

wic MICHIGAN VENDOR NEWS

Inside This Issue

WIC Products & Pricing	2
EBT Transition	3
Program Integrity	4
WIC Formulas	4
Central OAP/New Cards	5
New Minimum Stock	6
Breastfeeding at Work	6
WIC Food Corner	7
Training/Resources	8

Information for Store Owners, Managers, and Cashiers

Summer 2021

Welcome to our Summer Newsletter!

I believe this Summer will present us all opportunities for growth and development. Thank you, Vendors, for all your hard work and perseverance as we continue to serve our WIC clients.

Michigan WIC Program will be going through many changes this Summer:

- Transition to a new electronic benefit transfer (EBT) provider.
- Distribution of new EBT Cards.
- Changes to Minimum Stock Requirements.
- Restructuring of Peer Groups and Not to Exceed (NTE) prices.
- Upcoming Open Application period for Central Cycle Contracts.
- New Infant Formula Rebate Contract.
- Updates to the WIC Vendor Contract, Sanction Schedule and Policy.



To continue our mission of bringing healthy and nutritious foods to WIC families, it is important Vendors keep informed of the exciting program changes in the coming months. Please check your emails regularly and, as always, contact us with any questions or concerns.

Enjoy the beautiful weather. Thank you for your continued support and partnership.

Sincerely,

Kimberly Keilen

Section Manager—Vendor Relations & Program Integrity

LIVE VIRTUAL DISCUSSION



In lieu of the Annual Vendor Conference, this year Michigan WIC is hosting a **live virtual discussion** with our authorized Vendors. The discussion will be held **Sept. 30, 2021 at 10 a.m.** and serve as an interactive webinar providing updates on recent changes to the WIC Program, including the EBT transition, new Minimum Stock Requirements, updates to the WIC Vendor Contract and Sanction Schedule, and much more.

The discussion will also give Vendors the opportunity to ask questions, share concerns, and enhance their understanding and knowledge of WIC Vendor requirements. Visit miwicevents.com to register. We hope you join us!

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

WIC PRODUCTS & PRICING

Price Tag Placement



WIC Vendors are required to clearly mark the price of all WIC-approved foods on the item, container, shelf, or sign.

However, if placing the price tag directly on the food item, it is important to remember not to cover any **expiration** or **sell-by** dates on the item or package. All expiration and/or sell-by dates must be clearly visible.

Pricing WIC Bread

There is a common misconception among authorized WIC Vendors that WIC-approved bread is pre-priced by the bread companies, and that the price is automatically put on the packaging. This is not always the case.

WIC-approved breads may be delivered to the store by the distributor without being pre-priced. It is up to you, the Vendor, to ensure all items are priced and prices are visible before your bread is made available for sale.

To this end, some Vendors find that placing a sign with prices by the bread display is easier than individually pricing each loaf.



Peer Groups & Not-to-Exceed Prices

As a reminder, Michigan WIC has restructured its Vendor peer groups in a federally mandated effort to contain program costs. Vendors have been grouped using the following criteria:

- **Vendor type (full-line or pharmacy)**
- **Number of registers**
- **Whether the Vendor is a chain**

This restructuring plan reduces the number of peer groups from nineteen (19) to seven (7) and revises the maximum allowable price, or **Not to Exceed (NTE)**, calculation for each UPC to reflect a competitive average based on peer group assignment. As a result of implementing the new peer grouping structure and cost containment strategy, Vendors may notice differences in their WIC reimbursements as of the first week of June.

Please note that the WIC Vendor Team will be monitoring this new grouping of Vendors over the next few months to ensure that they have been placed into the appropriate peer group.

If you feel that your reimbursement is incorrect, please submit a written appeal with a copy of the receipt and justification to the Vendor Relations Unit at MDHHS-WICVendor@michigan.gov.



UPC REQUEST				
Michigan Department of Health and Human Services WIC Division				
<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 800-942-1536 for Vendor Assistance. If fax is not available email to Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS), Lewis Cass Building - WIC, 320 South Walnut, Lansing, MI 48913.</small>				
<small>Telephone requests will not be allowed.</small>				
VENDOR INFORMATION				
Vendor Name	Vendor WIC Number	Phone Number	Fax Number	
Address		City	Zip Code	
PRODUCT INFORMATION				
Food Item (Example: Milk, Cheese, Tuna, etc.)		Item Price	Package Size (oz)	
Name of Manufacturer				
Food Brand Name				
UPC Code (include all numbers)				
Food Description (Example: Flavor, Type, Added Ingredient, etc.)				
Copy of UPC Code & Label of Food Item Sent (Please Check One) <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No				
Authorized Vendor (Please Print)				
Authorized Vendor Signature				Date
STATE USE ONLY				
Date Received	Received By	Date Reviewed	Reviewed By	
Decision	<input type="checkbox"/> Approved	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Approved	<input type="checkbox"/> Review Pending	
Reason:				
Date UPC Entered	Entered By	Category	Sub Category	Vendor Peer Group
<small>The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) does not discriminate against any individual or group because of race, religion, age, national origin, color, height, weight, marital status, genetic information, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, political beliefs or disability. This institution is an equal opportunity provider.</small>				
MDHHS-5787 (3-19) 1				

Product Submission Form

The Michigan WIC Program is continuing to evaluate new foods for addition to the Approved Product List (APL).

