

# wic MICHIGAN VENDOR NEWS

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Information for Store Owners, Managers, and Cashiers

Spring 2020

Welcome to our Spring Vendor Newsletter!

I am reminded daily of the partnerships we are lucky enough to have with our 1,400+ WIC Vendors located throughout the great State of Michigan. I am also excited about the opportunity to build upon our past successes and work together to make the Michigan WIC Program one of the best in the country.

In FY 2020, the Vendor Unit has already monitored 11% of our WIC stores and we aim to train more Vendor staff than ever before through quarterly webcasts, on-site regional trainings, and our annual Vendor Conference. Together, let's keep the momentum moving forward. Thank you for your continued support.

Sincerely,

*Kimberly Keilen, MSW*

Section Manager—Vendor Relations & Program Integrity  
Michigan Dept. of Health & Human Services



## ALERT! BUSINESS EMAILS NOW REQUIRED!

Starting **May 1, 2020**, the Michigan WIC Program will be sending future Vendor communications **via email**, so it is important to check your email regularly for program and policy updates.

If your business email changes, please let us know immediately so that we can update it in our system.

## DID YOU KNOW... WIC PROVIDES MORE THAN FOOD?

### Other WIC services include:

- ◆ Peer counselors and lactation specialists
- ◆ Moms' groups and classes
- ◆ Breast pumps
- ◆ Breastfeeding accommodations
- ◆ Referrals to healthcare and social services, including return-to-work support and childcare

Call 2-1-1 to find the **WIC Clinic** nearest you!

### Who are WIC Clients?

- ◆ Pregnant women
- ◆ Breastfeeding women
- ◆ Non-breastfeeding postpartum women
- ◆ Infants (up to 1st birthday)
- ◆ Children (up to 5th birthday)

In FY 2019,  
**Michigan WIC**  
put over **\$143**  
**MILLION** into  
**local economies!**

### Who is Eligible to Receive WIC Benefits?

- ◆ Michigan residents
- ◆ Those who meet Income Guidelines
- ◆ Those at nutritional risk
- ◆ Medicaid and SNAP participants
- ◆ U.S. citizenship NOT required

Please email [MDHHS-WICVendor@michigan.gov](mailto:MDHHS-WICVendor@michigan.gov) or call 517-335-8937 with all questions and input.

# VENDOR BEST PRACTICES

Michigan WIC staff would like to thank Vendors for 'best practices' that have been observed during recent in-store Monitoring Visits.

WIC Shelves – Thank you to Vendors that have taken the initiative (and time) to create a WIC shelf to improve the client shopping experience. One issue raised by clients in a recent survey was the difficulty of locating WIC-approved items when shopping. WIC shelves help clients quickly find the items they need (leaving them more time to shop in your store for non-WIC items) and have been shown to increase WIC sales. We appreciate the time and effort that you have put into this best practice!

WIC Connect Mobile App – Thank you to Vendors that have shared the WIC Connect mobile phone application with their customers. The app, which was highlighted in the Summer 2019 Newsletter, allows clients to see their food prescription and balance (using words and pictures) and scan UPCs to determine if they have the benefits available to purchase the item (Green = Yes; Red = No). There is also a Resource page that directs clients to websites they may need. We hope this app helps both clients and Vendors by increasing client understanding of their food package and decreasing the need for cashiers to run balance inquiries and troubleshoot transaction problems during check-out.

Shopping Assistants – Shopping assistants (i.e. people stationed in a store to help customers find the items they need) are a great way to improve customer loyalty and increase WIC sales. Thank you to Vendors who have gone above and beyond with this service!

Vendor Newsletter – A great idea shared by a Vendor is hanging the Quarterly Newsletter in the employee breakroom where all staff are able to read and initial it. This is a convenient way to share important information about the Michigan WIC Program and ensure that all store employees are informed. Better trained staff = fewer transaction issues at the registers!

Shelf Talkers – Using shelf talkers (*see image to the right*) to identify WIC-approved products makes it easier for clients to find the items they need; ensuring they transact their benefits at your store.



