

**Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP):  
Questions and Answers (Q&A)  
Program Year 2013-2014**

**General/Funding/Program Agreement**

- 1) **Question:** What will be the duration of the program?

**Answer:** The program agreement will be in effect for 12 months from July 1, 2013 through June 30, 2014.

- 2) **Question:** Will we have to sign an addendum to our Permanent Agreement with the Ohio Department of Education?

**Answer:** Yes. The Ohio Department of Education, Office for Child Nutrition (ODE/OCN) will provide this document at the kick-off meeting.

- 3) **Question:** How much of a school's FFVP allocation can the State agency advance to the school?

**Answer:** As of July 31, 2008, the State agency may no longer provide advanced funds to FFVP schools.

- 4) **Question:** How will the funds be disbursed?

**Answer:** Funds must be disbursed as reimbursement based on claims submitted.

- 5) **Question:** Must FFVP State Level administrative funds be tracked separately from other funding sources, such as State administrative expenses (SAE)?

**Answer:** State agencies must be able to account for FFVP State administrative expenditures and to ensure proper and timely expenditure of funds. Whatever tracking method States have that will show these expenditures separately from other **State level expenditures is acceptable.**

- 6) **Question:** A school purchases equipment either with 100% FFVP funds or a percentage of funds (or a school food authority (SFA) on the part of a school(s)), but the following year the school no longer participates in the FFVP. What happens to the equipment?

**Answer:** It is the responsibility of the SFA or school authority (SA) to direct the disposition of equipment for those schools that no longer participate in the FFVP in keeping with existing guidance at 7CFR 3016.32(c) and (e)(1) and (2). In general, when the equipment is no longer needed for the original program or project, the equipment may be used in other activities currently or previously supported by a Federal agency.

Any school requesting FFVP funds for equipment must provide justification for the equipment. The justification should include an explanation on why additional equipment is needed and why current equipment cannot suffice, the extent of the program, and any other information that will support the request for additional equipment.

Schools requesting equipment that may be used in other school feeding programs must **prorate** the cost of the equipment among all programs that will use the equipment. Along with the

equipment justification, schools must also indicate percent usage for the FFVP, and make sure to only claim that portion directly associated with FFVP operations. The FFVP represents a small program and therefore the funds claimed under the FFVP should represent the smaller portion.

## Reporting

- 7) **Question:** What data will schools need to collect? What types of reports will be required for schools and SFAs? What paperwork should the schools keep?

**Answer:** Schools shall report to ODE Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program monthly program expenditures in order to generate a claim for reimbursement via the Claims Reimbursement and Reporting System (CRRS).

As with any permanent program, schools are expected to retain paperwork to support their claim for reimbursement, including invoices, receipts, etc for three years past the current school year.

- 8) **Question:** Are the FFVP funds subject to audits?

**Answer:** Yes. As with any permanent program, the FFVP is subject to all program requirements including audits.

## Procedural Issues/General

- 9) **Question:** When should the fruits and vegetables be made available?

**Answer:** In order to avoid conflicts with federally funded meal programs, schools must use the FFVP funding to introduce healthy snacks at other points within the school day in which meal programs are not operating. FFVP may not be made available before or after school. Schools may offer them in classrooms, hallways, and as part of classroom activities such as nutrition education. Schools must offer the produce to all children in the school and may not use the produce as a reward or take away produce for disciplinary purposes. Produce may be offered on alternative days to different grades or to one class at a time for nutrition education purposes because, at some point, all children would have the same access.

- 10) **Question:** Can the fruits/vegetables be provided at parent/teacher conferences? At other functions such as “Grandparent Day” or an evening or weekend program where most of the building's children gather but neighborhood children also attend?

**Answer:** The FFVP is not intended for community residents, or adults attending school functions. The FFVP is only available during normal school hours.

- 11) **Question:** Can adults participate in the FFVP?

**Answer:** Teachers may participate under the following conditions:

- Only teachers who are directly responsible for serving the fruit or vegetable to their students in a classroom setting may partake of the fruit and/or vegetable
- The FFVP is not available to the general teacher population and other adults in the school
- Teachers choosing to participate with their students are strongly encouraged to include a nutrition education component to enhance their positive role modeling

**12) Question:** Can fruits and vegetables be offered after school?

**Answer:** As of July 31, 2008, the FFVP may no longer be served after school.

**13) Question:** There is a non-school-district sponsored Head Start program operating in an elementary school that was selected for the FFVP. Are the Head Start children eligible to participate in the FFVP?

