



VENDOR NEWS

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Information for Store Owners, Managers, and Cashiers

Summer 2020

Dear Vendor,

As we continue to find ourselves in these challenging and uncertain times due to the COVID-19 state of emergency, I want to thank all of our WIC Vendors for stepping up and working tirelessly to meet the needs of our WIC clients.

To assist Vendors and WIC clients during this time, the Michigan WIC Program has:

- Temporarily suspended all monitoring;
- Expanded food choices available to WIC clients;
- Developed and shared Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs);
- Allowed for temporary store closures to protect store employees and WIC clients;
- Developed and shared a Michigan wholesaler list;
- Shared best practices as reported in a recent Vendor survey; and
- Developed a Michigan WIC COVID-19 website with valuable resources and information: https://www.michigan.gov/mdhhs/0,5885,7-339-71547_4910_6329-523991--,00.html

It is important that we continue our efforts and work to overcome obstacles that may impede our mission to bring healthy and nutritious foods to WIC families. To that end, please contact us with any questions or concerns you may have. We **will** get through this together!

As always, thank you for your continued support and partnership.

Sincerely,

Kimberly Keilen, MSW

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

REMINDER! Business Emails Now Required!

Starting **May 1, 2020**, the Michigan WIC Program began sending all Vendor communications **via email**. Additionally, some of these emails may include time-sensitive materials requiring Vendor signature and response, such as WIC Vendor Contracts. As such, please remember 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.

Please email MDHHS-WICVendor@michigan.gov or call 517-335-8937 with all questions and input.

WIC AND COVID-19

Expanded Products

In response to food supply and demand issues caused by the COVID-19 state of emergency, the Michigan WIC Program has implemented a series of food expansions to the WIC approved product list (APL), described below.

In order for your store to transact food items covered by these expansions, it is necessary for your POS system to access the most up-to-date APL. For WIC stand-alone POS devices, your APL is automatically uploaded daily by Conduent; for integrated systems, your Third Party Processor will update your APL.

Both expansions are designed to:

1. Increase the variety and accessibility of WIC-approved foods for clients;
2. Provide additional shelf-stable food choices; and
3. Reduce the number of trips WIC clients must make to purchase needed groceries.

On [April 1, 2020](#), the program expanded the options available for bread, oatmeal, pasta, tortillas, cereal, infant cereal, infant fruits and vegetables, infant meats, beans, yogurt, cheese, and soy beverages.

Beginning [June 1, 2020](#), the Michigan WIC Program is further expanding the APL to allow WIC clients to use their fruit and vegetable Cash Value Benefits (CVBs) to purchase frozen and canned fruits and vegetables.

This change will take effect for WIC customers on their June benefits start date. Therefore, this option will not become active for all clients on the same day. Frozen and canned fruits and vegetables will be made available for women and children over 1 year of age. Caregivers of children under 1 year of age will still be able to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables, but their benefits cannot be used for frozen and canned fruits and vegetables.

Because frozen and canned items are eligible for purchase with the same benefit used to buy fresh fruits and vegetables, please keep in mind the following:

1. Vendors **should** scan the UPC for frozen/canned items when conducting a WIC transaction.
2. Vendors **should not** scan the UPC for fresh fruits and vegetables. (Note: Use the actual PLU or #44691 for fresh produce.)
3. The **Split Tender Policy** applies to frozen/canned vegetables as well. CVBs will be charged and the client should be allowed to pay any remaining costs for WIC-approved fruits and vegetables.

More information regarding these expansions can be found on our website at Michigan.gov/WICVendor.

UPC Request Form

As explained above, in response to the COVID-19 crisis, the Michigan WIC Program has expanded the Approved Product List (APL) to include new sizes and products that were not previously WIC-authorized.

Vendors can request authorization of additional foods they believe meet federal size and nutritional guidelines by utilizing the [UPC Request Form](#), found at Michigan.gov/WICVendor.

Simply fill out the form, include a copy of the Food Description and UPC Code, and fax it to 517-335-9206. The request will be reviewed by Michigan WIC Program staff.