**KEEP UP THE GREAT WORK!**

## FORMULA PURCHASE REQUIREMENTS

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 (**FDA**). This requirement also applies to all **online purchases**.

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 MDARD in a variety of ways:

- Contact by phone: **1-800-292-3939**
- Contact by e-mail: [mda-info@michigan.gov](mailto:mda-info@michigan.gov)
- Website: [Michigan.gov/MDARD](http://Michigan.gov/MDARD)

If you are unable to confirm MDARD licensure status or have any questions regarding this requirement, please call the WIC Vendor Relations Unit at **517-335-8937**.



# WIC RECIPE: Cheesy Tuna & Veggie Quesadillas

## Ingredients

- ◆ 1 can (5 oz.) tuna in water\*, drained
- ◆ 1 small tomato\*, diced
- ◆ ½ green pepper\*, seeded and diced
- ◆ ½ cup low-fat cheese\*, shredded
- ◆ 4 (8 in.) whole-wheat tortillas\*

\*Designates a WIC-approved food item

**Makes 4 servings.**

Recipe from NWA 2020 WIC Calendar.

## Directions

In a bowl, mix together tuna, tomato, green pepper and cheese. Spread one-quarter of the filling over half of each tortilla. Fold tortilla over the filling. Heat each quesadilla in a skillet over medium heat until the cheese starts to melt. Turn the quesadilla over and cook for another 30 seconds to 1 minute. Garnish with chopped tomatoes.



## WIC INCENTIVE POLICY



Incentives offered to WIC participants are limited in value to a maximum of \$2 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. **Diapers and formula ARE NOT allowable incentives.**

The following are allowable incentives that are an exception to the \$2 limit. The exceptions listed here must be provided at no cost to the WIC Program.

INCENTIVE	DEFINITION	EXAMPLE
Transaction Discount (price discount)	Discount applied directly to total transaction amount; the WIC Program benefits by paying less for the same number of items.	\$10 or 10% off your current transaction when you purchase \$50 or more.
Loyalty Programs / Clubs	Programs that require enrollment and documented membership; they must be trackable, include proof of enrollment, and follow state and federal regulations.	Store loyalty program/Perk rewards.
Manufacturers' Coupons (price discount)	A digital or printed voucher advertising a reduced price for a specific WIC item; the WIC Program benefits from the price reduction.	\$0.50 coupon for low fat milk (Milk was \$2.50, but is now \$2 with coupon).
Free Ounces / Bonus Sizes (quantity discount)	When a food manufacturer adds extra ounces to a product at no cost to the consumer; this limited time item should have same UPC as the original item.	Bonus-sized box of cereal with '20% More Free' advertised on box.
BOGO Free (quantity discount)	Customers are offered the same item or a different item <u>of equal or lesser value</u> for free; the client benefits.	Buy one jar of baby food, get another of equal or lesser value free (Variations like 'Buy 10, get 1 Free' are also valid).
BOGO at a Reduced Price (price discount)	Like BOGO, but the second item is given at a reduced price and not for free; the WIC Program benefits by paying less for the second item.	Buy one box of infant cereal, get the second 50% off.

Specific incentives that ARE NOT allowed under any circumstances include:

- ◆ Cash or cash equivalents, such as debit cards, checks, money orders, phone cards, gas cards and gift cards
- ◆ Lottery
- ◆ Alcohol
- ◆ Tobacco



# 2020 INVENTORY AUDITS

## Tips From the Desk of WIC Program Integrity

When purchase records/receipts/invoices are requested from the WIC Program Office, DO NOT send in original receipts. Please ONLY send copies of legible records that are unaltered and include the entire receipt. The Program Integrity also asks that you organize your records in chronological order by date of purchase and refrain from highlighting, marking or modifying any purchase records.