**Answer:** Any child in the building during the time the FFVP is in daily operation may participate.

**14) Question:** May split session kindergarten classes in the Special Milk Program participate in the FFVP?

**Answer:** Yes

**15) Question:** Can the FFVP be used in other programs such as during a summer school program or in a year-round school?

**Answer:** The FFVP may not be offered during a summer school program. The FFVP may be offered year round if the school awarded operates a year round schedule for all students enrolled in the school.

**16) Question:** May more than one distribution technique be used in the same school?

**Answer:** Schools are encouraged to develop innovative and varied methods to offer the fruits and vegetables to students. Schools may want to have different methods based on the ages of the students, such as classroom distribution for younger students and hallway distribution for older students.

**17) Question:** What may be done with leftovers?

**Answer:** Food purchased with FFVP funds should be used in the FFVP. Any leftovers should be recycled in accordance with board of health requirements. The first priority for leftovers is use in the FFVP. However, if leftovers cannot be easily used in the FFVP, they may be used in the meal programs or transferred to a homeless shelter in accordance with applicable board of health requirements – but only to avoid waste.

**18) Question:** Can students take the fruits and vegetables out of the school (e.g., on the bus, on the playground, home)?

**Answer:** The intent of the program is for students to consume the fresh fruit and vegetables during the school day, separately from the lunch or breakfast meal.

**19) Question:** Can fresh fruit or vegetable baskets be purchased with the FFVP funds?

**Answer:** No, this not an acceptable use of FFVP funds.

## **Foods**

**20) Question:** Must only fresh fruits be offered in the FFVP?

**Answer:** Yes, only fresh fruits and vegetable are allowable. Canned, frozen, or dried fruit or vegetables are **not** allowed as part of the FFVP. Dicing and slicing into smaller pieces for ease of service, as well as the addition of ascorbic acid is acceptable.

**21) Question:** Is “fruit leather” allowed?

**Answer:** No

**22) Question:** Are dried fruits and vegetables allowed in the FFVP?

**Answer:** No. Dried fruits and vegetables are not an allowable expense.

**23) Question:** Are there any requirements for serving sizes?

**Answer:** The servings offered should be appropriate for the age and consumption pattern of participating children.

**24) Question:** Can commodities be used in the FFVP?

**Answer:** Yes; commodity items such as low-fat or non-fat dips can be offered with vegetables according to suggested serving sizes of 1-2 tablespoons or less.

**25) Question:** Can FFVP funds be used to purchase fruits and vegetables through Department of Defense’s (DOD) Fresh or DOD Farm to School program?

**Answer:** Yes.

**26) Question:** Can trail mix be offered?

**Answer:** As of July 31, 2008, trail mix is not an acceptable FFVP product.

**27) Question:** Is it allowable to have a type of dip offered with cut-up fresh vegetables like celery, carrots, etc.?

**Answer:** Dips can only be served with fresh vegetables. If you choose to serve dip with vegetables, make sure to only offer low-fat yogurt-based or other low-fat or non-fat dips.

**28) Question:** Can a fresh fruit pizza or vegetable pizza be offered in the FFVP?

**Answer:** Fresh fruit /vegetable pizzas are not acceptable products for the FFVP.

**29) Question:** Are salads acceptable?

**Answer:** Yes, fresh salads are acceptable products for the FFVP.

**30) Question:** Can full-strength fruit juice be offered?

**Answer:** As of December 2009, freshly squeezed juice is not an acceptable product for the FFVP. Schools cannot use purchased produce to produce juices through the FFVP.

**31) Question:** Can fresh fruit be used to make smoothies to serve to students?

**Answer:** Smoothies are not an acceptable FFVP product.

**32) Question:** Can fresh fruit or vegetable baskets be purchased with the FFVP funds?

**Answer:** No, this not an acceptable use of FFVP funds.

### **Use of Funds/Allowable Costs/General**

**33) Question:** What are allowable costs under the FFVP?

**Answer:** Under the FFVP, costs are broken out as Operating Costs and Administrative Costs.

Operating Costs are items such as food, value added items, dips etc., small supplies e.g. napkins, paper plates and the like, and labor costs directly related to the preparation or serving of the fresh fruits and vegetables.

