

Self-Prep or Catered Meals

Sponsors can prepare their own meals (“self-prep”), or contract meals from a vendor (or “caterer”). The majority of sponsors have meals catered.

Self-Prep

Health Inspection and Kitchen Experience

To run AMP you’ll need access to a viable kitchen that can pass a health inspection. It will also need to realistically serve your participants based on your level of experience.

Passing Health Inspection

If you just need a few things like soap dispensers, towel dispensers or other easily attained items to pass, then you should be fine. If you don’t have a 3-compartment sink and/or dishwasher, refrigerators, fire suppression or other vital equipment, you could be looking at thousands of dollars of capacity costs to pass a health inspection if preparing meals on-site (self-prep).

Realistic Kitchen Experience

Viable kitchens that can pass an inspection come in a variety of sizes. Some are enormous and can serve hundreds easily, and others are the size of a small bathroom and can also serve hundreds. The issue is experience. Do you or your staff have the experience to serve out of a larger or smaller sized kitchen?

Look For Kitchen Capacity in Your Community

If these options aren’t available to you, or you really want control of the meals you serve, look to your community for help. Senior centers, community recreation centers, soup kitchens, churches, and regional food banks all might have kitchen capacity that can pass a health inspection, and may be willing to let you use that space.

Look to Community Mentors For Training and Suggestions

If you have a viable kitchen but don’t have the training to adequately use it, try to find someone in your community who serves a similar number of people out of similarly sized/equipped kitchens. Other nonprofits running food programs and local restaurants might be more than willing to share some tips and best practices on how to effectively feed your participants given your capacity.

They might even be willing to come out and walk you through the process of planning, creating and serving meals. You don’t have to do this alone, and the more people you engage in this process the better off your program is going to be.

Other Options / Catered Meals

Look For Partner Meal Providers

If both passing a health inspection and kitchen capacity/experience are issues there are several options. Form a vended meal agreement with a caterer.

In some cases you can partner with a local school district or another non-profit vend meals for your program; DOH also provides a [list of registered caterers](#). If a sponsor finds a new caterer that is not on the DOH registered caterer list, the caterer has to register with DOH before they can provide the reimbursable meals through AMP.