Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program Handbook for Schools

Making the Best Decisions for Introducing Fruits and Vegetables to Students

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Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program
Handbook for Schools

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Introduction

The FFVP (Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program) provides all children in participating schools with a variety of free fresh fruits and vegetables throughout the school day. It is an effective and creative way of introducing fresh fruits and vegetables as healthy snack options. The FFVP also encourages community partnerships to support the schools when they offer free fruit and vegetables to children during the school day.

The goal of the FFVP is 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.

The FFVP initially began as a pilot project authorized by Congress in 2002. The pilot provided funds to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables in four States and an Indian Tribal Organization (ITO) for the 2002-2003 School Year in 207 schools. The purpose of the pilot was to determine the best practices for increasing fruit (both fresh and dried) and fresh vegetable consumption.

The tremendous success of this pilot led to the enactment of legislation in 2004 to expand the FFVP and to make it a permanent program under the National School Lunch Act. The law not only added four additional states and two ITOs but it also provided the funds needed to purchase the fresh fruits and vegetables. Each year, beginning School Year 2004-2005, 25 schools in each state and a total of 25 schools among the three ITOs could participate in the FFVP.

The Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2006, signed November 10, 2005, Public Law 109-97 appropriated $6,000,000 to further expand the FFVP in six additional States, with 25 schools in each state.

This program is seen as an important catalyst for change in efforts to combat childhood obesity by helping children learn more healthful eating habits. The FFVP introduces school children to a variety of produce that they otherwise might not have had the opportunity to sample.

Program Administration and School Selection

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) administers the FFVP at the national and regional levels. Within the participating states, the FFVP is administered by the State agency that administers the National School Lunch Program.

The State agencies solicit and review applications from interested schools. Twenty five schools in each state are selected to participate based on established criteria in the law and guidance from FNS. States have the option of allowing different schools to participate each year.

(Please note: There are a total of 25 schools among the three Indian Tribal Organizations.)

How It Works

Reimbursement for the FFVP is the same as with other Child Nutrition Programs schools are reimbursed by the State agency for purchases of fresh fruits, dried fruits, and fresh vegetables served free to children during the school day. Within basic requirements, the FFVP gives your school flexibility to develop your own implementation plan, involve your teachers and other school staff, work out problems, and reach your own solutions. Your school decides when, where, and how you want to implement the FFVP, and what mix of fresh fruits and vegetables you want to offer your children.

To be selected for the Program your school:

- ✓ Must agree to make free fresh fruits and vegetables available to all enrolled children.
- ✓ Must let the children and the parents of your school know that *free* fresh fruits and vegetables are available at school.
- ✓ Must have documented support of the food service manager, principal, and district superintendent.
- ✓ Must comply with state guidelines on making an application.
- ✓ Should have a higher number of lower-income children. The majority of schools selected within a state should be those in which 50 percent or more of the children are eligible for free or reduced price meals.
- ✓ Must submit implementation plans that include outside support or collaboration with state, local, or private partners. These partnerships would help the school with acquisition, handling, promotion, distribution, nutrition education, or other activities that contribute to the goals of the FFVP.

Additionally, USDA is looking for:

- ✓ a diverse blend of schools for the program—urban, rural, and suburban as well as large and small schools
- ✓ a variety of implementation strategies
- ✓ complementary nutrition education and promotion activities

As a participating school you:

- ✓ Receive funds allocated to your state, based on the total enrollment of the schools participating in the Program.
- ✓ May use 10% of your school's total grant for administrative costs.
- ✓ Receive reimbursement for the costs of purchasing, preparing, and serving fresh fruits and vegetables to children in your school.

Please note: If your school has 100 or fewer children, you receive a slightly higher rate of funding per student than other schools.

What should you do to make sure the FFVP runs smoothly?

Musts:

- ✓ Establish an implementation or operational plan for your school which addresses "who does what and where" to ensure that all program operations are met. In addition, you may also consider developing a monthly budget to track expenditures.
- ✓ Pay attention to the Program's logistics, right from the start, to make sure food service and other school staff understand how the FFVP works
- ✓ Involve and promote the FFVP to the entire school community.
- ✓ Establish partnerships on a local, State, or national level.

- ✓ Incorporate nutrition education into the daily curriculum, preferably during the service of fresh fruits and vegetables.

- ✓ Be familiar with the purchasing process of fresh produce and what is available locally, through Department of Defense Fresh, or through the Farm to School Initiative.

