

FRESH FRUIT AND VEGETABLE PROGRAM APPLICATION

for
School Year 2021-2022



INSTRUCTIONS AND APPLICATION

**Mississippi Department of Education
Office of Child Nutrition**

March 19, 2021

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

**Mississippi Department of Education's
Office of Child Nutrition**

FRESH FRUIT AND VEGETABLE PROGRAM

Applications Due: May 21, 2021

This packet includes:

- Section I: General Information
- Section II: Additional Information
- Section III: Application Procedures
- Section IV: Application Instructions
- Application and Special Instructions

Questions:

Questions regarding the School Year 2021-2022 Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program may be directed to Mary Burks or Tina Thomas at 601-576-5000.

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**Mississippi Department of Education's
Office of Child Nutrition
Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program**

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

Introduction

The MS Department of Education, Office of Child Nutrition is the administrator of Child Nutrition Programs which include the National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program and the Summer Food Service Program. The State Agency also administers the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP). Mississippi is one of the original states to participate in USDA's FFVP. This program provides funds for elementary schools (grades K-8) to provide free servings of fresh fruits and fresh vegetables throughout the school day to Mississippi students.

The Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program, under Section 19 of the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act (NSLA), has been a nationwide program since 2008 and operates in selected elementary schools in the 50 States, the District of Columbia, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. FFVP funding reflects annual changes in the Consumer Price Index. For School Year 2021-2022 the State of Mississippi anticipates receiving approximately \$2,921,025 in FFVP funding.

Purpose

The Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP) provides all children in participating schools with a variety of free fresh fruits and vegetables during the school day. It is an effective and creative way of introducing fresh fruits and vegetables as healthy snack options. The FFVP shows children that fresh fruits and vegetables are healthy and tasty alternatives to snacks high in fat, sugar, or salt. Providing a nutrition education component while serving fresh fruits and vegetables is the ideal way to introduce and reinforce good eating habits.

Eligible Applicants

Section 19 of the National School Lunch Act requires that schools with the highest free and reduced price enrollment be given priority for participation in the FFVP. This is the key selection criterion, which ensures that the Program benefits low-income children that have fewer opportunities to consume fresh fruits and vegetables on a regular basis. To determine the schools with the highest free and reduced price enrollment, the State Agency will use the school data reported from October 2019 for schools with pricing programs. Non-pricing schools' (CEP, Provision 2 lunch) free/reduced eligibility percentage will be determined by the identified student percentage (retrieved by the State Agency from MSIS; data as of April 1, 2021) and the 1.6 multiplier.

This criterion cannot be waived to give all schools in a state an equal chance to participate in the Program or to provide a geographic dispersion. To be selected for the FFVP, a school must:

- Be an elementary school (grades K-8);

- Represent the highest percentage of students certified for free and reduced price benefits (or ISP x 1.6 for non-pricing programs);
- Participate in the National School Lunch Program; and
- Complete an annual application for the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program.

Funding and Program Period

The program period will be from August 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022. Funds will be provided by USDA to the State administering agency through two distributions: on or about August 1, 2021 and October 1, 2021. The August allocation will be made available for obligations made from August 1, 2021 through September 30, 2021. Schools may obligate the October funds through June 30, 2022. **All participating schools, including new schools, should be operational when classes resume for the 2021-2022 school year.**

II. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Awards

Schools will receive funds based on an allocation of \$50 per student. Reimbursement for the FFVP is similar to other Child Nutrition Programs. Schools submit a monthly claim and are reimbursed by the State Agency for purchases of fresh fruits and fresh vegetables served free to children during the school day.

Upon receipt of completed applications, the Authorized Representative of the school district will be sent an Addendum to the State Agency Agreement that must be signed and returned to the State Agency on the prescribed due date. Districts may not begin the program until notified by the Mississippi Department of Education that all signatures have been obtained on the Addendum.

School Selection

To be selected for the FFVP, your school must have 50 percent or more of its students eligible for free or reduced price meals. **The requirements for school selection are very prescriptive and require that schools with the highest level of free and reduced price students enrolled receive priority.** Schools that have a free and reduced percentage of 85% or greater are considered highly probable for participation in the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP).

The application review process **MUST** select schools representing the highest percent of students certified for free and reduced price benefits. In order to select these high need schools the State Agency will order the eligible schools from the highest percentage of certified free and reduced price enrollment down to 50% free and reduced price enrollment, and then determine how many schools could participate with the funding provided. Schools will receive funds based on an allocation of \$50 per enrolled student.

A state can choose not to select a high need school if the:

- School fails to meet the deadline for application completion;
- School does not have the support of its administration;
- State has concerns with the school's administration of another child nutrition program;
- State believes the school cannot properly operate the FFVP, *despite* previous support from the State.

Use of Funds

Most of a school's FFVP funds must go toward purchasing fresh fruits and vegetables. All non-food costs must be carefully reviewed and deemed reasonable, given the extent of program operations (e.g., daily vs. twice a week and produce that is served whole versus sliced and put in containers). 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. The operating and administrative categories each allow labor and equipment costs. Equipment listed under administrative costs should be larger equipment purchases whereas equipment under operating costs are the smaller equipment purchases.

