

PINCO

FEEDING KIDS THE “RIGHT-WAY” WITH USDA

Under the California Department of Education’s Universal Meal NSLP Sponsors are responsible for providing quality meals that not only meet rigorous nutritional standards but also customer expectations. In addition to these challenges, Sponsors must run their operations as cost-effectively as any private-sector hospitality enterprise.

The Partners in Nutrition Co-Operative began in 1988 working under a Joint Powers Agreement under the administration of the Antelope Valley Union High School District, which serves as PINCO’s Lead Agency providing comprehensive management of the USDA Foods program on behalf of its Member Districts.

PINCO is the only self-managed Co-Operative USDA Receiving Agency and Purchasing Group in California. Each Member District assigns its NSLP entitlement into PINCO’s single-bank inventory. Strategically scheduled USDA commodities arrive directly to PINCO’s Service Center throughout the year. Additional processed USDA commodities are ordered, received, stored and delivered to Member Districts’ schools on-demand to meet their menu planning needs and schedule(s). PINCO Staff manage a proprietary website for PINCO Members where they manage their inventory(ies) and maximize their USDA entitlement in a unique and fluid manner through an inter-member exchange system.

PINCO solicits competitive and compliant RFPs for all USDA commodity processed and commercially purchased products for PINCO Members that come through the Service Center. Additionally, PINCO administers agreements for non-food and other food supplies following the same solicitation processes. Member Districts value the procurement documentation they are required to have under their sponsorship.

PINCO Staff works with Member Districts to track commodities throughout the school year to reduce local staffing demands with these responsibilities. PINCO’s financial activity is overseen by the Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE).

PINCO Representatives sit on CDE’s Food Distribution Program’s Advisory Committee. This engagement in addition to serving the American Commodity Distribution Association (ACDA) on various Sub-committees provides PINCO a direct conduit of information and clarity to facilitate the needs of PINCO’s constituents and vendors.

Over 60% of PINCO’s membership are made up of Districts that comprise less than two percent of its “fair-share” of PINCO’s \$4.1 million USDA Foods entitlement (2023-2024). Regardless of size or fair-share, each PINCO Member has an equal vote in decisions and creating procedures that create a positive, effective and collaborative working environment for all PINCO Members and Staff.