

UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND ARTS OF OKLAHOMA

Chickasha, Oklahoma

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

CAMPUS DINING SERVICES

RFP No. USAO-DINING-RFP-2026-01 | Issued in follow-up to RFI No. USAO-DINING-RFI-2026-01

Issuing Institution	University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma (USAO)
Document Title	Request for Proposals — Campus Dining Services
RFP Number	USAO-DINING-RFP-2026-01
Issue Date	May 7, 2026
Site Visit	May 15, 2026 at 9:00 AM CDT (mandatory for all respondents)
Questions Due	May 20, 2026 at 5:00 PM CDT
Answers Issued By	May 25, 2026
Proposals Due	June 8, 2026 at 5:00 PM CDT
Selection Date	June 11, 2026
Contract Start	July 1, 2026
Operational Start	August 24, 2026 (first day of fall 2026 semester)
Issuing Office	Office of the Executive Director of Operations and Controller
Contact Person	David Smith, Executive Director of Operations & Controller
Contact Email	Dsmith2@usao.edu
Contact Phone	(405) 574-1211
Submission Method	Electronic submission via https://usao.edu/vendors/index.html

IMPORTANT NOTICE

This Request for Proposals is issued by the University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma in follow-up to RFI No. USAO-DINING-RFI-2026-01, dated April 6, 2026. This document constitutes a formal competitive solicitation under the Oklahoma Competitive Bidding Act (61 O.S. § 101 et seq.) and applicable Board of Regents for Oklahoma Colleges policies. Submission of a proposal constitutes acceptance of all terms and conditions herein. USAO reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, waive informalities, and award a contract in the best interest of the University.

SECTION 1 — BACKGROUND AND SCOPE

1.1 Background

The University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma (USAO) is Oklahoma's only public liberal arts university, located in Chickasha, Oklahoma, approximately 40 miles southwest of Oklahoma City. USAO serves approximately 900–1,000 undergraduate students and maintains one of the highest residential participation rates among Oklahoma colleges and universities.

USAO currently operates approximately 594 on-campus beds across traditional residence halls (Rogers Hall and Troutt Hall) and apartment-style units at Lawson Court. Effective January 2027, the University will open a new 166-bed residential facility, bringing total on-campus bed capacity to approximately 760 beds. The University's current residential enrollment goal is approximately 600 students. Prospective providers should plan for this growth trajectory in all financial projections submitted with this proposal.

1.2 Current Dining Program

USAO's campus dining program currently includes the following facilities and services:

- Student Center dining hall (primary cafeteria — main board dining)
- Dusty's quick-serve concept (Student Center)
- C-Store convenience retail (Student Center)
- The Daily Grind / Starbucks-licensed café (Lawson Court Clubhouse)

Current meal plan offerings include weekly swipe plans (5, 12, 14, and 19 meals per week) and block plans (10, 25, and 50 meals per semester), with flex dollar components on all weekly plans. The academic calendar consists of two 15-week semesters (fall and spring) plus a limited summer session.

1.3 Scope of Services

The awarded provider shall be responsible for full management and operation of all campus dining facilities and programs, including but not limited to:

- Full staffing and culinary management of the primary dining hall and all retail concepts
- Design, pricing, and administration of all residential and commuter meal plan programs
- Catering services for university events, including the President's catering program
- C-Store and retail food and beverage operations
- Management or licensing of the Starbucks-equivalent café concept at Lawson Court
- Compliance with all applicable federal, state, and local health, safety, and food service regulations
- All required reporting, financial statements, and commission payments to USAO

SECTION 2 — FINANCIAL PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

USAO's evaluation of proposals will be based primarily on financial terms. Respondents must complete all pricing schedules in this section in full. Incomplete financial submissions will be disqualified. All prices submitted are binding for 90 days from the proposal due date.

2.1 Meal Plan Pricing

Respondents must propose pricing for each of the following meal plan tiers. USAO currently offers four weekly plans and three block plans; respondents may propose modifications to this structure but must provide pricing for equivalent tiers at minimum. Prices must be stated as semester amounts. Flex/dining dollars included in each plan must be itemized separately.

