

| Appendix A: Literature Review

CONTENTS

METHODS	2
RESEARCH QUESTIONS	2
SEARCH STRATEGY	2
SCREENING	5
SCREENING PHASE II & DATA EXTRACTION	5
SNOWBALL SEARCH AND SOURCES IDENTIFIED INFORMALLY	6
DATA ANALYSIS	6
CONTRACT ANALYSIS	6
RESULTS	7
RESEARCH QUESTION 1: What is known about the nutritional adequacy and quality of Aramark Correctional Services' food service with respect to company and client requirements, menus, and meals served, as compared to the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGA)?.....	7
RESEARCH QUESTION 1. Contract Analysis.....	7
RESEARCH QUESTION 1. Literature Analysis	8
RESEARCH QUESTION 2: What is known about the palatability of Aramark Correctional Services' meals?	13
RESEARCH QUESTION 2. Contract Analysis.....	13
RESEARCH QUESTION 2. Literature Analysis	13
RESEARCH QUESTION 3: What is known about food safety performance of Aramark Correctional Services with respect to company, client, and legal requirements?.....	17
RESEARCH QUESTION 3. Contract Analysis.....	17
RESEARCH QUESTION 3. Literature Analysis	18
RESEARCH QUESTION 4: What is known about the cost to correctional departments of contracting with Aramark Correctional Services?	20
RESEARCH QUESTION 4. Contract Analysis.....	20
RESEARCH QUESTION 4. Literature Analysis	21
DISCUSSION	23
SYNTHESIS	24
STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS	24
REFERENCES	25

I Methods

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Our literature review was guided by the following research questions:

- 1 What is known about the nutritional adequacy and quality of Aramark Correctional Services' food service with respect to company and client requirements, menus, and meals served, as compared to the 2020-2025 *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*?¹
- 2 What is known about the palatability of Aramark Correctional Services' meals?
 - a What is known about meal quality in Aramark-contracted facilities that utilize Aramark affiliated commissary providers (Union Supply) vs. other commissary providers?
- 3 What is known about food safety performance of Aramark Correctional Services with respect to company, client, and legal requirements?
- 4 What is known about the cost to correctional departments of contracting with Aramark Correctional Services?

These four questions were prioritized from an initial list of 14 questions based on capacity of the research team, but the initial list was used to screen search results as described below.

SEARCH STRATEGY

Our search strategy was designed to capture both peer-reviewed and grey literature. We used the University of Toronto's health sciences literature review guide to inform our methodology,² and conducted our search using the websites and search engines listed below. For each search engine below, we entered specific search strings. The search strings and corresponding results for each website and search engine are listed in Table A below.

Search engines

- [Google Advanced Search](#): allows user to set parameters around region and language, as well as additional key terms to search, within specified URLs. We entered the URLs of the websites listed below, one at a time, into Google Advanced Search's "site or domain" field and set the publication year to January 1, 2010 to present, language to English, and region to United States only, according to the inclusion/exclusion criteria (Table B). The research team identified the following websites to search using Google Advanced Search, based on organizations that are focused on carceral nutrition or have reported on the topic:
 - [The Marshall Project](#): a nonprofit news organization covering the US criminal justice system, with a [page dedicated to prison food issues](#)
 - [Prison Legal News](#): a project of the Human Rights Defense Center, is an independent 72-page monthly magazine that provides cutting edge review and analysis of prisoners' rights, court rulings and news concerning criminal justice-related issues
 - [American Correctional Association](#): a professional organization for all individuals and groups, both public and private, that share a common goal of improving the justice system
 - [In the Public Interest](#): a national nonprofit research and policy organization that studies public goods and services

¹ An expert work group convened by CSPI in 2020 recommended aligning correctional facility food service policies with the most recent *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*. Although the 2025-2030 *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* was published in January 2026, the 2020-2025 edition was current at the time this literature review was undertaken. [Silverman J, Holt M. *Strategies to Optimize Food and Nutrition in Correctional Facilities* 2021. Available at: <https://www.cspi.org/resource/strategies-optimize-food-and-nutrition-correctional-facilities-0>.]

- [Prison Journalism Project](#): an organization that trains incarcerated writers to be journalists and publish their stories
- [The Appeal](#): a nonprofit news organization that envisions a world in which systems of support and care, not punishment, create public safety
- [Aramark](#): food service provider with the largest market share in US correctional food service
- [Trinity Services Group, Inc.](#): a food service provider with the second largest share of the US correctional food service market
- [Impact Justice](#): an advocacy organization that advances safety, justice, and opportunity through boundary-breaking work that honors and empowers people and is changing expectations about what we can accomplish together
- [Worth Rises](#): an advocacy organization working to dismantle the prison industry
- [The Intercept](#): an independent reporting organization that investigates powerful individuals and institutions to expose corruption and injustice
- [Google News](#): specifically searches for published online articles
- [Google Scholar](#): a freely accessible web search engine that indexes the full text or metadata of scholarly literature across an array of publishing formats and disciplines
- [Customized Google search engines](#): allows user to search by document type (federal documents, provincial documents, municipal documents, depository documents)
- [NYU Library Catalog](#): associated with New York University, this catalog allows the user to search for scholarly articles, journals / e-journals, and newspaper and magazine articles

Table A. Search Strings & Screening Results

Search date	Name of source	Type of source	Search string (search term(s))	# of search results	# of sources included for Phase II screening
2/4/25	The Marshall Project	Website	"Aramark"	4	4
2/4/25	Prison Legal News	Website	"Aramark"	122	26
2/5/25	Human Rights Defense Center	Website	"Aramark"	1	1
2/5/25	American Correctional Association	Website	"Aramark"	1	1
2/5/25	In the Public Interest	Website	"Aramark"	38	11
2/5/25	Prison Journalism Project	Website	"Aramark"	62	10
2/5/25	The Appeal	Website	"Aramark"	5	4
2/5/25	Trinity	Website	"Aramark"	0	0
2/5/25	Impact Justice	Website	"Aramark"	1	1
2/5/25	Worth Rises	Website	"Aramark"	5	3
2/5/25	The Intercept	Website	"Aramark"	3	1
2/12/25	Aramark	Website	"Aramark Correctional Services"	768	18
2/11/25	Google scholar	Search engine	"Aramark prison OR jail OR correction*"	11	8
2/11/25	Customized Google search engines	Search engine	"Aramark prison OR jail OR correction*"	Federal documents: 5 Depository publications (Online catalogue): 60	0
2/12/25	NYU Library Catalog	Database	"Aramark prison OR jail OR correction*"	68	61
2/13/25	Google News via Advanced Google Search	Search engine	"Aramark prison OR jail OR correction*"	16	7
2/5/25	Google News	Search engine	"Aramark prison OR jail OR correction*"	75	60
		TOTAL		1,245	216
		Duplicates removed			15
		Unique sources remaining			201

SCREENING

Screening Phase I

There were two stages of screening. First, for each search string, one research team member reviewed the title and description of the source from the first 5 pages or 50 search results (whichever came first). We capped the number of results screened based on the capacity of the research team.

The first step the research team took to apply the inclusion/exclusion criteria (see Table B) was to review the title and description of the source from the search results.

The team then reviewed the full text to ensure that Aramark was mentioned and that the source answered at least one of the research questions. All of the screened results that appeared to meet inclusion/exclusion criteria (Table B) were indexed in a spreadsheet. Out of a total of 1,245 search results, 1,029 were excluded in Phase I because they didn't meet the inclusion/exclusion criteria. After completing Phase I of the screening process, we removed 15 duplicate rows in the Google spreadsheet using the 'remove duplicates' function, leaving us with 201 unique sources to screen in Phase II.

Table B. Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria

Category	Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
Publication year	January 1, 2010 through date of search for each engine, site, or database (February 4-13, 2025)	Before 2010
Accessibility	Open access	Behind a paywall
Source mentions Aramark	Aramark mentioned in title and/or text	Aramark not mentioned in title and/or text
Type of source	Peer-reviewed literature, non-governmental organization reports and audits, government documents and reports (except court documents), news media, company literature	Court documents and highly subjective sources such as online forums, social media, videos, personal blog posts, student essays
Responsiveness to research questions	Addresses one of the four research questions	Does not address any of the four research questions
Language	English	Any language other than English
Region (applicability to the United States)	Addresses carceral settings in the United States	Addresses only carceral settings outside the United States

Screening Phase II & Data Extraction

Three research team members were each assigned a portion of search results included after phase I for full text screening and data extraction. The three reviewers read the full texts of the results to determine whether they met inclusion/exclusion criteria (Table B).

Out of the 201 sources included in Phase I, 114 were excluded in Phase II because they failed to meet the inclusion/exclusion criteria or because they were behind a paywall. Forty-two of these sources solely addressed one or more of the 10 initial research questions that were ultimately excluded from the scope due to capacity.

The research team proceeded to data extraction for the remaining 87 sources. The following were extracted from each source: title, author(s), name of organization or publication, publication date, type of source, keywords, tone/stance toward Aramark (positive, negative, neutral), the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign's AACODS checklist for grey literature: Authority, Accuracy, Coverage, Objectivity, Date, and Significance, and all content responsive to each research question.

SNOWBALL SEARCH AND SOURCES IDENTIFIED INFORMALLY

The research team conducted one round of snowball searching by screening sources referenced in the initial and subsequent snowball results, resulting in 85 snowball results. We also identified 39 additional sources informally. These include sources that the research team encountered in the course of their day-to-day work or that were shared with us by advisory committee members and partners. Throughout Phase II of the screening process, we identified a total of 124 additional sources to screen via snowball search and informal means. Of these, 63 did not meet our inclusion/exclusion criteria, and an additional 14 were excluded due to capacity restraints. This left us with 47 additional sources for data extraction and analysis.

A total of 134 sources were ultimately included for data extraction and analysis.

DATA ANALYSIS

The research team coded the extracted data for each research question to identify recurring themes. The total number of sources that addressed each research question and each theme were counted. The top two to four themes pertaining to each research question were identified based on how frequently each theme appeared across the sources. If a theme appeared multiple times in the same source, this was counted as one occurrence for that source. The top themes were used to organize the data into written summaries for all four research questions.

CONTRACT ANALYSIS

During our search of the literature, we encountered various documents related to current or recently active state or local government contracts with Aramark to provide food service management in prisons or jails. As these contracts are relevant sources of information for answering the research questions in this review, but not among the intended publication types we aimed to capture from our searches, we have analyzed them separately from the other included sources. And since we obtained these documents through convenience sampling, we aim to report on their contents as examples of provisions and language that exist in these types of documents rather than to make conclusions about their generalizability at large.

I Results

For each research question below, we first provide results from our contract review to put findings in context, followed by thematic results from our literature analysis.

Research Question 1: What is known about the nutritional adequacy and quality of Aramark Correctional Services' food service with respect to company and client requirements, menus, and meals served, as compared to the 2020-2025 *Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGA)*?

For context, key recommendations from the 2020-2025 DGA include:³

- Follow a healthy dietary pattern across the lifespan to meet nutrient needs, help achieve a healthy body weight, and reduce the risk of chronic disease.
- Nutritional needs should be met primarily from foods and beverages—specifically nutrient-dense foods and beverages. Nutrient-dense foods provide vitamins, minerals, and other health-promoting components and have no or little added sugars, saturated fat, and sodium. A healthy dietary pattern consists of nutrient-dense forms of foods and beverages across all food groups, in recommended amounts, and within calorie limits.
- The core elements that make up a healthy dietary pattern include:
 - Vegetables of all types—dark green; red and orange; beans, peas, and lentils; starchy; and other vegetables
 - Fruits, especially whole fruit
 - Grains, at least half of which are whole grain
 - Dairy, including fat-free or low-fat milk, yogurt, and cheese, and/or lactose-free version and fortified soy beverages and yogurt as alternatives
 - Protein foods, including lean meats, poultry, and eggs; seafood; beans, peas, and lentils; and nuts, seeds, and soy products
 - Oils, including vegetable oils and oils in food, such as seafood and nuts
- Limit foods and beverages higher in added sugars, saturated fat, and sodium, and limit alcoholic beverages.