Per **Section IV** of the **WIC Vendor Contract**, please also remember that receipts/purchase records should reflect the following:

- ◆ Must include the name and address of the supplier or wholesaler.
- ◆ Must list the items purchased, including size, stock number, UPC code (if available), quantity and unit price.
- ◆ Sales receipts for WIC foods purchased at retail grocer (for resale by the Vendor) must include the name and address of the store, the date of purchase, description of the exact items purchased (e.g. 8 oz. PediaSure Vanilla-6pk), the unit price of the items, and the total quantity purchased.
- ◆ Receipts, which do not completely describe the actual item, shall have computer codes that can be verified by contacting the store at which the merchandise was purchased.
- ◆ All receipts from purchases at retail establishments must be machine dated by the establishment. Hand dated retail store receipts are not acceptable.
- ◆ Affidavits, Statements of Fact and oral statements shall not be accepted as evidence of inventory. Only purchase invoices or retail receipts as described in this section shall be accepted and constitute evidence of inventory.
- ◆ 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 (FDA).



## SUMMER EBT FOR CHILDREN IS BACK!

The Michigan WIC Program has received a USDA grant to continue the **Summer EBT for Children (SEBTC)** Program for 2020! This grant helps provide a monthly prescription of nutritious WIC foods to eligible school-age children in selected public schools and Intermediate School Districts (ISDs). This food package is valued at about \$30 per month per selected child and disbursed via a SEBTC Bridge Card. Families can redeem SEBTC benefits at any authorized WIC Vendor around the state between June 1, 2020, and Sept. 7, 2020. More information regarding SEBTC-specific Vendor trainings and approved foods coming soon!

### Eligible Items:

- ◆ Low Fat Milk - 2 Gallons
- ◆ Eggs - 1 Dozen
- ◆ Cereal - 18 Ounces
- ◆ Whole Grain Options - 1 Pound
- ◆ Peanut Butter & Bean Options
- ◆ Cheese - 1 Pound
- ◆ Canned soup
- ◆ Canned/jarred tomato sauce – 24 oz
- ◆ Jarred salsa – 16 oz
- ◆ \$8 Cash Value for Fresh Fruits & Vegetables

### County Service Areas:

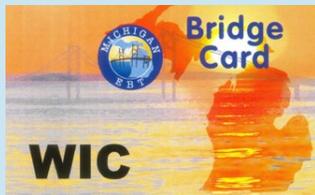
- ◆ Alcona
- ◆ Alger
- ◆ Alpena
- ◆ Antrim
- ◆ Baraga
- ◆ Benzie
- ◆ Charlevoix
- ◆ Chippewa
- ◆ Clare
- ◆ Crawford
- ◆ Delta
- ◆ Dickinson
- ◆ Emmet
- ◆ Gladwin
- ◆ Gogebic
- ◆ Grand Traverse
- ◆ Houghton
- ◆ Huron
- ◆ Iosco
- ◆ Iron
- ◆ Kalkaska
- ◆ Keweenaw
- ◆ Lake
- ◆ Leelanau
- ◆ Luce
- ◆ Mackinac
- ◆ Marquette
- ◆ Mecosta
- ◆ Menominee
- ◆ Montmorency
- ◆ Ogemaw
- ◆ Ontonagon
- ◆ Osceola
- ◆ Oscoda
- ◆ Roscommon
- ◆ Sanilac
- ◆ Schoolcraft
- ◆ Tuscola

# TRANSACTION UPDATES & REGULATIONS

## Lost & Found WIC EBT Cards

If a client leaves their **WIC EBT** or **SNAP Bridge Card** at your store:

- ◆ DO NOT keep the card.
- ◆ If you find a lost card, call the Customer Service number on the back of the card (**1-888-678-8914**). This will cancel the card and the client will be issued a new one.



- ◆ After calling the toll-free number, destroy or dispose of the card as directed.

## PLU 4469 now 44691

As a reminder, all Vendors that use the PLU 4469 for fresh fruit and vegetable transactions should now be using PLU 44691. Vendors with integrated software should also make sure that they map fresh fruit and vegetable UPCs and PLUs back to 44691.

## DID YOU KNOW?

Several varieties of **PediaSure, Ensure and Boost** are **WIC-approved!**

See all WIC-approved formulas on our website at [Michigan.gov/WICVendor](http://Michigan.gov/WICVendor).



## WIC Transaction Guidelines

The following are electronic benefit transfer (EBT) specific WIC Program policies and guidelines that apply to all authorized WIC Vendors.