If you know of a food item that meets current WIC Food Guide allowable criteria but is not scanning on your WIC-capable POS system, please submit a request for Michigan WIC to consider using the [UPC Request Form](#).

To give Vendors more submission options, Michigan WIC now accepts UPC requests as emails sent to MDHHS-WICFoodSubmissions@michigan.gov as well as by fax to 517-335-9206.

EBT TRANSITION

As many of our WIC-authorized Vendors are already aware, the Michigan WIC Program is transitioning to a new electronic benefit transfer (EBT) provider. The official cutover date is scheduled for Aug. 28, 2021. The EBT provider has a very important role in WIC and is responsible for many important functions, including reimbursing WIC Vendors for their WIC transactions; hosting the Approved Products List (APL); keeping track of client benefits; authorizing point-of-sale (POS) systems; and running the Help Desk. The company awarded the most recent EBT contract is Fidelity Information Systems (FIS)/Custom Data Processing (CDP). Conduent, our current EBT provider, will remain the provider until the transition is finalized at the end of August.



What this means for you, the WIC Vendor:

If you are currently using a stand-beside POS device through another provider, starting August 28th, 2021 you will not be able to transact WIC utilizing your current POS equipment. All Vendors with stand-beside devices should have received a Merchant Contract Agreement from FIS via both mail and e-mail. Vendors MUST return the Merchant Contract Agreement to FIS in order for FIS to send you your new POS equipment.

As we move through this transition, Vendors who currently utilize a stand-beside POS device may opt to:

- Obtain a new stand-beside POS device from FIS (you must return old device to your current provider); or
- Switch from a stand-beside POS device, to a certified integrated system of your choosing.

Do not return your current device until the final cutover to FIS occurs at the end of August. You will be responsible for the return of your existing equipment to Conduent or your current EBT/POS provider.

If you currently transact WIC using integrated POS system, your system must be certified by FIS/CDP. FIS is contacting Vendors with integrated systems to help them through this process before the transition cutover date.

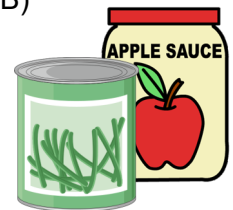
TRANSACTING FROZEN & CANNED PRODUCE

The Michigan WIC Program is excited to offer frozen and canned fruit and vegetable options to eligible WIC participants as part of their Cash Value Benefits (CVBs). The UPCs for these items have been loaded into Michigan WIC's Approved Product List (APL) that is accessed when you scan an item with your POS device.

Vendors who use a Verifone stand-beside device may notice the error message "Varying" when attempting to load a price for canned and frozen fruits and vegetables. This error message is because Conduent-issued POS devices do not allow prices to be loaded for any varieties of fruits and vegetables, including canned and frozen items.

To transact for these items, Vendors must do the following:

1. Scan frozen and canned fruits and vegetables along with other food items like milk and cereal. Scanning frozen and canned produce will let the POS confirm that they are WIC-approved, however it does not remove the items from the participant's benefits.
2. Once all items are scanned, use PLU# 44691 to charge client's cash value benefit (CVB) for ALL fruits and vegetables.
3. Add up the total cost of ALL fresh, frozen, and canned fruits and vegetables and enter this dollar amount in the POS device.
4. Allow client to confirm this total cost and continue to complete transaction.



Please note, the monthly cash value benefit (CVB) amount has been increased to \$35 (from \$9 and \$11 respectively) for all children and women participants through August 31, 2021. Vendors may want to prepare for increased purchasing of fruits and vegetables from WIC participants.

PROGRAM INTEGRITY

Staff Corner—Paul Francart



Paul R. Francart is the Complaint Coordinator in Michigan WIC's Program Integrity Unit. He received associate degrees in computer networking and social services, bachelor's degrees in open systems technology and computer information Systems, and a master of business administration.

Paul has worked for the State of Michigan for over 12 years and served in the U.S. Military for 16 years as a chaplain assistant where he received numerous awards and decorations including the Air Force and Navy achievement medals, Combat Action Ribbon, and the Air Forces Reserve Meritorious Service Medal. Paul is also a member of Genesee Lodge #174 Free and Accept Masons.

