

Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program

Overview

The Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP) provides all children in participating elementary schools with a variety of free fresh fruits and vegetables during the school day. The FFVP also encourages schools to develop partnerships at the State and local level for support in implementing and operating the program.

The goal is to create healthier school environments by providing healthier food choices, expanding the variety of fruits and vegetables children experience, increasing children's fruit and vegetable consumption, and making a difference in children's diets to impact their present and future health.

All schools that participate in the FFVP are required to widely publicize within the school the availability of free fresh fruits and vegetables.

Terminology

Fresh Fruit and Vegetable (FFVP) reimbursement – Schools submit a monthly claim for all fresh fruits and vegetables served to children free throughout the school day in this program.

Per student allocation – By regulation, the state must award a per-student allocation of \$50-\$75 per year for the school to purchase fresh fruits and vegetable for this program.

School application – Each school must complete an FFVP application annually to be considered for participation in the program. States must solicit applications from elementary schools representing the highest need within the state.

Site selection – Schools participating in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) with the highest free and reduced price enrollment must be given priority for participation in the FFVP. This is the key selection criterion, which ensures that the program benefits low-income children that generally have fewer opportunities to consume fresh fruits and vegetables on a regular basis.

Targeted school selection – States must conduct outreach to their neediest schools before they select any school for participation in the program.

What is The Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program?

The FFVP is an effective and creative way of introducing fresh fruits and vegetables as healthy snack options. Each school has the flexibility of scheduling the FFVP at any time during the day and is responsible for ordering any fresh fruit and vegetable that the children would like to try. The FFVP is for all the children who normally attend the school site. Any child who is considered a member of the school and who is present during the service of fruits and vegetables may participate.

The FFVP provides an opportunity to incorporate nutrition lessons along with the service of the produce.

The most successful distribution areas for the FFVP will be places where children can easily consume the fruits and vegetables.

The techniques you use to distribute fruits and vegetables will depend on a number of factors. Consider grade level, maturity of your students, time available to eat the fruits and vegetables, time required for preparation and service of fresh fruits and vegetables, extra clean-up, garbage concerns, and staffing issues.

Schools can offer the FFVP to children through a variety of distribution methods:

- Inside classrooms
- In hallways
- At kiosks
- In free vending machines
- As part of nutrition education activities

Why is the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program Important?

The FFVP is an effective and creative way of introducing fresh fruits and vegetables as healthy snack options. The FFVP is for all the children who normally attend your school. Any child who is considered a member of the school and who is present during the service of fruits and vegetables may participate.

The FFVP introduces children to new and different fresh fruits and vegetables, like kiwi, star fruit, pomegranate, rutabaga, and kohlrabi. Fruits and vegetables are good low-calorie, low-fat sources of vitamins, minerals, and fiber. The FFVP shows children that fresh fruits and vegetables are healthy and tasty alternatives to snacks high in fat, sugar, or salt.

The produce served should be presented in such a way that it will be easily identified or recognized for what it is or from the whole form. Sponsors participating in the FFVP encourage children to enjoy fruits and vegetables as they are. Children should be able to connect to fruits like juicy, ripe peaches and tart, crunchy apples (**without dips** or flavor additives), or vegetables like crunchy, sweet sugar snap peas, or asparagus.

Remember when purchasing for the Program the goal is to serve a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables in their natural state and without additives. Dicing and slicing into smaller pieces for ease of service, as well as the addition of ascorbic acid, is acceptable.

The FFVP provides schools the opportunity to purchase exotic fruits or vegetables that are not available locally or that are not domestically grown. When purchasing such items always follow proper procurement procedures and the Buy American provision.

FFVP is a separate program from the National School Lunch Program and has distinct rules, regulations, and procedures. For more details regarding allowable costs, operating labor, and administrative labor please reference the FFVP Handbook found on the Idaho Child Nutrition Program website by selecting the FFVP icon. The handbook is also available under this reference guide section heading.

The FFVP Does not allow:

- Processed or preserved fruits and vegetables (i.e., canned, frozen, or dried)
- Dip for fruit
- Fruit or vegetable juice
- Snack type fruit products such as fruit strips, fruit drops, fruit leather
- Jellied fruit
- Trail mix
- Nuts
- Cottage cheese
- Fruit or vegetable pizza
- Smoothies
- Fruit that has added flavorings including fruit that has been injected with flavorings
- Carbonated fruit
- Most non-food items, except those allowed under administrative/operational costs

Resources

Additional resources may be available for this topic. Please check the Idaho School Nutrition Reference Guide website for copies of manuals, user guides, and helpful links to relevant subject matter.