

America To Go Helps RPI Facilitate Off-Campus Food Options, Save Time



As a private research university located in Troy, New York, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (RPI) is often described as, “the oldest technological university in the English-speaking world.” Founded in 1824, the school celebrates a storied history. But that doesn’t stop them from taking a very modern approach to purchasing.

Since 2012, RPI has been working successfully with America To Go to manage its off-campus food services expenses. America To Go provides third party management of these expenses, through a centralized online platform easily accessible by the staff.

With all on-campus dining and catering orders being placed through Sodexo – the Institute’s dining services supplier – campus users at RPI appreciate having America To Go as an option for off-campus dining options.

Easy Online Ordering

At RPI, the America To Go platform is enabled through SciQuest. Menus for each of the local participating restaurants/delis are loaded onto the site, and staff members are encouraged to use the online repository as a resource when placing orders for take-out, delivery, and off-campus catering.

“When I came to RPI, the America To Go program was already in place, with about 8 or 9 participating restaurants,” said Nicole Runyon, Strategic Sourcing Manager at RPI. “My goal was to ensure we were continuing to improve the program and meet the needs on campus – which included continually working with America to Go to add new restaurants, evaluate new menu options, etc.”

To accomplish this, Nicole meets with her America To Go representative about once a month. She explained that the majority of the back-end work – gathering and updating menus, meeting regularly with vendors, etc. – is managed completely by America To Go, a huge value-add for Rensselaer. The efforts have paid off, and the program has increased to include 22 restaurants, with more in the works.

Saving Time & Controlling Spend

“The America To Go program works particularly well for us because our folks on campus don’t have purchasing cards, so everything must go through a purchase order,” Nicole explained. “ATG provides us with an effective method of controlling that spend, while making sure orders are placed with vendors whose insurance we have on file and who have been vetted along the way.”

All vendors participating in the America To Go platform must meet the Institute’s insurance requirements, and America To Go manages all of the responsibilities involved in securing the proper insurance documentation. This has resulted in a process which ensures compliance



with institutional policies while providing considerable time savings.

Another notable benefit provided by America To Go is e-invoicing, a process which automatically matches the invoice to the existing purchase order for payment. “E-invoicing means we don’t have to touch any of the invoices for these orders, which is a real time-savings benefit for our accounts payable department, and has alleviated many payment discrepancies,” Nicole explained.

“The America To Go program is a great opportunity for us to bring increased business to local restaurants and to support our local community,” she said. “It’s a great contract that’s been vetted by both our procurement department and also by E&I, who we trust a lot. I would definitely recommend America To Go to other E&I members, based upon the time and cost savings we’ve realized.”

About Us

E&I Cooperative Services is the member-owned, not-for-profit sourcing cooperative focused on education. Members have access to a diverse portfolio of competitively awarded contracts, electronic procurement platforms and consulting services to help reduce costs and optimize supply chain efficiencies. E&I’s America to Go contract will improve your food ordering experience by providing you with streamlined order tracking, customizable expense policy enforcement, and efficient reconciliation functionality.

To learn more about how you can better manage your catering expenses online, please visit www.eandi.org. You may also contact David Ott, E&I Portfolio Support Executive, at dott@eandi.org.

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Strategic Sourcing Manager,
Rensselaer Polytechnic
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