If schools purchase equipment for the FFVP, they must provide written justification to support the purchase. For example, the justification should explain the need for additional equipment, why the current equipment is not sufficient for FFVP operations, how many times the FFVP program will be offered each week, how many times deliveries are received each week/month and any other information that will support the purchase.

Equipment purchased with FFVP funds that will be used in other school feeding programs must be **prorated** among the programs. The FFVP represents a small program and therefore the funds claimed under the FFVP should represent the smaller portion.

Labor costs in either the "operating or administrative" category must be minimal. Volunteer parents or students can help to reduce these costs.

Operating costs are the costs of running your FFVP service. 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 such as:

- Buying fruits, vegetables, low-fat or non-fat dip for vegetables only;
- 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.

Operational Labor Cost may not exceed 20 percent of the total operational costs per month.

School administrative costs are limited to 10 percent of your school's total FFVP allocation. Schools must not exceed this limit. School 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.

For the FFVP administrative costs may include:

- Purchasing or leasing equipment such as refrigerators, coolers, portable kiosks, carts, and portable food bars (remember to prorate as appropriate)
- 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

Benchmarks, Reports, and Payment Schedule

Applicants must review and attest to the application information provided. If selected, the applicant must agree to implement the program as outlined in their application and to implement the project in a manner consistent with the policies and procedures established by USDA. Further, the applicant must agree to participate in any USDA-sponsored evaluations and to provide the information requested by the specified deadlines.

Awardees must complete and submit a monthly FFVP claim for reimbursement form. The claim form should identify monthly school purchase data for the FFVP. Awardees are responsible for ensuring that all claims are correct and include only those costs related to the FFVP. In addition, all claims must be filed on time; no later than the 10th day of the month following the month covered by the claim.

The payment schedule is made on a reimbursement basis after claims are submitted. Awardees must submit monthly claims for reimbursement documenting the purchase of approved expenses related to the program. The reimbursed payments will be submitted electronically from MDE through the School Payment System (SPS).

Timeline

<u>DUE DATE</u>	<u>Program Activities</u>
March 18, 2021	Application Disbursement Date
May 21, 2021	Application Deadline
TBA	Evaluate Applications
TBA	Addendum Disbursed for Signature
August 1, 2021	Program Activities Begin

NOTE: Program recipients may not begin the program until notified by the Mississippi Department of Education that all signatures have been obtained on the addendum. Program Activities Conclude June 30, 2022.

III. APPLICATION PROCEDURES

Procedures for Delivery of Applications

One (1) application per site must be received by 3:30 pm Central Time on **Friday, May 21, 2021**, based on the delivery method used:

Hand Deliver Applications to: Shonula D. Wright
Office of Child Nutrition
Mississippi Department of Education
500 Greymont Avenue, Suite F
Jackson, MS 39202

Mail Applications to: Shonula D. Wright
Office of Child Nutrition
Mississippi Department of Education
Post Office Box 771
Jackson, MS 39205-0771

Ship Applications to:
(FedEx, UPS, etc.) Shonula D. Wright
Office of Child Nutrition
Mississippi Department of Education
500 Greymont Avenue, Suite F
Jackson, MS 39202

Risk of Delivery

- The offeror is responsible for ensuring the applications are delivered by the deadline and assumes all risks of delivery.
- Applications and modifications received in the room designated in the Instructions and Application after the time set in the application will be considered **late** and will not be accepted or considered for the award.
- At the time of receipt of the application, the application will be opened, date stamped and recorded in the MDE, Office of Child Nutrition, School Support Division.
- Incomplete applications will not be evaluated and will not be returned for revisions. No late, faxed or emailed copies will be accepted.
- The application must be signed by an authorized official to bind the offeror to the application provisions.

Disposition of Applications

All applications become the property of the state of Mississippi.

Conditions of Solicitation

The Mississippi Department of Education reserves the right to accept, reject, or negotiate regarding submitted applications on the basis of the evaluation criteria contained in this document. The final decision to determine eligibility for the program rests solely with the MDE.

Before preparing the applications, the applicant should note that:

1. All applications, in their entirety, will become the property of the MDE upon submission;
2. MDE will not be liable for any costs associated with the preparation of applications incurred by the applicant; and
3. Dollars received as an outcome of this application cannot be used to cover any costs associated with the preparation of the application.

The MDE also reserves the right to accept any application submitted for a FFVP award, without negotiation. Therefore, applicants are advised to propose their most favorable terms initially. Applicants will be required to assume full responsibility for meeting all specified requirements stated in the application.

IV. APPLICATION INSTRUCTION

The completed application will serve as your implementation plan for the School Year 2021-2022 FFVP. Please fill out the application completely. Type or clearly print all information except where signatures are needed. Print or type the name of the person in each position and then obtain each original signature. If your school organizational chart does not include these exact job titles, indicate equivalent positions. Please have the School Food Service Administrator sign the application. If there is no Administrator, have the School Lunch Manager sign the application. Applications that do not have all of the required signatures will be considered incomplete and will not be evaluated.