

**Appendix A: Sample State Agency Letter** OMB Number: 0584-0611

Expiration Date: 09/30/2019



**United States  
Department of  
Agriculture**

Food and  
Nutrition  
Service  
  
3101 Park  
Center Drive  
  
Alexandria, VA  
22302-1500

**SUBJECT:** 2020 Nominations for Produce Safety University  
  
**TO:** Directors State Directors  
Special Nutrition Programs Child Nutrition Programs  
All Regions Food Distribution Programs  
All States

**For State Agencies:**

Produce Safety University (PSU) is a one-week, all expenses paid training course for USDA’s Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) State agency (SA) and local school district partners. An overview of the course content is attached.

On behalf of FNS, I invite you to nominate up to four individuals to attend PSU. You may nominate Child Nutrition staff, and up to one State Agency representative. You may nominate yourself.

Nominations may come from the child nutrition agency and/or food distribution agency, but no more than four total nominations will be accepted from each State (states are highly encouraged to maintain a list of alternate nominees). If nominations are made by multiple agencies, they should work together to select the four nominees for the state. Territories will receive one space due to higher travel costs and fewer schools.

The following chart shows how the limit of four nominations may be distributed among state and local participants:

State Agency Representatives	School District Foodservice Staff	Total Number of Nominees
1	3	4
0	4	4

**Who Should Come?**

You are encouraged to select participants who have produce procurement responsibilities and/or a **current active role in training** child nutrition staff at the district and local levels. Participants will be expected to teach others about produce safety using the comprehensive training materials provided to all attendees. Individuals who previously have attended Produce Safety University should not be nominated.

**Selection Process and Criteria**

Attendees will be balanced among states who submit nominations by **December 3, 2019**. Late nominations will be placed on a waiting list and considered if space becomes available.

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, an agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 0584-0611. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 15 minutes per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, Office of Policy Support, 3101 Park Center Drive, Room 1014, Alexandria, VA 22302, ATTN: PRA (0584-0611). Do not return the completed form to this address.

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Once you have selected your nominees, please forward this letter, or the section below, to each of the nominees. Please inform them of their nomination, and instruct them to submit a nomination form as described below. **Nominees should complete the electronic form for their own nomination.** They should not nominate any other person.

**For Nominees**

Nomination Form Instructions

The dates and locations of the five 2020 classes are listed below. Please select three dates when you, the nominee, will be available to attend the training. **Nominees are encouraged to select the nearest training in order to reduce the time and cost of travel and facilitate regional networking.** Though we will try our best to place you into training on your preferred dates, please note that this will not be possible in all cases.

Dates	Location

Each nominee will be required to submit an electronic nomination form by **December 4, 2019**, although early submission is encouraged. This form is available at: [insert link](#)

Click on the hyperlink or type the link directly into your web browser to submit information. **Only nominations submitted through the online nomination form will be accepted.** Once a nomination form has been submitted successfully through the available link, confirmation will appear at the end of the form. Submission of a nomination form does not guarantee a place in a training session.

Upcoming Dates

- Nominees selected for the March and April training sessions will be notified of their acceptance by **January 6, 2020**. Participants for these classes must confirm to FNS by **January 20, 2020** that they are available and willing to attend.
- Nominees selected for the May and June training sessions will be notified of their acceptance by **February 5, 2020**. Participants for these classes must confirm to FNS by **February 19, 2020** that they are available and willing to attend.

FNS looks forward to working with you to offer produce safety training to state agency and district child nutrition staff. If you have any questions, contact the program manager at [producesafetyuniversity@fns.usda.gov](mailto:producesafetyuniversity@fns.usda.gov).

Sincerely,

Dr. Regina Tan  
Director, Office of Food Safety  
Supplemental Nutrition and Safety Programs  
USDA Food and Nutrition Service

## **Produce Safety University Overview**

Fresh produce provides many nutritional benefits, but it must be handled safely to reduce the risk of foodborne illness. Fresh produce that is served raw does not go through a cooking step to kill any harmful bacteria that may be present before it is served to students, and, therefore has the potential to cause a foodborne illness.

Increased funding through the USDA Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program, Farm-to-School initiatives, and school gardens raised concerns about potential food safety risks associated with these programs and prompted the USDA to develop Produce Safety University (PSU). The week-long immersion course is a collaborative venture between USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) and Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS).

The overall goals of PSU include:

- Provide Child Nutrition Professionals the tools to identify and mitigate the food safety risks associated with produce.
- Provide Child Nutrition Professionals the tools to increase produce shelf life, prevent spoilage, and reduce waste.
- Improve student acceptance of produce.
- Control costs.
- Provide Child Nutrition Professionals resources to engage the community and support local agriculture.
- Identify best practices for writing produce specifications.

PSU covers all aspects of the fresh produce supply chain from farm to fork. A combination of lecture, laboratory, and field-trip instruction is used in a train-the-trainer format. Graduates receive training materials to use at regional, state, and local trainings that include lesson plans, presentations and activities related to key topics addressed during PSU classes.

Participants learn to assess produce upon receiving to ensure that the produce meets bid specifications. They also learn how to safely store and serve fresh produce. Field trips, which vary due to training locations and seasons, give participants the opportunity to visit sites such as terminal markets, large produce distributors, fresh-cut processing companies, or farms.

Upon completion of the course, graduates receive a USDA certificate of completion for 21 continuing education hours.

## **Produce Safety University Logistics**

Produce Safety University begins late on Monday afternoon and ends on Friday at noon to allow the majority of participants to travel on Monday morning and return home on Friday afternoon. Tuesday and Thursday classes run from 8 am to 5 pm. Field trips take place on Wednesday. Draft agendas will be provided to participants well in advance of their session.