Plan Name / Tier	Semester Price (\$)	Flex Dollars Included (\$)	Meals per Semester	Net Cost per Meal (\$)
19 Meals/Week				
14 Meals/Week				
12 Meals/Week				
5 Meals/Week				
50 Meal Block		N/A		
25 Meal Block		N/A		
10 Meal Block		N/A		

Net Cost per Meal is calculated as: (Semester Price – Flex Dollars Included) ÷ Total Meals per Semester. Total meals per semester for weekly plans = meals per week x 15 weeks. Respondents must show all calculations. Block plan flex dollars should be listed if included; if not included, enter \$0.00.

If the respondent proposes a restructured meal plan (different tiers, unlimited options, or declining balance), provide a complete pricing schedule using the same format above. Attach as Exhibit A to the proposal.

2.2 Management Fee / Financial Model

Respondents must clearly describe their proposed financial model and provide a complete fee schedule. USAO will consider both management fee and commission/profit-share models. Respondents must specify:

- Whether the proposed model is a management fee, commission/profit-share, or hybrid arrangement
- The annual management fee amount (if applicable), stated in dollars
- The basis on which operating expenses are billed to USAO — actual cost, budgeted cost, or other
- Any guaranteed cost-per-meal ceiling or operating budget cap offered
- Any minimum revenue guarantee offered to USAO

Respondents must provide a projected annual operating budget for Year 1 (2026–27) and Year 2 (2027–28), broken down by: food cost, labor cost, paper/supplies, management fee, and other direct costs. Attach as Exhibit B to the proposal.

2.3 Capital Investment

Respondents must state their proposed capital investment commitment for this contract, including:

- Total dollar amount of capital investment offered
- Specific improvements or equipment to be funded (itemized list)
- Amortization schedule — term length and annual amortization amount
- Recapture terms — under what conditions and in what amounts would USAO be required to reimburse unamortized capital upon early termination

USAO places significant weight on capital investment offers that fund improvements to the Student Center dining hall and preparation for the new 166-bed residential facility opening in January 2027. Proposals that address both will be viewed favorably in the evaluation.

2.4 Revenue Sharing and Commissions

Respondents must provide a complete commission and revenue sharing schedule covering all revenue streams, including:

- Retail cash sales
- Guest meals
- Catering — university-sponsored events
- Catering — third-party events
- Block/punch card meal sales
- Vending (if applicable)

State all commissions as a percentage of net sales. If any revenue stream is excluded from commission, state the reason. USAO's current commission structure generates revenue from retail, guest meals, and catering; any proposal that reduces existing commission income must account for that reduction elsewhere in the financial model.

2.5 Annual Escalator Structure

Respondents must describe their proposed annual price adjustment mechanism, including:

- The index or indices to be applied (e.g., CPI-Food Away From Home, HEPI, blended index)
- Whether any fixed add-on percentage applies above the index
- The effective date of each annual adjustment
- Any cap on annual increases

For reference: USAO's current contract applies CPI-Food Away From Home plus 2% through June 2026, reverting to CPI-Food Away From Home only beginning June 2027. Proposals offering CPI-only or capped escalators will be viewed favorably.

2.6 Contract Term

Respondents must state their proposed contract term in years. USAO will consider terms of five to ten years. Longer terms will be evaluated favorably only where accompanied by proportionally greater capital investment or financial benefit to USAO. All proposals must include:

- Proposed contract start date (no earlier than July 1, 2026)
- Proposed operational start date (target: August 24, 2026)
- Proposed contract length
- Termination for convenience provisions — minimum notice period USAO would be required to give, and any associated financial consequences

SECTION 3 — MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

Proposals from respondents who do not meet all of the following minimum qualifications will be disqualified without further evaluation:

1. The respondent must have a minimum of five (5) years of continuous experience operating campus dining services at accredited colleges or universities.
2. The respondent must currently hold a minimum of three (3) active dining services contracts at residential institutions with enrollment between 500 and 2,000 students.
3. The respondent must carry, at a minimum: Commercial General Liability insurance with a combined single limit of \$5,000,000 per occurrence; Workers' Compensation coverage as required by Oklahoma law; and Employers' Liability coverage of \$1,000,000 per occurrence.
4. The respondent must not be currently debarred, suspended, or otherwise excluded from participation in state or federal procurement.
5. The respondent's authorized representative must attend the mandatory site visit on May 15, 2026. Proposals from respondents who did not attend the site visit will be disqualified.

SECTION 4 — MANAGEMENT AND STAFFING

While this RFP is primarily financial in focus, USAO requires the following staffing commitments as conditions of any contract award. These are non-negotiable minimum requirements, not scored criteria.