RESEARCH QUESTION 1. Contract Analysis

The convenience sample of contract-related documents included contracts (n=9), contract amendments (n=2), requests for proposals (RFP) (n=2), and RFP responses from Aramark (n=4). These documents provided evidence of the types of standards that correctional agencies set for Aramark as their vendor and that Aramark commits to in its proposals. Most documents indicated that the contractor would comply with American Correctional Association standards for food service including ensuring that menus meet the Dietary Reference Intakes (DRI) or Recommended Daily Allowances (RDA) and be regularly reviewed for adequacy by a registered dietitian. Some documents also specified compliance with National Commission on Correctional Health Care standards. In addition to the DRI and/or RDA, some documents indicated that the contractor would also align menus with the DGA, MyPlate, or other USDA guidelines. Most documents indicated that all substitutions to the prescribed menu must be nutritionally equivalent. Most documents included a daily calorie requirement or range for the menu (e.g., 2,800 calories per day), and some included specific quantitative micronutrient (e.g., sodium) or macronutrient (e.g., carbohydrates) targets in addition to the DRI. Notably, multiple institutions established sodium limits that exceeded the DRI and DGA recommended limit of 2,300 mg per day. Some documents included specifications or requirements for specific foods (e.g., bread must be at least 60 percent whole grain) or food groups (e.g., fruit must be offered daily). Within the sample, there were documents that explicitly prohibited the use of food (or withholding of food) as punishment and others that explicitly permitted the use of an alternative meal as a disciplinary measure.

RESEARCH QUESTION 1. Literature Analysis

We identified three key themes based on our analysis of 57 sources that addressed this research question. We summarize the content related to each theme below.

► Theme 1.1. Prisons and jails that contract with Aramark or another private vendor reportedly provide meals that fall short of key DGA recommendations.

A total of 41 sources addressed the topic of nutritional quality and allowed comparison to DGA recommendations. One peer-reviewed article⁴ and corresponding report,⁵ one dissertation⁶ that was partially published in a peer-reviewed journal,⁷ six nongovernmental reports,⁸⁻¹³ three state government reports,¹⁴⁻¹⁶ and 23 media sources¹⁷⁻³⁹ indicated that prisons and jails that contract with Aramark or other private vendors provide meals that fall short of key DGA recommendations.

For example, Zullo (2016, 2020) interviewed 32 correctional officers who had worked at the Michigan Department of Corrections (DOC) before and after the DOC's transition from self-operated to privatized food service under Aramark.⁴ Multiple participants reported a decline in nutritional quality of meals after the DOC contracted with Aramark. During one focus group, one correctional officer noted that Aramark reduced the ground meat quantity when scaling up a spaghetti recipe, which affected the "protein count."⁵

A 2023 doctoral dissertation that was partially published in a peer-reviewed journal analyzed 29 state prison master menus, including some that were developed by Aramark.^{6,7} The author's analysis of the entire sample of prison menus revealed that on average, fruit and vegetable servings failed to meet the minimum recommendations outlined in the 2020-2025 DGA.⁷ And in a comparative analysis of menus created by state-employed registered dietitian nutritionists (RDNs) versus contracted RDNs (including freelance and employees of food service management companies including but not limited to Aramark), menus created by contractors on average served fewer fruits and vegetables and more sodium than menus created by state-employed RDNs.⁶ Additionally, all but one of the 15 menus created by contracted RDNs included fortified beverages (these are typically fruit-flavored beverages with added vitamins and/or minerals) to supplement the menu. The author found that menus that included fortified beverages tended to not meet fruit serving recommendations from the DGA, "possibly indicating the beverage [was] used as a substitute for fruit." One of the contract menus provided the fruit serving entirely in the form of fruit juice, while the DGA recommends consuming no more than half of fruit from juice.³

In 2020, Impact Justice published a national, mixed methods investigation of the eating experience in state prisons and the factors that influence it. Their methods included interviews (n=11), focus groups, and surveys (n=250) with people who were currently and formerly incarcerated.⁸ Currently and formerly incarcerated people who ate in multiple facilities indicated in their responses that they perceived meals served by privatized vendors, including Aramark, to be less nutritious than food served in self-operated facilities. In some cases, the food quality was "even worse" when commissary and food service were operated by the same private vendor. Similarly, a 2010 audit of the Kentucky DOC's food service contract with Aramark – which included a review of key documents, site visits of DOC facilities, and interviews with dozens of key informants, including incarcerated individuals and DOC and Aramark staff – found that Aramark was inappropriately adding margarine to meals such as peanut butter and jelly sandwiches and soup to meet calorie minimums.¹⁴

In a 2023 report, the West Virginia Center on Budget and Policy published excerpts from interviews with people who had spent time in West Virginia state prisons and evaluated an April 2022 menu from a maximum-security state prison.⁹ Almost all meals included bread or pasta (presumably made from refined grains; the menu does not specify any whole grain items other than oatmeal for breakfast twice a week). The menu included a rotating variety of sugary desserts but no fruit. Additionally, the authors were concerned that among the 70 lunches and dinners served, only 26 included a salad option. Many of them were starchy items like potato salad or pasta salad, and the

amount of fresh greens offered had declined since Aramark took over. Interviewees reiterated these findings, sharing that “most of what the kitchen feeds us is pasta and rice,” and “I don’t remember getting fresh fruit or vegetables. Mostly it was starch.”

In 2024, the Pennsylvania Prison Society published a report on food in Pennsylvania prisons. In Pennsylvania, DOC staff retain control over menu planning and food preparation, while Aramark is contracted to oversee food procurement.¹⁰ The report indicates that Aramark has at least some influence on menu planning, because prior to the contract, individual prisons had more discretion to source food and create menus independently. The report recommends using the next vendor solicitation as a vehicle to make improvements to the menu. A registered dietitian analyzed the DOC’s statewide menus as of April 2022 and revised February 2024 menus. Additionally, the Prison Society disseminated a survey in July 2023 and collected 595 responses from people currently incarcerated in the state. According to the menu analysis, the meals served in Pennsylvania’s state prisons contain double the amount of starchy vegetables and refined carbohydrates recommended by the DGA, only half the recommended servings of fruits and vegetables, and insufficient whole grains, seafood, and dairy. The analysis also found that the menu failed to provide sufficient calories for men, based on the DGA. Nearly 46 percent of incarcerated survey respondents said they did not receive fresh fruit daily, and nearly 42 percent did not receive green vegetables every day.

In 2025, the Office of the D.C. Auditor investigated the quality of the food Aramark served to people incarcerated in Washington, DC’s jails by interviewing key informants and reviewing relevant documents.¹⁵ Incarcerated individuals at the jail filed 48 formal grievances and 221 complaints regarding food, including its quality. Additionally, a 2024 DC DOC food service report published by the District of Columbia Corrections Information Council found that the fruits and vegetables Aramark serves to the D.C. jail population are limited to apples every other lunch and one daily vegetable at dinner.¹⁶ Recipients of special diets received an apple daily. This was based on a site visit to the jail in March 2024, conversations with food service staff, and a review of the DOC’s policies and procedures. And according to a report by community-based organization DC Greens on the results of a survey of DC jail residents (n=330) between June and July 2023, 89 percent of respondents said they are “often” or “always” served processed foods; 90 percent were “rarely” or “never” served fresh fruit; and 75 percent “rarely” or “never” received fresh vegetables.¹¹ Multiple open-ended responses elaborated on this finding. One respondent shared, “There are too many empty calories, carbs, etc... We are not provided with enough fresh fruits and vegetables, and I am concerned about the lack of nutritional content in the food overall.”

An analysis of Return Strong’s 2023 food survey of 119 people incarcerated in Nevada’s three state prisons also found that perceived nutritional quality and adequacy declined after Aramark took over the food service in July 2022, according to almost 95 percent of respondents.¹²

The majority of media pieces found that at carceral facilities around the country, Aramark meals are generally nutritionally inadequate,^{20,21,25,26,30} including carbohydrate-heavy,^{27,35,37} highly processed,³³ and lacking variety.^{18,40} These articles provide insight into specific concerns with Aramark at DOCs around the country. For example, in Florida, incarcerated writer Justin Slavinski (2023) described one Aramark meal he’d eaten as “rice, pasta salad and two slices of bread.”⁴⁰ Despite the high refined carb content, Slavinski applauded Aramark for serving low fat, low sodium meals and vegetables, even unpalatable ones. The Kansas City Beacon reported on the quality of food in Missouri and Nevada prisons after Aramark took over food service, noting complaints by people incarcerated in Nevada related to poor nutrition content.²⁰

Five sources indicated that Aramark provides meals that meet nutrition requirements, namely one federal government report⁴¹ and three pieces of company literature.⁴²⁻⁴⁴ A federal Office of Detention Oversight (ODO) audit of the Saint Clair County Jail in Michigan,ⁱⁱ where Aramark provides both food and commissary services,ⁱⁱⁱ determined that Aramark’s cold meal (two sandwiches containing

a mix of chicken and turkey) was “nutritionally adequate and in accordance with the [Performance-Based National Detention Standards],” based on an interview with the food service director and a review of the current and prior weekly menu.⁴¹ Additionally, an Aramark spokesperson told The Intercept that the company meets or exceeds nutrition standards from both the state government and a third party accreditor, the American Correctional Association.²⁹ In one of Aramark’s ‘Mark This!’ podcast episodes, Randy Bain, Vice President for Culinary Development for Aramark Correctional Services said that meals adhere to the American Correctional Agency guidelines and that Aramark prioritizes calorie and sodium intake.⁴⁴ Additionally, Bain said:

! “We’re going to continually work to demystify what goes on inside of our facilities. There’s some bad stereotypes out there, and really we wake up every day to do a good job, to be consistent, to deliver fresh food on time, and we’re held to the guidelines that are given to us by our clients. It’s not our job. If they want us to write the menu, then believe me, we can do that. However, they give us these guidelines and restrictions and things that they hope to see, not only in the way of products, in a way of local purchasing, also in the way of cost.”

And on Aramark’s Corrections FAQ page, the company states that it follows “all local, state, and federal requirements related to menu and nutritional guidelines, as well as facility and American Correctional Association (ACA) dietary guidelines.”⁴² Also on its website, Aramark claims that preparing and serving healthy, nutritious meals is “one of many ways we show our dedication to the communities we serve.”⁴³

► **Theme 1.2. Small and inadequate portion sizes and food and meal shortages have financial, health, and safety consequences.**

A total of 36 sources addressed this topic. All but two sources were critical of Aramark’s ability to provide adequate portions and discussed related financial, health, and safety implications, including one peer-reviewed study and corresponding report,^{4,5} four nongovernmental reports,^{9, 10, 12, 45} two state government reports,^{14,15} and 26 media sources.^{18-21, 23, 25-27, 30, 31, 33, 38, 46-59}

In Zullo’s peer-reviewed study (2020) on prison food in Michigan state prisons, he writes that the transition from self-operated to Aramark-managed food service resulted in numerous issues.⁴ And in his 2016 research on the topic, Zullo found that multiple correctional officers who participated in focus groups claimed that Aramark attempted to minimize leftovers by progressively cooking meals (rather than preparing food upfront).⁵ This resulted in reduced portion sizes, delayed meals, or meal substitutes because Aramark underproduced meals and didn’t account for the time it would take to prepare or thaw additional food for people who arrived late to the dining hall. For example, one correctional officer shared:

! “You know the guys [inmates] have been feeling like they’ve been getting shorted, and you feel the tension, and you’ve had that back-turn thought that one day these guys are going to lose it. We’re going to lose one of these prisons.... staff is going to get hurt, and one way to curtail that from happening is to give these guys enough food. Why try to cut them short? And if you’re trying to make the shortage by not making so much, so you only made 1100, and now you trying to stretch that 1100 to feed the 1280 or the 1230 that might come.....it makes their portion smaller. If you give them enough portion, 50% of your problem is taken care of right there, as far as you know, whatever they might decide to blow up that day.”

⁴¹ A division of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, ODO conducts compliance inspections at U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) facilities and local jails that contract with ICE.

⁴² On Aramark’s Corrections FAQ page, it states the company “does not have and has never had contracts with U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), or the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to provide food service to immigration detainees.” This and subsequent ODO audits that appear in our report pertain to state/local facilities where Aramark manages food service, and where detainees are held in custody.

Participants alleged that Aramark added ingredient fillers and diluted meals with water. They also shared that as the quality and quantity of the food declined, there was a corresponding increase in the demand for contraband – such as cigarettes, phones, and drugs. Additionally, participants provided examples of how tension resulting from food shortages affected security and power dynamics in Michigan prisons.⁴

A 2023 report by the West Virginia Center on Budget and Policy also found that portion sizes in West Virginia prisons were inadequate and causing people to go hungry.⁹ For example, one interviewee said she received “skimpy portions” after the switch to Aramark-managed foodservice. A man who was incarcerated in West Virginia prisons before and after the transition to Aramark’s food service shared that portions “shrank” after Aramark took over. Similarly, the Pennsylvania Prison Society’s 2024 report noted that interview respondents complained about small portions.¹⁰ Additionally, the report found that 70 percent of incarcerated survey respondents said they rely on the commissary, which is often lacking in healthier options, to get enough to eat. Although not specific to Aramark, Impact Justice’s 2020 report similarly found that portion sizes are smaller when private companies oversee food service.⁸ This was sometimes attributed to the same private company managing both the kitchen and commissary. Individuals who had eaten in facilities where the same company managed both contracts shared their belief that meals are intentionally made unappetizing to encourage increased commissary purchases.

