

Outside Food and Catering Policy

Touch of Nature welcomes clients to bring in external catering services for their events hosted at our facility. This policy is designed to ensure a smooth and successful collaboration between our facility, you as the client, and external catering providers.

In-House Food Options

Feel free to explore the diverse range of in-house food options available at Touch of Nature. Our dedicated programming team is ready to assist you in designing a menu to meet your group needs to the best of our ability. Utilizing our internal options not only provides more flexibility during meal times but also reduces the need for extensive communication with external caterers.

Approval Process

Client must seek prior approval from Touch of Nature before engaging an external catering service. To obtain approval, clients must provide Touch of Nature staff with information regarding meal services, times, and group sizes. Touch of Nature reserves the right to mandate the use of our in-house meal service.

Caterers must be on the SIUC approved catering list which can be found here: <https://procurement.siu.edu/how-to/appcaterers.php>. All outside caterers must agree and adhere to the kitchen and facility policies of Touch of Nature.

Catering Policies

- The client is responsible for communicating with the caterer regarding all details relevant to meal service.
- Caterers will be granted access to the space only during the rental period specified in the Touch of Nature contract.
- Access to Touch of Nature's kitchen or any kitchen supplies is not allowed for caterers unless coordinated in advance with Touch of Nature.
- Caterers must provide all necessary cutlery, plates, bowls, cups, glasses, and serving utensils.
- Removal of all trash is the responsibility of the caterers.
- Caterers are accountable for cleaning up after their services.
- All catering equipment and materials must be removed from the premises after service.
- External caterers must adhere to all relevant health and safety regulations, including food handling, storage, and preparation standards.
- Caterers may collaborate with Touch of Nature for assistance with some of these conditions for an additional fee.

Client Responsibilities

- Approval must be obtained from Touch of Nature before the contract for the use of outside catering.
- The client is responsible for conveying all Touch of Nature catering policies to the caterer.
- The client accepts responsibility for any additional fees incurred by the catering service due to policy violations or damages.
- A catering plan, including the number of people served, meal service times, and caterer contact information, must be submitted by the client a minimum of 2 weeks prior to the event.
- Pizza or Insomnia Cookies may be picked-up or delivered to Touch of Nature. Groups may order from pizza businesses on the SIU Approved Caterer list (Little Caesar's, Papa John's, Primo's Pizza, Pagliais, Quatro's). However, orders from these businesses must be for pizza and beverages ONLY. Cookies and milk are allowed to be ordered from Insomnia Cookies.
- For events with food that has been delivered, picked-up or which falls under the Small Food Policy, the customer is responsible for cleaning-up all food and food-related items. This includes events where a caterer is dropping-off food and not remaining on-site. A \$40 minimum housekeeping fee may be charged if Touch of Nature space is left unclean after use.

Small Food Policy

- Registered Student Organizations (RSOs), University Departments, and outside groups may bring prepackaged food for consumption in private meeting spaces only for events/meetings not exceeding 75 people, unless otherwise approved by Touch of Nature staff.
- Prepackaged food includes food in manufacturer sealed, airtight containers or wrappers. This may include potato chips, cookies, candy, or beverages as well as fruit and veggie trays.
- Per Southern Illinois University's agreement with Pepsi MidAmerica, all beverages must be Pepsi products, including bottled water (Aquafina or Crisp 'n Clear). NO HOMEMADE ITEMS ARE ALLOWED. Reference [this site](#) for a list of all Pepsi beverage products.
- Food items which require refrigeration or heating to ensure food quality must be ordered through Touch of Nature.
- The group must provide their own ice and utensils when bringing in food/beverages.
- All groups must indicate on the reservation form if they plan to provide food. If individuals or groups decide to bring in food after they initially reserve space, they must notify Touch of Nature 2 weeks prior to the event.
- Prepackaged food wrappers or empty containers must be disposed of by the reserving group. Per the Scheduling Guidelines Policy, groups may be charged a \$40 minimum housekeeping fee if space is left unclean after use.

**Failure to comply with this policy may result in additional fees, penalties, or the termination of the event. Touch of Nature reserves the right to review and modify this outside catering policy as needed. By adhering to this policy, we aim to create a positive and seamless experience for our clients and external catering partners.*