- ✓ Be familiar with proper handling and storage of fresh produce to prevent spoilage and loss.

- ✓ Be familiar with all Food Safety and Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) principals for fresh produce.

- ✓ Process reports on time, retain records, and comply with all other paperwork and reporting requirements.

Best Practices:

- ✓ Anticipate the need for extra staff time to prepare and deliver food, and process reports and other paperwork.

- ✓ Coordinate efforts to inform principals, teachers, school staff, children, and parents about the FFVP.

- ✓ Respond to reports from custodians about trash and messes.

- ✓ Determine the appropriate types of produce to serve and the appropriate portion sizes. Keep in mind the types of produce as well as the portion sizes depends on the ages and preferences of your students as well as displays and the ways you offer the fruits and vegetables to your students.

- ✓ Identify with your stakeholders the best methods for distributing and promoting fruits and vegetables to your students.

Who Can Receive Fruits and Vegetables

Musts:

- ✓ The FFVP is for all the children who normally attend your school. Any child who is considered a member of the school and who is present during the service of fruits and vegetables may participate.

- ✓ The FFVP is not intended for community residents, or for adults who are attending school functions that do not involve students.

- ✓ You can promote the FFVP by doing a demonstration for the parents as long as the children of your school are present but, you cannot operate the FFVP at school functions that only involve adults.

- ✓ Free fruits and vegetables are intended for all children and cannot be used as gifts or rewards. You cannot withhold them or use them to discipline children.

Best Practices:

- ✓ All children who are enrolled in a Head Start program, split-session kindergarten classes, or a child care center located in your school are also eligible for the FFVP.

- ✓ Encourage teachers to participate with their students. Teachers model healthy eating by eating fruits and vegetables in front of the children. They can help monitor and direct the food distribution, and use the opportunity to talk with students about nutrition, health, hygiene and manners.

The Best Time to Serve Fruits and Vegetables

Your school has flexibility to schedule FFVP at any time during the school day during a school activity for the students of the participating school. Many schools serve fruits and vegetables multiple times during the school day so different groups of students have more access to fruits and vegetables.

- ✓ You can serve fruits and vegetables before school, during school, after school, or at any time there is a school activity that your students attend. At a minimum, fruits and vegetables must be served during the school day in order to provide the opportunity to incorporate a nutrition lesson along with the service of produce.

- ✓ You could even schedule the FFVP on alternate days to children in different grades, or to one class at a time as part of nutrition education curriculum.

    - o If you decide to serve students on alternate days, make sure over the course of the school year, all children will have the same access to the Program.

- ✓ The FFVP cannot be used to replace foods that are part of the reimbursable school meal.

Schools can offer the FFVP during the breakfast, lunch or afterschool snack service in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). Many schools offer the FFVP at times during the day when children would otherwise be hungry, or when they might need an energy boost to improve their attention in the classroom. If you choose to offer the FFVP during breakfast, lunch, or snacks under the NSLP, the FFVP cannot be served as a component of the reimbursable meal, and should be served in a separate area in the cafeteria from the regular program meals/snacks.

Multiple distribution times may be used and may be the best way to maximize participation.

The Best Places to Serve Fruits and Vegetables

The most successful distribution areas for the FFVP will be places where you can ensure that children can easily reach the fruits and vegetables.

The techniques you use to distribute fruits and vegetables will depend on a number of factors. Consider grade level, maturity of your students, time available to eat the fruits and vegetables, time required for preparation and service of fresh fruits and vegetables, extra clean-up, garbage concerns and staffing issues.

Schools offer the FFVP to children:

- ✓ Inside classrooms
- ✓ In hallways
- ✓ Inside the nurse's and school's offices
- ✓ In the cafeteria
- ✓ At kiosks
- ✓ In free vending machines
- ✓ On school buses
- ✓ As part of nutrition education activities
- ✓ At student club meetings

Most schools use classrooms or a combination of classrooms and kiosks to deliver fruits and vegetables to children.

Offering fruits and vegetables to children in their classrooms helps you reduce messes, deal more effectively with disruptive behavior, and make the most of learning time.

To minimize interruptions to learning time, find ways to balance eating with classroom activities, such as silent reading or a nutrition education lesson.

Serving from kiosks lets you offer more choices and allows easier access. Consider staggering access to lessen confusion in hallways. Be sure to

serve fruits and vegetables that can be handled easily. Have enough so you do not run out of the children's favorites.