An audit of the Washington, DC DOC (which contracts with Aramark), which included structured interviews (n=20) and surveys with the incarcerated population (n=756), also revealed multiple complaints about inadequate portions.¹⁵ For example, two formerly incarcerated individuals mentioned inadequate, poor quality portion sizes, leading them and many of their peers to rely on commissary for additional food and water. The report points out that most commissary foods are not nutrient dense. Additionally, the 2023 DC Greens report on food service in DC’s jails (n=330) found that 94 percent of respondents reported feeling hungry between meals.¹¹ This is partly attributable to inadequate portions (reported by 89 percent of respondents) and partly to routine discarding of meals that are unpalatable (reported by 85 percent of respondents). According to the report, individuals turn to commissary to supplement their diet, but only if they are able to afford it. And when they can, these supplementary items tend to be high in sodium and/or sugar, such as instant ramen and cookies.

In Return Strong’s 2023 survey of 119 people incarcerated in Nevada state prisons, all of which are contracted with Aramark, portion sizes were “overwhelmingly” described as “child sized,” and receiving servings of inadequate food was a common experience.¹² According to one respondent, “all we think, speak, [and] dream about is a proper food tray, nothing extra, only what we once had coming to us.” Another respondent shared that the “worst portions” are served in segregation housing units, also known as ‘solitary confinement.’ Of 117 survey respondents, 101 (86 percent) indicated that commissary items are purchased to supplement Aramark meals.

Furthermore, a state audit of Kentucky DOC’s contract with Aramark identified portion sizes and food shortages as two of the three most common categories of complaints received by the Commissioner (the third being sanitation).¹⁴ Auditors also specifically noted complaints from incarcerated individuals about feelings of hunger. The auditors found that Aramark faces challenges in serving appropriate and standardized portion sizes. While this was also an issue when the DOC operated food service, unlike Aramark, the DOC was prone to serving larger rather than smaller portions. And in a 2014 letter requesting a bipartisan hearing to investigate the state’s contract with Aramark, Ohio state Representative John Patrick Carney (D-Columbus) also referenced food shortages at Warren Correctional Institution, an Ohio state prison.⁴⁷

News sources have reported on inadequate portion sizes or meal shortages in at least seven states that have contracted with Aramark for prison food service, including Ohio,²⁶ Nevada,³⁰ Missouri,²⁰ Michigan,^{18,50,55} Florida,^{25,54} West Virginia,⁴⁶ and Kentucky.⁵⁸ For example, *Prison Legal News* reported that in Michigan in 2014, Aramark was fined for failing to prepare the appropriate number of meals

on 240 occurrences.¹⁸ David Reutter, an incarcerated food service worker in Florida, wrote in *Prison Legal News* in 2018 that he was once told off by an Aramark staff member because he drained the cooking water off vegetables, which he was told was “part of the serving.”²⁵ And Mark Wilson, writing for *Prison Legal News* in 2023, reported on a nine-day hunger strike by approximately 40 individuals incarcerated in a high security Nevada state prison, which Nevada DOC officials attributed to Aramark’s small portions.²¹

In some instances, incarcerated individuals have attributed hunger and unwanted weight loss to factors including inadequate portion sizes.^{27,39,59} For example, *In These Times* reported on the food service conditions at an Indiana prison in 2014. Incarcerated individuals reported that cold sack lunches, which contained “slices of bread, peanut butter and jelly, and a cookie,” were causing people to lose weight and were not providing sufficient nutrients and calories.³⁹ One of the incarcerated men interviewed for the article shared that the quality of food worsened after Aramark started managing food service in 2005; according to one incarcerated individual, “It’s all about profit and all about profit motives; it’s not about nutrition or nothing.” Additionally, a 2025 article by *The Marshall Project* covered a lawsuit filed against Aramark for intentionally providing inadequate meals in West Virginia prisons in order to drive commissary sales and Aramark’s profit margin.⁴⁶ One of the plaintiffs claimed to spend “nearly all his \$70 monthly income on commissary items to supplement the small food portions.”

Two federal government reports by the Office of Detention Oversight (ODO)^{60,61} indicated that Aramark provided adequate portion sizes that matched prescribed menus. The ODO inspected a county facility in Albany, New York and determined that Aramark’s portion sizes met the prescribed menu.⁶⁰ However, the report noted that the meals prepared for delivery to housing units did not include a pre-packaged snack. And an ODO inspection at Rappahannock Regional Jail in Stafford, Virginia also found that the portions served matched the menu, based on the noontime meal that was sampled.⁶¹

► Theme 1.3. Reports indicate that Aramark routinely makes unauthorized menu substitutions.

Prisons and jails generally have prescribed menus that have been deemed to be nutritionally adequate by a dietitian and require substitutions to be approved as nutritionally equivalent to the original menu item. Unauthorized substitutions may not be nutritionally equivalent. A total of 19 sources addressed this topic. Of these sources, 18 described unauthorized substitutions made by Aramark, including one peer-reviewed study⁴ and corresponding report,⁵ one nongovernmental report,¹² two state government reports,^{14,62} and 13 media sources.^{18,19,25,27,48-52,58,63-65}

An audit of the Michigan DOC by the Michigan Office of the Auditor General found that Aramark didn’t always indicate which food items were substituted and why, even though Aramark was contractually required to report substitutions.⁶² According to the auditor’s survey, Aramark made 6,081 total substitutions for breakfast, lunch, or dinner between December 8, 2013 and June 13, 2015. The audit found that Aramark only reported 33 percent of these substitutions.

In line with these findings, a 2010 audit that evaluated Aramark’s food service in Kentucky DOC facilities found that meals did not always adhere to the menus.¹⁴ Specifically, the audit evaluated production records for 534 meals and identified 142 meals that indicated an unauthorized substitution or food shortage, based on production records. Some examples of unauthorized substitutions included:

- four pieces of brownie were served instead of a meat option
- three pieces of cake replaced two hotdogs
- cheese was substituted for coney sauce^{iv}
- watermelon was served instead of broccoli and a dessert.

The 2023 Return Strong survey of 119 individuals incarcerated in Nevada prisons, where Aramark manages foodservice, also identified a disparity in meals served compared to meals listed on the menu, according to 74 percent of the 84 respondents who answered the specific question, “Do the meals you’re served match what’s on the menu? Have you documented the differences?”¹² Return Strong attributed this to a variety of factors, including staff effort, meal schedule, and food supply/shortages. One survey respondent who works in food service explained that staff must often find substitute ingredients to address the weekly supply shortages. The survey also found that both changes to the menu and substitutions are common; when asked “Are there times that your tray is missing food items?”, 94 percent of 108 respondents said yes.

Media sources have also reported on unauthorized food substitutions made by Aramark, particularly in Michigan^{50,52} and Ohio.⁶⁴ According to a 2015 article in *Prison Legal News*, Aramark was cited by the state of Michigan for 52 incidents of unauthorized meal substitutions and fined by the state of Ohio for contract violations, including unauthorized substitutions.¹⁸ Examples of these substitutions include replacing spaghetti sauce with ketchup, tacos with bologna and tortillas, spaghetti with mashed potatoes and tomato sauce, and meat with cheap soy products.^{27,63,64}

One source, a federal government report, noted that Aramark followed the prescribed menu.⁶¹ When the Office of Detention Oversight (ODO) sampled Aramark’s lunch meal on the day of inspection at Rappahannock Regional Jail in Stafford, Virginia, they determined that the meal matched the menu.

Research Question 2: What is known about the palatability of Aramark Correctional Services’ meals?

RESEARCH QUESTION 2. Contract Analysis

The convenience sample of contract-related documents included contracts (n=9), contract amendments (n=2), requests for proposals (RFP) (n=2), and RFP responses from Aramark (n=4). Almost all contained language regarding palatability and consideration of customer preferences, but specific requirements and commitments varied. One of the more common provisions specified that the contractor would consider visual, taste, and/or textural appeal in menu development and meal preparation. Another common provision was that the contractor would vary foods served and limit repetition, with some establishing maximum frequencies for specific menu items (e.g., “Eggs shall be offered no more than three times per week”). Some documents discussed incorporating particularly appealing holiday or “spirit-lifter” meals at regular intervals. Several documents specified that the contractor would survey incarcerated individuals routinely regarding their satisfaction with the menu and incorporate this feedback into menu planning. Some also specified how the contractor should respond to complaints about the menu from incarcerated individuals. One document required the contractor to maintain a minimum approval rating from such surveys, and otherwise develop a corrective action plan. Another required the contractor to conduct a plate waste study before removing or adding anything to the menu. Several documents specified minimum quality grades for specific food items (e.g., “Poultry shall be at least USDA Grade B”).

RESEARCH QUESTION 2. Literature Analysis

We identified three key themes based on our analysis of 31 sources that answered this research question. We summarize the content related to each theme below.

► Theme 2.1. Aramark meals allegedly lack flavor and are generally unappetizing.

Thirty sources addressed this topic. Twenty-seven sources indicated that Aramark meals allegedly lack flavor and are generally unappetizing, including one peer-reviewed study⁴ and corresponding report,⁵ three nongovernmental reports,^{8,11,66} two state government reports,^{14,15} and 20 media sources.^{18-20,22,23,25,26,29,31,33,35,54,58,67-73}

¹⁹ Coney sauce is typically made using ground beef, onions, and tomato paste or ketchup.

Zullo's research (2016, 2020) on food served in Michigan prisons found that outsourcing food service to Aramark led to a decline in flavor.^{4,5} For example, the correctional officers he interviewed noted that Aramark watered down gravy and pizza sauces and failed to proportionally adjust seasonings when scaling up a recipe. One correctional officer noted that when Aramark took over food service, they removed many spices and flavorings from meals, resulting in food that tasted bland. Similarly, the 2010 audit of the Kentucky Department of Corrections' (DOC) food service contract with Aramark noted multiple instances where Aramark removed spices from meals.¹⁴

Impact Justice's report (2020) on the quality of prison food nationally found that prison food is generally described as "bland" and even "tasteless."⁸ The report noted that according to both currently and formerly incarcerated individuals who have eaten at multiple facilities, meals provided by private vendors were even less palatable than meals in self-operated facilities, particularly when the same vendor managed both kitchen and commissary. And according to a 2023 survey of 330 DC jail residents, as summarized in a report by DC Greens, the majority of respondents (85 percent) routinely refuse to eat the meals because they are so unpalatable.¹¹ Combined with inadequate portion sizes (reported by 89 percent of respondents), 94 percent of survey respondents reported feeling hungry between meals. One individual who was surveyed, shared: "It's to the point that some of us go to sleep hungry, refusing to eat the food provided to us, and that's not by choice."

The Nakamoto Group's 2020 annual inspection of the Donald W. Wyatt Detention Center in Rhode Island, where food service is managed by Aramark, included interviews with people in custody of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). One individual, who had been at the facility for four days, complained about the food being "awful" and water that "tasted bad." However, another individual who had been detained at the facility for one month had "no substantive complaints about... [the] food."⁶⁶

The Kansas City Beacon reported in 2023 that although Aramark was contractually required by the Missouri DOC to provide seasonings like salt and pepper with meals, the incarcerated population has been told this is not true.²⁰ One incarcerated individual said the meals would be "amazing" if Aramark would just add salt and pepper. Similarly, a 2016 *VICE* article quoted Mike Brickner, senior policy director at the Ohio ACLU, who drew a connection between unpalatable lunches and safety in prisons: "Prisons are very delicate environments and things like food become incredibly important to people who are incarcerated. It's a safety issue for other prisoners and corrections officers. What we're seeing with Aramark and around food privatization is that it injects chaos into the situation."³¹

Multiple incarcerated individuals have also reported on the palatability of Aramark meals. For example, in a 2024 *Prison Journalism Project* article, Shameka Hayes described Aramark's food in Washington, DC's jails as "terrible" and the turkey-ham salad as resembling "cat food."²² Justin Slavinski, an incarcerated writer in Florida, has given Aramark meals mixed reviews. Writing for *Prison Journalism Project* in 2024, he praised Aramark's "100% all beef patty" as more palatable than the usual patty options, which he described in a 2023 article as "indistinguishable from each other in how they taste, feel or look. They are all the same kind of nasty."^{69,73} Slavinski has also emphasized the lack of seasoning in Aramark meals, describing Aramark's turkey and potato casserole as "flavorless," with a texture resembling "canned dog food."^{72,73} Incarcerated writer David Reutter has also written multiple articles describing Aramark's meals in Florida and Kentucky as bland and unpalatable.^{19,25,58} Writing for *Prison Legal News* (2010), Reutter, who is incarcerated in Florida, reported on Aramark's food service at Linn County Jail in Oregon, where the incarcerated population stopped receiving hot breakfasts in March 2009.¹⁷ The cold breakfast that replaced the hot meal consisted of "peanut butter bars, biscuits, hard-boiled eggs and fruit." According to the article, the DOC made this change to save an estimated \$38,000 in food prep costs. The county Sheriff, Tim Mueller, is quoted in the article saying: "if they don't like the food, they should stay out of jail. Then they can have steak and eggs or whatever they want." In a 2018 *Prison Legal News* article, Reutter noted that holiday and specialty diets generally taste better than regular meals.²⁵ Yet incarcerated writer Frank Morse, writing for *Endeavor* in 2023, a newspaper published by Everglades Correctional Institution in Miami, Florida, wrote a "good meal" is often followed by multiple "bad meals."⁵⁴ One

incarcerated individual in Florida who was interviewed by Morse shared that the meals needed more staff effort and seasoning. And in a 2016 article for *VICE*, incarcerated writer Stephen Katz described the bologna soup served in his Michigan state prison as “cartoonish.”