- ◆ Treat all customers, regardless of WIC status, equally and with respect.
- ◆ A valid WIC EBT Bridge Card and PIN must be presented at the time of purchase in order for the cardholder to purchase their WIC food items. The Vendor **may never** ask the client or proxy for additional ID verification.
- ◆ The card number may only be keyed into the point-of-sale (POS) or register if the magnetic strip is damaged or the card is not scanning.
- ◆ Vendors may not enter a cardholder's Personal Identification Number (PIN). The cardholder must enter his/her own PIN.
- ◆ All items the client receives must be physically scanned. UPC sheets are not allowed. The only exception to this policy is for fresh fruits and vegetables, for which the PLU 44691 is used.
- ◆ Vendors must give the cardholder a printed receipt that reflects the appropriate quantities of WIC food items purchased. When using Manual WIC Vouchers, Vendors must give the cardholder a copy of the Voucher.
- ◆ Manual WIC Vouchers may only be used when the store's WIC EBT system is not available to process a WIC EBT transaction. Vouchers must be cleared within 5 days via Conduent or a Vendor's 3<sup>rd</sup> Party Processor. Contact the **Conduent Vendor Help Desk at 1-888-529-1693** with questions.

Please see the **WIC Vendor Contract** and **Appendix T-1** of the Michigan WIC Program State Plan of Operations for more information regarding policies and procedures related to the processing of WIC transactions.

# COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## Collected from WIC Vendor Training Webcasts

**Q: Does the online webcast count towards my interactive training requirement?**

A: Yes, the webcast fulfills the mandatory training requirement of 1 training per Contract Cycle (i.e. once every 3 years). If you prefer an in-person training, please see the back page for more information.

**Q: Who do I contact if I need more WIC materials (shelf talkers, door decals, Food Guides, etc.)?**

A: You can call the Vendor Relations Unit at **517-335-8937** or email us at [MDHHS-WICVendor@michigan.gov](mailto:MDHHS-WICVendor@michigan.gov).

**Q: Where can I find a list of all approved egg varieties?**

A: The Michigan WIC Authorized Eggs list can be found on our website at [Michigan.gov/WICVendor](http://Michigan.gov/WICVendor).

**Q: I am confused about the Michigan WIC Incentive Policy. What incentives are allowed?**

A: Please see Page 3 of this newsletter for information regarding our Incentive Policy. You may also call the Vendor Relations Unit at **517-335-8937** for additional clarification.

**Q: What types of meats are eligible to meet the ‘full-line grocer’ WIC Vendor Selection Criteria?**

A: Meats and meat products that contain meat as the first ingredient are allowed under our current Selection Criteria. Please see the article below and visit <https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/retailer/eligible> for more information on ‘full-line grocer’ requirements and eligible meats.

**Q: What types of fruits and vegetables are WIC-approved?**

A: All fresh fruits and vegetables without additives are WIC-approved. This includes bagged salad greens and pre-cut fruit, as long as there is no sugar, oil, preservatives, dressing, nuts, etc. added. At this time, fresh herbs ARE NOT allowed. Please see the current [Michigan WIC Food Guide](#) for further guidance.

**Q: What information needs to be included on my invoices and how long do I have to keep them?**

A: Invoices and purchase records must be kept for a minimum of 3 years. For a description of invoice requirements, please see Page 4 of this newsletter.

**Q: Why doesn't WIC reimburse me the full purchase amount for some items? Is there anything I can do?**

A: WIC calculates maximum reimbursement amounts for each UPC based on the average price charged for that same item by similar Vendors in your area. This max value is re-calculated each month. If you believe your reimbursement is incorrect, you can submit a copy of your purchase records, a sales receipt indicating the price reimbursed by WIC, and an explanation via fax to Pam at **517-335-9206**.

