

MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Name:	Vendor Advisory Council Kickoff Meeting		
Date of Meeting:	February 7, 2022	Time:	2:30 pm – 4 pm
Minutes Prepared By:	Renee Verbeke	Location:	Virtual (Teams)
1. Meeting Objective			
Kickoff Meeting to meet Vendor members, give an overview of the VAC and set the stage for direction of future meetings.			
2. Attendees			
Steering Committee: Katherine Groble, Myra Lee Fowler, Renee Verbeke, Karen Batterham, Hal Stratton, Zayna Suleiman			
VAC Members: Sharon Pitt (Walmart), Erik Hingst (Walmart), Eman Hussain (Dearborn Fresh), Elijah Pelkie (Jim's Jubilee), Muhammed Osman (Fordson), Issa Odeh (Quick Pick III)			
Management: Christina Herring-Johnson, Kimberly Keilen, Dawn Pline, Julia Gurley-Johnson			
Other: Bill Dokianos, Paul Francart, Shawn Gompa, Michelle Moore, Whitney Jackson, Katie Timer, Diala Rabah			
3. Agenda and Discussion			
Topic	Discussion		
Welcome & Introductions	<p>Katherine opened the meeting and thanked everyone for joining. Today's agenda and housekeeping/virtual meeting etiquette were reviewed. Group agreed to allow recording of meetings.</p> <p>Christina (Director) spoke to thank all: Thank you to all who joined and willing to be an active part, thank you for wanting to do better and implement changes. Thank you State staff, as well. Welcome and thank you to everyone!</p> <p>Steering Committee Introductions Completed Management Introductions Completed State Staff Introductions Completed</p>		
Icebreaker	<p>Vendors introduced themselves and responded to Icebreaker prompts (Your name and position; Store name and type; Location; # of years as a WIC Vendor; Racial/ethnic and socioeconomic makeup of the population you serve; Favorite thing about being a WIC Vendor).</p> <p>There was diversity among the group of vendors from large corporate to small independent stores. Locations included from the Upper Peninsula and Lower Peninsula demographically with the time serving Michigan WIC clients from 3-20 years! Most agreed that the favorite thing about being a WIC vendor was helping the clients and sharing the benefits of MI-WIC.</p>		
VAC Overview	<p>Myra reviewed the <u>purpose</u> of the VAC:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receive Vendor feedback on WIC policies Gain insight to barriers to improve service to clients • Collaborate to develop marketing, promotion and retention, and training tools • Address food access and security needs in areas with 'openings' and/or low redemption • Advance DEI and Racial Equity efforts <p>Katherine talked about <u>membership</u> and striving for diverse representation of Vendors around the state. She asked members to think about what gaps in representation they saw and reach out to other Vendors that might be interested in joining.</p>		

	<p>Myra discussed meeting frequency and structure. Regular bi-annual meetings will be held in March and October, with ad-hoc meetings as needed.</p>
<p>Approve Bylaws</p>	<p>Katherine gave a brief demo of the WIC Vendor website (www.michigan.gov/WICVendor) and how to navigate to different pages, including the VAC page, past Vendor Communications, and Vendor Policy.</p> <p>She pulled up the VAC Bylaws and they were reviewed and approved.</p>
<p>Guided Discussion</p>	<p>Myra led the guided discussion with the Vendors. Questions and Vendor responses below.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Why are you interested in serving on the VAC? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Being able to discuss policy changes and updates b. To give feedback/offer opinions c. To be a voice for the customer d. To see what's going on e. To talk about the FIS transition and ongoing POS issues 2. What key topics would you like to address as a Council? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Approved WIC foods 3. What challenges and/or changes in practice have you made in response to COVID? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Lots of new staff – no time to train thoroughly b. Training c. Staffing issues noted 'across the board'
<p>Vendor Survey Results</p>	<p>Katherine presented the results from the Vendor survey that went out in January 2022 addressing COVID and the supply chain. She asked the Vendors if the survey results reflected what they are seeing in their stores.</p> <p>Are you seeing the same food shortages (by category)?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walmart said yes, the trends reported match almost exactly. • One Vendor said no, that they have had the most issue with milk and eggs. <p>Are you experiencing staffing shortages like reported in the survey?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two Vendors said no, that this is hasn't been an issue, potentially because they have smaller stores. • Others reported staffing shortages during the Guided Discussion.
<p>2022 Meetings & Next Steps</p>	<p>Myra presented potential dates and times for March and October meetings. Group agreed to March 7 and October 3 from 2:30 to 4pm.</p> <p>Myra asked the group to do the following <u>Before Next Meeting</u>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review policies on Vendor website – come back with questions • Outreach to additional Vendors for VAC membership <p>Katherine reviewed ideas for the <u>March Agenda</u>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop strategic objectives and timeline • Feedback of Vendor Policies • Fall Vendor Conference – speakers, topics, VAC panel • Online training videos – test group • Vendor innovations and best practices

Closing Remarks/Questions	<p>Myra thanked everyone for participating and asked if there were any final questions or comments.</p> <p>Can clients who were prescribed gallons of milk redeem them for half gallons? Michelle responded that no, they must redeem this benefit for full gallons, unless otherwise specified on their shopping list.</p> <p>My FIS devices are not working. Is there a way to get replacement equipment more quickly? Katie and Shawn responded that FIS does not overnight equipment, but that contacting the state so that we can enter a ticket for the Vendor does speed up the process.</p>
4. Next Meeting:	Monday, March 7 th at 2:30-4pm