Several articles reported on protests related to the palatability of Aramark meals. For example, one article in the *Detroit Free Press* reported on a protest of Aramark’s food in Marquette, Michigan in 2014.⁶⁸ And two separate articles reported on a 2018 boycott by employees and incarcerated individuals at New York’s Westchester County jail due to Aramark’s “atrocious” meals.^{23,29}

Media accounts also reported that individuals turn to commissary food to supplement or even fully replace Aramark’s unappetizing meals, including *The Appeal’s* nine-month investigation regarding the exploitative nature of commissaries.³² *The Kansas City Beacon* also noted this trend.²⁰

A total of three sources, all of which are media sources, included descriptions of Aramark’s meals as flavorful and appetizing.^{26,67,74} Randy Ludlow, senior reporter at *The Columbus Dispatch*, reported in 2014 that 80 percent of people incarcerated in Ohio state prisons were satisfied with Aramark meals, which were ranked as “good” according to prison documents.²⁶ However, the article also notes that commissary purchases increased after Aramark took over food service in Ohio state prisons, drawing a connection to some incarcerated individuals complaining about food quality. Additionally, despite some of Slavinski’s criticism of Aramark meals, he described Aramark’s chocolate cake as “lighter and butterier than whatever the [Florida DOC] used previously.”⁷⁴ He also noted that Aramark’s pasta sauce was not “watered down or skimpy on the tomato flavor” and contained “real herbs!” However, shortly after Aramark began managing Florida’s food service, Slavinski wrote that the “special items disappeared,” and attributed this to a renegotiation of the contract between the Florida DOC and Aramark.⁷⁵ Finally, in an interview for *Corrections Forum*, Aramark’s marketing director, Jacqui Whitfield stated:

! “[Aramark is] innovating around the preparation of meals, developing solutions that enhance taste without adding to budget and infusing different seasonings to liven up the palate. Some managers have had opportunities to include locally-sourced ingredients into their menu, which prevents menu fatigue.”⁶⁷

► **Theme 2.2. Reports allege that Aramark’s food is often improperly prepared and served at the wrong temperature.**

This topic appeared in nine sources, seven of which indicated that Aramark’s food is often improperly prepared and/or served at the wrong temperature. These included three nongovernmental reports,^{5,9,12} two state government reports,^{14,15} and two media sources^{71,74} that point to Aramark’s shortcomings when it comes to properly preparing and serving meals at the correct temperature. The latter is both a palatability and a food safety concern, which is also discussed in the food safety section.

In Zullo’s 2016 focus groups with correctional officers in Michigan state prisons, multiple participants criticized the preparation and temperature of Aramark meals.⁵ According to one correctional officer, meals served at the wrong food temperature (such as “warm lettuce” or “cold corn”) is a significant issue. Another officer raised the issue of “raw, undercooked, ...burnt, [and] ... soupy” food.

Teri Castle, co-author of the West Virginia Center on Budget and Policy’s 2023 report on West Virginia prison food, recalled the Aramark food she was served while incarcerated, which included “runny scrambled eggs; dehydrated potato slices that were either mushy or tough to chew; reheated pancakes made the previous day.”⁹

The 2010 Kentucky audit found multiple complaints regarding Aramark’s failure to properly maintain food temperature.¹⁴ The auditors noted this may be because food is transported from central kitchens to satellite locations and/or the condition of the equipment used. Similarly, a 2025

audit of the DC jail, which included interviews with the incarcerated population, found that the transportation time between the kitchen to where meals are served resulted in meals being served at the wrong temperature, which led to meals that were “unappetizing” and sometimes caused “digestive discomfort.”¹⁵

In 2023, grassroots prison oversight organization Return Strong surveyed 119 people incarcerated in Nevada state prisons, all of which are serviced by Aramark, and identified numerous complaints regarding temperature and food preparation.¹² For example, respondents asserted that bread is packaged with other foods and becomes wet and falls apart by the time it’s served, while sometimes, trays are prepared and food items packaged well in advance of when meals are served.

A *Prison Journalism Project* article by incarcerated writer Slavinski criticized Aramark for serving either over or under cooked meals.⁷¹

However, two sources, one federal government report and one media source, indicated that Aramark meals are properly prepared and served at the correct temperature. An article in *Corrections Forum* (2020) that favorably described Aramark, quoted Jacqui Whitfield, Aramark’s marketing director, who said that when meals are delivered at the appropriate temperature, it increases the “acceptability” of the meals and reduces the amount of uneaten food left on trays.⁶⁷ According to Whitfield, Aramark accomplishes this by utilizing “warming carts” when transporting meals. And an Office of Detention Oversight (ODO) compliance inspection report of the Tulsa County Jail in Oklahoma determined that Aramark was correctly preparing and serving food at the correct temperature.⁷⁶

► Theme 2.3. Aramark’s meals are reported to be repetitive and lacking in variety.

This topic appeared in 12 sources. Each of these indicated that Aramark’s meals are repetitive and/or lacking in variety, including three nongovernmental reports,⁹⁻¹¹ five media sources,^{17,19,20,39,70} one local government report,¹⁶ and four federal government reports.^{41,60,61,77} None of these sources indicated that Aramark provides varied meals.

The West Virginia Center on Budget and Policy’s 2023 report on food in West Virginia state prisons addressed the lack of variety in Aramark meals, as detailed by report co-author Teri Castle, who was incarcerated at Lakin Correctional Center in West Virginia until 2021:

! “When Aramark won the food service contract for West Virginia prisons, we were excited about the potential for better food. That excitement was short-lived. They eliminated the fresh fruit and bowls of cereal, leaving us with no options other than what the kitchen put on the tray... The salad bar was removed. Fresh veggies were replaced with frozen ones... Aramark added for-profit food sales out of the dining room. They sold fresh veggie trays with tomatoes, green peppers, broccoli, cauliflower, and celery, along with slices of fruit pie, ice cream cups, and freshly made pizza bread with your choice of toppings. Purchasing it became the only way to get fresh food, as residents were no longer provided fresh veggies on the free trays served at meals. If you could not afford to buy them, you did not get them.”⁹

The Pennsylvania Prison Society’s 2024 report also found that there is a lack of variety in the meals served in Pennsylvania prisons, where food is procured by Aramark.¹⁰ DOC staff are primarily responsible for menu development and kitchen operations.

A 2023 survey on food in Washington, DC’s jails by DC Greens asked incarcerated individuals at the jail (n=330) to offer one thing they would change to improve the eating experience.¹¹ Out of the 278 individuals who responded to this question, the top three out of 11 suggestions were to make “better quality food” and “more fresh fruits and vegetables” available, and to “change [the] menu.”

Four government audits sought to determine to what extent Aramark was meeting national U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) food service standards at regional facilities that contract with ICE.^{41,60,61,77} Inspectors from the federal Office of Detention Oversight (ODO) interviewed staff, inspected storage areas, observed meal preparation and service, and reviewed relevant policies and documents. One incarcerated individual who was randomly interviewed at Rappahannock Regional Jail in Stafford, Virginia shared that bologna was served “all the time.”⁶¹ This finding was corroborated through a review of the facility menu; ODO found that bologna was served for breakfast or lunch during three out of six days leading up to the inspection. According to the report, Aramark management said they would implement a new menu to address this concern raised by ODO. ODO’s inspections at Hall County DOC in Grand Island, Nebraska and Albany County Correctional facility found that Aramark was not including all required components in sack meals.^{60,77} Additionally, according to ODO’s 2020 inspection of Saint Clair County Jail in Michigan, eight ICE detainees reported that they were served *one* bologna sandwich and one piece of fruit for dinner.⁴¹ Through interviewing the facility’s food service director and reviewing past and current weekly food menus, ODO determined that the menu had been changed from a hot to cold dinner, though it was supposed to consist of two sandwiches that contained a variety of meats, “including white turkey and chicken.”

In a 2025 report by the Office of the D.C. Auditor, two members of the DC Corrections Informational Council, which is mandated to inspect and monitor DC correctional facilities, shared in interviews with the auditors that menus are repetitive; bologna sandwiches, peanut butter, and beans and rice are common menu items.¹⁵

A reporter at The Kansas City Beacon interviewed the fiancée of an incarcerated individual following Missouri DOC’s decision to contract with Aramark in January 2023.²⁰ The fiancée shared that breakfast features eggs, pancakes, or oatmeal and “is generally the best meal of the day inside Missouri prisons.” However, she said that bologna is typically served for lunch and dinner. An incarcerated individual at Jefferson City Correctional Center described Aramark’s food as mostly “bad,” and said that bologna was served daily for ten days straight. Additionally, in a 2014 *In These Times* article, journalist George Lavender reported that people incarcerated at Westville Correctional Facility in Indiana had been refusing Aramark’s cold sack lunches out of protest until finally receiving their first hot weekday lunch in months.³⁹ And in a 2024 *Prison Legal News* article, incarcerated writer David Reutter wrote that following the end of Florida’s first contract with Aramark in 2009, the Florida DOC continued Aramark’s practices of “feeding prisoners large amounts of soy.”¹⁹ And finally, in a 2023 *Prison Journalism Project* article, incarcerated writer Justin Slavinski wrote that the “nine different patties” served by Aramark all resemble “bland, grayish meat” and lack variety in how they taste.⁷⁰

There were no positive descriptions of variety in reference to meals served to incarcerated people.

Research Question 3: What is known about food safety performance of Aramark Correctional Services with respect to company, client, and legal requirements?

RESEARCH QUESTION 3. Contract Analysis

The convenience sample of contract-related documents included contracts (n=9), contract amendments (n=2), requests for proposals (RFP) (n=2), and RFP responses from Aramark (n=4). Most included detailed food safety and sanitation provisions in addition to requiring compliance with all applicable federal, state, and local regulations. Several also required maintenance of American Correctional Association (ACA) accreditation and/or meeting ACA standards for food service. Other common provisions specified requirements for temperature control, requirements for cleaning and sanitizing facilities, equipment, dishes, and utensils, requirements for inspections by the contractor, correctional department, or health department, requirements for safe storage of food, application of Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) principles, whether some or all employees must hold a food safety certification (*e.g.*, ServSafe), pest control requirements, food safety requirements for the contractor’s suppliers, preventive measures to keep sick employees from handling food,

requirements for employees to wear hairnets and gloves, handwashing requirements, and waste removal requirements.

RESEARCH QUESTION 3. Literature Analysis

We identified two key themes based on our analysis of 60 sources that addressed this research question. We summarize content related to each theme below.

► Theme 3.1. Numerous reports have alleged or documented Aramark's food safety lapses, including serving spoiled and contaminated meals.

This topic appeared in 49 sources, 45 of which reported food safety lapses and contaminated meals served by Aramark. These included one peer-reviewed study⁴ and corresponding report,⁵ three nongovernmental reports,^{11,12,78} four state or local government reports,^{14-16,62} two federal government reports,^{61,77} and 36 media sources.^{17,18,20,21,23-25,27-29,31,37,48-50,52,58,59,63-65,67,68,79-90}

Zullo's research (2016 and 2020) on Aramark food service in Michigan state prisons identified "unsanitary conditions" as a key theme in focus groups he conducted with correctional officers: participants reported that food safety declined following the transition from in-house food service to Aramark.^{4,5} Additionally, Zullo found that food safety violations occurred due to pressure from Aramark to limit food waste, for example serving food past its expiration date. Correctional officers also shared that pests were found in the kitchens.