Michigan Department of Health and Human Services WIC Division UPC Request Form		
<small>Instructions: Complete the items in the Vendor Information area. Print or type information, and Fax to: 517-335-9206. Questions should be directed to 1-800-645-1558 for Vendor Assistance. If fax not available mail to: MDHHS, Lewis Cass Bldg - WIC, 320 S Walnut, Lansing, MI 48913. Telephone requests will not be allowed.</small>		
Vendor Information		
Vendor Name:	Vendor WIC Number:	
Address:	Phone Number:	
City:	ZIP Code:	Fax Number:
Product Information		
Food Item: <small>(Example: Milk, cheese, Luno etc.)</small>	Item Price:	
Name of Manufacturer:	Package Size (oz)	
Food Brand Name:		
UPC Code: <small>(include all numbers)</small>		
Food Description: <small>(Example: Flavor, Type, Added ingredient, Etc)</small>		
Copy of UPC Code & Label of food item sent:	YES	NO <small>(Please Circle one)</small>
Authorized Vendor: <small>(PLEASE PRINT)</small>		
Authorized Vendor Signature:		Date:
STATE USE ONLY		
Date Received:	Received By:	
Date Reviewed:	Reviewed By:	
Decision:	Approved	Not Approved Review Pending
Reason:		
Date UPC Entered:	Entered By:	
Category:	Sub Category:	Vendor Peer Group:
This institution is an equal opportunity provider		

RECORD MAINTENANCE

Faded Receipts and Proof of Purchase

Texts on thermal paper receipts fade. And when they do, it could mean a problem, particularly when it involves a discrepant audit with the Program Integrity Unit. The following practices will help prevent your thermal paper receipts containing all your WIC approved food purchases from fading and becoming unreadable.

AVOID storing receipts:

- ◆ Near the window/light source;
- ◆ In a humid room;
- ◆ Inside your car;
- ◆ In walk-in coolers;
- ◆ In a busy place with many people;
- ◆ Next to organic solvents;
- ◆ Near adhesives;
- ◆ In dusty places; and
- ◆ In plastic sleeves.



Vendors, as warmer weather approaches you will want to store your receipts in a dark place, with optimal humidity between 45 and 65 percent and a temperature below 77 Fahrenheit. If you want to make sure every receipt is accounted for, **scan or photocopy** all of your thermal paper receipts to protect your proof of inventory records.

Formula Beyond Infants



If a Vendor receives a request for WIC formula records as part of an audit conducted by the Program Integrity Unit, this request pertains to standard infant formula, exempt infant formula, and WIC eligible nutritionals. This includes **PediaSure, Boost Kid Essentials, and Ensure**, as well as any newly authorized items added to this list.

Therefore, it is crucial that any staff handling record keeping regularly review the authorized formulas and that Vendors submit inventory records for all relevant items redeemed during the audit period.

Please see the [WIC-authorized Formula List](#), found on our website at [Michigan.gov/WICVendor](#), for a complete list of WIC formulas.

NOTE: Please be aware as well that inventory audits may be conducted for **any WIC item**, not just formula.

Audit Paper Submissions and Coronavirus

Current information suggests it may be possible to contract COVID-19 by touching cardboard or paper surfaces infected with the virus. To reduce the chances of spreading coronavirus through multiple handlers, the Program Integrity Unit encourages sending record receipts via email to MDHHS-WICProgramIntegrity@michigan.gov.

Please contact the Program Integrity Unit at **517-335-8937** with questions.



SUMMER EBT FOR CHILDREN IS BACK!

The USDA grant-funded **Summer EBT for Children (SEBTC)** Program is underway for Summer 2020! This grant helps provide a monthly prescription of nutritious foods using the SEBTC Bridge Card to eligible school-age children in select public schools and Intermediate School Districts (ISDs). Eligible children receive approximately \$30 per month in food benefits, which can be redeemed at any WIC-authorized Vendor throughout the state until September 7, 2020.



Unfortunately, the limited size of the grant does not allow us to serve children throughout the whole state. **This year, the counties being served include:**

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

The items included in the food package are:

- | | | |
|------------------|--------------------------------|--|
| ◆ Low fat milk | ◆ Peanut butter & bean options | ◆ Canned/jarred tomato sauce – 24 oz |
| ◆ Eggs - 1 dozen | ◆ Cheese - 1 lb | ◆ Jarred salsa – 16 oz |
| ◆ Cereal - 18 oz | ◆ Canned soup | ◆ \$8 Cash Value for fresh fruits & vegetables |

For more information about the SEBTC Program, a brochure of eligible foods and a Vendor training video, visit <http://sebtc-mi.com/for-grocery-vendors/wsdindex.html>. Please contact Sarah at GreerS1@michigan.gov with questions.

