United States Department of Agriculture

Food and Nutrition Service

3101 Park Center Drive
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SUBJECT: Frequently Asked Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program Questions

TO: Regional Directors
Special Nutrition Programs
All Regions

State Directors
Special Nutrition Programs
All States

The new FFVP began operations under the authority and provisions set forth in The Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008, (P.L. 110-234), the Farm Bill on July 1, 2008. The Farm Bill amended the National School Lunch Act to add a new section 19, the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP). The purpose of this memorandum is to provide answers to some of the frequently asked questions gleaned from our conference calls which address key program operation issues.

Q. What are the FFVP hours of operation?
A. The program is available only during the school day, not before or after regular school hours.

Q. Can the fresh fruits and vegetables be served at the same time as the breakfast or lunch program but in a separate part of the cafeteria?
A. No. The FFVP can not be provided at the same time as the service of the breakfast or lunch program.

Q. How many times during the school week must fresh fruits and vegetables be offered?
A. We expect schools to offer fresh fruits and vegetables as many times as possible during the school week.

Q. Must fresh fruits and vegetables be offered the entire school year or can schools choose to offer the program a limited number of months.
A. We expect that the Program be offered through the entire school year and not limited to certain months. One goal of the program is to effect a change in eating habits and a continual exposure to fresh fruits and vegetables is necessary/beneficial in making this change

Q. Can RCCI's participate in the FFVP?
A. RCCI's can participate provided they operate an elementary school program during the day, and participate in the NSLP.

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Frequently Asked Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program Questions

Q. Can FFVP funds be used to purchase Nutrition Education Materials?
A. No, we suggest that schools find other methods to fund the cost of nutrition education materials.

Q. Can schools use FFVP funds for promotional costs?
A. No, costs associated with promotional activities can not be funded by the FFVP.

Q. Can we use trail mix, nuts or dried fruit?
A. No. Only fresh fruit and vegetables can be purchased.

Q. Can fruit smoothies, veggie pizzas and fruit pizzas be provided under the FFVP?
A. No.

Q. Are dips allowed?
A. Dips may not be used for fruits. However, in the interest of promoting the consumption of vegetables, the judicious use of *low fat* and *non-fat* dips for vegetables in a "serving size" quantity is allowed.

Q. Can cooked vegetables be provided and reimbursed in the FFVP?
A. Schools may only cook fresh vegetables (These vegetables should be ones not normally eaten raw) as part of a nutrition education lesson not more than once a week. The vegetables must be fresh; not frozen, canned or dried. Schools may not claim any additional ingredients that are part of the cooked fresh vegetable dish.
As an example, a class may study nutrition, and part of the lesson may be to learn about specific vegetables and their nutritional value.

Q. Do schools have to submit all supporting documentation with their claim for reimbursement?
A. No, however they must maintain this information for review.

Q. Are schools required to have separate purchase orders/invoices for the FFVP?
A. No provided they can demonstrate on the orders which purchases pertain to the FFVP.

Q. What are the FFVP funds obligation timeframes on a fiscal year or school year basis?
A. For **Schools**:
July FFVP funds: must be obligated by September 30 of that year.
October FFVP funds: must be obligated by the following June 30.

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For **States**:
July FFVP funds-States that choose to receive a proportional share for State administrative expenses must obligate these funds by September 30 of that year. The normal fiscal year closeout timeframes apply with funds expensed by December 30.
October FFVP funds-The October obligation timeframe differs for FFVP State administrative funds than those for schools in that the State's funds may be obligated until September 30. The normal fiscal year closeout timeframes apply with funds expensed by December 30.

As States are aware, they must determine their total FFVP administrative funds allowed under the formula before funds are allocated to schools. We recommend that the State agency take their portion for State administrative expenses from the October allocation in order to allow schools sufficient funds to start-up the program.

Q. When will the new FFVP guidance manual be available?
A. We are in the process of drafting new guidance and will notify all State and Regional Offices as soon as the new manual is available on our web site. We hope to have the manual available by early September, 2008. The revised manual will incorporate the FAQs contained in this memorandum and the recently issued implementation memorandums, SP-31 dated July 11, 2008 and SP-33 dated July 31, 2008. The online manual will serve as the resource for the program and will be managed electronically to provide updates as needed.

The FFVP guidance manual that was used for prior program operations is no longer a reflection of current program operations under the authority and provisions of the new section 19 of the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act. Therefore, we ask that the States or schools not use this "old" version. We have removed the FFVP Guidance Manual from the FNS website because it is no longer accurate.

Original Signed

Robert Eadie for
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