## FULL-LINE GROCER REQUIREMENTS

As per the updated January 2018 [WIC Vendor Selection Criteria](#), to be eligible for participation in the Michigan WIC Program, a Vendor must be a **full-line grocery store**. A full-line grocery store is defined as carrying:

- ◆ at least one additional variety of **bread or tortillas** with six or more units of said variety
- ◆ at least one additional variety of **brown rice** with six or more units of said variety
- ◆ at least four varieties of **fresh fruits** with five or more units of each variety
- ◆ at least four varieties of **fresh vegetables** with five or more units of each variety
- ◆ at least four varieties of **fresh meat, poultry or fish** with five or more units of each variety



For a description of eligible foods in each category, please see the USDA guidelines at: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/retailer/eligible>.

# RESOURCES

## WIC PROGRAM: Call for Public Opinion

WIC Program Federal Regulations require that state agencies ensure that the public has an opportunity to provide comment on development of the WIC Program State Plan of Operations.

The Michigan Department of Health & Human Services will accept written comments regarding the operation of the WIC Program in Michigan between **March 1, 2020 and April 30, 2020**. Comments may be related to any aspect of the operation of the WIC Program in Michigan. These comments will assist the Department to constructively review WIC operations and make improvements in the operation of the WIC Program in Michigan.

Comments should be mailed to:

Michigan Dept. of Health & Human Services  
WIC Division  
Lewis Cass Building, 6th Floor  
320 S. Walnut St.  
Lansing, MI 48913

or emailed to: [MichiganWIC@michigan.gov](mailto:MichiganWIC@michigan.gov)

## LOOKING FOR SOMETHING?

Contact the Michigan Department of Health & Human Services – WIC Division

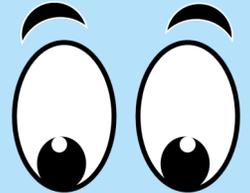
Lewis Cass Bldg, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor      Phone: (517) 335-8937  
320 S. Walnut St.                      Fax: (517) 335-9514  
Lansing, MI 48913

Email: [MDHHS-WICVendor@michigan.gov](mailto:MDHHS-WICVendor@michigan.gov)

Website: [Michigan.gov/WICVendor](http://Michigan.gov/WICVendor)

**Visit our website** for links to lots of helpful documents and resources, including:

- ◆ Vendor Request for Application Form
- ◆ WIC Vendor Selection Criteria
- ◆ UPC Request Form
- ◆ WIC Vendor Complaint Form
- ◆ WIC Vendor Handbook
- ◆ A recording of the WIC Vendor Training webcast
- ◆ Copies of the WIC Vendor Contract and associated documents
- ◆ Minimum Stock Requirements
- ◆ Previous WIC Vendor Newsletters
- ◆ And more!



## NON-DISCRIMINATION CLAUSE

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Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at **800-877-8339**. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD-3027) found online at: [http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_cust.html](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](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov)

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Michigan Department of Health &  
Human Services, WIC Division  
Lewis Cass Bldg - 6th Floor  
320 S. Walnut St.  
Lansing, MI 48913

PLEASE  
PLACE  
STAMP  
HERE

Questions/Comments  
Telephone Number: 517-335-8937  
Email:  
[MDHHS-WICVendor@michigan.gov](mailto:MDHHS-WICVendor@michigan.gov)



## 2020 TRAINING SCHEDULE

As a reminder, all WIC authorized Vendors are required to participate in one interactive training each Contract Cycle (i.e. **once every three years**) to be compliant with the **WIC Vendor Contract** and eligible for reauthorization. Below is the upcoming webcast training schedule for 2020. If your store requires a training, you will be sent an invitation in the mail. Vendors may also participate in trainings more frequently as desired.

Tuesday, June 16<sup>th</sup> @ 2 p.m. (WEBCAST)  
Tuesday, September 22<sup>nd</sup> @ 2 p.m. (WEBCAST)

If you prefer an **in-person** training:

Thursday, September 17<sup>th</sup> Annual Vendor Conference at the Dearborn  
DoubleTree Hotel

**Stay tuned for additional training opportunities!**



If you would like to know the date of your most recent training or would like more information regarding registration for these events, please contact the **Vendor Relations Unit** at **517-355-8937** or by email at [MDHHS-WICVendor@michigan.gov](mailto:MDHHS-WICVendor@michigan.gov).

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