



NYSAC
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ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES

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A New State Budget Provision Encourages Counties To Save On Jail Costs Through Partnership With The State's Correctional Food Production Center

Under a provision in the 2008-09 State Budget, counties can partner with the state to lower the cost of providing meals to county jail inmates. The Oneida Correctional Facility's Food Production Center in Rome could start offering county jails the option to purchase meals starting this year.

More than 40 county officials from 19 counties across New York State took a fact finding tour of the facility today, to determine whether the program would benefit their county.

"Currently, on average counties pay about \$5 a day to feed their inmates, while the State Department of Correctional Services (DOCS), which uses the Food Production Center, feeds each of its inmates for \$2.28," said NYSAC Executive Director Stephen J. Acquario. "We're pleased that counties are exploring this opportunity."

The Food Production Center has the physical room to prepare and provide every county in the State, outside of New York City, with meals for an average of \$3 a day, including transportation costs.

When the Food Production Center opened in 1992, it served 5,000 State inmates. In October 2003, they began serving all State inmates. The Food Production Center currently serves 62,000 inmates at all 70 State Correctional Facilities and 1,200 at the Oneida County Jail with over 83 million pounds of food and drink annually.

"We have worked hard to develop a food program that supplies State inmates with nutritious meals three times a day while saving State taxpayers money through an efficient, centralized operation. We now have the means to supply all local jails in the State outside New York City and are pleased to offer the same advantages to them," said DOCS Commissioner Brian Fischer. "The more counties that choose to participate, the greater the potential savings to both their own property taxpayers and to State taxpayers through economies of scale."

"When we first started, we were saving \$20,000 to \$25,000 over any other option for the same service. We believe it's grown to about \$40,000 per year," said Oneida County Undersheriff M. Peter Paravati. Oneida County has been using the facility's service since 1998. "They have a superior menu to anything we've seen. There's (food) preparation involved, but it's simpler and more manageable."

The New York State Association of Counties (NYSAC), founded in 1925, is a bi-partisan municipal association representing the 62 counties of New York State. NYSAC is the only statewide association representing the interests of nearly 5,000 elected and appointed officials, including county executives, legislators, supervisors, administrators, commissioners and other employees who deliver essential services to the public.

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