



Vendor News

For Store Owners, Managers, and Cashiers

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Inaugural WIC Vendor Conference

Thank you to all vendors that attended and helped make the first ever WIC Vendor Conference in Lansing a success. We especially thank vendors who traveled from far distances to attend. This conference aimed to enhance the WIC Program's relationship with WIC vendors and various WIC stakeholders by providing topic-specific information and transparency of State and Federal policies. The conference provided vendors the opportunity to meet and interact directly with WIC Vendor and Operations staff and have their questions answered throughout the day.

Special thank you to Auday Arabo, President and CEO of Associated Food and Petroleum Dealers and Linda Gobler, President and CEO of Michigan Grocers Association for their time, partnership and support of this event.

As part of the WIC Vendor Contract, all WIC authorized vendors are required to attend a group training session during their contract period. Vendors that attended the entire conference and whose current WIC Vendor Contract is within one of the contract cycle below, will not be required to attend upcoming training sessions.

Southeast Contract Cycle: July 1, 2014 – June 30, 2017

Northern Contract Cycle: July 1, 2015 – June 30, 2018

Central Contract Cycle: July 1, 2016 – June 30, 2019

Please check the dates on Page 1 of your WIC Vendor Contract to confirm your current contract cycle.

Vendors that did not attend the conference will be required to attend a vendor training session during their contract cycle. Please see article below for more information.

WIC Vendor Training Sessions

WIC vendor training sessions for various areas of the state are being identified and planned accordingly. Regardless of your location, if it is determined you are required to attend a training session, you will be notified by UPS overnight mail at least 10 days prior to the training.

Training notifications will be mailed to you with the date, time, and location of the group training session in your area. At least one representative from each store is REQUIRED to attend, per the terms of the WIC Vendor Contract.

If you own more than one store and both stores are WIC authorized locations, you may be allowed to represent both locations by only attending one training session. If this applies to you, and you have received notification of a training session, you should contact the WIC Program to make arrangements.

Verification of your affiliation with each location may be requested.

Store Brand Cereal

Store brand cold cereals listed on page 12 of the WIC Food Guide must be in 12oz. or larger packages. If your store carries store brand cold cereals, please be aware of this minimum size requirement as it not advertised in the WIC Food Guide.

Beech-Nut Naturals 4oz. Glass Jars

The Beech-Nut Naturals line of infant fruits and vegetables in 4oz. jars are allowed for WIC. This new size replaced the 4.25 oz. glass jars that were not allowed for WIC. The 4oz. Beech-Nut Classics line of infant fruits and vegetables continue to be allowed for WIC in addition to 4oz. Beech-Nut Naturals.

Gerber 4oz. 2-Pack Plastic Tubs

The Gerber 4oz. 2-pack plastic tubs of infant fruits and infant vegetables are allowed for WIC. These 2-pack plastic tubs replaced the 4oz. glass jars discontinued by Gerber last year. As a reminder, the 2-packs may not be separated and sold a single unit. The 2-packs must be sold as a 2-pack only. Vendors that still stock Gerber 4oz. glass jars may continue to sell their remaining glass jars through the expiration date on the lid.

Fairlife Milk Brand Not WIC Approved

The WIC Program received several calls regarding whether or not 52oz. whole, reduced fat or fat free Fairlife milk is allowed as a WIC milk product alternative. Fairlife milk is considered an ultra-filtered milk, and this type of milk alternative does not conform to the WIC Program's definition of milk or milk alternative. Therefore, Fairlife milk products are not allowed for WIC.

What To Do If A WIC EBT Bridge Card Does Not Scan

If a WIC EBT Bridge Card will not scan or swipe, do not turn the WIC client away. Simply enter the WIC EBT card number into the POS (point of sale) device. If the customer is not able to redeem their benefits because the card will not swipe, the client's benefits may expired. As a reminder, the WIC customer must have their WIC EBT Bridge Card with them to redeem benefits, even if you are manually entering the card number into the POS device.

