Funds: the financial resources that are received, generated, managed, or held by American University, regardless of source, method of acquisition, or unit in which the funds reside.

IV. POLICY

Individual University Facilities may establish guidelines that further restrict Food Services in a particular facility, subject to review and approval by the Office of Finance and Treasurer. Event planners are encouraged to verify such guidelines prior to planning an event.

A. Food Service Costs Exceeding \$750

To ensure the University receives the Best Financial Terms, use of an Approved Caterer is required when the total cost of Food Services for Activities is \$751 or more and University Funds are used to purchase the Food Services. Caterers are approved by the Office of Finance and Treasurer consistent with the University's Food Service Guidelines. The University Budget Office may periodically review and adjust this threshold.

B. Exceptions

Exceptions to the requirement to use an Approved Caterer for Food Services totaling \$751 or more will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Office of Finance and Treasurer, in consultation with a cross campus working group that will review such requests. For the purposes of this Policy, an exception may be granted when the proposed Food Service arrangement is essential to the unique nature, purpose, religious or cultural significance of the activity or the event.

C. University Activity Host Responsibilities

The University Activity Host is responsible for ensuring that all necessary resources, compliance obligations, and risk-mitigation measures are in place to support safe and effective Food Service delivery, including any reasonable modifications to make the Food Services accessible for individuals with disabilities.

D. General Health and Safety Standards

All Food Services within University Facilities must be provided in accordance with the following health and safety standards:

1. Any food served within University Facilities must be handled safely, held at appropriate temperatures and prepared in accordance with applicable food safety laws and regulations.

2. Devices intended to maintain food at hot temperatures, such as sternos, slow cookers, induction devices, etc. may only be used under the supervision of an Approved Caterer or the Dining Services Provider.
3. Any perishable food that is unrefrigerated or unheated for longer than two (2) hours shall be disposed of. Excess perishable food remaining after two hours may not be donated or taken by attendees.
4. All Activities within University Facilities must comply with University Policies and local and federal laws related to the purchasing, serving and consumption of alcohol.

E. Sustainability and Zero Waste Standards

1. University Activity Hosts must request support for composting and waste bins through the University Events Management System (EMS). For more details regarding support for composting and waste bins, please visit <https://www.american.edu/about/sustainability/campus-greening/waste.cfm>
2. University Activity Hosts must follow the University's Waste Management Guidelines. The University and the Zero Waste team in Facilities Management may revise or expand the Waste Management Guidelines to meet campus needs.
3. Caterers and Food Trucks are required to remove all waste from University Facilities and dispose of it in their company's approved waste disposal site. The University may assess the cost of disposal to University Activity Hosts for a Caterer or Food Truck failing to properly dispose of waste from an Activity.
4. All Activities within University Facilities must comply with University Policies and local and federal laws related to waste disposal and sustainability.
5. Food donations play an important role in ensuring that food does not go to waste and can support those in need. The University encourages support for local community by donating unused food in accordance with the University's Food Donation Guidelines to its on-campus food pantries and local non-profit organizations.

F. Policy Enforcement and Compliance

The University's Business Services Department is responsible for ensuring compliance with this Policy through regular training, consultation with the University Community, review of exceptional circumstances, and engaging qualified food safety experts as required to support activities covered by this Policy. \

V. EFFECTIVE DATE AND REVISIONS:

This Policy is effective as of July 1, 2026