



February 7, 2013

Dear Superintendent and School Nutrition Program Sponsor:

The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE), Division of Food and Nutrition, is now accepting applications for the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP) for the 2013-2014 school year. The elementary school buildings, named in the attached document, have been identified as having free/reduced meal eligibility rates greater than or equal to 50% (based on 2012-13 school year data) and may be eligible to submit an application.

You are receiving this message because you are listed as the National School Lunch Program Contact Person or the Superintendent for one or more buildings on this list. If you are unable to open the attached document, it is also posted on PEARS Form Download, Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program Section, PDE126i.

The FFVP is a United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) program which was implemented in Pennsylvania in 2004, but expanded to all 50 states and several U.S. territories with the 2008 Farm Bill. Schools use the grant to provide fresh fruits and vegetables to students for free during the school day. 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, and positively impact children's present and future health.

Applicants must be an approved sponsor of the School Nutrition Program. Elementary schools with the highest free/reduced meal eligibility rates whose application most effectively demonstrates the ability to operate and administer the FFVP will be selected. Applications must include: (1) an implementation plan to administer the FFVP equally to all students during the school day outside of breakfast or lunch meal periods a minimum of three days per week; (2) the documented support of the food service director, principal, and district superintendent; and (3) a plan that integrates the FFVP with other efforts to reduce overweight/obesity and promote sound health and nutrition.

Since individual elementary buildings (not entire districts) will be selected to participate, each building must submit a separate application. Selected schools will be notified by May 8, 2013, and will be funded from July 1, 2013 – June 30, 2014. Grant amounts are determined by PDE using an enrollment-based calculation. The program will be adequately funded (approximately \$65/student/year) to provide fresh fruits and vegetables to all students at least three days a week throughout the entire school year.

The majority of funds must be dedicated to the purchase of fresh fruits and vegetables, and schools must develop a plan that will minimize the amount of labor charged to the program by establishing partnerships (see Examples of Non-Federal Resource Partners on PEARS Form Download, FFVP Section, PDE123). PDE stringently limits labor charged to the FFVP up to 10-15% of each month's FFVP Claim for Reimbursement. Labor expenses will be further evaluated each month for appropriateness.

Nutrition education must be provided as part of the FFVP; however, FFVP funds may not be used to purchase nutrition education materials or services. Therefore, schools must develop a plan to establish partnerships that will provide or assist in providing nutrition education (examples of nutrition education partnerships can be found in Examples of Non-Federal Resource Partners, referenced above). The nutrition education can be very basic; often times the most effective type of nutrition education is discussing what the fruit/vegetable looks like in "whole form," how it is grown, and how to clean/cut it. Also, this type of nutrition education is easier to incorporate every day the program is offered. If desired, more elaborate nutrition education activities (i.e., assemblies, guest chefs for cooking demonstrations) can take place as the school can accommodate; however, if the services are not donated, resources other than the FFVP grant must cover the cost of these events.

Fruits and vegetables may not be used as a reward or withheld from students as a punishment. The FFVP must operate outside of meal periods in order to not interfere with or take the place of the reimbursable meal. Since the intent of the program is to develop healthier eating habits, students are to be exposed to a wide variety of both fruits and vegetables.

Schools interested in applying for the FFVP are strongly encouraged to read the USDA FFVP Handbook (revised December 2010), available on PEARS Form Download, FFVP Section, PDE126h.

Applications must be postmarked by Friday, March 22, 2013. The application should be completed electronically. Schools should follow these steps:

- Download and save the blank FFVP Application 2013-2014 located on PEARS Form Download, FFVP Section, PDE126.
- To save the application from PEARS Form Download, you do not need to open the document. Place cursor on top of the "Excel" link. Right click the mouse and select "Save Target As." Once the Save As box appears, choose where to save the file (i.e. C drive) and a file name (i.e. FFVP Application).
- Click "Enable Editing" at the top of the Excel worksheet to allow for revisions and correct formatting.
- Complete the application electronically using a computer. Do not alter the pre-typed application packet itself.
- Save the completed application to a local or network drive.
- Print the completed application and obtain the necessary signatures (in blue ink).
- Mail the application (with original signatures) postmarked by the due date to:

Pennsylvania Department of Education
Attn: Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program
Division of Food and Nutrition
333 Market Street, 4th Floor
Harrisburg, PA 17126-0333

Fax or e-mailed applications will not be considered.

The selected school's Contact Person (listed in PEARS), the Project/Site Manager, and the Food Service Director will be required to participate in a FFVP training webinar or on-line module.

Please note that all documents mentioned above will also be available at www.education.state.pa.us > Programs (left menu) > Food and Nutrition Services (drop down menu) Go > Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program.

Questions about the FFVP or the application process can be directed to Eliza Laude, Program Coordinator, at elaude@pa.gov or 1-800-331-0129, Ext.156.

Sincerely,



Vonda Cooke (Fekete), M.S., R.D.
State Director, Child Nutrition Programs
Division of Food and Nutrition
Bureau of Budget and Fiscal Management