



Michigan WIC Vendor News

Store Owners, Managers, and Cashiers – PLEASE READ

Volume 22, Issue 2

June 2013

Application Period for Central Cycle Contracts Wrapping Up

The current contracts with WIC authorized vendors in the CENTRAL part of the state will expire on June 30, 2013.

Applications for vendors in the central cycle were due February 15, 2013. All timely applications are currently being reviewed for accuracy and completeness. If an application is missing information or requires clarification, it will be returned to the vendor for appropriate action.

Vendors who will be awarded contracts for the period July 1, 2013 through June 30, 2016 will be notified in writing of their renewal status. Should notifications be delayed, those vendors who are currently authorized will be allowed to continue accepting WIC under a limited grant of authority until new contracts are issued.

Vendors not selected to receive a new 3-year contract will also be notified in writing and placed on a waiting list for future consideration.

Changes to WIC Authorized Foods

PEANUT BUTTER

18 oz. Jif Peanut Butter recently transitioned to 16 oz. jars. Since 18 oz. peanut butter will still be the only WIC approved size, **the 16 oz. jar of Jif Peanut Butter will NOT be WIC approved**. Vendors will not be able to scan the UPC of 16 oz. Jif Peanut Butter as part of a WIC EBT transaction. As a reminder, the minimum stock requirement for peanut butter is four jars in 18 oz. size only – any brand or type (smooth, crunchy, extra crunchy) – except those listed in the WIC Food List as not allowed. If you should have any problem obtaining WIC approved 18 oz. peanut butter, please contact your Vendor Relations Analyst at (517) 335-8937.

Also, please note that local WIC clinics are notifying their WIC clients of this change as clients come in for their regularly scheduled appointments. However, it may take 2-3 months for all clients to be notified. If clients have questions or concerns regarding this change, please refer them to their local WIC clinic.

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WIC WEBSITE ADDRESS

www.michigan.gov/wic

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CHEESE

As noted in our March WIC Vendor Newsletter, the small half pound (8 oz.) packages of cheese are being removed from the WIC Program with the next Food List revision. At that time, only one pound (16 oz.) packages of cheese will be WIC approved. No other sizes will be allowed. Please refer to the WIC Food List for other types of cheese that are not WIC approved. You will be notified prior to the effective date of this change.

INFANT CEREAL

Packaging for 8 oz. and 16 oz. Gerber infant cereal has transitioned from a cardboard box to a plastic container. This change was also mentioned in our March WIC Vendor Newsletter. Nestlé USA, Inc. recently notified the Michigan WIC Program that select Gerber infant cereal items will be temporarily out of stock over the next 3-4 months during this transition. The 8 oz. and 16 oz. Gerber infant cereal plastic containers are WIC approved. However, please be reminded that WIC allows more than one brand of infant cereal, therefore, the current WIC minimum stock requirements for infant cereal will continue to be enforced – six 8 oz. boxes of Beechnut, Nature's Goodness or plastic containers of Gerber. The plastic containers of Gerber infant cereal should not be confused with plastic tubs of Gerber baby food, which are not WIC approved.

WIC Food List

A new WIC Food List is anticipated to be released later this year. **In the meantime, the current food list, with an effective date of March, 2011, remains in effect.**

Food lists distributed to vendors are for use by cashiers in cases where clarification may be needed on allowable WIC foods. WIC clients are given a copy of the WIC food list when they enroll in the WIC program. If a WIC client asks for a copy of the food list to take with them due to loss of their original list, please refer them to their local WIC clinic for a replacement. If you need additional lists for cashiers, please contact the WIC office at (517) 335-8937. Lists are available in English, Spanish, and Arabic.

Summer EBT Program

The summer EBT lunch program has been expanded this year to include students from the City of Detroit in addition to students from Grand Rapids Public Schools, Arenac, Bay, Clare, Gladwin, Midland, and Tuscola counties. **As was the case last year, it is possible for SEBTC clients in these counties to use their summer food benefits anywhere in the state. Clients can use their SEBTC Bridge Cards from June 1 through September 2, 2013.**

For SEBTC program help:

Call: 1-888-265-3291

E-mail: sebtc.mi@gmail.com

Internet: www.sebtc-mi.com

Scanning Each Separate UPC Code a Must

The WIC Program is finding that some vendors are scanning one UPC code and then allowing a different product, which may or may not be WIC approved, to be sold to the WIC customer.

Per the WIC Vendor Contract, you are required to scan the UPC of each item a WIC customer purchases. **Allowing the WIC customer to leave the store with an item that was not scanned and approved for sale is a serious violation which can result in termination and a 3 year disqualification from the WIC Program, as well as termination and disqualification from SNAP (Food Stamps).**

It is okay to scan one UPC when selling multiple identical items, as identified by UPC. For example, you could enter a Quantity of 2 and then scan the UPC for powder Enfamil Premium once.

However, it would a violation if you enter a Quantity of 2 and scan the UPC for powder Enfamil Premium, but actually give the customer a different item, regardless of whether the replacement item is WIC approved or not.

