# SNP Memo #2019-2020-40


**COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
Department of Education**

DATE: April 14, 2020

TO: Directors, Supervisors, and Contact Persons Addressed

FROM: Sandra C. Curwood, PhD, RDN, ***Sandy***

## SUBJECT: Flexibilities in the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP) during COVID-19

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), on April 9, 2020, issued flexibilities for the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP) during the COVID-19 pandemic. USDA exercised its authority to issue these flexibilities under section 19 of the National School Lunch Act (NSLA 42 U.S.C 1769a). The flexibilities are effective January 27, 2020, until June 30, 2020.

These flexibilities apply to elementary schools funded to participate in the FFVP during the 2019-2020 school year. FFVP-funded elementary schools that are operating during an unexpected closure, using the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) or the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) Seamless Summer Option (SSO), may provide FFVP foods along with SFSP or SSO foods at the same time.

Participating School Food Authorities (SFAs) do not have to apply to the state agency to implement these flexibilities in the FFVP. Notify Lynne Fellin, SNP Technical Assistance Specialist, by email at lynne.fellin@doe.virginia.gov if your SFA will implement the FFVP flexibilities, including which FFVP school(s) will operate during the unexpected school closures. The deadline for notification is April 20, 2020. The FFVP flexibilities may be implemented immediately.

### Flexibilities in the FFVP during Unexpected School Closures Due to COVID-19

* FFVP fresh fruits and vegetables may be served outside of the regular school day.
* FFVP fresh fruits and vegetables may be served in a non-congregate setting.
* FFVP fresh fruits and vegetables may be served at the same time as other meal service, SFSP or SSO, during unexpected school closures.
	+ Multiple FFVP fresh fruit and vegetable servings may be provided along with the multiple SFSP or SSO meals.
		- For example, three breakfast and three lunch meals are distributed together as part of the school’s SFSP or SSO meal service. Three FFVP fresh fruit and/or vegetable servings may be distributed at the same time.
		- There is no required minimum serving size for FFVP. Schools should provide whatever the typical serving of FFVP fresh fruits and vegetables would have been during regular school operation.
	+ FFVP fresh fruits and vegetables must be provided in addition to the required fruits and vegetables provided as part of the meal patterns for the unitized breakfast and lunch meals.
		- FFVP funds may not be used to purchase fruits and vegetables to be served as part of the unitized breakfast and lunch meal patterns.
	+ The requirement to offer nutrition education as part of the FFVP is suspended during this public health emergency.
* FFVP schools that operate an open site for SFSP or SSO during the unexpected closures may provide the FFVP fresh fruits and vegetables to all children receiving a meal from that site.
	+ Only currently approved FFVP elementary schools operating the SFSP or SSO may provide the FFVP fresh fruits and vegetables.
* FFVP funds may be used to provide the FFVP fresh fruits and vegetables in addition to the SFSP or SSO meals through the last day of the scheduled school calendar or until all previously allocated FFVP funds are spent, whichever comes first.
* FFVP claims for reimbursement should be submitted through the regular SNPWeb claim process.
	+ Submit all February and March claims, prior to the unexpected closures, as soon as possible. This will help determine the remaining FFVP funds available to provide FFVP at your SFSP/SSO participating FFVP elementary school(s) through the end of the school year.

The Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) did not include the FFVP as a “qualified program.” Because of that, the nationwide waiver allowing parents/guardians to pick up meals for children at non-congregate sites does not apply to FFVP. Operation of the FFVP is not mandatory during unexpected school closures due to COVID-19.

### Purchasing Local Fresh Fruits and Vegetables for the FFVP

Below is a list of ways to connect with local farmers and other resources to provide fresh fruits and vegetables for the FFVP.

* Sign up as a buyer on [Virginia Market Maker](https://va.foodmarketmaker.com/). You can use the Buy/Sell Forum to search products available and to reach out for specific items, such as Virginia Harvest of the Month (VA HOM) featured items.
* Call your local [Virginia Cooperative Extension](https://ext.vt.edu/offices.html) Agriculture and Natural Resources Agent. This person can connect you with farms in your region that may be seeking new market opportunities.
	+ For example, April’s VA HOM item is lettuce and May's VA HOM item is strawberries. Farmers currently have an excess supply of lettuce due to restaurant closures. U-Pick strawberry farms are modifying their operations and may be able to meet schools' needs.
* Ask your current produce vendors for local produce and select local options.

Please contact Lynne Fellin, SNP Technical Assistance Specialist, at lynne.fellin@doe.virginia.gov or by telephone at (804) 225-2717, with questions regarding the FFVP and these flexibilities. For questions about farm to school and purchasing local produce, please contact Trista Grigsby, Farm to School Specialist, at trista.grigsby@doe.virginia.gov.

SCC/LAF/cc