Administrative Costs are such costs as equipment purchases; leasing and labor costs **not** related to the preparation and serving of fresh fruits and vegetables, (subject to the 10% limit). Please keep in mind that Congressional intent and primary purpose of the FFVP is to provide fresh fruits and vegetables to school children, and this purpose should not be diminished.

Labor costs in either the 'operating or administrative' category must be minimal. SFA/State agencies must, as part of their review process, review these costs and as appropriate work with schools reporting high costs in these categories. Volunteer parents or students can help to reduce these costs.

**34) Question:** Can schools purchase non-domestic fruits and vegetables with FFVP funds?

**Answer:** The "Buy American" requirement in the National School Lunch Program (as provided in 7 CFR 210.21(d)) applies to purchases made with FFVP funds. Schools must follow the same policies.

Produce such as bananas, which are generally not available as a domestic product may be purchased even though it is not domestic. Schools needing additional guidance on specific purchases should contact their State agency for assistance.

### **Administrative Cost Issues**

**35) Question:** Is the ten percent limit on administrative funds based on the total allocation received or on the amount of program funds actually spent?

**Answer:** The ten percent is based on the total allocation approved for the school. Establishing this predetermined amount of funding for administration of the program allows schools to adequately plan for their needs.

**36) Question:** Is the cost of labor in preparing and serving fruits and vegetables considered an administrative cost or an operating cost? Can student labor be paid from FFVP funds?

**Answer:** Student labor for example, vocational education work study programs or student organizations used to prepare and offer the fruits and vegetables are allowable operating costs.

**37) Question:** Can equipment and other non-food items purchased with FFVP funds be transferred to the school meal programs at the end of the FFVP?

**Answer:** Equipment and supply disposition are subject to the rules found in circular 3016. For questions on the disposition of items at the end of the grant period please contact our office.

**38) Question:** May part of the 10% administrative funds be used for costs such as a field trip to an orchard or a farm market or for planting a garden or orchard at the school?

**Answer:** No. FFVP funds may not be used for nutrition education or FFVP promotion costs. This includes field trips and garden supplies.

**39) Question:** Can the funds be used for nutrition education?

**Answer:** Program funds may not be used for nutrition education materials. Schools are encouraged to conduct nutrition education and use free resources as provided in the FFVP handbook.

**40) Question:** Can the State agency retain a percentage of the funds?

**Answer:** State agencies have the authorization to retain a limited amount of program funds for FFVP administration.

## **Food Cost Issues**

**41) Question:** Can a cooked vegetable be used as part of the FFVP?

**Answer:** Yes, a cooked, fresh vegetable dish can only be provided once a week and must include a nutrition education component.

**42) Question:** Four cases of bananas are purchased for the FFVP. Three of the cases are used but one is not and cannot be held over the weekend. The case that is not used for the FFVP will be used in the lunch program. Should the cost be charged to the lunch program or to the FFVP?

**Answer:** Food purchased with FFVP funds should be used in the FFVP. Any leftovers should be recycled in accordance with board of health requirements. The first priority for leftovers is use in the FFVP. However, if leftovers cannot be easily used in the FFVP, they may be used in the meal programs or if that is not practical transferred to a homeless shelter in accordance with applicable board of health requirements – but only to avoid waste.

**43) Question:** Can schools purchase value added or enhanced products?

**Answer:** Yes, funds may be used to purchase products that include dip, sliced, individually bagged fruits and vegetables, etc. The cost of these enhanced items would be included as part of the food cost.

**44) Question:** Can schools purchase fresh fruits and vegetable from their own school gardens using FFVP funds?

**Answer:** Yes. The funds must accrue back to the school food service account.

### **Evaluation/End of Year Report**

**45) Question:** What plans does FNS have to evaluate the FFVP?

**Answer:** Schools will be asked to provide responses to questions of this nature at the end of each program year by completing an *End of the School Year Report*.

**46) Question:** Will FNS require any mid-year assessment of the FFVP as was done in the pilot program as part of the evaluation?

**Answer:** No. At this time, we do not anticipate any mid-year assessments.