4.1 Dedicated General Manager

The awarded provider must assign a dedicated, full-time General Manager exclusively to the USAO account. The General Manager may not hold management responsibilities at any other account simultaneously. The proposed General Manager must be identified by name in the proposal, with a resume attached as Exhibit C. USAO reserves the right to approve or reject the proposed General Manager and any subsequent replacement. USAO approval of any General Manager change is required within 30 days prior to the change becoming effective.

4.2 Culinary Leadership

The awarded provider must assign a qualified Executive Chef or Head Chef to the USAO account. The proposed culinary leader must be identified by name in the proposal, with a resume attached as Exhibit C. USAO reserves the right to approve or reject the proposed culinary leader and any subsequent replacement.

4.3 Staffing Transition

The awarded provider must describe its plan for staffing the USAO account at transition, including its policy for interviewing and considering existing dining staff for employment. The provider's hiring decisions regarding any individuals currently employed by the incumbent dining provider are the sole responsibility of the provider and must be made independently of USAO direction. USAO makes no representations regarding the availability or eligibility of any current dining personnel.

SECTION 5 — SITE VISIT

A mandatory site visit will be held on May 15, 2026 at 9:00 AM CDT. Location and access details will be provided by separate email to all known respondents. Attendance by an authorized representative of the respondent is required. Proposals from respondents who did not attend the mandatory site visit will be disqualified without exception.

The site visit will include a walkthrough of all current dining facilities, an opportunity to ask questions of USAO staff, and review of relevant operational data. Questions raised during the site visit will be compiled

and answered in writing as part of the formal Q&A process described in Section 6.3. No answers given verbally during the site visit are binding.

SECTION 6 — SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS AND PROCESS

6.1 Proposal Format

Proposals must be submitted electronically via <https://usao.edu/vendors/index.html> in PDF format. Hard copy submissions will not be accepted. Proposals must be organized in the following order:

6. Cover letter signed by an authorized representative (one page maximum)
7. Completed financial proposal — Sections 2.1 through 2.6, including all required exhibits
8. Proof of minimum qualifications — Section 3
9. Exhibit A — Proposed meal plan structure (if modifying current structure)
10. Exhibit B — Year 1 and Year 2 operating budget projections
11. Exhibit C — Resumes for proposed General Manager and culinary leader
12. Exhibit D — Three references from comparable institutions (name, enrollment, contact person, phone, email)
13. Signed Respondent Certification — Section 8

6.2 Proposal Deadline

Proposals must be received no later than June 8, 2026 at 5:00 PM Central Daylight Time. Proposals received after this deadline will not be considered under any circumstances. USAO's electronic submission system timestamp is the official time of receipt. USAO is not responsible for technical failures on the respondent's end.

6.3 Questions and Clarifications

All questions must be submitted in writing via email to David Smith at Dsmith2@usao.edu by May 20, 2026 at 5:00 PM CDT. Questions received after this deadline will not be answered. USAO will issue written responses to all timely questions by May 25, 2026. Responses will be distributed to all known respondents. Only written answers issued through this process are binding — verbal statements made during the site visit or otherwise do not constitute official USAO responses.

6.4 Proposal Validity

All pricing and financial terms submitted in a proposal are binding and irrevocable for a period of ninety (90) days from the proposal due date of June 8, 2026. USAO may, at its discretion, request that a respondent extend the validity period of its proposal; the respondent may decline such a request without prejudice.

6.5 Confidentiality

Proposals will be treated as confidential to the extent permitted by the Oklahoma Open Records Act (51 O.S. § 24A.1 et seq.). Respondents who believe specific financial or proprietary information in their proposal is exempt from disclosure should clearly identify those portions and the legal basis for exemption. USAO makes no guarantee that information identified as confidential will be protected from disclosure in response to a public records request.

SECTION 7 — EVALUATION AND AWARD

7.1 Evaluation Committee

Proposals will be evaluated by a committee appointed by the USAO President. The committee will score all compliant proposals against the criteria below. The committee may, at its discretion, request clarification from any respondent. Clarification requests do not constitute negotiations and do not commit USAO to any course of action.

7.2 Evaluation Criteria

All proposals meeting minimum qualifications will be scored on the following criteria. Financial terms account for 100% of the scored evaluation.

