



Enhancing School Meals: GRO42 K-12 School Nutrition Products Statewide Contract Debuts

The Operational Services Division (OSD), working with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and food and nutrition directors from eight Massachusetts school districts, developed the GRO42 K-12 School Nutrition Products Contract. GRO42 is designed to provide organic and non-organic produce, groceries, meat, seafood, and locally sourced items to schools and other eligible entities. The first category of the contract, offering Produce, debuted on February 1, 2025.

Contract Highlights

- Selection of businesses experienced in effectively managing medium- to large-scale produce distribution
- Produce includes high-quality fresh fruits, vegetables, and herbs (organic, non-organic, and locally sourced) which comply with federal and state standards and requirements
- Help entities comply with federal and state nutrition regulations, including the Buy American Standard, and gain greater school nutrition program efficiencies
- Statewide coverage, including western Massachusetts, Cape, and the Islands
- Offer food choices with clearly identified third-party certifications and standards (certified organic, locally sourced, certified non-GMO, etc.)
- Market Basket – Large selection of frequently purchased/popular items, enabling immediate price comparisons and ability to negotiate pricing to achieve significant cost savings
- Pricing – Vendors provide a Category 1 Produce *do not exceed maximum rate* and are prepared to negotiate weekly rates with buyers that are fair, competitive, and transparent. Awarded vendors offer a Weekly Vendor Order Guide for current pricing and buyers are encouraged to negotiate prices and/or seek alternative quotes from other GRO42 awarded vendors. Pricing information is posted under each vendor's MBPO in COMMBUYS, linkable from the GRO42 Contract User Guide
- Pricing from vendors is inclusive of all business expenses; Fuel surcharges by vendors are not permitted
- Will Call Orders available to satisfy more immediate buyer needs



Categories and Effective Dates

- **Category 1 Produce:** Launched February 1, 2025
- **Category 2 Groceries:** Estimated start date — Summer 2025
- **Category 3 Locally Sourced Foods:** Estimated start date — Winter 2025

FAQs

Q: Where can I find a list of GRO42 awarded vendors?

A: The [GRO42 Contract User Guide](#) lists all available vendors and the regions they cover. Find the User Guide in COMMBUYS: COMMBUYS.com > Enter GRO42 in the Search Bar and select Blankets from the dropdown > Select the GRO42 Master Contract Record.

Q: How do I find pricing?

A: Each vendor offers a Category 1 Produce *do not exceed maximum rate* price file located as an attachment to their MBPO in COMMBUYS. Link to each vendor's price file from the GRO42 Contract User Guide. Contact vendors to discuss/negotiate weekly rates.

Q: Where can I find additional contract details, such as Delivery Ticket requirements or Substitution and Return policies?

A: The GRO42 Request for Response (RFR) provides details related to these and other contract areas. The RFR is posted on COMMBUYS under the GRO42 Master Contract Record. Buyers also are encouraged to reach out to vendors with specific questions.

Q: Some of the GRO42 offerings are similar to products offered on other contracts. Will GRO42 replace any existing contracts?

A: The GRO42 Contract will not replace the GRO38 Prime Grocers, the GRO39 Drinking Water, nor the GRO41 Dairy Products and Baked Goods Statewide Contracts, though some overlap is anticipated.

Q: Where should I go if I have additional GRO42 questions?

A: Contact the OSD Help Desk at 888-MA-State (627-8283) for assistance in locating contract documents. For contract-specific questions, reach Michael Barry, Category Manager for Food and Food Service Supplies, at Michael.Barry3@mass.gov.