

Metropolitan Area Planning Council

Fresh Produce for Eastern Massachusetts Schools

Fruit and Vegetable Provision

[Invitation for Bids](#)

[Addendum 1](#)

[Issued: 3/26/2026](#)

IFB #MAPC School Produce 2026

Solicited in partnership with the cities and towns and school districts; including Acton-Boxborough, Andover, Arlington, Ashland, Bedford, Belmont, Billerica, Braintree, Brookline, Cambridge, Canton, Danvers, Dartmouth, Dedham, Dover-Sherborn, Dracut, Foxborough, Franklin, Lawrence, Medford, Methuen, Milton, Needham, New Bedford, North Attleborough, Quincy, Salem, Somerville, Stoughton, Wakefield, Wareham, Wilmington and Worcester



Metropolitan Area Planning Council, 60 Temple Place, 6th Floor, Boston MA 02111 www.mapc.org
MAIN PHONE 617.933.0700 MAIN FAX 617.482.7185

Addendum 1

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Vendor conference occurred on March 19, 2026. Those present were Kelsi Champley (MAPC), Bob O'Neil (MAPC Produce Consultant), and Jim Mullet (Produce Connection).

Reminders of key dates were provided, including the date of final questions (March 24th) and the due date for the IFB (April 14th, 2026 at 4:00 PM via CommBUYS).

Award is anticipated for summer programs for participating schools.

Changes and Updates to the Bid:

33 total districts, 10 new districts, 267 schools, anticipating \$5mil in usage, with an average order drop over \$600.

The classification of "New England Grown" has been changed to regionally grown, this is in reference to all New England states and including New York.

"Locally Grown" will only be used in reference to items grown in Massachusetts. We anticipate being able to more closely track the locally grown produce purchases during the life of the contract.

As a reminder, the specification list of produce requires different item code for every item on list, this includes separate codes for imported and domestic produce. We are individually tracking the variations of imported, domestic, regionally, and locally grown produce purchased by schools for the year the contract will be in place.

The order lead time has been shortened from 5 to 3 days, which will also impact the timeline for any price fluctuation changes.

There will be only one delivery time frame per school. If a school is looking to add an additional delivery, those deliveries must meet a minimum of \$400.00 or they will incur a \$50.00 delivery fee. A \$200 minimum delivery amount also applies.

Vendors need 3 written references from public school districts for their reference requirements in the IFB.

Questions and Answers:

Question Numbers are in **BOLD**, while numbered answers are in **RED BOLD**.

For the bid referenced above, we are pricing items on the Price Quote tab based on the full case sizes listed in Column C. For items that include a minimum case break (as indicated in Column D), could you please clarify the following:

Question #1: Is separate case break pricing required, and if so, where should it be entered on the bid template?

Answer #1: A separate case break price is not required. The purpose of Column D (Minimum Case Break) is to display which items will require a case break. The Split Case Fee is a prescribed formula and is explained in section 6.3 on page 19 of the IFB.

Question #2: Should case break pricing be evenly prorated from the full case price, or may vendors include additional costs such as labor, handling, or repacking when establishing a case break?

Answer #2: Section 6.3 – “In instances where Participants need to modify pack sizes, a split case fee will be added to the item’s delivered price (pre-split). The fee for breaking a case will be \$4.00 per case (pre-split) for the full duration of the contract. The formula will be the total unit case price plus the split case fee multiplied by the percentage of the master case that is being ordered. No other labor, packing, delivery or overhead charges can be applied to split cases. All other fees associated with splitting cases must be included in the split case fee or the total unit case price.”

Question #3: Is the state GRO42 contract considered a conflict of interest for someone bidding on the MAPC bid?

Answer #3: MAPC does not currently recognize a conflict with the state GRO42 contract.

Question #4: Will the state or municipalities ever consider GRO42 and MAPC contracts related, or will they require price matching?

Answer #4: Neither of these situations are expected during the contract term for the School Produce 2026 IFB.

Question #5: How is the FOB baseline determined for all of the items?

Answer #5: The price escalator baseline is the average weekly USDA FOB mid Low/High price for the specific growing region for 2025 (excluding summer school break and extreme market volatility). The previous year’s average weekly USDA FOB mid Low/High prices are used to identify extreme market volatility within the baseline year. The baselines for each eligible item are displayed in the Price Quote Worksheet (Attachment 1 – Price Quote Workbook, Tab 2. Price Quote) and should be considered when submitting a Total Unit Case Price for that item. If the produce item or similar item is not included in the USDA FOB report, then the fixed price must be honored throughout the term.

In the past, FOB prices were set for items that were not the actual source. For instance the FOB was set for the Mexican tomato market, but the Buy America program would want to use USA product.

Question #6: Can you confirm that this has been cleaned up for all the items so that the escalation formula can be based on the actual source?

Answer #6: The fresh produce specifications for the MAPC School Produce procurements have changed over the years for various reasons. The intent has always been to have the price escalator baseline and the FOB Report details for price escalation align with the fresh produce specification. It is aligned this year and has been in previous years. The example in question #6 is missing context. The FOB details and baseline for some tomatoes were set for the Mexican growing area and the Buy American Provision does support purchasing domestically grown produce, as noted in the example. However, the Buy American provision does allow for limited exceptions due to availability and cost. In the past, certain varieties of tomatoes were intentionally specified to be Mexican, were compliant with the Buy American Provision's limited exceptions and were expected to be sourced from Mexico. As economic and other market conditions change, the MAPC specifications change. The current specification list does have some non-domestic specifications that are expected to be sourced non-domestically, are aligned with FOB details and price escalator baseline and are compliant with the USDA Buy American Provision.

The price escalation requires 2 weeks in a row of escalated prices before any price can be adjusted. This system does not allow recovery for FOB price spikes lasting only two weeks. By the time we are eligible to increase the price, the market has retreated, forcing us to reduce it back to normal. We never received any relief from the escalation clause. It seems very self serving and offers little relief when things spike. We must absorb the added costs.

Question #7: Why can't it be one week?

Answer #7: There are many different criteria and conditions that are considered in creating an effective pricing methodology. Our goal was to create a logical, reliable, fair and manageable pricing methodology. Please consider all aspects of the prescribed pricing methodology when submitting the Total Unit Case Price for each item.

Question #8: Why can't the price be held for as long as the spike lasted? That will allow real relief for items that spike.

Answer #8: Beginning with the second consecutive week of extreme market volatility, a price adjustment request may be made for each consecutive week the FOB price for the specific growing region is more than \$10.00 over the baseline. This allows the vendor potential relief through the end of the extremely volatile period.