Evaluation Criterion	Max Points	Score
Proposed Meal Plan Pricing (per-meal cost across all tiers)	35	35
Management Fee / Financial Model	25	25
Capital Investment Offer	20	20
Revenue Sharing / Commission Structure	10	10
Annual Escalator Structure	10	10
TOTAL	100	

7.3 Scoring Methodology

Meal Plan Pricing (35 points)

The averaged net cost per meal across all proposed plan tiers will be calculated for each respondent. The proposal with the lowest averaged net cost per meal receives 35 points. All other proposals are scored proportionally: $(\text{Lowest CPM} \div \text{Respondent CPM}) \times 35$.

Management Fee / Financial Model (25 points)

The committee will evaluate the total annual cost to USAO under each proposed financial model, including management fees, reimbursable operating expenses, and any guaranteed cost ceilings. The proposal presenting the most favorable total annual cost to USAO receives 25 points. All others scored proportionally.

Capital Investment (20 points)

The total capital investment offered is scored on both dollar amount and recapture terms. The committee will calculate a net investment value: total investment offered minus estimated recapture liability at the end of a 5-year period. The highest net investment value receives 20 points. All others scored proportionally.

Revenue Sharing / Commissions (10 points)

The total estimated annual commission revenue to USAO, calculated against current sales volume data provided at the site visit, will be compared across proposals. The highest projected annual commission receives 10 points. All others scored proportionally.

Annual Escalator (10 points)

Proposals are scored based on the projected 5-year cumulative cost impact of the proposed escalator. A CPI-only escalator with no add-on receives full points. Escalators with add-on percentages or uncapped structures are scored at a discount determined by the committee based on projected cost impact.

7.4 Award

USAO intends to award a contract to the highest-scoring responsive and responsible respondent. USAO reserves the right to: reject any or all proposals; waive minor informalities; negotiate final contract terms with the selected respondent; and cancel this procurement at any time without obligation. Award is subject to approval by the USAO Board of Regents as required by applicable policy.

SECTION 8 — TERMS, CONDITIONS, AND CERTIFICATION

8.1 Procurement Integrity

This procurement is conducted in compliance with the Oklahoma Competitive Bidding Act (61 O.S. § 101 et seq.), applicable Board of Regents for Oklahoma Colleges (BROC) procurement policies, and USAO's internal procurement procedures. Any attempt by a respondent to improperly influence the evaluation process, offer gifts or gratuities to USAO employees or committee members, or otherwise compromise the integrity of this procurement will result in immediate disqualification and may be referred for further action.

8.2 No Contact

From the date of this RFP through the date of contract award, respondents and their representatives shall not contact any USAO employee, officer, board member, or agent regarding this procurement except through the designated contact person identified on the cover page of this document. Violation of this provision is grounds for disqualification.

8.3 Governing Law

Any contract resulting from this procurement will be governed by the laws of the State of Oklahoma. Venue for any dispute arising under the contract shall be in Grady County, Oklahoma. The contract will be subject to all applicable Oklahoma statutes and regulations, including but not limited to the Oklahoma State Finance Act and applicable BROC policies.

8.4 Public Institution Disclosure

USAO is a public institution of the State of Oklahoma. All contracts entered into by USAO are public records subject to disclosure under the Oklahoma Open Records Act. Respondents should not submit information they are unwilling to have disclosed publicly, except as noted in Section 6.5 above.

8.5 Existing Contract Disclosure

USAO currently has a dining services agreement in place with an incumbent provider. The selected respondent should be prepared to coordinate an orderly operational transition beginning no later than August 24, 2026. USAO will provide relevant transition information to the selected respondent following contract award. Respondents should account for standard transition costs in their financial proposals.

8.6 Respondent Certification

Each proposal must include the following certification, signed by an authorized representative of the respondent:

RESPONDENT CERTIFICATION

The undersigned certifies that: (1) the pricing and financial information submitted in this proposal is accurate, complete, and binding for a period of 90 days from the proposal due date; (2) the respondent has read and

agrees to all terms and conditions set forth in this RFP; (3) no officer, employee, or agent of USAO has been offered any gift, gratuity, or benefit in connection with this proposal; and (4) the respondent is not currently debarred or suspended from participation in federal or state procurement.

Organization Legal Name: _____

Authorized Representative: _____

Title: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

— END OF REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS —

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