

The Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP) application for school year 2026-27 is open for submission until **June 10, 2026**. Applications must be submitted to ISBE by this date for consideration.

Potential participants must apply for FFVP annually. Multiple schools from a district may apply; however, a separate school application must be submitted for each, and not all applicants are guaranteed to participate.

Prior to completing and submitting the application, interested applicants should review the [FFVP Handbook for Schools](#) and read through the application instructions in entirety.

Program Description

The Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program is supported and funded by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Food and Nutrition Administration. FFVP is a school-based nutrition program, supporting the development of healthful eating habits among elementary school children. By promoting nutrition education and introducing children to a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables throughout the school year, the program aims to increase children's overall acceptance and consumption of fresh, unprocessed produce as part of a healthy lifestyle.

Program funds are used to offer a free fresh fruit or vegetable snack to all students in the participating elementary school at least two days per week at a time during the regular school day that is separate from the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program meal periods. This opportunity for students to receive free fresh fruit and vegetable snacks must be widely publicized within the school. Schools are encouraged to incorporate complementary nutrition education lessons alongside the FFVP snack.

FFVP prioritizes participation of elementary schools with the highest percentage of enrolled children certified as eligible for free and reduced-price meals, although any school that meets the eligibility criteria is welcome to apply.

The number of schools selected for FFVP is dependent on the amount of program funding provided by USDA each year. Schools that are at 100% free and reduced-price eligibility are the most likely to be chosen to participate.

Once selected, each school is allocated program funds based on the number of enrolled students. The allocated funds are paid to the School Food Authority (SFA) on a reimbursement basis for program expenses incurred by its participating school(s). The SFA must separately track FFVP expenses of each of its participating schools and submit an itemized monthly expense claim for reimbursement to ISBE.

If selected, schools must abide by all program requirements as stated in Section 19 of the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act, as well as adhere to all regulations and guidance of the USDA and ISBE.

Program Eligibility

The Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program is for children at the elementary school level (kindergarten through Grade 8) who are enrolled in eligible schools. FFVP prioritizes schools with the highest percentage of children certified as eligible for free and reduced-price meals. This is because children from low-income households generally have fewer opportunities to consume fresh produce on a regular basis.

Eligible School Criteria

A school must meet all eligibility criteria to apply for participation in FFVP. Eligibility is determined annually based on National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and entity profile data.

- The school must be an elementary school, enrolling students in one or more grade levels within the kindergarten through Grade 8 range. Schools that serve a combination of elementary and secondary (high school) grade levels must be able to separate out elementary students.
- The school must participate in the National School Lunch Program.
- The school must have at least 50% of enrolled students certified for free or reduced-price meals or Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) equivalent.

Schools should refer to the [2026-27 FFVP School Eligibility](#) data file to verify eligibility prior to starting an application. The file includes all schools that have been determined eligible to apply for participation in the FFVP based on NSLP free and reduced-price meal eligibility and enrollment data as of October 2025. Schools will need to reference this data while completing certain portions of the application.

School Selection and Priority

School eligibility and/or prior participation in the program does not guarantee a school will be selected to participate in a given school year. An eligible school must apply each year for consideration. Annual school selection and participation is limited by the amount of federal program funding allocated for FFVP each year.

School Priority

FFVP prioritizes participation of schools that have the highest percentage of enrolled children certified as eligible for free and reduced-price meals. Free and reduced-price eligibility percentage is the primary factor used to prioritize and select participants from among schools that apply. School enrollment is the secondary factor used to prioritize between schools that have identical free and reduced-price eligibility percentage. When eligibility percentage is the same between schools, the school that has the lesser number of enrolled students receives priority over the school with the higher enrollment.

Application Format and Submission Process

The FFVP application packet is to be completed in coordination between the School Food Authority (i.e., the district/sponsor) and the SFA's eligible school(s) applying to the program.

Application Format

The application packet consists of two separate components:

- FFVP Sponsor Application** – completed and certified by the School Food Authority
 - The sponsor application collects district/organization-level information regarding its support and oversight of the program. The school district/sponsor completes only one application, which is combined with the individual school applications for submission to ISBE.
- FFVP School Application** – completed and certified by each individual school applying to the program
 - The school application collects school-level information regarding administration and operation of the program within each specific school.
 - Each school must complete a separate application for consideration.

Coordinating the Application Process

The SFA is responsible for coordinating the application process with its eligible schools.

- The SFA should notify its eligible schools of the opportunity to apply for the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program and direct them to program informational materials.
- The SFA collects applications from schools that are interested in participating. It is recommended that the SFA give schools a due date that allows time for the SFA to review school applications prior to submission.

- The SFA should review the FFVP School Applications, ensuring they are complete and have signatures of the school principal and the school food manager (or equivalent positions).
- In addition to collecting school applications, the SFA must complete the FFVP Sponsor Application. The SFA only needs to complete one sponsor application form.
- Both the superintendent of the school district (or equivalent executive administrator of a sponsor that is not a school district) and the school nutrition program food service director of the SFA must provide certification that they are supportive of administering and operating FFVP within the schools that are applying to the program.
 - Be sure to list all schools applying for FFVP on the SFA application
 - Ensure the SFA application has both the required signatures

Signature Methods

All signature fields must be signed by the appropriate persons.

Applicants collecting signatures by hand should enter all information into the electronic form, then print the form, obtain signatures of the designated persons, scan and save the signed document as a PDF, then attach the scanned document file to the email for submission.

Applications may be signed electronically if your organization has established an electronic signature process, or applicants can use the Adobe Acrobat fill and sign feature to sign the application form electronically.

Application Submission

After coordinating the application process, the SFA administrator or food service director should collectively submit the FFVP Sponsor Application and all FFVP School Applications to ISBE.

Attach the complete application file to an email and send to FFVP@isbe.net.

Applications will be accepted through **June 10, 2026**.

Program Contact

For program questions or assistance with completing/submitting the application, contact the state program coordinator for FFVP:

Emily Durbin

School Nutrition Programs

Illinois State Board of Education, Nutrition Department

Email: edurbin@isbe.net Phone: 217-782-2491

USDA Non-Discrimination Statement

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the State or local Agency that administers the program or contact USDA through the Telecommunications Relay Service at 711 (voice and TTY). Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at [How to File a Program Discrimination Complaint](#) and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Mail Stop 9410, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov