



NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release
February 23, 2015

Union beats Aramark price on food service bid

Westerville – Today the union representing the majority of Ohio prison employees presented a proposal to the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction to take back prison food service that includes a lower per meal cost than current prison food service vendor, Aramark.

The proposal by the Ohio Civil Service Employees Association comes in at \$1.216 per meal. Aramark's cost is \$1.275. The bid will save \$2.9 million a year over the Aramark cost.

“Our proposal proves, when there’s a level playing field, public sector employees are every bit as competitive as those in the private sector,” said OCSEA President Christopher Mabe. “Now, DR&C just needs to do the right thing and bring food service back under state control.”

Not only is OCSEA’s per meal cost lower than Aramark’s price, their proposal also includes such provisions as beefed-up security and sanitation training for 338 Correctional Food Service Coordinators. In addition, OCSEA’s proposal will bring back 41 Food Service Managers whose primary responsibility is sanitation. The bid will also keep the use of four regional monitors, which were instituted with the private vendor, because the union says it is serious about cleaning up the institutions.

Numerous security and sanitation violations including maggots in food, inappropriate relationships, increased contraband and staff and food shortages highlighted the inadequacy of Aramark’s staff training. When the contract began, Aramark employees received a scant eight hours of training. After numerous reports of security and sanitation violations, DR&C required the vendor to increase its training to 32 hours, but at the agency’s expense.

OCSEA’s proposal would bring back an even higher level of training and require food service workers to receive the same six-week training as Correctional Officers. Additionally, instead of only managers receiving ServSafe certification, as is Aramark’s practice, the union’s proposal will certify all food service workers.

Also under OCSEA’s bid, dozens of Lieutenants and Captains who were re-located to prison kitchens to monitor food service will go back to providing needed security in other areas of the prisons.

“With well-trained staff who are compensated fairly, we believe many of the security and sanitation problems we’ve experienced in prison food service will be minimized,” said Mabe.

This is the second time the union has sought to bring food service under state operation. “We’ve been through this once already and believe this time, we’ve accounted for everything,” Mabe said.

OCSEA represents approximately 30,000 state employees who work in a wide range of security, regulatory, administrative, direct care, maintenance, customer service and other positions, including

8,500 who work in the Ohio Department of Correction and Rehabilitation. For more information, contact Sally Meckling, 614-865-2602 or 614-404-3881 (cell). ##