Vending machines may be a more popular way of distributing fruits and vegetables in high schools and middle schools. Be sure to select fruits and vegetables that are suitable, and to allow adequate time and staff for restocking. If the vending machine's capacity is small, consider adding traveling kiosks as supplements.

To help your school's FFVP run smoothly, you can develop guidelines to remind children of good manners for when they receive and eat their fruit and vegetable snacks, and dispose of their trash. Setting up policies on trash disposal and clean up will also improve the fruit and vegetable service.

When you plan your Program, try to create serving areas that will encourage children to enjoy eating their snacks, while lessening your concerns about the potential for messes.

To a limited extent fruits and vegetables can be served to students while they are riding the school bus, or on field trips with their classes, or playing in "away games" with their school athletic teams. Providing a nutrition education component while serving fresh fruits and vegetables is the ideal way to introduce and reinforce good eating habits.

Which Fruits and Vegetables to Purchase and Serve

The FFVP introduces children to new and different fruits and vegetables, like kiwi, star fruit, pomegranate, rutabaga, and kohlrabi. Fruits and vegetables are good low-calorie, low-fat sources of vitamins, minerals, and fiber. The FFVP shows children that fresh fruits and vegetables are healthy and tasty alternatives to snacks that are high in fat, sugar, or salt.

The produce you serve should be presented in such a manner which will be easily identified or recognized for what it is. Children should be able to connect to fruits like juicy ripe peaches and tart crunchy apples, without additives such as dips. Encourage children to enjoy fruits as they are.

As noted below, low fat and low fat yogurt based dips are acceptable in very limited amounts and as long as they are used infrequently.

Slicing whole fruits and vegetables may make them easier for children to eat.

The FFVP does <u>not</u> allow:

- ✓ Processed or preserved fruits and vegetables, such as canned, frozen or vacuum packed.
- ✓ Dip for fruits
- ✓ Fruit leather
- ✓ Jellied fruit
- ✓ Full-strength/<u>purchase</u> freshly squeezed fruit or vegetable juices.
- ✓ Trail mixes or fruit mixtures with candy.
- ✓ Cottage cheese
- ✓ Fruit desserts such as fruit pizzas made with cookie dough crust, and fruit tarts.

The FFVP limits:

- ✓ Service of dips: if you serve dip with vegetables, choose low fat yogurt-based or other low-fat dips. The amount used should be what is commonly noted as a "Serving Size" for condiments and as shown on produce "Nutrition Facts" labels; 1 to 2 tablespoons.
- ✓ Freshly squeezed juices (NOT store bought juices labeled as freshly squeezed) prepared as part of a nutrition education lesson and fruit smoothies to no more than once a week.
- ✓ Fruit smoothies to fresh fruit and ice without other additives such as ice cream and no more that once a week. Bananas may be used as a thickener.
- ✓ Trail mixes must always exclude candy.
- ✓ Veggie pizzas are limited to once per week

Dried and fresh commodity fruits and other commodity items, and peanut butter (as a dip), may be used for the FFVP. As a reminder, they may not be claimed for reimbursement.

A goal of the FFVP is to expand the varieties of fruits and vegetables your students consume. To broaden their exposure, try "sample sizes" to introduce new items and then adjust your ordering accordingly. As much as possible, you should not limit the choices you offer. Find innovative and fun ways to encourage your students to try different foods.

If you have any questions on FFVP purchases, contact your State agency for guidance and technical assistance before you make purchases.

What should you do in your school?

- ✓ Adjust your selection of fruits and vegetables to purchase and serve more of your students' favorites, and avoid items that you have seen children waste.

- ✓ Be sure fruits and vegetables are appealing and easy to grab. If necessary, precut them so they are easier, more appetizing, and not as messy for children.

- ✓ If using dips, serve a “serving size” to encourage children to eat vegetables. Consider using prepackaged items which are not as messy as bowls of dip or peanut butter.

- ✓ Introduce children to different varieties of a fruit (such as Bartlett, Bosc, and Seckel Pears) or a vegetable (Bell, Sweet Banana, and Poblano Peppers).