WIC APPROVED SHELF TAGS/TALKERS

The Michigan WIC Program does not currently require the use of the “WIC Approved” shelf tag/talkers. You are free to use shelf tags at your discretion. We do encourage the use of shelf talkers as they have proven to be useful tool in assisting WIC participants in identifying WIC approved foods.

However, improper use of signage would be a violation, such as labeling non-WIC foods as WIC authorized. The Michigan WIC sanction Policy lists “Advertising a non-WIC food item as a WIC authorized food items” as a 5 point violation.

The Michigan WIC Vendor Contract also delineates appropriate use of the WIC logo and acronym in section III #10:

10. The WIC logo or acronym may only be used in accordance with the following:

The WIC Logo is any stylized representation of a silhouette depicting a woman holding and infant, or other variation of the silhouettes depicting various types of WIC clients. The WIC acronym are the letter W-I-C placed in sequence and represents the WIC Program as defined in Section I.

- A. Never place stickers, tags, or labels that include either WIC logo or acronym on individual packages.
- B. Never place stickers, tags, or labels that include either the WIC logo or acronym in a location to indicate or suggest that a non-WIC food item is WIC approved.
- C. The WIC acronym or logo may not be used in manufacturer advertising or be vendors in their names or in advertising or promotional literature other than to inform the public that the vendor is WIC-authorized.
- D. The WIC acronym or logo may not be used in manufacturer or vendor advertising in any manner likely to cause confusion, mistake, or deception as to the affiliation, connection, or association of a manufacturer or vendor with the WIC Program, or as to the sponsorship or approval of manufacturers' or vendor's goods, services, advertising, or commercial activities, including nutritional message(s), by the WIC Program or USDA

Showing the Price for an Authorized WIC Item

Vendors please remember that it is a WIC contract violation if you do not show the price of a WIC approved item. WIC clients have the right to see what you are charging for particular item before making the purchase with their WIC benefits. It doesn't matter if the product is a box of cereal, a 64oz bottle of juice or a can of infant formula powder. Each individual item must be priced, or the price must be displayed near the item. Even if for security purposes you store you infant formula in another location other than the shelf, the amount you are charging for the formula must be visible to the client, either by displaying a sign with the price, or by pricing each individual item. As mentioned above, failure to do this is a violation of Section III #6 of the WIC vendor contact.

Purchasing Infant Formula for Resale to WIC Customers

Important reminder - the Michigan WIC Program requires that all WIC authorized vendors **MUST only purchase infant formula from wholesalers, distributors, and retailers licensed by the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) or from infant formula manufacturers registered with the Food and Drug Administration.**

The MDARD is available to answer any questions as to whether a wholesaler, distributor, or retailer is properly licensed or general questions you may have regarding licensing requirements and procedures. You may contact the MDARD in a variety of ways:

Contact by phone: 1-800-292-3939

Contact by e-mail: mda-info@michigan.gov

Website: <http://michigan.gov/mdard>

Find a Licensed Michigan Business: [MDA Licensing, Certification and Registration](#)

If you are unable to confirm MDA licensure status or have any questions regarding this requirement, please call the WIC Vendor Relations Unit at 517-335-8937. This line will be answered by a live person from 8:00am – 5:00pm Monday through Friday.

Also, you must retain all purchase records, receipts, and invoices for WIC approved foods for at least three (3) years.

Requirements for inventory and purchase records can be found on Page 7, Section IV of your WIC Vendor Contract. These requirements will be strictly enforced and inventory records not meeting them will not be accepted. Accordingly, it is strongly suggested that WIC vendors provide their infant formula suppliers with a copy of these requirements.

If you have any questions about any of these policies, please call the WIC Program at 517-335-8937.

