

PROPOSED CHANGES TO PUBLIC HEALTH FEES

SCHOOL CAFETERIAS

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH



The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, Environmental Health Division (EH), is proposing changes to the Los Angeles County Code, Title 8 – Consumer Protection, Business, and Wage Regulations; Division 1 – Public Health Licenses. These changes impact permit, plan check, and service fees that are collected under the authority of State and County Codes to carry out duties that protect public health and safety.

Overview of Program

EH is responsible for enforcing the California Retail Food Code, a California state law codified in the California Health and Safety Code beginning at §113700. The primary purpose of this law is to establish minimum standards to safeguard public health and to ensure that consumers receive food that is safe, unadulterated, and honestly presented. The CRFC has delegated enforcement of this code to the local environmental health agency and defined public and private school cafeterias as food facilities that must obtain a health permit to operate.

EH inspects school cafeterias in all cities **except** for Long Beach, Pasadena and Vernon, which have their own environmental health departments. Food safety inspections are important because they help control the spread of infectious diseases by ensuring that there are efficient protections in place for students, staff members, and cafeteria workers.

Why are the fees changing now?

Fees were last increased in 2018. While fees have remained the same, operational costs have increased annually due to negotiated employee salaries and benefits, along with inflation. From FY 19/20 through FY 25/26, the Consumer Price Index (CPI) increased by about 25%, and cost-of-living increases approved for County workers totaled 20.5%. Yet fees have remained at 2018 levels despite these cost increases.

A comprehensive fee study was conducted along with an evaluation of current operational costs and the fee levels required to cover those costs. The study reviewed direct and indirect costs associated with program administration, inspection, oversight and enforcement. The fee analysis structure was validated by the LA County Auditor-Controller. The last comprehensive fee study for EH programs was conducted in 2011.

What are the fee changes?

A summary of the proposed fees is listed below. If approved by the Board of Supervisors, fees will go into effect starting December 15, 2026. An invoice will be sent for FY 26/27 upon approval.

To minimize the impact of future increases, starting in FY 27/28, fees will be adjusted annually based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI), with no fee exceeding the reasonable cost of providing services.

SUMMARY OF SCHOOL CAFETERIA PROGRAM FEES

PERMIT FEES	Current Fee	Proposed New Fee
SCHOOL CAFETERIA - LOW RISK: School which receives prepackaged and ready to serve foods	New	\$706
SCHOOL CAFETERIA - MODERATE RISK: School cafeteria with limited food service	New	\$870
SCHOOL CAFETERIA - HIGH RISK: School cafeteria that handles, prepares, and cooks meals onsite and may also prepare food for service at other school cafeterias	New	\$1,142
AFTER SCHOOL MEALS PROGRAM*: A child nutrition program that provides free meals/snacks to children and operates after school hours and weekends	New	\$404

* Most of these operations are fee-exempt, as authorized in Section 8.04.700, since the majority of the operators are non-profit 501 (c)(3) and give food away.

COMPARISON WITH RESTAURANT FEES**	Proposed New Fee	Restaurant Proposed New Fees
SCHOOL CAFETERIA - LOW RISK: School which receives prepackaged and ready to serve foods	\$706	\$566
SCHOOL CAFETERIA - MODERATE RISK: School cafeteria with limited food service	\$870	\$1,054
SCHOOL CAFETERIA - HIGH RISK: School cafeteria that handles, prepares, and cooks meals onsite and may also prepare food for service at other school cafeterias	\$1,142	\$1,997

** Two inspections are conducted based on National School Lunch Program requirements.

Visit our website to learn more about [School Cafeterias](#).

How to provide feedback

Questions and comments can be submitted to:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/EHfees> or scan the QR code.