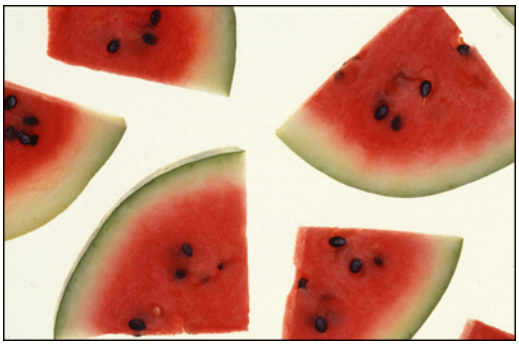
- ✓ Consider more pre-cut fruits and vegetables and pre-prepared trays to control labor costs and handle the lack of extra storage space.

- ✓ Offer whole fruits on days when staff cannot prepare trays of pre-sliced fruits or vegetables.

- ✓ Schedule the serving of prepared fruits and vegetables as a nutrition education activity. The FFVP fruits and vegetables can be diced into salads, shredded into coleslaw, chopped into salsa, sliced onto pizza, freshly squeezed into juice, blended into smoothies, or prepared in a variety of ways as part of your nutrition education activities.

- ✓ Show your students how to make a veggie pizza, a fruit smoothie or other food that uses fruits and vegetables.

How Schools Purchase Fruits and Vegetables



FFVP schools must follow proper procurement procedures.

Produce must always be graded, and inspected according to existing local, State and Federal guidelines.

Finding suitable vendors or suppliers that will give you a reliable supply of produce has been a challenge for a number of schools. Many schools purchase fruits and vegetables from food wholesalers or brokers. The vendors deliver shipments of fresh produce directly to the schools.

Local grocery stores and other retailers are not only good suppliers of fruits and vegetables; they might also be valued partners for nutrition education and promotion activities.

You can support local agricultural producers by buying fresh produce at farmers' markets, orchards, and growers in your community. Produce purchased with FFVP funds is meant to be used in the FFVP only. They cannot be used as a replacement in the National School Lunch Program.

As with other school meal programs, plan accordingly to prevent leftovers. Follow your local board of health/local public health department guidelines for handling leftovers. If you cannot easily use the leftovers in the FFVP, you may be able to use them in your school meal programs, or give them to children to take with them on their way home at the end of the school day. However, plan as much as possible to be able to use the fruits and vegetables purchased with FFVP funds as part of this program.

What should you do in your school?

- ✓ 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. 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 or how an item would be affected by the Buy American provision should contact their State agency for assistance.

- ✓ Order produce through DoD-Fresh, the Department of Defense’s Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program. DoD-Fresh uses a large network of produce suppliers to distribute a wide variety of American-grown fresh produce directly to schools. Deliveries are frequent and on time, and the cost is reasonable.

- ✓ Buy produce from your local grocery stores and farmers’ markets, or contact conventional and organic growers, and dried fruit producers and distributors directly if you cannot find vendors to supply the quantity or variety of fruits and vegetables your school needs.

- ✓ Make a commitment to farm-to-cafeteria projects by purchasing fresh fruits and vegetables from growers and farmers in your community. Farm to cafeteria projects are collaborations between farmers and schools that increases your access to fresh local farm products, and expands market opportunities for family farms.

Nutrition Education in the FFVP

The primary focus of the FFVP is to bring fresh produce into the school for distribution to the children. For too many children, the produce they see in school might be their first exposure to fresh fruits and vegetables, and the only ones they will see all day. That is why nutrition education and promotion is critical to the Program's success.

What should you do in your school?

- ✓ Develop nutrition education activities that fit your students and your school community.
- ✓ Use the free or low-cost resources and educational materials that are available to schools from USDA's Team Nutrition, 5 A Day, and other FFVP National Partners.
- ✓ Log on to TeamNutrition.usda.gov, MyPyramid.gov, and the Partner web. All schools will have access to the Partner Web where you will find information on the FFVP policy, resources, and best practices.
- ✓ Schedule the serving of prepared fruits and vegetables as classroom nutrition education activities where children can dice, shred, chop, slice, squeeze, and blend the FFVP fruits and vegetables with their classmates and teachers.
- ✓ Adapt lesson plans to include nutrition education.
- ✓ Plan assemblies and health fairs. Have students create displays using nutrition education materials and fresh fruits and vegetables.
- ✓ Consult with the FFVP partners to obtain low cost or no cost promotional items such as informational fliers, pamphlets, posters, banners, and buttons.

- ✓ Use student address systems and student broadcasts to share educational information about the importance of eating healthy.

- ✓ Promote the FFVP on monthly menus that go out to parents. Also, add a monthly newsletter that addresses nutrition education and the benefits of fresh fruits and vegetables. Include the students by having them create and publish the newsletter.