Infant Formula Manufacturers Registered with the FDA

Mead Johnson
Mead Johnson Nutritionals
2400 West Lloyd Expressway
Evansville, IN 47721

Nestle USA
Nestle Infant Nutrition
12 Vreeland Road Box 697
Florham Park, NJ 07932

Abbott Laboratories
Abbott Nutrition
3300 Stelzer Road
Columbus, OH 43219

Nutricia North America*
(Formerly Scientific Hospital Supplies (SHS) North America)
Nutricia North America
9900 Belward Campus Drive Suite 100
Rockville, MD 20850

**SHS International, based in the UK, manufactures most of
Nutricia North America Products. Nutricia North America
distributes the products in the US*

WIC Incentive Policy

Incentives offered to WIC participants are limited in value to a maximum of \$2.00 per day. Vendors are not allowed to add multiple transactions together to increase the value of the total transaction amount or the value of the incentive being offered to the WIC participant.

Examples of items not allowed based on the \$2.00 limit are packages of diapers and/or additional cans of infant formula

The following are allowable incentives that are an exception to the \$2.00 limit. The exceptions listed here must be provided at no cost to the WIC Program, subject to documentation and verification:

- Discount applied directly to the total transaction amount being charged to the WIC program.
- Loyalty programs or clubs that require participant enrollment and documented membership. Also, membership to the program or club must include proof of enrollment or some form of membership identifier issued to the member at the time of enrollment. The program or club must meet all applicable state and federal regulations.
- Manufacturers' coupons
- Free ounces added to food item by manufacturer (bonus sized items)
- Buy one, get one (BOGO) - the sale of one WIC food item as part of a normal WIC transaction and the provision of an additional item at no added cost, or a second item at reduced price.
Infant formula may not be included as a part of a BOGO.

Specific incentives that are **NOT** allowed under any circumstances:

- Cash or cash equivalent-such as debit cards (pre-paid or not), checks, money orders, phone cards, gas cards, gift cards. This clarification of definition of cash also applies to all references to cash found in the current WIC Vendor Contract and the WIC Vendor Sanction Policy.
- Lottery
- Alcohol
- Tobacco

A violation of any of these terms will be sanctioned in accordance with the current Vendor Sanction Policy. The WIC Program will determine the sanction for any violation of these terms on a case by case basis. **The minimum sanction for any violation of these terms will be 20 violation points, in accordance with Section A, #12 of the current Vendor Sanction Policy. Other sanctions may apply as well.**

As a reminder a vendor may be terminated and disqualified from the WIC Program upon accumulating 35 or more violation points.

WIC Program Integrity

In its continued efforts to contain costs and prevent fraud and abuse, the WIC program recently terminated and disqualified the following vendors from the WIC program due to violation of WIC program policies and procedures:

A&W Party Store	Ypsilanti, MI	Meghna Super Market	Warren, MI
E.K. Liquor	Inkster, MI	Tireman Market	Dearborn, MI
H&S Castle Party Store	Detroit, MI		
Lonyo Market	Detroit, MI		
Meghna Grocery	Detroit, MI		

Among the violations on which many termination actions are based, the most frequent include **failure to properly maintain purchase and inventory records** as required in Section IV of your WIC Vendor Contract. A Termination action based on the requirement may also result in a claim against the vendor by the WIC program to recoup unsubstantiated payments made to the vendor.

Another common violation is **failure to follow UPC scanning procedures** listed in Section III #7 of the WIC Vendor Contract. Failure to follow proper UPC scanning procedures is subject to sanctioning based on Section C #2 of the Vendor Sanction Policy- *“Charging the WIC Program for food (by UPC code) not received by the client.”*

In accordance with Federal Regulations and the Vendor Sanction Policy, three documented instances of this violation requires termination of the WIC Vendor Contract and a 3 year disqualification. As this is a mandatory Federal sanction, the Michigan WIC Program has no discretion regarding application of this sanction for this violation.

Also, the vendor may be terminated and disqualified from WIC based on SNAP (Food Stamps) termination and disqualification.

Michigan Department of Health & Human Services

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320 S. Walnut

Lansing, MI 48913

www.Michigan.gov/WIC

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To file a program complaint of discrimination; complete the [USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html). (AD-3027) found online at: http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, 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, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) Fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) Email: program.intake@usda.gov.

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