As part of a 2010 audit of Aramark's food service in Kentucky state prisons, inspectors from the state Auditor of Public Accounts office found that poor sanitation was one of three most common complaints filed by people in custody and appealed to the Commissioner.¹⁴ Additionally, leftovers were stored past the appropriate date and at improper temperatures. The inspection also identified situations where insects were found on trays and beverage containers, as well as improper temperatures for meals transported from satellite locations. Similarly, an audit conducted by the Michigan Office of the Auditor General from December 8, 2013, to August 31, 2015, found expired food in coolers.⁶² Additionally, in 2015, Progress Michigan reviewed 25,000 pages of email communications between the Michigan Department of Corrections (DOC) and Aramark from March to September 2014 and found 2,945 issues pertaining to food quality/facility sanitation, including "poor food preparation practices that can lead to the spread of food-borne pathogens as well as incidents that cite poor cleanup of food preparation area."⁷⁸ Additional issues cited were "food debris, slime, mold and rodent droppings."

A 2024 DC DOC food service report by the District of Columbia Corrections Information Council (CIC), an independent oversight body, confirmed that food leaving the kitchen met appropriate temperature standards, based on a review of the temperature logs and thermometers on the side of the hot boxes.¹⁶ The report did not specify whether these temperatures were maintained up to the time food was served. The CIC reviewed the DC DOC's policies and procedures and conducted independent observations of food service areas and processes. However, a 2025 audit of Washington, DC's jails documented resident and staff reports that Aramark had served moldy food, meals contaminated by "bugs, mice, screws, and other non-food materials," as well as meals that were "improperly heated" and water that was "potentially contaminated."¹⁵ The audit was informed by a review and analysis of agency reports and documents, 20 structured interviews with jail staff, family of people incarcerated at the jail, formerly incarcerated individuals, and other people with knowledge about jail conditions, as well as three sets of surveys with individuals incarcerated during the audit period (n=756) and jail staff (n=512). Two of the surveys were administered by the DOC, and one was conducted by the report authors. During the audit period, incarcerated individuals filed a total of 48 formal grievances and 221 complaints pertaining to food safety, among other top concerns.

Additionally, a DC Greens survey (2023) of the DC jail population found that 70 percent reported having been served spoiled meals, particularly milk, bread, lunchmeat, eggs, and fruit.¹¹ This was true for 84 percent of individuals who had been incarcerated over one year.

Three federal Office of Detention Oversight (ODO) compliance inspections of different jails revealed inconsistent food safety compliance by Aramark. When the ODO inspected a jail in Albany, New York, in 2014, they found that Aramark was failing to meet national detention food safety standards.⁶⁰ There was trash and food on the floor, no soap in the staff restroom, dripping water, and peeling paint. At the Rappahannock Regional Jail in Stafford, Virginia, in 2012, ODO found that Aramark was meeting food temperature requirements but needed to ensure that food was covered during transportation from the satellite kitchen to housing units.⁶¹ The latter was also true for the Nebraska facility that the ODO inspected in 2014, where Aramark was not meeting temperature requirements for hot foods.⁷⁷

In a 2014 letter to Ohio House Speaker Bill Batchelder, state Representative John Patrick Carney wrote, “I am very troubled by the recent reports of maggots in state prison meals as a result of improper conduct by Aramark.”⁴⁷ Furthermore, a 2025 survey by Return Strong on the quality of Aramark’s food in Nevada state prisons found that 94 percent of incarcerated respondents had received spoiled or raw food, including moldy bread, sour dairy, undercooked eggs, and rotten meat.¹² A majority (57 percent) of survey respondents were also concerned about the poor water quality. Additionally, 26 percent of survey respondents reported being served food contaminated by rodent droppings or maggots.

Media sources also overwhelmingly report a lack of adherence to food safety protocols. A total of 26 media sources referenced maggots and insects found in Aramark kitchens and meals in multiple facilities across multiple states, including Ohio, Michigan, Missouri, Mississippi, Kentucky, and California.^{18,24-27,29,31,37,48,49,52,58,59,63-65,79,80,85-92} Eleven media sources reported that in multiple states, Aramark served food from the trash and food contaminated by rodents.^{18,23,27,31,37,63,81,83-85,90} Media coverage also referenced rotten, raw, spoiled, or undercooked meals served by Aramark.^{20,86}

Writing for *Truthdig* (2013), columnist Chris Hedges interviewed several corrections officers at the Burlington County Jail in New Jersey, who recounted incidents of Aramark serving “spoiled fruit” and moldy food.²⁷ The article also references a 2009 health report, which determined food wasn’t stored at safe temperatures in a Camden County, New Jersey Aramark kitchen. Additionally, one incarcerated individual at Union County Jail in New Jersey observed dirty cooking utensils and mice in an Aramark kitchen. Writing for *The Denver Post* in 2021, reporter Conrad Swanson wrote that metal shavings had been found in meals served at the Jefferson and Arapahoe county jails, as well as food that was rotten, expired, and served at the wrong temperature.²⁸ The article also stated that the American Correctional Association and National Commission on Correctional Health Care conduct an inspection of the jail every three years. And when Swanson interviewed the Denver Sheriff’s Department, the Department Chief shared that the department would begin monitoring Aramark’s food safety compliance, as would a third-party auditor. In 2014, the *Detroit Free Press* reported that a former Aramark food service staff member claimed she was fired from her job after complaining of food safety violations.⁹³ She joined Aramark the year the Michigan DOC entered into its \$145 million three-year contract with the private vendor. The official reason given for why she lost her job was “insubordination,” according to the article. In 2014, the ACLU of Ohio argued in a press release that Ohio should end its contract with Aramark due to food safety infractions, including maggot infestations in two Ohio prisons.⁷⁹

Four sources indicated that Aramark adheres to food safety guidelines, including one federal government report and three media sources. ODO’s inspection report of the Tulsa County Jail in Oklahoma (2012) noted the kitchen observed “a high level of sanitation” and food was properly stored.⁷⁶ One of the three media sources that offered a positive take on Aramark’s ability to meet food safety protocols was produced by Aramark, and another quoted an Aramark representative. In an interview on Aramark’s *Mark This* podcast, Randy Bain, Aramark’s Vice President for Culinary

Development, shared that “food safety is the highest of standards.”⁴⁴ Similarly, in a 2020 *Corrections Forum* article, editor in chief Donna Rogers interviewed Aramark’s marketing director, who claimed that Aramark consistently upholds high food safety standards.⁶⁷ An article in the *Wall Street Journal* (2010) mentioned that Aramark passed its health inspection in Kentucky, according to the company itself.³⁴ This is inconsistent with the findings of food safety violations in the 2010 audit of Aramark’s food service in Kentucky state prisons, as described above.¹⁴

► **Theme 3.2. Aramark’s alleged food safety lapses have been linked to outbreaks of foodborne illness.**

This topic appeared in 12 sources, all of which indicated that Aramark’s alleged food safety lapses have been linked to outbreaks of foodborne illness. These sources included one state government report,¹⁴ one nongovernmental report,¹² and ten media sources.^{17,18,27,30,31,63,79-81,92} According to the 2010 audit of the Kentucky DOC’s food service, neither Aramark nor the Kentucky DOC consistently addressed sanitation issues, including a foodborne illness outbreak, likely stemming from a contaminated lunch.¹⁴ Similarly, according to a survey Return Strong administered to incarcerated individuals in Nevada prisons in 2023, 68 percent of 114 respondents self-reported that they had suffered from foodborne illness, and only 17 of the 78 respondents who suffered foodborne illness received medical attention.¹² Most of these individuals had requested but failed to receive medical care, and several individuals described foodborne illness as a common experience in their open-ended survey responses. In the ACLU Ohio’s 2014 press release urging the state to end its contract with Aramark, the organization wrote that almost 30 incarcerated individuals at Parnell Correctional Facility in Jackson, Michigan suffered from food poisoning following the discovery of maggots in Aramark’s food.⁷⁹ Media coverage has referenced food poisoning in Aramark-managed facilities in multiple states, including New Jersey,²⁷ Michigan,^{63,92} Florida,^{17,27} and Nevada.³⁰ *Michigan Live* also reported on a lawsuit against Aramark due to foodborne illness.⁸¹

Research Question 4: What is known about the cost to correctional departments of contracting with Aramark Correctional Services?

RESEARCH QUESTION 4. Contract Analysis

The convenience sample of contract-related documents included contracts (n=9), contract amendments (n=2), requests for proposals (RFP) (n=2), and RFP responses from Aramark (n=4). Nearly all included information on price per meal or price per diem (per person per day) and most included a maximum compensation amount for the term of the contract (Table 2). These prices are intended to cover all costs to produce meals (food, labor, etc.) and most contracts provide no breakdown. Within each contract, prescribed meal costs generally vary based on the population in custody: due to economies of scale, the minimum meal cost applies when the population is highest, and the maximum meal cost applies when the population is lowest.

Table 2. Examples of meal costs for select jurisdictions that contract with Aramark Correctional Services

Client (Contract Term)	Minimum meal cost per diem	Maximum meal cost per diem	Maximum contract value
STATE PRISONS			
Florida Department of Corrections (4/7/22-4/6/27)	\$3.05	\$3.23	unknown
Kentucky Department of Corrections (1/5/15-1/4/23)	\$3.65	\$3.65	unknown
Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction (7/1/21-6/30/25)	\$4.62	\$4.62	unknown
Missouri Department of Corrections (1/6/23-1/5/28)	\$5.31	\$5.56	\$228,500,000
Arizona Department of Corrections, Rehabilitation, & Reentry (9/30/24-9/29/25)	\$5.93	\$7.16	\$47,992,276.46
LOCAL JAILS			
Williamson County (Texas) Jail (11/23/21-9/30/24)	\$3.20	\$4.02	unknown
Office of the Genesee County (Michigan) Sheriff (5/4/22-5/4/25)	\$3.45	\$3.45	\$2,342,205
City and County of Denver (Colorado) Department of Public Safety (7/1/21-6/30/23)	\$4.07	\$11.69	\$7,375,506.82
District of Columbia Department of Corrections (9/15/21-9/14/22)	\$5.76	\$7.53	\$5,620,162
Multnomah County (Oregon) Sheriff's Office (3/1/23-11/30/26)	\$6.48	\$92.16	\$50,000,000
Lancaster County (Nebraska) (5/1/23-4/30/27)	\$6.65	\$8.25	\$6,756,978
County of Westchester (New York) Department of Correction (1/1/19-12/31/20)	unknown	unknown	\$4,589,198

RESEARCH QUESTION 4. Literature Analysis

We identified four key themes based on our analysis of 68 sources that addressed this research question. We summarize content related to each theme below.

► Theme 4.1. Correctional departments have projected cost savings by outsourcing meal production to Aramark.