- ✓ Plant an outside garden or a potted garden indoors.

Reimbursable Costs

Program costs are broken out into two categories – operating and administrative. However, the allowable costs under these categories may be different from those in the National School Lunch Program.

Operating Costs

Operating costs are the costs of running your service of the FFVP. These are your documented expenses for acquiring, delivering, preparing, and serving fruits and vegetables. They include the FFVP portion of the goods and services your school pays for:

- ✓ Buying food, such as fruits, vegetables, dips, and condiments
- ✓ Buying nonfood items like napkins, paper plates, serving bowls and trays, cleaning supplies, and trash bags
- ✓ Value added services such as pre-cut produce, ready-made produce trays, and delivery charges
- ✓ Salaries and fringe benefits for employees who do such tasks as washing and chopping produce, preparing trays, distributing produce to classrooms, setting up kiosks, restocking vending machines, and cleaning up

Administrative Costs

Administrative costs are limited to ten percent of your school's total FFVP grant. Administrative costs are the documented expenses you have for planning the Program, managing the paperwork, obtaining the equipment you need, and all other aspects of FFVP that are not related to the preparation and service of fruits and vegetables.

Administrative costs include the FFVP share of:

- ✓ Purchasing or leasing equipment such as refrigerators, coolers, portable kiosks, carts, and portable food bars

- ✓ Salaries and fringe benefits for employees who compile and maintain claims for reimbursement and other financial reports, plan and write menus, order produce, track inventory, and coordinate nutrition promotion activities

- ✓ Expenses for nutrition education and promotion activities, including nonfood supplies and materials for classroom lessons, field trips to orchards or farmers' markets, and planting school gardens.

What should you do to ensure that your FFVP runs smoothly?

- ✓ Prorate your costs. Only the FFVP portion of the expense can be charged to the FFVP.

- ✓ Budget your expenses carefully to keep within the ten percent limit on administrative costs. To increase schools' flexibility and efficiency, State agencies may consider requests to waive the ten percent limit on administrative funds on a case-by-case basis.

- ✓ Make sure your expenses are reasonable and support the Program's goals. For example, fruit baskets that would be distributed to families or to school personnel do not contribute to the Program's goals and are not allowable expenses.
- ✓ If you have doubts about whether or not a specific cost is allowable, contact your State agency to discuss them prior to incurring such costs.

Paperwork

Participating in the FFVP requires you to follow reporting and record keeping requirements which are similar to those you follow for the National School Lunch Program.

Here are some key points to remember:

- ✓ Wait to begin the FFVP until you have been told by your State agency that FFVP funds are available.
- ✓ Obtain a copy of your State's Federal/State agreement for the FFVP. This agreement identifies all of the terms and conditions that you are required to meet, as well as those for the State agency.
- ✓ Participate in any training offered by your State agency. School staff must be trained on the FFVP requirements and report forms before each new school year begins.
- ✓ You may request advance payments, if necessary. Your school may request up to 25 percent of your school's FFVP funds. Be sure to keep records of all of FFVP expenses that are paid for with the advance funds.
- ✓ *Keep all records* to support the FFVP expenses paid with advance funds and your claims for reimbursement.
- ✓ Complete and submit the monthly FFVP Prototype Performance Report form (or similar reporting mechanism that your State developed) to claim reimbursement. The Prototype Performance Reports identify monthly school purchase data and must be submitted to FNS by the State agency on a quarterly basis. Check with your State agency to determine when you should submit these reports to their office so that the State can submit them to FNS in a timely manner.

- ✓ Remember, you are responsible for making sure that all claims are correct and appropriate. Include only those costs related to the FFVP on your claim form. *Reminder:* claims should be filed timely in accordance with your State agency's rules regarding submitting claims.

- ✓ States should be following FNS 60/90 day guidance when approving claims (especially late claims).

- ✓ Complete and submit to the State agency an FFVP End-of-Year Report; this should be done by school staff who work directly with the FFVP. The end-of-year report is due to FNS by July 15 of each grant year. Check with your State agency to determine when you should submit these reports to their office so that the State can submit to FNS in a timely manner.

- ✓ Maintain full and accurate FFVP records in your files. Your school must keep these for a period of three years (after the end of the fiscal year to which they pertain). Records must be kept longer if your school has any unresolved audit findings.

