



September 2024

Dear Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Program Coordinator,

Congratulations on receiving the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP) grant award for the 2024-2025 school year (SY). The FFVP grant was awarded to 171 Nebraska schools, providing approximately 53,700 elementary students with the opportunity to receive a snack of fresh fruits and vegetables during the school day along with a chance to promote lifelong healthy eating habits.

As a FFVP participant, your site will receive a virtual resource kit to assist with promoting the program and integrating nutrition and wellness education. The FFVP Handbook has also been made available to be accessed through the [Nebraska Department of Education \(NDE\) FFVP Webpage](#). The handbook provides guidance on program requirements and implementation. All program operators should closely review this handbook and communicate about best practices and policies of the FFVP with staff involved in preparing and offering the FFVP.

The SY 24-25 FFVP Annual Training was recently held via Zoom and a recording of this training will be posted on NDE FFVP webpage. New FFVP site coordinators and administrators are required to view this recorded training if they were unable to participate in the live training. Experienced FFVP site coordinators and administrators are encouraged to review the training, as necessary.

Additionally, FFVP operators are encouraged to take advantage of other FFVP resources made available on the NDE FFVP webpage or those provided within this resource guide. Operating school nutrition programs and feeding students remains a top priority for Nebraska's dedicated school meals professionals. The FFVP offers an opportunity expand upon these efforts and engage students, staff, and your community in realizing the many positive impacts of the USDA's School Nutrition Programs.

Thank you for your efforts to teach Nebraska youth about healthy habits and the wonderful world of fresh fruits and vegetables which benefit their body and mind. We look forward to learning about your programs and supporting these efforts throughout this school year.

Sincerely,

Kayte Partch
Director, Nebraska Child Nutrition Programs





Nebraska Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Program (FFVP) Promotional and Educational Materials



Nebraska Department of Education is providing Nebraska schools participating in the Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Program a **virtual** toolkit to assist in promoting the Program to students, staff, and family. Explore the resources below!

MyPlate Resources - [https://www.myplate.gov/resources/print-materials?f\[0\]=audience%3A1137&f\[1\]=audience%3A1138](https://www.myplate.gov/resources/print-materials?f[0]=audience%3A1137&f[1]=audience%3A1138) & <https://www.myplate.gov/life-stages/kids>

Harvest of the Month – Nebraska Department of Education - <https://www.education.ne.gov/ns/farm-to-school/harvest-of-the-month/>

Mindful Eating - <https://www.actionforhealthykids.org/activity/mindful-eating/>

Dole At Home Resources - <https://www.dole.com/en/at-home-resources>

Seasonal Food Guide - <https://www.seasonalfoodguide.org/> (can be used to find facts about various fruits and vegetables)

Have Fun with Fruits and Vegetables Word Search - <https://myplate-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/2020-12/HaveFunWordSearch.pdf>

Kids Food Critic Activity - https://myplate-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/2020-12/Food_Critic_508.pdf

MyPlate Coloring Sheet - <https://myplate-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/2020-12/Coloring%20Sheet.pdf>

Veggie IQ Presentation - <https://food.unl.edu/free-resource/veggie-iq-presentation>

Nutrition Based Physical Activity Games - <https://www.actionforhealthykids.org/activity/nutrition-based-physical-activity-games/>

Eat a Rainbow Game - <https://www.kdhe.ks.gov/DocumentCenter/View/10250/Eat-a-Rainbow-Game-PDF>

Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Nutrition Curriculum - <https://web.uri.edu/community-nutrition/nutrition-education-and-resources/curriculums/grade-k/>

FFVP Jamboard - <https://jamboard.google.com/d/1vvSlfLivwy0Xz-yJxX9GI86F7BINIzvUcu370HESC4/viewer?f=0>

Healthy Jokes - <https://foodhero.org/jokes>

Food Hero - <https://foodhero.org/kids>



Fruit and Veggie Jokes -

<https://ospi.k12.wa.us/sites/default/files/public/childnutrition/programs/ffvp/pubdocs/jokes.pdf>



Schools should provide nutrition education as a component of the FFVP.

Providing nutrition education is part of helping schools create a healthier school environment.

HINT: Nutrition education is a required component of several important programs and initiatives for schools, such as the School Wellness Policy.