This topic appeared in 15 sources, all of which supported this theme and indicated that contracting with Aramark was projected to reduce costs for correctional departments. These sources included three nongovernmental reports,^{9,13,94} one state government report,¹⁴ and 11 media sources.^{18,20,24,26,58,91,95-99}

A 2016 report published by In the Public Interest reviewed case studies of how corrections companies have reduced costs on services, including meal preparation. The report noted that a contract between Aramark and the Michigan Department of Corrections (DOC) saved the state of Michigan between \$36 million and \$48 million, or 20 to 25 percent, over the three-year period.⁹⁴ According to the Dayton Daily News, Ohio state officials estimated contracting with Aramark would save them \$16 million in one year relative to when the Ohio Civil Service Employees Association ran the prison kitchens.⁹⁸

As reported by Prison Legal News, the Missouri DOC signed a \$45.7 million, five-year contract with Aramark in 2023 that costs \$3 million (or 6 percent) less than what the state was spending per year to produce meals.⁹⁷ According to *The Kansas City Beacon*, the state spent \$5.69 per person per day for food and staffing before the contract, as compared to \$5.31 under the contract.²⁰ In Kentucky, a contract with Aramark saved the state about \$5.4 million per year.⁵⁸ According to Kentucky's Auditor of Public Accounts, the DOC's meal cost per diem was \$3.28 before outsourcing food service, while Aramark charged \$2.34 to \$2.63 per diem from fiscal year (FY) 2005 to FY 2010 (indicating savings of 20 to 29 percent).¹⁴

► **Theme 4.2. Aramark's cost cutting measures allegedly include lower quality and reduced variety of ingredients, reducing the salaries of kitchen staff, and eliminating staff training requirements.**

This topic appeared in seven sources, all of which supported this theme. These included one peer-reviewed study and corresponding report^{4,5} and five media sources.^{17,24,44,97,100}

Zullo examined the impact of private contracting in Michigan and found that Aramark was able to lower the operating costs for the Michigan DOC by reducing staffing (from 371 to 269 FTE), reducing staff compensation, neglecting basic operations and safety training, and eliminating pensions.^{4,5} In focus groups with correctional officers who experienced the transition, participants said the contractor's compensation was too low to attract competent staff and combined with a challenging work environment, led to high rates of turnover.⁵ They also alleged that Aramark managers were slow to fire incompetent staff to minimize recruitment costs. *The Nation* reported in 2019 that unionized corrections workers in Michigan who initially made \$20 to \$25 per hour were replaced by Aramark workers who made \$11 per hour.²⁴

Prison Legal News reviewed Aramark's Standardized Menu with the Tennessee DOC and found that the menu frequently featured the least expensive foods, like potatoes, carrots, and corn.⁹⁷ The meat in the menu was comprised of 75 percent mechanically separated meat, a cheaper alternative to traditional cuts. Aramark also opted not to include any seasonings in the food to limit sodium, which greatly decreased the palatability of the meals. Randy Bain, Vice President for Culinary Development for Aramark Correctional Services, said on a podcast, "if the budget is difficult and is challenging, then there's only so much we can do within that budget."⁴⁴

► **Theme 4.3. Correctional departments have found billing discrepancies with their Aramark contracts that caused them to overpay for meals and services.**

This topic appeared in five sources, all of which identified instances of billing discrepancies based on contracts between correctional agencies and Aramark. These included one state government report¹⁴ and four media sources.^{18,27,99,101} In 2010, Kentucky's Auditor of Public Accounts found that Aramark had overbilled the DOC approximately \$7,000 to \$8,600 per month in three sampled invoices over the course of its contract, which could have amounted to \$84,000 to \$102,000 per year if projected.¹⁴ As reported by Prison Legal News in 2015, the state of Michigan hired a contract oversight advisor who discovered that Aramark was billing them \$200,000 per month more than what was listed in the contract.¹⁸ After learning of these billing discrepancies, the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction began investigating their Aramark contract and found that Aramark had charged them \$57,193 for 13 prisoners that did not exist in their database and that an additional \$80,343 was improperly billed.¹⁰¹ In 2013, *Truthdig* reported that Florida DOC auditors charged that Aramark billed the state for \$5 million worth of meals that they never served.²⁷

► **Theme 4.4. Multiple correctional departments have allegedly fined Aramark for contract violations.**

This topic appeared in eight media sources.^{18,26,56,83,98,101-103} All of these sources alleged that Aramark was fined for contract violations. In 2015, Prison Legal News reported that the state of Michigan had fined Aramark a total of \$298,000 for employee misconduct and contract violations related to food quality, preparation, and quantity, as well as kitchen sanitation issues. The same article reported that the state of Ohio had fined Aramark a total of \$272,000 for staff shortages, unacceptable food substitutions, food shortages, and sanitation issues, and that the state of Florida had fined Aramark \$240,000 for slow meal delivery, insufficient staffing, and other contract violations.

I Discussion

SYNTHESIS

Most of the included sources that address nutrition indicate that Aramark falls short of providing adequate portions of nutritious meals in carceral facilities, relative to the 2020-2025 *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* (DGA). While many sources did not explicitly refer to the DGA, they provided evidence of discrepancies between Aramark-provided menus and specific DGA recommendations. For example, the audit of food service in the Kentucky DOC found that excessive packets of margarine and other condiments were being served to meet calorie minimums, which is inconsistent with the DGA's recommendation to prioritize nutrient-dense foods and limit discretionary calories.¹⁴ The West Virginia Center on Budget and Policy found that the state prison menus relied heavily on refined grains, provided no fruit, and infrequently offered non-starchy vegetables, whereas the DGA recommends consuming a variety of fruits and vegetables daily and limiting refined grains.⁹ Although Aramark spokespeople and institutional officials have asserted that the company meets American Correctional Association (ACA) food standards and additional requirements set by each client,^{29,44} ACA standards focus on meeting Recommended Daily Allowances to prevent nutrient deficiencies and do not reference the DGA or any food-based guidelines that address overall health promotion and chronic disease prevention.

Many sources reported that Aramark provides inadequate portion sizes. This reportedly leads some incarcerated individuals to rely on commissary to supplement their diet, which has negative health and financial consequences. This dynamic is especially problematic in facilities where both food service and commissary are operated by Aramark-owned entities, creating a perverse incentive for Aramark to limit both quality and quantity of mainline meals.

Included sources also allege that Aramark has violated its agreements with some institutions by making unauthorized menu substitutions, which tend to be less nutritious than the foods they are replacing.

The sources included in this review indicate that unpalatable meals are a common, if not consistent, experience in prisons and jails where food service is managed by Aramark. The most reported complaints are insufficient use of seasonings, poor food preparation, and meals being served at the wrong temperature. Multiple incarcerated individuals have compared some meals to pet food. Lack of variety was a less prevalent but still common theme across multiple news articles, particularly the repetitive offering of cold meals like deli meat sandwiches in place of hot meals. Consistently unappetizing meals have negative consequences for institutional staff and leadership as well as people in custody, including food waste and protests that may disrupt facility safety and security.

This review identified numerous accounts of food safety concerns in Aramark-managed carceral food service operations, from surveys and interviews with hundreds of incarcerated people and correctional officers as well as third party audits of kitchen facilities. Alleged and documented food safety concerns range in severity from failure to hold food at the correct temperature to outbreaks of foodborne illness. Our findings suggest that Aramark's food safety practices are at best inconsistent, putting incarcerated people at risk for acute illness wherever they fall short. This is especially concerning in light of the six-fold higher risk of outbreak-associated foodborne illness in carceral facilities compared to the general population.¹⁰⁴ Even putting health risks aside, serving spoiled food or food contaminated with maggots violates the dignity of people who are already suffering the profoundly dehumanizing experience of incarceration.

Many of these nutrition, palatability, and food safety issues have also been reported in self-operated facilities and can be attributed in part to budget constraints and inadequate standards or oversight by the institution.^{1,105,106} In other words, theoretically any carceral food service operation, whether self-operated or privatized, could provide safe, healthier, and more appetizing meals if policymakers set higher standards, required more rigorous oversight, and provided adequate resources. Nevertheless, many sources indicated that these attributes worsened following a transition from in-house food

service to Aramark, especially nutrition and palatability. This contrasts with correctional officials' motivation to lower costs while maintaining or improving quality when outsourcing food service management.

These negative outcomes are also at odds with contract specifications and Aramark's commitments in our sample of contract-related documents, particularly for palatability and food safety. With respect to nutrition, these documents specified adherence to ACA standards more often than any other nutritional benchmark. We did not attempt to evaluate the extent to which Aramark complies with ACA standards for nutritional adequacy. As noted previously, these standards are merely designed to prevent nutrient deficiencies, whereas the DGA are also intended to promote overall health and prevent chronic disease. Assessing the impact of specific contractual requirements on outcomes was outside the scope of this review, but our findings raise the question of whether insufficient contractual requirements and/or oversight may contribute to poor outcomes for nutrition, palatability, and food safety.

Carceral institutions' limited budgets likely also serve as barriers even when all parties desire to make positive changes. Our review found that multiple states have projected that outsourcing to Aramark would save them meaningful amounts of money on carceral food service, based on the meal price established in their contracts. The sources that allowed us to calculate a percent reduction indicated a range in projected savings of 3 percent to 29 percent of annual costs. This range overlaps with HTF Market Intelligence's estimate that food service management companies can reduce costs by 15 to 25 percent compared to self-operation.¹⁰⁷

Other sources—as well as our findings for nutrition, palatability, and food safety—suggest that these lower costs may come with trade-offs, such as purchasing cheaper ingredients of lower quality and nutritional value, reducing portion sizes, and reducing staffing levels and compensation. The predominant fixed cost payment structure likely furthers the incentive for contractors to cut costs for food and labor.

Despite projecting cost savings, several correctional departments allegedly found Aramark made consistent billing errors that caused them to pay more than agreed upon. Several institutions identified other contract violations and ultimately imposed fines on the company to address the associated costs. The sources identified in this review do not permit a comparison of the costs of contracting with Aramark relative to self-operation that accounts for such tradeoffs, but our findings do cast doubt on the value that Aramark claims to provide to its taxpayer-funded correctional clients.

STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS

Our review included sources that employed relatively objective information-gathering methods (peer-reviewed research, independent audits, surveys of incarcerated populations, menu analyses), but the majority were more subjective sources (news stories, reports without systematic or transparent methods). In addition to capturing the lived experience of currently and formerly incarcerated people through surveys and interviews, included sources also reflect the concerns of correctional officers, third party auditors, and non-governmental organizations. One limitation of our reliance on survey findings is that these may be biased towards people who were highly dissatisfied with Aramark's food service. In general, our search was likely subject to reporting bias, in that we were more likely to identify documentation of negative outcomes than positive ones. Additionally, some of the same incidents were reported in multiple sources. Nevertheless, we surfaced consistent reports of nutrition, palatability, and food safety problems in at least 15 states and localities during contracts with Aramark, from as recently as 2025. Furthermore, we solely gathered a convenience sample of contracts. Future research should systematically evaluate contracts to understand whether our findings are generalizable nationwide. Finally, we focused on Aramark food service, but future research should investigate whether other private food service vendors and self-operated carceral facilities receive similar reports of problems with nutrition, palatability, and food safety. Without that evidence it is not possible to assess whether a change in vendors would substantially improve carceral food service conditions.