Let the WIC System Decide

It has come to our attention that some cashiers are using the printed WIC Balance Inquiry slip to determine whether an item is WIC approved.

The food descriptions on the WIC Balance Inquiry slip are limited as to the number of characters that can be printed on the slip. Because of this, there may be some missing descriptive information on the slip. If a WIC customer presents food items that are not described on the balance inquiry slip, the **CASHIER SHOULD SCAN THE ITEM ANYWAY**. The POS will determine if the item is allowed. If it is an allowed item, and the customer has enough in their balance to receive the item, the POS will allow the transaction. If the item is, in fact, not a WIC item, the cashier will see the "Not a WIC Item" message displayed on the POS.

Under no circumstances should cashiers make a determination if an item is allowed based on anything other than a scan of the item.

The only exception to this rule might be a determination of appropriate fresh fruits and vegetables. In this case, use the WIC food list to determine which fresh fruits and vegetables are allowed.

WIC And SNAP Are Not The Same Program

Please be reminded that the WIC and SNAP (food stamps) programs are two completely different programs, governed by separate rules of operation. WIC staff cannot answer questions about SNAP regulations and guidelines.

If you have questions regarding SNAP, please call the SNAP Vendor Helpline at 1-877-823-4369.

Minimum Stock Requirements

WIC program representatives continue to find, during routing monitoring visits, that some vendors are not keeping the WIC vendor minimum stock requirements in their store at all times.

Under Section III, Number 5, A (Page 3) of the WIC Vendor Contract, **the vendor agrees to:**

“Stock WIC authorized foods as designated on the current approved Michigan WIC Vendor Food List except for pharmacies as set forth in Section IX of this contract. The vendor shall carry as many as possible of the WIC approved types and brands of foods in all categories and **have in stock at minimum, at all times, all mandatory minimum stock items listed on the most current Mandatory Minimum Stock Requirements sheet provided with the application.**”

It is a clear violation of the WIC vendor contract, which you signed as an authorized WIC vendor, to not keep the minimum stock items in your store AT ALL TIMES. If it is discovered, during routine monitoring visits, that the store does not have all the required minimum stock items, violation points may be assigned to the store. If enough violation points are accumulated, the vendor could be terminated and disqualified from participation in the WIC program.

NOTE: You may purchase items from another source, including other retail stores, to re-sell in your store to ensure that you always have minimum stock on hand. **You cannot use your delivery schedule as an excuse for not having minimum stock at ALL times.**

The WIC Program periodically distributes copies of the WIC Vendor Minimum Stock Requirements, either through the mail or in vendor group training sessions. Should you require additional copies, contact the WIC office at (517) 335-8937.

Price Loading

During routine monitoring visits to stores that use the stand alone WIC Point-of-Sale device(s), WIC program representatives have observed many instances where prices for WIC products have not been loaded into the POS device.

Though it is possible to enter a price for an item at the time of the sales transaction, it is highly recommended that all prices for WIC items be pre-loaded into the POS. Once the price is loaded for an item, the item need only be scanned and the loaded price will automatically register.

To load WIC prices, from the Main Menu select F4 "Retailer Options", then press the purple arrow down key to go to the next screen. Select Option #3, Load WIC Prices. Scan the UPC, or enter it manually, then enter the price for the item. Scan the next UPC to continue loading prices. When finished, press the green "Enter" key. When finished loading prices, press the red "Cancel" key and answer "Yes" to stop loading prices.

Once loaded, the price will stay the same until you change it using the same process as above. **MAKE SURE THAT THE PRICE LOADED IN THE WIC POS DEVICE ALWAYS MATCHES THE POSTED PRICE OF THE ITEM.** Failure to keep the POS price consistent with the posted price could result in overcharging, which is a serious violation of your WIC contract. (See the WIC vendor sanction policy, Page 6C1.)

WIC Point-of-Sale Questions

All questions regarding the use of WIC/EBT Point-of Sale equipment, including hardware problems, transaction questions, programming, additional signage, changing of the bank account to which your WIC reimbursements are deposited, etc., should be directed to the **Xerox Help Desk at 1-888-529-1693.**

Stores with integrated systems should contact their in-store IT department.

WIC Vendor Survey

Enclosed with this newsletter is a WIC Vendor Survey. Per the terms of your WIC Vendor Contract, it is *required* that you respond by submitting the survey to the WIC Program. **YOUR SURVEY MUST BE RECEIVED AT THE WIC OFFICE BY FRIDAY, JULY 19, 2013.**

Failure to submit this survey by the due date will result in assignment of violation points. Accumulation of 35 points during a contract period may result in termination and disqualification from the WIC program.

IF YOU WISH TO CONFIRM RECEIPT BY THE WIC PROGRAM, YOU MUST SUBMIT THIS SURVEY USING A SERVICE THAT REQUIRES THE DEPARTMENT'S SIGNATURE (i.e. Certified Mail, UPS, Fed Ex, etc.). DO NOT CALL THE WIC OFFICE TO CONFIRM RECEIPT OF THE SURVEY.



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