Taking the FFVP to the Next Level

1. Celebrate *#TryItTuesday* at your school and encourage students to try a new fruit or veggie they've not had before (i.e., horned melon, romanesco broccoli)
2. Offer *#FindYourFavorite Fridays* and have students eat some of their old favorites
3. Host a local farmer for a visit, or work with partners to provide a virtual farm visit or tour
4. Make a salad; divvy up jobs: Washing greens/veggies, chopping, etc.
5. Make root veggie fries (a great cold day snack): Chop carrots, potatoes, beets, and parsnips and air fry until crispy
6. Read *Growing Veggie Soup* by Lois Ehlert and taste test soup ingredients from the book
7. *Eat a Rainbow*: Make a colorful salad or kabob with a variety of fruits and veggies
8. Celebrate *National Garden Month* in April and visit a local community garden or school garden
9. Participate in *Nebraska Crunch Off* in October by pairing the FFVP product with your Crunch event - celebrate local!
10. Taste different varieties of radishes, peas, tomatoes. Students can compare colors, sizes, shapes, and growing environments
11. Try fruit or veggies that are an unexpected color (yellow watermelon, white cherries, purple carrots, yellow cauliflower)
12. Eat the alphabet. Pick a letter each day and plan your snack with a food that starts with that letter



13. Celebrate *#TryItTuesday* at your school and encourage students to try a new fruit or veggie they've not had before (i.e., horned melon, romanesco broccoli)
14. Offer *#FindYourFavorite Fridays* and have students eat some of their old favorites
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19. *Eat a Rainbow*: Make a colorful salad or kabob with a variety of fruits and veggies
20. Celebrate *National Garden Month* in April and visit a local community garden or school garden
21. Participate in *Nebraska Crunch Off* in October by pairing the FFVP product with your Crunch event - celebrate local!
22. Taste different varieties of radishes, peas, tomatoes. Students can compare colors, sizes, shapes, and growing environments
23. Try fruit or veggies that are an unexpected color (yellow watermelon, white cherries, purple carrots, yellow cauliflower)
24. Eat the alphabet. Pick a letter each day and plan your snack with a food that starts with that letter
25. Consider all the ways to eat one fruit, like an apple. Teach about the processes the food can undergo, like sauce, slices, leather, popsicles, pie, juice
26. Have students lead planning and making a FFVP bulletin board or posters
27. Add FFVP information and resources to your school website and newsletter; provide social media updates about the FFVP, encouraging parents to use the FFVP highlighted produce item at home; see page 5 and 6 for these resources
28. Announce the fruit or veggie over the PA. See the *What Am I?* resource found at Iowa Department of Education,
<https://educateiowa.gov/sites/default/files/documents/What%20Am%20I.pdf>



More ideas can be found here:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/tools-schools-offering-fruits-and-vegetables>

Team Nutrition materials support nutrition education and promotion of the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP).

What is Team Nutrition?

Team Nutrition is an initiative of the USDA Food and Nutrition Service to support national efforts to promote lifelong healthy food choices and physical activity by improving the nutrition practices of the child nutrition programs. Team Nutrition provides resources to schools, childcare settings, and summer meal sites.



Team Nutrition resources included in your toolkit:

- Dig In! Poster Set (set of 6) [Dig In! Posters | USDA-FNS](#)
- Emergent Readers English [Discover MyPlate: Emergent Reader Mini Books | USDA-FNS](#)
- Emergent Readers Spanish [Discover MyPlate: Emergent Reader Mini Books | USDA-FNS](#)
- Serving Up MyPlate: A Yummy Curriculum <https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/serving-myplate-yummy-curriculum>

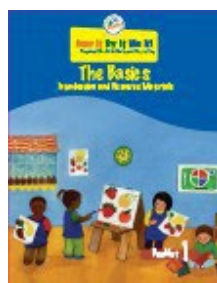
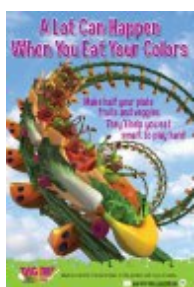
Not available to order, but could be printed at your school: [Stronger with School Meals Activity Booklet](#)

Team Nutrition provides free materials for operators of any of the child nutrition programs, including the FFVP.

