



Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP)
Frequently Asked Questions and Concerns
Updated February 2014

The FFVP (Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Program) is a federal program administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). It reimburses school districts for serving a fresh fruit or vegetable snack each day to students at schools where 50% or more of students are eligible for free or reduced price school meals.

Learn more about the federal program here: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/ffvp>

FFVP Contact: Andrea Northup, andrea.northup@mpls.k12.mn.us, 612-668-2854

Where can I find the menus, FFVP newsletter, and information?

On our website! <http://nutritionservices.mpls.k12.mn.us/ffvp>

How do I know if my school qualifies? How can my school start the FFVP?

Schools can qualify to participate in the FFVP if more than half of students in the school are eligible for Free or Reduced Price meals. The application process begins in the spring, when the Department of Agriculture informs MPS of which schools qualify. Then the Culinary & Nutrition Service department fills out applications, working with each qualifying school. We are informed in the late spring of our funding for the following school year.

My school does not qualify because fewer than half of students are eligible for Free & Reduced Price meals. Can we still participate?

MPS is willing to work with schools that do not qualify for the FFVP because fewer than half of their students are eligible for free or reduced price meals. In this case, schools must pay for the FFVP snacks, since they are not reimbursed by a federal grant. Please contact Andrea Northup if your school is interested in paying for FFVP snacks at andrea.northup@mpls.k12.mn.us or 612-668-2854.

Why do we only get one teacher serving per classroom?

The FFVP is funded by a grant administered by the USDA, so we have to abide by the federal rules of the program. As much as we would love to provide more snacks for other adults at participating schools, we can only provide enough snacks for each student and one teacher serving per classroom (it's one of the USDA's rules).

The kids prefer the fruits –can you send more of those?

We try to send a variety of fruits and vegetables in order to expose students to all sorts of healthy produce items. We especially like serving vegetables so that students get a balance of nutrients, and so

that they have a chance to try a small taste of something different (that they might otherwise not try). We keep the serving sizes small so that having just a small taste may be less intimidating for students.

Why can't we serve cooked fruits and vegetables?

Another one of the rules that we must follow in order to receive federal funding for the program is that the fruit and vegetable snacks **MUST** be served fresh (not cooked). Hence the name - FRESH Fruit and Vegetable Program!

There is a lot of waste with the program, because students don't always want to try the snack.

The FFVP is a federal program that requires us to serve a variety of fruits and vegetables for snack in every classroom every day. The serving sizes are designed to be small so that it's just a taste. Even if they don't eat the whole snack, it's good for students to try new things! You may share the leftover snacks using a "share table" as long as the snack is not left at room temperature for unsafe periods of time. The upside to the program is that students are exposed to new, unique fruits and vegetables. The downside is that there is waste associated with the program.

The plastic wrap around the fruits and vegetables is really hard to open!

We would love to give our produce vendors feedback when the plastic is too difficult to open. If you receive items that are too difficult to open, please submit a comment with the date and produce item at http://nutritionservices.mpls.k12.mn.us/Contact_Us.

Some of the items were messy, like pineapple.

We feel that even messy fruits and vegetables are beneficial to students in terms of their nutritional value and exposing them to new, healthy items. You can order napkins and Sani-wipes from your Cafeteria Coordinator if you need them to help with clean-up. Think of it as a lesson in eating a messy snack, and the proper way to clean up!

Can you serve more than just fruits and vegetables, to give the students a more substantial snack?

Unfortunately we can only serve fresh fruits and vegetables as part of the program requirements set by the USDA. If your school is interested in a different snack program, please fill out a comment at http://nutritionservices.mpls.k12.mn.us/Contact_Us.

Some of the produce items were dried out, unripe, or had other quality issues.

We only want to serve the highest quality produce, so we want to work with our produce vendors to address and prevent any issues that may arise. If you find that produce served through the FFVP is low quality for any reason, please submit a comment with the date, produce item, and description of the issue at http://nutritionservices.mpls.k12.mn.us/Contact_Us.

Why don't we serve dip with the vegetables?

We think that fruits and vegetables are flavorful and delicious on their own! While many students are used to dip, we are trying to expand their palates to enjoy the many unique flavors of fruits and vegetables. Additionally, dip can be messy and the packaging would add more waste to the program. Since we only have a certain budget for the produce served, we'd rather spend more of our allocated funds on high-quality fruits and vegetables instead of dips.

Some students are allergic to some of the fruits and vegetables. Is there anything we can do?

In order to make accommodations for special diets, we have to follow the protocols we have in place set by the USDA. They are available here: http://nutritionservices.mpls.k12.mn.us/special_dietary_needs. Please contact diettech@mpls.k12.mn.us with any questions about allergens or special diets.

Quotes about the FFVP:

- “[Our] students have certainly benefited from the FFVP. Thanks so much!” – 3rd grade teacher
- “We are grateful for this program and the [Sani-wipes] that we receive to keep our desks clean after snack.” – 1st grade teacher
- “I think the program is a big hit! I am surprised at how many kids are willing to try things.” – 3rd grade teacher
- “My preschoolers are excited every day to try the new snack!” – Pre-K Teacher