References

- ¹ Silverman J, Holt M. *Strategies to Optimize Food and Nutrition in Correctional Facilities* 2021. Available at: <https://www.cspi.org/resource/strategies-optimize-food-and-nutrition-correctional-facilities-0>.
- ² Searching the Literature: A Guide to Comprehensive Searching in the Health Sciences. *University of Toronto Libraries*. Available at: <https://guides.library.utoronto.ca/comprehensivesearching>.
- ³ *Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2020-2025*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; 2020. Available at: <https://www.dietaryguidelines.gov/about-dietary-guidelines/previous-editions/2020-dietary-guidelines>.
- ⁴ Zullo R. Private Contracting and the Hidden Cost of Burden Shifting: The Case of Prison Food. *Corrections*. 2020;5(4):314-331.
- ⁵ Zullo R. *Food Service Privatization in Michigans Prisons: Observations of Corrections Officers* 2016. Available at: <https://www.prisonlegalnews.org/media/publications/Food%20Service%20Privatization%20in%20Michigans%20Prisons%20-%20Observations%20of%20Corrections%20Officers%2C%20Zullo%2C%202016.pdf>.
- ⁶ Bain L. *Nutritional characteristics and development factors of U.S. prison menus*. Manhattan, Kansas: Department of Food, Nutrition, Dietetics and Health, Kansas State University; 2023. Available at: <https://krex.k-state.edu/server/api/core/bitstreams/96e1d15e-e69f-4fd7-bf94-70b342728b2c/content>.
- ⁷ Bain L, Sauer KL, Holliday MK. Nutritional Characteristics of Menus in State Prisons. *J Correct Health Care*. Oct 2024;30(5):326-331.
- ⁸ Soble L, Stroud K, Weinstein M. *Eating Behind Bars: Ending the Hidden Punishment of Food in Prison*: Impact Justice; 2020. Available at: impactjustice.org/impact/food-in-prison/#report.
- ⁹ Castle T, Whitaker S. *The High Costs of Cheap Food: Eating in West Virginia Prisons*: West Virginia Center on Budget & Policy; 2023. Available at: <https://wvpolicy.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/The-High-Cost-of-Prison-Food.pdf>.
- ¹⁰ *Hungry and Malnourished: Food Service in the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections*: Pennsylvania Prison Society; 2024. Available at: <https://www.prisonersociety.org/resource/food-report>.
- ¹¹ Rosen D. "We're Hungry in Here": D.C. Department of Corrections Food Survey Results: DC Greens; 2023. Available at: https://dgreens.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/DCG-Doc-Food-Survey_FINAL-Nov-7-23.pdf.
- ¹² Lenz M. *Analysis of Food and Nutrition in Nevada Prisons*: Return Strong; 2025. Available at: <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/62b39135ce8cab28789daa2b/t/69629d381b1e0e13cc3b14f7/1768070456871/FINAL+Analysis+of+Food+and+Nutrition+in+Nevada+Prisons.pdf>.
- ¹³ Turner J, Olaizola Rosenblat M, Guruli N, et al. *Captive Labor: Exploitation of Incarcerated Workers*: ACLU The University of Chicago Law School Global Human Rights Clinic; 2022. Available at: <https://www.aclu.org/publications/captive-labor-exploitation-incarcerated-workers>.
- ¹⁴ Luallen C. *Examination of the Kentucky Department of Corrections' Food Services Contract with Aramark Correctional Services, LLC* 2010. Available at: <https://www.auditor.ky.gov/Auditreports/Special%20Exams%20%20Performance%20Documents/2010ARAMARKreport.pdf>.
- ¹⁵ Patterson K. *Urgent Need for New D.C. Jail*. Washington, District of Columbia 2025. Available at: https://cdn.prod.website-files.com/659c0df344c9c8325dd821ca/6837197775af1c53f8f34cf0_JailUpdate_Web_v5.pdf?utm_source=TMP-Newsletter&utm_campaign=6c227229a7-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2025_05_30_10_43&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_5e02cdad9d-6c227229a7-174586267.
- ¹⁶ *DC Department of Corrections Food Service Report*. Washington, District of Columbia: District of Columbia Corrections Information Council; 2024. Available at: https://cic.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/cic/page_content/attachments/DOC%20FY24Q2%20Report_Food%20Services%20%208.2.24.pdf.
- ¹⁷ Reutter DM, Hunter G, Sample B. Appalling Prison and Jail Food Leaves Prisoners Hungry for Justice. *Prison Legal News*, 2010. Available at: <https://www.prisonlegalnews.org/news/2010/apr/15/appalling-prison-and-jail-food-leaves-prisoners-hungry-for-justice/>.
- ¹⁸ Zoukis C, Bower RL. Aramark's Correctional Food Services: Meals, Maggots and Misconduct. *Prison Legal News*, 2015. Available at: <https://www.prisonlegalnews.org/news/2015/dec/2/aramarks-correctional-food-services-meals-maggots-and-misconduct/>.
- ¹⁹ Reutter DM. Commissary and Food Service Privatization Strands Florida Prisoners in 'Food Desert'. *Prison Legal News*, 2024. Available at: <https://www.prisonlegalnews.org/news/2024/feb/1/commissary-and-food-service-privatization-strands-florida-prisoners-food-desert/>.
- ²⁰ Cunningham M. People in Missouri prisons say food went from bad to worse when contractor took over. *The Kansas City Beacon*, 2023. Available at: <https://thebeaconnews.org/stories/2023/10/04/missouri-department-of-corrections-aramark-contract/>.
- ²¹ Wilson M. Aramark Sparks Nevada Prison Hunger Strike. *Prison Legal News*, 2023. Available at: <https://www.prisonlegalnews.org/news/2023/sep/15/aramark-sparks-nevada-prison-hunger-strike/>.
- ²² Hayes S. The Life of an Elected Official Who's Also in Jail. *Prison Journalism Project*, 2024. Available at: <https://prisonjournalismproject.org/2024/09/15/the-life-of-an-elected-official-whos-also-in-jail/>.
- ²³ Ankney D. Prisoners, Guards, Students Protest Aramark. *Prison Legal News*, 2020. Available at: <https://www.prisonlegalnews.org/news/2020/jan/8/prisoners-guard-students-protest-aramark/>.
- ²⁴ Requarth T. Prisoners of Profit. *The Nation*; 2019.
- ²⁵ Reutter DM. Prison Food and Commissary Services: A Recipe for Disaster. *Prison Legal News*, 2018. Available at: <https://www.prisonlegalnews.org/news/2018/aug/4/prison-food-and-commissary-services-recipe-disaster/>.
- ²⁶ Ludlow R. Inmates seek food outside cafeteria. *The Columbus Dispatch*, 2014. Available at: <https://www.dispatch.com/story/news/crime/2014/08/31/inmates-seek-food-outside-cafeteria/23980871007/>.
- ²⁷ Hedges C. Food Behind Bars Isn't Fit for Your Dog. *Truthdig*, 2013. Available at: <https://www.truthdig.com/articles/food-behind-bars-isnt-fit-for-your-dog/>.
- ²⁸ Swanson C. Aramark, which has served rotten food in other states, could win \$9M Denver jail contract. *The Denver Post*, 2021. Available at: <https://www.denverpost.com/2021/06/24/denver-jail-aramark-food-contract/>.
- ²⁹ Facciola T. George Latimer Awarded County Jail Contracts to Private Firms That Donated to His Campaign. *The Intercept*, 2024. Available at: <https://theintercept.com/2024/03/06/george-latimer-jail-contracts-wellpath-donation/>.
- ³⁰ Murphy V. "Hangry": Food at Nevada prisons leading to complaints, changes. *8 News Now*, 2023. Available at: <https://www.8newsnow.com/investigators/hangry-food-at-nevada-prisons-leading-to-complaints-changes/>.
- ³¹ Katz S. What It's Like to Eat Some of the Worst Prison Food in America. *Vice*, 2016. Available at: <https://www.vice.com/en/article/what-its-like-to-eat-some-of-the-worst-prison-food-in-america/>.

- ³² Weill-Greenberg E, Corey E. Locked In, Priced Out: How Prison Commissary Price-Gouging Preys on the Incarcerated. *The Appeal*, 2024. Available at: <https://theappeal.org/locked-in-priced-out-how-much-prison-commissary-prices/>.
- ³³ Ross K. Oklahoma Looks to Privatize Prison Food Service. *Oklahoma Watch*, 2025. Available at: <https://oklahomawatch.org/2025/02/07/oklahoma-looks-to-privatize-prison-food-service/>.
- ³⁴ Simon S. Jailbirds Order Up Hot Wings. *The Wall Street Journal*, 2010. Available at: <https://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424052748703441404575206153521909136>.
- ³⁵ Slavinski J. A Side-by-Side Comparison of Commissary and Cafeteria Meals. *Prison Journalism Project*, 2023. Available at: <https://prisonjournalismproject.org/2023/06/25/florida-prisons-substitute-ice-cream-for-salad>.
- ³⁶ DeMarco A. Students petition to end UT's contract with Aramark as company falls under national scrutiny for ties to prison system, racist actions. *UT Daily Beacon*, 2020. Available at: <https://utdailybeacon.com/113585/campus-news/students-petition-to-end-uts-contract-with-aramark-as-company-falls-under-national-scrutiny-for-ties-to-prison-system-racist-actions/>.
- ³⁷ Mundy J. Incarcerated People Work for Aramark Without Pay. *LawyersandSettlements.com*, 2024. Available at: https://www.lawyersandsettlements.com/legal-news/california_labor_law/incarcerated-people-work-aramark-without-pay-23887.html.
- ³⁸ Kelkar K. Prison strike organizers to protest food giant Aramark. *PBS NewsHour Weekend*, 2017. Available at: <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/nation/prison-strike-protest-aramark>.
- ³⁹ Lavender G. Private Contractor Accused of Skimping on Prisoner Food. *In These Times*, 2014. Available at: <https://inthesetimes.com/article/private-contractor-accused-of-skimping-on-prisoner-food>.
- ⁴⁰ Slavinski J. Is the New Aramark iCare Package Worth the Price? *Prison Journalism Project*, 2023. Available at: <https://prisonjournalismproject.org/2023/11/05/new-aramark-icare-worth-price/>.
- ⁴¹ Office of Detention Oversight Compliance Inspection Saint Clair County Jail. Port Huron, Michigan 2020. Available at: <https://www.ice.gov/doclib/foia/odo-compliance-inspections/SaintClairCoPortHuronMIJuly2020.pdf>.
- ⁴² Our Corrections Work Matters: FAQ. *Aramark*. Available at: <https://www.aramark.com/corrections-faq>.
- ⁴³ Building the Path for Second Chances. *Aramark*. Available at: <https://www.aramark.com/newsroom/blog/building-the-path-for-second-chances>.
- ⁴⁴ Aramark. Episode 13: Highly Regulated Culinary. Available at: <https://www.aramark.com/newsroom/news/2023/october/mark-this-episode-13-highly-regulated-culinary>.
- ⁴⁵ *Buying Access: How Corporations Influence Decision Makers at Corrections Conferences, Trainings, and Meetings*: In the Public Interest; 2015. Available at: <https://www.inthepublicinterest.org/wp-content/uploads/Buying-Access-In-the-Public-Interest-PDF.pdf>.
- ⁴⁶ Henry DE. Starve and Charge: Aramark Cuts Free Prison Meals to Boost Profits, New Suit Claims. *The Marshall Project*, 2025. Available at: <https://www.themarshallproject.org/2025/12/06/prison-food-abuse-aramark-lawsuit>.
- ⁴⁷ Rep. Carney Calls for Legislative Oversight of State Prison, Aramark Contract: Numerous contract violations warrant committee's review, says lawmaker. *Ohio House of Representatives*. Available at: <https://ohiohouse.gov/news/democrat/rep-carney-calls-for-legislative-oversight-of-state-prison-aramark-contract-47601>.
- ⁴⁸ Egan P. Michigan to end prison food deal with Aramark. *Detroit Free Press*, 2015. Available at: <https://www.freep.com/story/news/local/michigan/2015/07/13/state-ends-prison-food-contract-aramark/30080211/>.
- ⁴⁹ Egan P. More maggots found in food in Aramark prison kitchen. *Detroit Free Press*, 2015. Available at: <https://www.freep.com/story/news/local/michigan/2015/06/02/aramark-michigan-prison-contractor-maggots-kitchen/28378435/>.
- ⁵⁰ Reutter DM. Michigan's New Prison Food Service Provider Failing to Meet Contract Terms. *Prison Legal News*, 2018. Available at: <https://www.prisonlegalnews.org/news/2018/jan/8/michigans-new-prison-food-service-provider-failing-meet-contract-terms/>.
- ⁵¹ Zoladz C. Four workers caught in sexual romp with Ionia inmates, fired. *WZZM*, 2014. Available at: <https://www.wzzm13.com/article/news/local/four-workers-caught-in-sexual-romp-with-onia-inmates-fired/69-271477517>.
- ⁵² Egan P. Maggots prompt call for prison kitchen inspections. *Detroit Free Press*, 2015. Available at: <https://www.freep.com/story/news/local/michigan/2015/06/24/bill-targets-aramark-requiring-prison-kitchen-inspections/29210815/?gnt-cfr=1&gca-cat=p&gca-uir=true&gca-epi=z114304e1125xxv114304d-48-b-48-&gca-ft=90&gca-ds=sophi>.
- ⁵³ McCarthy N. Column: Carolina Dining Services claims to be food-forward. Its association with Aramark says otherwise. *The Daily Tar Heel*, 2024. Available at: <https://www.dailytarheel.com/article/2024/10/opinion-cds-where-my-food-from>.
- ⁵⁴ Morse F. Verdict's In on Prison's New Food Service. *Endeavor*, 2023. Available at: <https://prisonjournalismproject.org/2023/03/13/dissappointing-new-food-service-florida-prison/>.
- ⁵⁵ Cohen D. *How Privatization Preys on the Prison Population: Contractors for phone, financial, health, and food services profit from mass incarceration*: In The Public Interest; 2023. Available at: <https://inthepublicinterest.org/how-privatization-preys-on-the-prison-population/>.
- ⁵⁶ Tylek B. Not Fit for Human Consumption. *Inquest*, 2025. Available at: <https://inquest.org/not-fit-for-human-consumption/>.
- ⁵⁷ Weill-Greenberg E. Alameda County Sheriff, Aramark Are Forcing Prisoners Into 'Involuntary Servitude,' New Lawsuit Says. *The Appeal*, 2019. Available at: <https://theappeal.org/alameda-county-sheriff-prisoners-involuntary-servitude/>.
- ⁵⁸ Reutter DM. Food Problems Contribute to Riot at Kentucky Prison. *Prison Legal News*, 2010. Available at: <https://www.prisonlegalnews.org/news/2010/apr/15/food-problems-contribute-to-riot-at-kentucky-prison/>.
- ⁵⁹ Duffy Rice J, Ramsey D. The Privatization of Prisons. *The Appeal*. Available at: <https://theappeal.org/justice-in-america-episode-26-the-privatization-of-prisons/>.
- ⁶⁰ Office of Detention Oversight Compliance Inspection Albany County Correctional Facility. Albany, New York 2014. Available at: <https://www.prisonlegalnews.org/media/publications/ICE%20Detention%20Standards%20Compliance%20Audit%20-%20Albany%20County%20Correctional%20Facility%2C%20Albany%2C%20NY%2C%20ICE%2C%202014.pdf>.
- ⁶¹ Office of Detention Oversight Compliance Inspection Rappahannock Regional Jail. Stafford, Virginia 2012. Available at: <https://www.prisonlegalnews.org/media/publications/ICE%20Detention%20Standards%20Compliance%20Audit%20-%20Rappahannock%20Regional%20Jail%20Stafford%20VA,%20ICE,%202012.pdf>.
- ⁶² Ringler DA. *Prisoner Food Services: Department of Corrections* 2015. Available at: <https://audgen.michigan.gov/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/r471062115.pdf>.
- ⁶³ Perkins T. Michigan's Failed Effort to Privatize Prison Kitchens and the Future of Institutional Food. *Civil Eats*, 2018. Available at: <https://civileats.com/2018/08/20/michigans-failed-effort-to-privatize-prison-kitchens-and-the-future-of-institutional-food/>.
- ⁶⁴ Delgadillo N. Maggots With a Side of Dirt? What Privatization Does to Prison Food. *Governing*, 2018. Available at: <https://www.governing.com/archive/gov-private-food-service-prisons-aramark-trinity-ohio-michigan.html>.
- ⁶⁵ Cohen D. Aramark unfit for duty in Michigan prisons. *The Detroit News*, 2014. Available at: <https://www.detroitnews.com/story/opinion/2014/09/30/aramark-fails-michigan-prisons/16497349/>.