- To order, go to <https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn>.
- Then, click the button that says **Order Team Nutrition Resources**.
- Search for resources that fit your site and program; order directly from the website:

<https://pueblo.gpo.gov/TN/TNPubs.php?NavCode=Q&PHPSESSID=mrarspe73rijnn1n1rf94lm8o3>

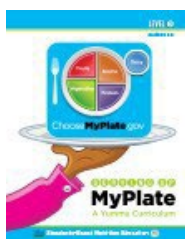
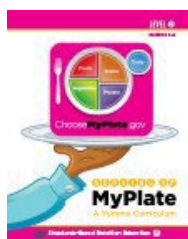
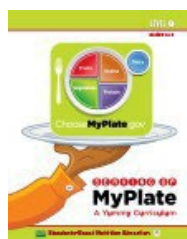
Suggested Team Nutrition resources that align with FFVP include the following:



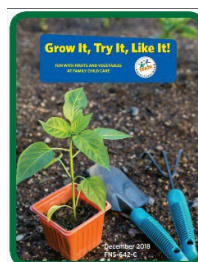
Team Nutrition Poster Sets

Grow It, Try It, Like It!

Garden-themed nutrition education kit for childcare center staff that introduces children to fruits and vegetables.



Serving Up MyPlate, Lessons 1, 2, & 3



Grow It! Memory Cards

<https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/tn/GITILcard.pdf>



Discover MyPlate

- ✓ Emergent Reader Mini Books
- ✓ Teacher's Edition
- ✓ Songs
- ✓ Look and Cook Recipes, and more
- ✓ Spanish and English available



Join the Team! Become a Team Nutrition School: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/schools>

Additional activity resources that support nutrition education and promotion of the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP).

Cooking Matters - <https://cookingmatters.org/community-resources/#kids-handouts>



Sample Social Media Messages for sharing about the FFVP!

Facebook

[Elementary School Name(s)] has been awarded the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program grant this school year! 🍅 Students will receive a free fresh fruit or vegetable snack in the [time of day that snack is served] [number of days per week]. 🥬 Teachers will provide nutrition education activities in the classroom to increase students' knowledge of the health benefits of eating fruits and vegetables. 🥕 We are excited to introduce our students to a variety of unique fruits and vegetables this school year! 🍓🥕🍎 #FFVP #NESchoolMealsRock

Did you know that in the last month, students at [Elementary School Name(s)] have had the good fortune to try [examples of fruits and vegetables]?! This opportunity is part of the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program, a grant funded by the USDA. Find out more about the program here: <https://www.education.ne.gov/ns/nsfp/fresh-fruit-and-vegetable-program/> #FFVP #NESchoolMealsRock 🥬🥕🍓🥕🍎🥕🍅

Did you know that our district participates in the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP)?

Students in [School Name(s)] are offered the opportunity to have a healthy fruit or vegetable as a snack. 🥬🥕🍓 This program is free to ALL school students! The snacks are provided [days/time], separate from lunch or breakfast. We feature a variety of unique fruits and vegetables to introduce students to new foods. 🍓🥕

To find more information, contact [nutrition director] at [phone number or email address] or check out NE's FFVP webpage: <https://www.education.ne.gov/ns/nsfp/fresh-fruit-and-vegetable-program/> 🥬🥕 #FFVP #NESchoolMealsRock

Happy Friday! This week, students at [Elementary School Name(s)] tried some local produce [fruit/vegetables] as part of the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program. Next week, students will be trying [fruit/vegetables]. Check out [producer info]. Ask your child what they liked best! 🍇🍏 #FFVP #NESchoolMealsRock

This week, students at [Elementary School Name(s)] were thrilled to try [fruit/vegetable] from [Local Farm Name]! Snack was offered as part of the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program. Thank you, [Farm/Farmer's Name] for the delicious, nutritious snack! #FFVP #NESchoolMealsRock

[Photo of children enjoying FFVP snack, local farm, or local farmer]

Twitter

This week, elementary school students are enjoying fresh [fruit/vegetable] and [fruit/vegetable] as a part of the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program. These are served as a snack to all elementary school students free of charge! #HealthySnacks #NESchoolMealsRock 🍓🍏🍌🥦

Did you know that all students at [Elementary School Name(s)] get a free fresh fruit or vegetable snack twice a week?! Thanks to the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program, students have tried [fruit/vegetable], [fruit/vegetable], and [fruit/vegetable] this month. 🥕🥦🍊 #FFVP

[Photo of fruit/vegetable]

