



Michigan WIC Vendor News

Store Owners, Managers, and Cashiers – PLEASE READ

Volume 21, Issue 2

June 2012

Application Period for Northern Cycle Contracts Wrapping Up

The current contracts with WIC authorized vendors in the NORTHERN part of the state will expire on June 30, 2012.

Below is the list of NORTHERN counties affected:

ALCONA	GOGEBIC	MENOMINEE
ALGER	GRAND TRAVERSE	MIDLAND
ALPENA	HOUGHTON	MISSAUKEE
ANTRIM	IOSCO	MONTMORENCY
ARENAC	IRON	NEWAYGO
BARAGA	ISABELLA	OCEANA
BENZIE	KALKASKA	OGEMAW
CHARLEVOIX	KEWEENAW	ONTONAGON
CHEBOYGAN	LAKE	OSCEOLA
CHIPPEWA	LEELANAU	OTSEGO
CLARE	LUCE	PRESQUE ISLE
CRAWFORD	MACKINAC	ROSCOMMON
DELTA	MANISTEE	SCHOOLCRAFT
DICKINSON	MARQUETTE	WEXFORD
EMMET	MASON	
GLADWIN	MECOSTA	

Renewal applications are currently under review, and vendors who will be awarded contracts for the period July 1, 2012 through June 30, 2015 will be notified in writing by June 30, 2012. 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.

WIC Vendor Training Sessions

Group training sessions for NORTHERN vendors will be scheduled for the summer and autumn months of 2012. At least one representative from each store is **REQUIRED** by contract to attend the training session. This includes independent vendors AND chain outlets. **Failure to attend the required training may result in termination from the WIC program.**

Training notifications will be mailed to you with the date, time, and location of the group training in your area. If you miss a scheduled training, contact the WIC office immediately to reschedule. Once the initial round of training sessions is complete, we will assess attendance to determine where and when additional sessions will be held.

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WIC WEBSITE ADDRESS
www.michigan.gov/wic

Improper Use of WIC **Acronym**

It has come to our attention that some grocers carry WIC approved bread and/or cheese that have “WIC Approved” stickers affixed to the actual package.

Please be reminded that placement of the WIC acronym (the letters “W-I-C”) on the actual package of **any** WIC approved food item is a **violation of your WIC Vendor Contract.**

While we understand that the bread or cheese is frequently delivered to your store with a “WIC Approved” sticker already affixed to the package, ultimately, it is your responsibility to ensure the terms and conditions of your WIC Vendor Contract are followed in your store at all times. Improper use of the WIC acronym could result in the assignment of sanction points to your store, regardless of who placed the sticker on the package.

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).**

(continued in next column)

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 is a violation if you enter the Quantity of 2 then scan the UPC for powder Enfamil Premium, but actually give the customer a different item. It is also a violation if you scan the UPC for power Enfamil Premium twice, but then allow anything other than two cans of powder Enfamil Premium.

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 Program Image

The image of the WIC Program as an important health program is critical, especially during difficult economic times and potential budget cuts.

Part of this image involves the manner in which grocers advertise WIC on store signs or buildings. Both USDA and the WIC Program are particularly concerned about grocers that advertise “WIC” and “Liquor” (or other references to alcohol) together.

Advertising alcohol alongside WIC is not in the best interest of the WIC Program and certainly does not promote WIC as an important health Program.

As stakeholders in this important health Program, vendors are asked to please take this concern into consideration when making store advertising decisions.

For those of you who currently advertise WIC and Liquor together, we strongly encourage you to re-consider how you advertise WIC so as to avoid creating an improper image of the WIC Program.

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 routine 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 Changes

Despite continued reminders in the vendor newsletter and discussions in vendor group training sessions, WIC Program representatives continue to observe differences between the shelf price of WIC items and the prices loaded in the WIC POS device.

IMPORTANT: When you change the shelf price or advertise a sale price for a food item that is WIC authorized (i.e., gallon of milk), you **MUST ALSO UPDATE THE PRICE IN YOUR WIC POS DEVICE. Failure to match the prices loaded in the WIC POS with current shelf prices may result in OVERCHARGING.** If overcharging happens on three different occasions, your store could be terminated and disqualified from the WIC Program for three years. *This could also impact your eligibility to participate in SNAP (food stamps).*

Buy One, Get One Free

Per the WIC Vendor Contract, **vendors must offer WIC clients the same courtesies offered to other customers** (Section III, 5 E, Pg. 3) This includes allowing WIC customers to take advantage of “Buy one, get one free” promotions. Vendors must also accept “cents off” coupons for WIC items if they are presented by the WIC customer.

WIC EBT Questions

If you have questions regarding the use of the stand-alone EBT Point-of-Sale (POS) equipment, please do **not** call the WIC office. ALL questions regarding use of the EBT equipment, including transaction problems, programming, maintenance, additional signage, etc., should be directed to the ACS help desk at 1-888-529-1693

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

Hearth Oven Bakers Whole Wheat Buns

We have had several inquiries from vendors about how to obtain Hearth Oven Bakers 100% whole wheat hamburger and hot dog buns.

The manufacturer has indicated they are able to service most all areas of the state. For information, contact:

George Kordas
Vice President, Sales & Marketing
Metropolitan Baking Company
313-875-7246
313-875-7246 (fax)
www.metropolitanbaking.com



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