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# FRESH FRUIT AND VEGETABLE PROGRAM

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## **1. What is the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program?**

The Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP) is a federally assisted program providing free fresh fruits and vegetables to students in participating elementary schools during the school day.

The goal of the FFVP is to improve children's overall diet and create healthier eating habits to impact their present and future health. The FFVP will help schools create healthier school environments by providing healthier food choices; expanding the variety of fruits and vegetables children experience; and increasing children's fruit and vegetable consumption.

## **2. When did the FFVP become a national program?**

The FFVP began as the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Pilot Program, authorized by Congress under the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (P.L. 107-171) in a limited number of States and schools. The purpose of the pilot was to identify best practices for increasing fresh fruit and vegetable consumption among students, and to determine the feasibility and students' interest.

In 2008 the Food, Conservation and Energy Act of 2008 established the FFVP as a permanent program under section 19 of the National School Lunch Act. This law also expanded the FFVP nationwide to 50 States, the District of Columbia, and the territories of Guam, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands and substantially increased the funding level.

## **3. Who may participate in the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program?**

The 50 States, District of Columbia, and the territories of Guam, Puerto Rico and Virgin Islands may participate. The FFVP is targeted to elementary schools with the highest free and reduced price enrollment.

## **4. Who administers the Program?**

The Food and Nutrition Service that administers all the Child Nutrition Programs at the Federal level also administers the FFVP. At the State level, the FFVP is usually administered by the State

education agency, which operates the program through agreements with school food authorities (SFA).

## **5. How does the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program work?**

Elementary schools participating in the program receive between \$50.00 - \$75.00 per student for the school year. The State agency decides the per-student funding amount based on total funds allocated to the State and the enrollment of applicant schools.

With these funds, schools purchase additional fresh fruits and vegetables to serve free to students during the school day. They must be served outside of the normal time frames for the National School Lunch (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP). The State agency or SFAs determines the best method to obtain and serve the additional fresh produce.

Schools participating in the FFVP submit monthly claims for reimbursement which are reviewed by the SFA before payment is processed to the SA. Schools are reimbursed for the cost of fresh fruits and vegetables and limited non-food costs.

State agencies are provided funds for administration of the program according to federal requirements.

## **6. What are the Program requirements for eligible elementary schools?**

Schools have the flexibility to develop their own implementation plan, choose the type of produce, number of days a week and times during the day (outside of NSLP and SBP operation) to provide free fresh fruits and vegetables to their students. The number of times the program can be offered during a school week is dependent on the level of funds a school receives. FNS strongly encourages schools, whenever feasible, to offer the FFVP no less than 2 days a week. Schools must agree to widely publicize the availability of the program. Schools must follow all food safety requirements and HACCP guidance. Schools are encouraged to develop partnerships to help implement the program, such as with local universities, extension services and local grocers.

## **7. How do schools purchase fruits and vegetables for the Program?**

Schools may purchase their fruits and vegetables through the same system they make purchases for the NSLP and SBP. They may acquire produce through the DOD Fresh program, or they may purchase locally. In all cases, schools must follow proper procurement procedures and produce must be purchased according to existing local, State and Federal guidelines.

## **8. How is the program funded?**

Congress established the funding amount and cycle for the FFVP as follows:

October 1, 2008: \$40 million

July 1, 2009: \$65 million

July 1, 2010: \$101 million

July 1, 2011: \$150 million

July 1, 2012 and each July 1 thereafter, the amount made available is adjusted to reflect changes for the 12-month period ending the preceding April 30 in the Consumer Price Index.

The funding level per state is determined through a formula allocation and provided through the States' Letter of Credit.

## **9. How many schools participate in the FFVP?**

In school year 2008-2009, 1,956 schools participated with an enrollment of approximately 740,327 students. Each year the number of participating schools is expected to increase due to the increased funding provided.

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