Instagram

[Photo of fruit/vegetable]

Do you know what this is? Your child does! This rare [fruit/vegetable] was offered free of charge to all elementary students this week as part of the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program. We love having the opportunity to provide healthy, unique fruits and vegetables to students as part of this grant program from USDA. Ask your child what else they've tried recently! 🥥🍇🍉🍊🍏🍎🍌🥦🍓🥕 #FFVP #NESchoolMealsRock

[Photo of children enjoying FFVP snack]

Students at [Elementary School Name] enjoyed [fruit/vegetable] this week as part of the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program. This grant program from USDA allows us to serve students free fresh fruits and vegetables twice per week. The kids are loving it! 🍉🍏🍎🍌🥦🍓🥕 #FFVP #NESchoolMealsRock



Modified from Wisconsin Department of Education



OCTOBER 2024

NEBRASKA CRUNCH OFF

DATE OF YOUR
CHOICE
DURING THE
MONTH OF
OCTOBER

October is Farm to School Month. Join thousands of Nebraskans as we compete against other states in our region to Crunch Off! Take a bite into local, CRUNCHY fruits or vegetables.

Register your team today so your Crunch is counted!

REGISTER
NOW!



www.education.ne.gov/ns/farm-to-school/mountain-plains-crunch



Nebraska Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Program

TASTE TEST GUIDE



GOALS OF FFVP

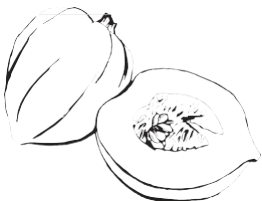
- Create healthier school environments by providing healthier food choices
- Expand the variety of fruits and vegetables children experience
- Increase children's fruit and vegetable consumption
- Make a difference in children's diets to impact their present and future health



Photo Credit: USDA

WHAT IS A TASTE TEST?

A taste test is a small sample of food offered in the classroom or cafeteria that introduces flavor, texture, and smell.



- ✓ Providing a nutrition education component while serving fresh fruits and vegetables is the ideal way to introduce and reinforce good eating habits.
- ✓ When offering the FFVP, produce should be easily identified or recognized for what it is. Encourage children to enjoy fruits and vegetables in the original state and without additives and processing.



STEPS & TIPS FOR ORGANIZING FFVP TASTE TESTS

Remember when purchasing for the Program, the goal is to serve a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables in their natural state and without additives. Dicing and slicing into smaller pieces for ease of service is acceptable.



- » **DETERMINE** what products you will feature
 - Local products can be purchased directly from a farmer, farmers' market, grocer, food hub and more. Ideas for sourcing local products: www.education.ne.gov/ns/farm-to-school/resources/
 - Frequently introduce new items
- » **ASSEMBLE** all needed sampling items (serving tools, utensils, sampling dishes, etc.)
- » **PROMOTE** your program. Share about the products and recipes in advance in the cafeteria, classroom, and community. Use PA announcements, posters, trivia questions, all staff emails, the website, and parent newsletters.

- » Consider integrating LOCAL and SEASONAL products into your program.
- » The FFVP provides schools the opportunity to purchase exotic fruits or vegetables that are not available locally or that are not domestically grown.

DID YOU KNOW?

IT CAN TAKE 10 - 15 TIMES OF TASTING A NEW FOOD BEFORE A CHILD IS WILLING TO EAT IT.



IDEAS FOR ENGAGING STUDENTS

- Encourage students to use their senses when testing new foods and they will be more likely to taste and accept it.
- Provide a map that visually points to where the food is grown in our state, country, or world.
- Tie the taste test to other subjects. Can students learn fractions by measuring length of turnips? Can younger children guess if the product is grown above or underground?
- Invite a farmer to bring in local fruits and vegetables and share about how that food is grown on the farm.
- Plan a contest for classrooms to compete in naming a new recipe.
- Younger students can add stickers to a bingo game or chart for each new food tasted in the school year.
- Consider pairing the taste test with a cooking demonstration. Have samples of the FFVP item available to touch and see, like a variety of whole squash.



Children who help prepare food for a taste test are more likely to try it and like it than children who have not been involved.

TASTE TESTS ALIGN WITH WELLNESS POLICY REQUIREMENTS

Sample wellness policy language:

Nutrition promotion and education positively influence lifelong eating behaviors by using evidence-based techniques, nutrition messages, and food environments that encourage healthy nutrition choices and participation in school meal programs.