Please remember that State agencies are responsible for submitting the following forms to FNS; SF 269A, Financial Status Report Short Form, on a quarterly basis and the monthly Prototype Performance Reports also on a quarterly basis. Therefore, it is important that schools submit their forms to the State agency in a timely manner.

Best Practices

- ✓ Keep a file for the FFVP with the following folders or section labeled as:

  - Addendums
  - Contact Information
  - End of Year Report
  - Invoices
  - Monthly Claim
  - Nutrition Education Materials
  - Purchase Order Information
  - Vendors/Local Farmers

Encouraging Success

Your State agency provides considerable support and encouragement to you in administering the FFVP. Oversight refers to a variety of methods of monitoring your school's ability to successfully manage the Program, both during and between reviews. State agency oversight includes:

- ✓ Selecting and approving your school to participate in FFVP
- ✓ Keeping in contact with you about your school's operation of FFVP
- ✓ Holding training sessions and workshops on the FFVP including workshops with partners and others who can assist you
- ✓ Conducting onsite visits to assist in implementing and running the FFVP
- ✓ Providing technical assistance to answer your questions and concerns
- ✓ Ensuring that you have received and reviewed the information you need to manage and monitor FFVP in your school
- ✓ Encouraging your efforts to collaborate with state and local affiliates of FFVP's National partners
- ✓ Encouraging your efforts to promote nutrition education as a daily feature in your school classrooms
- ✓ Reviewing claim forms
- ✓ Sharing information about your school's Program among FFVP and financial management staff at the State agency
- ✓ Ensuring that reports are submitted on time

Why Partnerships are Important

Outside support, collaboration, and partnerships have been essential elements of FFVP success. State, local, and private partners have helped schools better manage FFVP funds, resolve logistical challenges of the Program, and obtain educational materials for promoting nutritious food choices in and out of the classroom.

Collaborate with State and local affiliates such as:

- ✓ 5 A Day
- ✓ Produce for Better Health

Encourage cooperation and commitment from school partners:

- ✓ Administrators
- ✓ Teachers
- ✓ Food service staff
- ✓ School nurses
- ✓ Custodial staff
- ✓ Parents
- ✓ Parent Teacher Association
- ✓ Student government
- ✓ Student activity clubs

Develop working relationships with outside partners:

- ✓ State and National affiliates of the American Cancer, Diabetes, Dietetic and Heart Associations and School Nutrition Association
- ✓ Community Health Agencies
- ✓ County and State health and agriculture departments
- ✓ Dieticians and dietetic interns
- ✓ Extension agents
- ✓ Hospitals
- ✓ Local grocers and stores
- ✓ Vocational clubs
- ✓ Produce associations/commodity groups
- ✓ Nutrition trade associations
- ✓ Health associations
- ✓ Food distributors

Food Safety in the FFVP

Please review Food Safety requirements and HACCP Guidance

To prevent or reduce risk of food-borne illness or injury by contaminated fruits and vegetables best practices are:

- ✓ Train food service employees who prepare or serve food on how to properly wash and store fresh fruits and vegetables.
- ✓ Wash hands using the proper procedure.
- ✓ Wash, rinse, sanitize, and air-dry all food-contact surfaces, equipment, and utensils that will be in contact with produce, such as cutting boards, knives, and sinks.
- ✓ Follow manufacturer's instructions for proper use of chemicals.
- ✓ Wash all raw fruits and vegetables thoroughly before combining with other ingredients, including:
    - o Unpeeled fresh fruit and vegetables that are served whole or cut into pieces.
    - o Fruits and vegetables that are peeled and cut to use in cooking or served ready-to-eat.
- ✓ Wash fresh produce vigorously under cold running water or by using chemicals that comply with the 2001 FDA Food Code. Packaged fruits and vegetables labeled as being previously washed and ready-to-eat are not required to be washed.
- ✓ Scrub the surface of firm fruits or vegetables such as apples or potatoes using a clean and sanitized brush designated for this purpose.
- ✓ Remove any damaged or bruised areas.
- ✓ Label, date, and refrigerate fresh-cut items.
- ✓ Serve cut melons within 7 days if held at 41 ºF or below (see SOP for Date Marking, Ready-to-Eat, and Potentially Hazardous Food).
- ✓ Do not serve raw seed sprouts to highly susceptible populations such as preschool-age children.
- ✓ Follow State and local public health requirements.

This handbook will be updated as changes occur. Please forward any suggestions or concerns through the FFVP Partner Web at https://www.fnspartner.usda.gov or through your State agency.