As the Complaint Coordinator, Paul investigates WIC client fraud and Vendor complaints. Paul enjoys working for WIC because WIC has demonstrated a positive effect on pregnancy outcomes, child growth and development. The program provides a combination of nutrition education and improves health outcomes for WIC children and families across the state. One of Paul's favorite quotes: "A man never stands so tall as when he stoops to help a child." -Abraham Lincoln

Trafficking of WIC Benefits and Cards is a Crime

The sale or intent to sell **WIC food benefits** and/or **Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) cards** verbally, in print, or online through websites such as Facebook, Twitter, Craigslist, etc. is a violation of the WIC Vendor Contract. Per the WIC Vendor Sanction Schedule, Vendors convicted of trafficking shall have their contract terminated and be **permanently disqualified** from the WIC program.



Remember: any form of fraud and abuse, such as using WIC benefits in any way other than the method and purpose for which they were intended, violates federal WIC regulations.

To report fraud, call 800-424-9241 or visit udsa.gov/oig/hotline.htm.

WIC FORMULAS

Infant Formula Rebate Contract

State WIC Programs are required by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to award infant formula rebate contracts through a **competitive bid process**. Michigan's current contract is with the manufacturer of Enfamil, **Mead Johnson Nutrition**, and expires on October 31, 2021.

Federal law also requires formula contracts be awarded to the **lowest bidder**. Based on received proposals, the Joint Evaluation Committee (JEC) has recommended that **Abbott Laboratories Inc.** be awarded the five-year contract term from November 1, 2021 through October 31, 2026.

Further information on the formula contract change will be provided in the coming months.

Formula Purchase Requirements



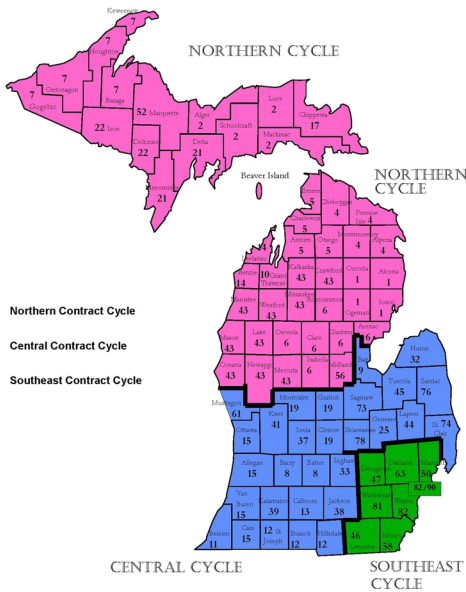
The Michigan WIC Program requires that all WIC authorized Vendors **MUST** only purchase infant formula from wholesalers, distributors, and retailers and/or manufacturers **licensed** by the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (**MDARD**), the Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (**LARA**), or the Food and Drug Administration (**FDA**). This requirement also applies to all **online purchases**.

To find the licensure status of any Michigan wholesaler or retailer, visit:

- aca3.accela.com/MDARD (MDARD)
- michigan.gov/lara (LARA)
- Michigan.gov/WICVendor (FDA)

OPEN APPLICATION PERIOD

for Central Contract Cycle



WIC Vendor Contracts for all authorized Vendors located in the Central region will expire on June 30, 2022. The Open Application Period for Vendors in this region will begin Oct. 1 and run through Dec. 13, 2021.

On Oct. 1, 2021, applications will be emailed to all currently authorized WIC Vendors and any stores on the Vendor Waitlist located in the Central region. These applications will be due on Dec. 13, 2021.

WIC Vendor Applications can also be printed from the Michigan WIC website at Michigan.gov/WICVendor, as well as mailed to the Vendor upon request. Requests for mailed applications should be sent to MDHHS-WICVendor@michigan.gov or made by calling 517-335-8937.

Vendors who are approved in the Central counties will receive a three-year contract valid from **July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2025**.

Below is a complete list of counties in the Central Contract Cycle:

- Allegan
- Barry
- Bay
- Berrien
- Branch
- Calhoun
- Cass
- Clinton
- Eaton
- Genesee
- Gratiot
- Hillsdale
- Huron
- Ingham
- Ionia
- Jackson
- Kalamazoo
- Kent
- Lapeer
- Montcalm
- Muskegon
- Ottawa
- Saginaw
- Sanilac
- Shiawassee
- St. Clair
- St. Joseph
- Tuscola
- Van Buren

The completed application must be received by the Department as soon as possible upon receipt, but no later than 5:00 p.m. on **Monday, Dec. 13, 2021**. **LATE APPLICATIONS WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED.**

Please note, neither the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services nor currently authorized WIC Vendors are obligated to renew a WIC Vendor Contract.