This promotion will occur through:

- » *Offering healthy snacks and taste tests through FFVP, highlighting fresh fruits and vegetables*
- » *Providing linkages to the school meal program, cafeteria nutrition promotion activities, school gardens, local farms and nutrition-related community services*

Find more ideas on Wellness Policy Opportunities:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/local-school-wellness-policy>

Nebraska Extension supports schools with Wellness Policy implementation:

<https://food.unl.edu/article/helping-support-school-wellness>



RESOURCES



Harvest of the Month NEBRASKA

Nebraska Harvest of the Month can supplement the FFVP. Harvest of the Month is a statewide farm to school program that features a different Nebraska fruit or vegetable each month. The program promotes sourcing of local produce and provides schools with resources to sample and serve these foods to students. Schools that participate have access to free posters, promotional materials, stickers, and recipes that assist with featuring the items in the cafeteria and classroom.

Download or order free materials at:

www.education.ne.gov/ns/farm-to-school/harvest-of-the-month.



OPTIONAL: EVALUATING YOUR TASTE TEST

1. Hang a large sheet of paper on the wall that is within students' reach. Attach an image of the product you are featuring and/or write the name of the product at the top of the paper. Draw three columns on this paper for students to cast their votes. At the top of the columns, list the following: Loved it! 😊 ; Liked it 😐 ; Maybe Next Time ☹️ . Students can mark on the paper with a pen or use a sticker to make their vote. Figure 1, Appendix 1.
2. Gather three jars. Adhere each jar with one of the following: Loved it! 😊 ; Liked it 😐 ; Maybe Next Time ☹️ . Students can use a tangible item like a scrap of paper or a dry bean and drop their item into the appropriate jar to cast their vote. Figure 2, Appendix 2.
3. Provide students with ballots for voting. Students list the featured product, the date, and choose between three votes: Loved it! 😊 Liked it 😐 Maybe Next Time ☹️ . Students can circle or color their vote on their paper and drop into a voting box. Figure 3, Appendix 3.

FIGURE 1.

Harvest of the Month TASTE TEST EVALUATIONS		
Loved it! 😊	Liked it 😐	Maybe Next Time ☹️

FIGURE 2.

Harvest of the Month TASTE TEST EVALUATIONS	
Loved it! 😊	
Liked It. 😐	Maybe Next Time. ☹️




FIGURE 3.

DATE	PRODUCT	LOVED IT! 😊	LIKED IT 😐	MAYBE NEXT TIME ☹️



TASTE TEST EVALUATIONS

Item _____

Loved it! 	Liked It. 	Maybe Next Time. 

TASTE TEST EVALUATIONS

Loved it!



Liked It.



Maybe Next Time.



TASTE TEST

Item _____

Circle One:

Loved it! Liked it. Maybe Next Time.

TASTE TEST

Item _____

Circle One:

Loved it! Liked it. Maybe Next Time.

TASTE TEST

Item _____

Circle One:

Loved it! Liked it. Maybe Next Time.

TASTE TEST

Item _____

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TASTE TEST

Item _____

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Loved it! Liked it. Maybe Next Time.

TASTE TEST

Item _____

Circle One:

Loved it!



Liked it.



Maybe Next Time.



TASTE TEST

Item _____

Circle One:

Loved it!



Liked it.



Maybe Next Time.



TASTE TEST

Item _____

Circle One:

Loved it!



Liked it.



Maybe Next Time.



Harvest of the Month NEBRASKA



Nebraska Harvest of the Month is a statewide farm to school program that features a different Nebraska fruit or vegetable each month. The program promotes sourcing of local produce and provides schools with resources to support sampling and serving these foods to students. Schools that participate have access to posters, promotional materials, and recipes to feature the items in the cafeteria and classroom.

Nebraska Harvest of the Month is a project of the Nebraska Department of Education and Buy Fresh Buy Local Nebraska. Learn more at www.education.ne.gov/ns/farm-to-school/harvest-of-the-month.

NEXT STEPS FOR SCHOOLS

- 1 Become familiar with the Harvest of the Month items.
- 2 Define "LOCAL" for your program.
- 3 Find local! www.education.ne.gov/ns/farm-to-school/resources/#finding-local
- 4 Purchase local, roll out the Harvest of the Month item, and promote your program!