PROJECT FRESH & DOUBLE UP FOOD BUCKS



Project FRESH (i.e. Farmer's Market Nutrition Program) helps provide healthy and nutritious produce to Michigan WIC clients, while promoting our state's diverse agricultural products. The program provides WIC clients with locally grown fresh fruits and vegetables from authorized **farmers, farmers' markets and roadside stands** throughout MI via the use of **coupon booklets**. While administered by WIC, WIC-authorized Vendors MAY NOT accept Project FRESH coupons. Visit https://www.michigan.gov/mdhhs/0,5885,7-339-71547_4910_4921---,00.html for more information.



The Double Up Food Bucks program doubles the value of SNAP EBT benefits spent on **fresh fruits and vegetables** at participating markets and grocery stores. For example, a customer purchasing \$1 of apples with their SNAP Bridge Card would get **\$1 FREE** Double Up Food Bucks for any fresh fruits and vegetables, up to \$20 per day. WIC benefits are NOT eligible for this program. Visit <https://www.doubleupfoodbucks.org/about/> for more information.

WIC AND NUTRITION EDUCATION

One of the key components of the WIC Program is **nutrition education and counseling**. In addition to receiving food benefits and referrals, clients have an opportunity to learn about nutrition and health, with guidance aimed at their specific needs. WIC counselors, many of whom are **registered dietitians**, spend time educating clients on healthy choices focused around the WIC food package. Then, many of these healthy behaviors start in the food aisles of your store.

This is where you can help!

- ◆ Promote healthy options by sourcing and placing nutritious foods in prominent locations throughout your store.
- ◆ Make meal planning simple:
 - ◆ **Group WIC items** that can be used to create a healthy and nutritious meal. For example, you might group beans, bell peppers, onions and tomatoes for clients to create a simple and delicious chili; or add whole wheat pasta for spaghetti.
 - ◆ Display **recipe cards** near WIC items to increase purchases and make meal planning easier for clients. For easy WIC recipes, visit <https://texaswic.org/wic-foods-and-recipes/recipes> or see the last page of this (and other) WIC Vendor Newsletters.



Thank you, Vendors, for being a key partner in WIC. You compliment the work of our nutrition staff by keeping your shelves stocked with healthy foods so Michigan WIC clients can achieve their individual and family nutrition goals!

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
- General website: Michigan.gov/MDARD



Additionally, you can find the licensure status of any Michigan wholesaler or retailer on their website at <https://aca3.accela.com/MDARD/Default.aspx>.

For a list of FDA-approved formula manufacturers, please visit our website at Michigan.gov/WICVendor.

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

WIC RECIPE:

Black Bean and Corn Salad

Ingredients

- ◆ 1 can (14.5 oz.) black beans*, rinsed and drained
- ◆ 1 cup corn *, frozen or canned
- ◆ ½ red onion*, chopped
- ◆ 1 bell pepper*, chopped
- ◆ ½ cup cilantro, finely chopped
- ◆ 1 clove garlic*, minced
- ◆ 2 limes*, juiced
- ◆ ½ cup olive oil
- ◆ ½ tsp cumin
- ◆ Pinch of salt

*Designates a WIC-approved food item

Directions

In a large bowl, mix together black beans, corn, onion, pepper, cilantro and garlic. In a separate bowl, whisk together lime juice, olive oil, cumin, and salt. Add to the bean mixture and toss well. Refrigerate before serving.

TIP: This salad tastes best when it can sit in the fridge a few hours or overnight.

Makes 6 servings.

Recipe from NWA 2020 WIC Calendar.



RESOURCES

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

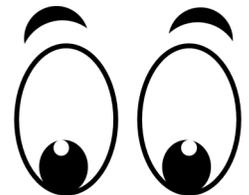
Lewis Cass Bldg, 6th Fl.
320 S. Walnut St.
Lansing, MI 48913

Phone: (517) 335-8937
Fax: (517) 335-9514

Email: MDHHS-WICVendor@michigan.gov
Website: 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!



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(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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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



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 16th @ 2 p.m. (WEBCAST)
Tuesday, September 22nd @ 2 p.m. (WEBCAST)

If you prefer an **in-person** training, our [Annual Vendor Conference](#) will be held:

Thursday, September 17th at the Dearborn DoubleTree Hotel*

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.

A [recorded version](#) of the training webcast can also be viewed at any time online at Michigan.gov/WICVendor.

*The conference will be subject to current regulations surrounding the COVID-19 state of emergency.

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