



State of New Jersey

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Division of Food & Nutrition
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To: Elementary Schools with 50% or More Students Eligible for Free or Reduced Price Meals, that Participate in the National School Lunch Program

From: Janet Celi, FFVP Coordinator
NJDA/Division of Food and Nutrition

Date: March 24, 2021

Re: 2021-2022 Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program

Please pass this along to Food Service Directors and any other appropriate school staff, such as wellness committee coordinators, school nurses, or teachers.

The USDA Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Program (FFVP) will continue for the 2021-2022 school year. The New Jersey Department of Agriculture is now accepting applications from New Jersey **elementary schools with 50% or more students eligible for free or reduced-price meals** to participate in this program for the 2021-2022 school year.

- Included is an Application Packet that you must complete and **e-mail by Friday, May 7, 2021** if you are interested in being considered for this program. **Applications that are received after May 7, 2021 will be eliminated.**

The FFVP provides funding for schools to serve free fresh fruits and vegetables to students during the school day, outside of regular mealtimes. The goals of the FFVP are to:

- Create healthier school environments by providing healthier food choices;
- Expand the variety of fruits and vegetables children experience;
- Increase children's fruit and vegetable consumption;
- Make a difference in children's diets to impact their present and future health.

This school year 168 schools are participating in the FFVP. The funding for 2021-2022 will range from \$50 - \$75 per student for the school year.

All schools currently participating in the FFVP will automatically be enrolled in the Program for 2021-2022. **These schools do not need to submit this application form.**

All eligible schools within a district can apply. Applications should be submitted by individual schools as they are listed on their Child Nutrition Program's Schedule "A". It is IMPORTANT that you check with your Food Service Director to find out how your school is listed on the Schedule "A". This is essential if your school is an Annex. Each school listed on the Schedule "A" must complete and submit a separate application based on their specific needs. Schools will be selected based on the following criteria:

A- SELECTION CRITERIA

To be selected for the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program, a school must:

- **Have 50 percent or more of its students eligible for free or reduced-price meals.**
(USDA requires that priority must be given to schools with the greatest percentages of low-income students.)
- **Be an elementary school.**
 - ✓ *Early Childhood Schools are eligible if they participate in the National School Lunch Program.*
 - ✓ *K-8 Schools are eligible.*
 - ✓ *Middle Schools and High Schools are not eligible.*
- **Operate the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) in good standing.**
- **Be in compliance with all NJDA grants and program regulations and procedures.**
- **Submit a complete application packet, separate and specific for each school.**
(Applications should be submitted by individual schools as they are listed on their Child Nutrition Program's Schedule "A". The information provided should be tailored to the specific school applying for the program. Duplicate responses that are submitted for several schools will result in the elimination of each of these schools' applications.)
- **Submit a certification of support from each school, signed by the school principal.**
- **Schools meeting the above criteria will be selected by a committee from the NJ Department of Agriculture based on:**
 1. **Their percent of free/reduced price eligible students**
 2. **Their questionnaire responses indicating their ability to successfully implement the program and fully utilize the funding. All questions must be answered. All information requested on Attachment "A" must be complete and accurate. Missing information or unanswered questions will result in the elimination of the application.**

B- EXPECTATIONS OF PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS

- Selected schools must provide **fresh** fruits and vegetables **free to all students at times other than at meal service periods.** *(Fruits and vegetables are not permitted to go home with students or be served for Afterschool Snack Programs.)*
- Participating schools must submit information monthly about participation, purchases, and costs, to the New Jersey Department of Agriculture through SNEARS, the web-based reporting system used for the school lunch program. All cost documentation must be kept on file for review.
- Schools interested in applying for the FFVP are strongly encouraged to read USDA's Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program Handbook for Schools, which is available online at: <https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/resource-files/handbook.pdf>
- **Selected schools that have never been in the program before MUST participate in an orientation or your school will be eliminated.** *(Specific dates to be announced.)*

C- USE OF FUNDS

- Funds are to be used primarily to purchase **fresh** fruits and vegetables to be made available at no charge to students. A small percentage of funds may be used for operating and administrative costs, such as labor for preparation and distribution of fruits and vegetables, equipment and administrative costs to manage the program.

D- HOW TO APPLY

- Complete 2021-2022 FFVP Application Packet and **e-mail by Friday, May 7, 2021**, for consideration to participate in the 2021-2022 FFVP. **Applications received after May 7, 2021 will be eliminated.**
- If you have questions, contact Janet Celi at 609-744-3562 or Jackie Bricker at 609-847-9079.
- E-mail Application Packet to: janet.celi@ag.nj.gov

E- PROGRAM TIMELINE

- May 7, 2021 FFVP Application Packet Due
- June 30, 2021 Notification of Selected Schools
- August & September 2021 Mandatory orientation for schools new to FFVP
(*Tentative*) (*Specific dates to be announced.*)
- September 2021 FFVP Voucher Webinar (*Specific date to be announced.*)

Application packets must be e-mailed by Friday, May 7, 2021.

Application Packet Must Include the Following Two (2) Attachments (*Incomplete packets will be disqualified*):

Attachment A - Completed School Information and School Data (*1 page*)

NOTE: Data Must Be Accurate!

Attachment B – Completed Questionnaire and Certification of Support (*1 page*)

NOTE: Electronic Signature is Acceptable.

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