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

www.education.ne.gov/ns/farm-to-school

www.buylocalnebraska.org

www.fns.usda.gov/cfs/community-food-systems

PROGRAM CONTACTS



NDE.F2S@nebraska.gov

(402) 853-1655



www.buylocalnebraska.org

buylocalnebraska@unl.edu

(402) 472-5273

SUGGESTED MONTHS FOR FEATURED ITEMS



August
MELONS



September
CABBAGE



October
APPLES & CARROTS



November
TURNIPS



December
WINTER SQUASH



January
SWEET POTATOES



February
POTATOES



March
DRY BEANS



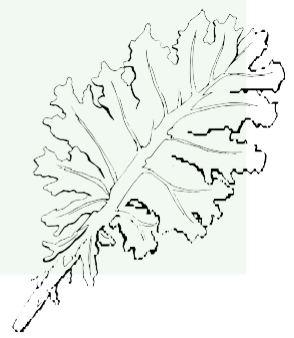
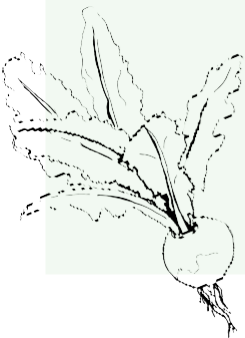
April
LEAFY GREENS



May
ASPARAGUS

FREE HARVEST OF THE MONTH ITEMS AVAILABLE
TO NEBRASKA SCHOOLS. FIND OUT MORE TODAY!

WWW.EDUCATION.NE.GOV/NS/FARM-TO-SCHOOL/HARVEST-OF-THE-MONTH



Allowable FFVP Costs

Please note that the FFVP grant awardees change EACH year depending on school enrollment and free and reduced meal participation. The grant awards are given on a reimbursement basis, meaning the school must first purchase the items and then submit allowable items for reimbursement through the NDE CNP system.

The following items are reimbursable through FFVP funds.

Operating Costs:

- Fresh fruits and vegetables (including delivery charges)
- Whole pieces (ready-to-eat or requiring preparation)
- Pre-cut and/or pre-packaged, ready-to-eat
- Fresh (not canned, dried, or frozen) vegetables are allowed to be cooked with an accompanying nutrition education lesson up to once per week
- Low-fat and fat-free dips for vegetables (not fruits)

Non-food items, including but not limited to:

- Paper supplies: Napkins, plates, bowls, souffle cups
- Plastic eating utensils
- Cutting boards and knives
- Serving bowls and trays
- Cleaning supplies
- Trash bags
- Wages/salaries and benefits for ALL employees (kitchen staff, para, bookkeeper, etc.) who wash or chop produce, prepare trays, distribute produce to classrooms, clean up, enter claims, manage funds, or otherwise directly run the FFVP service.

Administrative Costs (Up to 10% of Grant Award)

- Wages/salaries and benefits for employees who assist with administrative management (e.g., food ordering and claim entry)
- Purchasing or leasing equipment used for FFVP, or repair of FFVP-designated equipment including:
 - Refrigerators
 - Coolers
 - Portable kiosks and food bars
 - Small and large carts



Non-allowable FFVP Costs

The following items are not reimbursable through FFVP funds. If purchasing these items and/or providing them with FFVP service, the associated costs may not be billed to the FFVP grant.

Non-Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Food Items:

- Peanut butter
- Hummus
- Canned beans or other canned items
- Dip for fruit
- Fruit leather or jellied fruit
- Nuts or trail mix
- Cottage cheese
- Fruit or vegetable pizza (pre-made)
- Smoothies
- Other non-fresh or vegetable-related foods (e.g., pizza dough to make fruit pizza, yogurt and granola for fruit parfaits, jarred salsa to add to avocado to make guacamole, pickles, etc.)

Other costs:

- Nutrition education materials or equipment
- Promotional items and marketing materials sent to parents (including postage)
- Travel or field trip costs

If you have questions about what is or is not allowable with the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable program, please feel free to contact Lauren Christensen at lauren.christensen@nebraska.gov or 402-580-2210.

Thank you for participating in the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program!



High-Speed



Wet your hands.



Handwashing



Add soap – just a bit.



Go to the end of the line.



Keep scrubbing for 20 seconds.



Rinse germs down the drain.



Dry off - you're done!