- ⁶⁶ *Annual Inspection of the Donald W. Wyatt Detention Center*: The Nakamoto Group, Inc.; 2020. Available at: https://www.ice.gov/doclib/facilityinspections/wyattDetCntr_CL_10-28-2020.pdf.
- ⁶⁷ Rogers D. Spice It Up: How does food service and kitchen equipment, by both cooking techniques and food choices, keep the menu fresh and consistent and the costs contained? *Corrections Forum*; 2020.
- ⁶⁸ Egan P. Prisoners in Marquette demonstrate over Aramark food. *Detroit Free Press*, 2014. Available at: <https://www.freep.com/story/news/local/michigan/2014/11/12/prisoners-marquette-protest-aramark-food/18933107/?gnt-cfr=1&gca-cat=p&gca-uir=true&gca-epi=z119045d00---v119045b00xxxxd11xx65&gca-ft=166&gca-ds=sophi>.
- ⁶⁹ Slavinski J. On Burger Day in Prison, I Went Back for Seconds. *Prison Journalism Project*, 2024. Available at: <https://prisonjournalismproject.org/2024/08/05/burger-day-when-prison-food-actually-ok/>.
- ⁷⁰ Slavinski J. It Sounds Like Fine Dining, But... *Prison Journalism Project*, 2023. Available at: <https://prisonjournalismproject.org/2023/05/21/all-prison-meat-tastes-same/>.
- ⁷¹ Slavinski J. Three Condiment Packets I Keep Handy for Prison Meals. *Prison Journalism Project*, 2024. Available at: <https://prisonjournalismproject.org/2024/02/04/ketchup-packets-make-prison-food-bearable/>.
- ⁷² Slavinski J. Incarceration Eating is Like the Temple of Doom. *Prison Journalism Project*. 2023.
- ⁷³ Slavinski J. Meet the Company Getting Rich Off My Prison's Awful Food. *Prison Journalism Project*, 2023. Available at: <https://prisonjournalismproject.org/2023/09/10/getting-rich-providing-awful-prison-food/>.
- ⁷⁴ Slavinski J. At My Florida Prison, Spaghetti and Meatballs Take the Cake. *Prison Journalism Project*, 2024. Available at: <https://prisonjournalismproject.org/2024/02/27/spaghetti-meatballs-prisons-best-food/>.
- ⁷⁵ Slavinski J. Ice Cream Is the New Salad. *Prison Journalism Project*, 2023. Available at: <https://prisonjournalismproject.org/2023/06/25/florida-prisons-substitute-ice-cream-for-salad/>.
- ⁷⁶ *Office of Detention Oversight Compliance Inspection Tulsa County Jail*. Tulsa, Oklahoma 2012. Available at: https://www.ice.gov/doclib/foia/odo-compliance-inspections/2012-Tulsa-CtyJail_tulsa-OK_Sept11-13_2012.pdf.
- ⁷⁷ *Office of Detention Oversight Compliance Inspection Hall County Department of Corrections*. Grand Island, Nebraska 2014. Available at: <https://www.prisonlegalnews.org/media/publications/ICE%20Detention%20Standards%20Compliance%20Audit%20-%20Hall%20County%20Department%20of%20Corrections%2C%20Grand%20Island%2C%20NE%2C%20ICE%2C%202014.pdf>.
- ⁷⁸ *A Failed Privatization Experiment: Aramark and the Michigan Department of Corrections*: Progress Michigan; 2015. Available at: <https://progressmichigan.org/a-failed-privatization-experiment-aramark-and-the-michigan-department-of-corrections/>.
- ⁷⁹ Ohio Should End Contract with Prison Private Food Vendor. *ACLU of Ohio*. Available at: <https://www.acluohio.org/press-releases/ohio-should-end-contract-prison-private-food-vendor/>.
- ⁸⁰ Pelzer J. Maggots found in four Ohio prison kitchens; officials launch statewide investigation. *cleveland.com*, 2014. Available at: <https://www.cleveland.com/open/2014/07/maggots-found-in-three-ohio-pr.html>.
- ⁸¹ Agar J. Inmates' rotten chicken taco case against Aramark, Kent County heads to federal court. *mlive.com*, 2015. Available at: <https://www.mlive.com/news/grand-rapids/2015/04/inmates-rotten-chicken-taco-ca.html>.
- ⁸² Jackson A. Prisoner sues Aramark after rocks in taco lead to chipped teeth. *mlive.com*, 2016. Available at: <https://www.mlive.com/news/grand-rapids/2016/04/prisoner-sues-aramark-after-bi.html>.
- ⁸³ Feldscher K. Aramark worker ordered prisoner to feed inmates at Michigan prison cake partially eaten by rodents. *Mlive*, 2015. Available at: <https://www.mlive.com/news/saginaw/2015/03/aramark-employee-served-sagina.html>.
- ⁸⁴ Johnson B. Food in trash served to state prisoners in Saginaw County; Aramark worker fired. *Mlive*, 2015. Available at: <https://www.mlive.com/news/saginaw/2015/03/aramark-employee-served-sagina.html>.
- ⁸⁵ Pauly M. Jail Inmates Worked for a \$16 Billion Company Without Pay. Now They Want Their Wages. *Mother Jones*, 2020. Available at: <https://www.motherjones.com/criminal-justice/2020/01/alameda-santa-rita-jail-aramark-unpaid-wages-lawsuit/>.
- ⁸⁶ Erickson K. Mo. DOC contracts Aramark to feed inmates. *CorrectionsOne*, 2023. Available at: <https://www.corrections1.com/aramark-correctional-services/articles/mo-doc-contracts-aramark-to-feed-inmates-3PKHTrFPI2sY46S4/>.
- ⁸⁷ Cohen D. Outsourcing: Maggots on Aramark's Prison Menu. *Capital & Main*, 2014. Available at: <https://capitalandmain.com/outsourcing-maggots-on-aramarks-prison-menu>.
- ⁸⁸ Maggots Discovered at Michigan Prison During Lunch at Correctional Facility. *CBS Detroit*, 2015. Available at: <https://www.cbsnews.com/detroit/news/maggots-served-to-michigan-prisoners-during-lunch-at-correctional-facility/>.
- ⁸⁹ Livengood C, Heinlein G. Snyder ends Aramark prison food contract. *The Detroit News*, 2015. Available at: <https://www.detroitnews.com/story/news/politics/2015/07/13/aramark-prison-food-contract/30080579/>.
- ⁹⁰ Schwartzapfel B. The Big Business of Bad Prison Food. *The Marshall Project*, 2025. Available at: <https://www.themarshallproject.org/2025/03/08/food-business-michigan-prison-mississippi>.
- ⁹¹ Joe. Maggots in the Kitchen. *In The Public Interest*. Available at: <https://inthepublicinterest.org/maggots-in-the-kitchen/>.
- ⁹² Cwiek S. Aramark contract "up in the air" after more maggots found in prison food. *Michigan Public*, 2014. Available at: <https://www.michiganpublic.org/politics-government/2014-07-03/aramark-contract-up-in-the-air-after-more-maggots-found-in-prison-food>.
- ⁹³ Egan P. Whistle-blower: Aramark falsified records, served filthy food. *Detroit Free Press*, 2014. Available at: https://subscribe.freep.com/restricted?return=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.freep.com%2Fstory%2Fnews%2Flocal%2Fmichigan%2F2014%2F10%2F23%2Fformer-aramark-prison-workers-allege-unsafe-kitchen-practices%2F17753335%2F&gps-source=CPROADBLOCKDH&itm_source=roadblock&itm_medium=onsite&itm_campaign=premiumroadblock&gca-cat=p&gca-uir=true&gca-epi=z116866e005500v116866b0076xxd117665&gca-ft=187&gca-ds=sophi&theme=twentyfour&hideGrid=true&gnt-eid=control.
- ⁹⁴ *Cutting Corners in America's Criminal Justice System: How Corrections Companies Harm Prisoners and the Public in Pursuit of Profit*: In the Public Interest; 2016. Available at: <https://inthepublicinterest.org/cutting-corners-in-americas-criminal-justice-system/>.
- ⁹⁵ Board TDFPE. Rat cake? Even prisoners deserve better. *Detroit Free Press*, 2015. Available at: <https://www.freep.com/story/opinion/editorials/2015/03/17/prisoner-aramark-snyder/24913151/?gnt-cfr=1&gca-cat=p&gca-uir=true&gca-epi=z115001e1116xxv115001d-55--b-55--&gca-ft=193&gca-ds=sophi>.
- ⁹⁶ Officials mull decision on prison food contract. *WZZM*, 2014. Available at: <https://www.wzzm13.com/article/news/local/officials-mull-decision-on-prison-food-contract/69-271468301>.
- ⁹⁷ Aramark: Prison Food for Thought. *Prison Legal News*, 2024. Available at: <https://www.prisonlegalnews.org/news/2024/may/1/aramark-prison-food-thought/>.
- ⁹⁸ Seitz A. More than 100 food workers banned from state prisons. *Dayton Daily News*, 2014. Available at: https://www.daytondailynews.com/local/more-than-100-food-workers-banned-from-state-prisons/article_9a651c8a-4a87-55ae-a7fa-0524a8d39465.html.

- ⁹⁹ Egan P. States accuse prison food contractor of overbilling. *USA Today*, 2013. Available at: <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2013/05/07/prison-food-contractor-aramark/2140503/>.
- ¹⁰⁰ Gilna D. Report: How Private Prison Companies Cut Corners to Generate Profit. *Prison Legal News*, 2016. Available at: <https://www.prisonlegalnews.org/news/2016/aug/2/report-how-private-prison-companies-cut-corners-generate-profit/>.
- ¹⁰¹ Zoukis C. Ohio Experiences Continued Problems with Aramark Over Alleged Food Fraud. *Prison Legal News*, 2018. Available at: <https://www.prisonlegalnews.org/news/2018/jan/31/ohio-experiences-continued-problems-aramark/>.
- ¹⁰² Heinlein G. Aramark funds higher wages, staffing in prisons. *The Detroit News*, 2014. Available at: <https://www.detroitnews.com/story/news/local/michigan/2014/10/01/aramark-funds-higher-wages-staffing-prisons/16533509/?gnt-cfr=1&gca-cat=p&gca-uir=true&gca-epti=z113634v113634b0040xxd004065&gca-ft=213&gca-ds=sophi>.
- ¹⁰³ Boucher D. Tennessee picks Aramark, another prison food provider with troubled past. *The Tennessean*, 2016. Available at: <https://www.tennessean.com/story/news/crime/2016/08/04/tennessee-picks-aramark-another-prison-food-provider-troubled-past/88044070/?gnt-cfr=1&gca-cat=p&gca-uir=true&gca-epti=z114024e1121xxv114024b0044xxd004465&gca-ft=179&gca-ds=sophi>.
- ¹⁰⁴ Marlow MA, Luna-Gierke RE, Griffin PM, Vieira AR. Foodborne Disease Outbreaks in Correctional Institutions-United States, 1998-2014. *Am J Public Health*. Jul 2017;107(7):1150-1156.
- ¹⁰⁵ Kathuria K. "I Refuse to Let Them Kill Me": Food, Violence, and the Maryland Correctional Food System: Maryland Food & Prison Abolition Project; 2021. Available at: <https://foodandabolition.org/report>.
- ¹⁰⁶ *Correcting Food Policy in Washington Prisons*: Prison Voice Washington; 2016. Available at: https://wacorrectionswatch.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/final_correcting-food-policy-in-wa-prisons_prison-voice-wa.pdf.
- ¹⁰⁷ *United States Catering & Food Services Market for Correctional Facilities 2020-2032*: HTF Market Intelligence; 2025