

# Menu Planning Software

## Financial Benefits and Considerations

Did you know that TDA offers MENU Module, a menu software solution complete with in-depth training, technical assistance, and streamlined reports for your administrative review, all at no cost? Whether you choose to use MENU or another system, menu planning software may help you achieve nutrition integrity and can also provide financial benefits to your foodservice operation.

### **MENU PLANNING SYSTEM BENEFITS**

#### **REDUCE FOOD COSTS**

- Automatically calculate food costs based on real pricing
- Generate costing reports across all schools within your district
- Use system reports to monitor food waste and poorly performing items

#### **MANAGE PRODUCTION**

- Use automated tools to help with forecasting
- Create shopping lists based on expected daily participation

#### **RECIPE STANDARDIZATION AND SCALING**

- Standardize recipes to help with portion control and consistency
- Automate recipe scaling, so that ingredient quantities are accurately calculated as recipe yields are changed

#### **INCREASE LIKELIHOOD OF COMPLIANCE**

- Instantly analyze menus for NSLP meal pattern compliance
- Provide clean, easy-to-read documentation

#### **MENU MARKETING**

- Upload appealing recipe pictures and descriptions to increase student participation
- Use mobile apps to market menus and receive feedback from students regarding recipes

#### **BETTER PREPARATION AND LESS HASSLE**

- Keep recipes, menus, and food production records organized and in one place
- Quickly adapt to changes in foodservice operations by creating menus to accommodate different service styles and anticipated needs (non-congregate, emergency, etc.)
- Use system templates as-is or tweak them to save time on adding recipes and menu cycles
- Adapt quickly to the latest regulations based on software companies' timely updates



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www.SquareMeals.org

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### QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER BEFORE SELECTING SOFTWARE\*

- Do I need software that only performs nutrient analysis, or do I need software that performs other functions, such as production management, costing, inventory, etc.?
- How much will the software cost for the features we need? How many licenses will we need?
- What hardware requirements are needed to support the menu software?
- How efficient is the software for entering data, building menus, recording production, etc.?
- Is my staff comfortable enough with the computer to use a menu system?
- What staffing resources do I have to enter data?
- What type of software support is available? Online, telephone, in-person?
- How often is the software updated?

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Click [here](#) and [here](#) for a USDA-approved list of nutritional analysis and menu compliance software
- To learn more about MENU Module, TDA's free nutritional analysis and menu planning software, visit the MENU Module page on [SquareMeals.org](http://SquareMeals.org).
- Are you ready to implement a menu planning system at your CE? Find out by taking the [Are You Ready to Launch MENU Module Quiz!](#) This assessment is geared towards MENU Module, but the questions are broad enough that they can be applied to any menu planning system.

\*Adapted from United States Department of Agriculture *Nutrient Analysis Protocols: How to Analyze Menus for USDA's School Meals Programs*. CreateSpace Publishing. (2015).



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