

# Food Service Facts Table of Contents

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# 17. Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program

The Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP) is a federally assisted program providing free fresh fruits and vegetables to children at eligible elementary schools during the school day. The goal of the FFVP is to introduce children to fresh fruits and vegetables, to include new and different varieties, and to increase overall acceptance and consumption of fresh, unprocessed produce among children. The FFVP also encourages healthier school environments by promoting nutrition education. To learn more, visit the USDA FFVP webpage: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/ffvp/fresh-fruitand-vegetable-program>.

## Participation

Elementary schools are eligible to participate. Schools must operate the National School Lunch Program in order to operate the FFVP. Importantly, the FFVP prioritizes schools with the highest percentage of children certified as eligible for free and reduced price meals. This is because children from low-income families generally have fewer opportunities to consume fresh produce on a regular basis.

## Application Requirements

Eligible elementary schools must submit an FFVP application that includes:

- ◆ The total number of enrolled children;
- ◆ The percentage of children certified as eligible for free and reduced price meals;
- ◆ A certification of support for participation of the FFVP signed by the school food service manager, school principal, and the district superintendent (or equivalent positions, as determined by the school); and
- ◆ A Program implementation plan, including efforts to integrate the FFVP with other efforts to promote childhood health and nutrition.

## Implementation Requirements

Participating elementary schools are required to publicize the availability of the FFVP and must serve the fresh fruits and vegetables outside the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program meal service times. Beyond these requirements, schools have flexibility in determining their implementation plan. Schools may select the type of produce served, decide the number of days per week to serve the produce (though schools are strongly encouraged to serve a minimum of two days per week), and choose the time outside the breakfast and lunch meal service to provide fresh fruits and vegetables to children.

## **Types of Fruits and Vegetables**

Schools are encouraged to serve a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables. Because the intent of the FFVP is to introduce children to new and different fresh fruits and vegetables, the produce must be served in a way that it is easily identifiable. This encourages children to enjoy fruits and vegetables “as they are.”

Schools may purchase produce through wholesalers, brokers, local grocery stores, or other retailers. Schools can also support local agricultural producers by buying fresh produce at farmers’ markets and orchards, or by purchasing directly from growers in their community. In all cases, schools must follow proper procurement procedures. Purchases must be made according to existing local, State, and Federal guidelines, including the Buy American provision.

## **Reimbursement**

Selected elementary schools receive \$50 to \$75 per student for each school year. The exact amount of per student funding is determined by the State agency and is based on the total funds allocated to the State and the student enrollment at participating schools. With these funds, schools purchase fresh fruits and vegetables to serve free of charge to children during the school day. Participating schools submit monthly claims for reimbursement, which are reviewed by the school food authority before payment is processed by the State agency. Schools are then reimbursed for the cost of fresh fruits and vegetables, as well as limited non-food costs.