



**United States  
Department of  
Agriculture**

Food and  
Nutrition  
Service

3101 Park  
Center Drive

Alexandria, VA  
22302-1500

DATE: December 1, 2009

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SUBJECT: Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP) Targeted School Selection and Outreach Process

TO: Regional Directors  
Special Nutrition Programs  
All Regions

State Directors  
School Nutrition Programs  
All States

It has come to our attention that there is confusion among some States on the process for selecting schools to participate in the FFVP. This memorandum provides clarification on the statutory requirements for selecting schools and reiterates information from the September 29, 2009 FFVP webinar on the targeting and outreach process that States must conduct in order to select schools. School selection and outreach requirements were also addressed in Policy Memos SP #31-2008 and #33-2008.

According to the school eligibility criteria set forth in section 19 of the National School Lunch Act:

- all schools must be elementary schools beginning in school year 2010-2011;
- schools must represent the highest percentage of students certified for free and reduced price benefits;
- schools must participate in the NSLP; and
- schools must complete an annual application for the FFVP.

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 generally have fewer opportunities to consume fresh fruits and vegetables on a regular basis. This criterion cannot be waived to give all schools in a state an equal chance to participate in the Program or to provide geographic dispersion.

States must conduct outreach to the elementary schools with the highest percentage of students certified for free and reduced-price benefits and are also responsible for ensuring that the FFVP reaches these elementary schools. States that have a large number of elementary schools at or above 50 percent certified for free and reduced price benefits than could possibly be funded through the FFVP may choose to target just those schools with the highest need. It is important in performing outreach to potentially eligible schools to keep in mind

that FFVP funding will increase substantially in the next several years and it may be useful for some schools to know about the FFVP even if they may not be able to participate immediately.

States should follow these targeting and outreach steps to reach their high need elementary schools:

1. Order the elementary schools from the highest percentage of certified free and reduced price enrollment down to 50% free and reduced price enrollment.
2. Determine how many schools could participate with the funding provided.
3. Conduct targeted outreach to the highest need schools and notify them that if they apply, they will likely be chosen to participate.
4. Conduct more general outreach to inform other schools of the FFVP and the opportunity to apply and possibly be funded.
5. Review the application process with schools and provide guidance on how to complete the application in the months prior to the application deadline.

As part of outreach efforts, the State agency should assist these high need schools in submitting the application for participation. The application review is not competitive but instead is based on the percent of students certified for free and reduced price benefits. An eligible school should be afforded every opportunity to complete an application to participate in the Program.

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; or
- State believes that a school cannot properly operate the FFVP *despite previous support from the State.*

While we understand that selections have been made for this school year, we want to make clear those currently participating elementary schools that do not reflect a State's highest percentage of need cannot be selected to continue participation in the coming school year. If you have any questions, please contact your regional office.

**Original Signed**

Cynthia Long  
Director  
Child Nutrition Programs