NEW EBT CARDS

The new electronic benefit transfer (EBT) contractor, FIS/CDP, is printing new WIC EBT cards for participants. New cards will be issued when "new" participants become eligible for WIC, when a current WIC participant loses their WIC EBT card, or when families visit a WIC clinic for their recertification appointment.

We hope that the new card design will make it easier for WIC participants to differentiate between their WIC and SNAP bridge cards during transactions.

Please note that the new card will not be sent to all currently enrolled WIC clients and that the old cards will **continue to work**. The new cards will begin to be sent out August 28, 2021.



MINIMUM STOCK CHANGES

Beginning July 1, 2021, the Michigan WIC Program changed the minimum stock requirements, i.e., the food items that Vendors must **always have in stock**. These updates were made in part due to the feedback from Vendors who participated in surveys, webcasts, and regional forums.

Please keep in mind that these minimum stock requirements are now in effect and all monitoring and compliance activities will hold Vendors responsible for the [new minimum stock requirements](#).

To assist Vendors with understanding these changes, the Michigan WIC Program has provided the following resources on [Michigan.gov/WICVendor](#) to explain the changes:

- [Updates for WIC Vendors](#) pre-recorded webcast (Begin watching at 7:50)
- [List of Changes to Vendor Stocking Requirements](#)

If you have any questions or concerns with the new minimum stock requirements, you may find more information at [Michigan.gov/WICVendor](#) or contact our office.



KEEP YOUR WORKING MOMS WORKING FOR YOU!



Over the years, women have become a huge part of the workforce. Unfortunately, many parents lack support to continue breastfeeding after they return to work and often decide to quit their job so they can continue providing breast milk – the best source of nutrition – to their baby. Here are five simple suggestions on how you can help support your breastfeeding employees.

1. **Provide a space.** Provide a private space for employees to breastfeed or express milk. If it is not practical to set aside a specific space, a vacant office can be used so long as it is not visible to the public or other employees. Be creative by covering a window with sheets of paper. If possible, offer your employee a comfortable chair, table, access to an electrical outlet, refrigerator to store milk, and a sink to wash hands or pump parts. Please do not ask your employees to use the bathroom.
2. **Provide reasonable break time.** A nursing parent may need to pump two to four times in an 8 hour period for up to about 30 minutes (for each pumping session). This helps prevent complications with breastfeeding, including painful engorgement, and helps parents maintain a great milk supply.
3. **Avoid reduction in pay for pumping breaks.** This can have major setbacks for businesses, including decreased morale and productivity, as well as disparities amongst other employees. Allow nursing parents to pump during their break times without needing to take a reduction in pay.
4. **Allow babies on-site.** Whether it is a family member dropping an employee's baby off to nurse during break time, allowing parents to bring their babies to work, or providing on-site childcare, allowing these opportunities has shown to improve employee morale and work productivity!
5. **Develop corporate policies to support breastfeeding employees.** A written policy ensures your business leaders will not only respond to accommodations, but also conveys that your business takes breastfeeding support seriously. This can improve employee retention and loyalty!

If one of your employees is experiencing complications with breastfeeding, let them know that breastfeeding support is just a phone call away! Michigan WIC has a [Breastfeeding Warmline](#) with trained staff ready to help!

To learn more on how supporting breastfeeding employees benefits employers visit <http://www.usbreastfeeding.org/p/cm/ld/fid=234>.

WIC FOOD CORNER

July is National Picnic Month!

Celebrate the tastes of summer with this picnic perfect salad full of healthy WIC-approved foods. This is a great make-ahead dish as the flavors get better with time. Plus, eating outside has been shown to decrease anxiety, reduce stress and tension, and improve concentration. It's a win-win!

GREEK CHOPPED SALAD

Ingredients:

- 1 cucumber, large*
- 1 15 oz. can garbanzo beans (drained and rinsed)*
- 1 red bell pepper, large*
- ½ red onion, small*
- 4 Roma tomatoes, ripe*
- 3 tbsp red wine vinegar
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 2 tsp oregano, dried or fresh
- ¼ tsp salt and pepper

*means a WIC-approved food

Instructions:

1. Make the dressing. In a small bowl, combine vinegar, olive oil, oregano and salt. Whisk to combine. Set aside.
2. Dice the cucumber, onion, bell pepper and tomatoes (removing any excess liquid from tomatoes).
3. Put vegetables and garbanzo beans in a large bowl.
4. Add dressing and toss to combine.
5. Eat immediately or refrigerate for at least an hour to let flavors combine. Some dressing will settle on the bottom, so stir before serving.
6. Experiment with adding feta cheese, olives, and additional fresh herbs of your choosing.



Using Tomato Paste—Slow Cooker Pizza Dip

Tomato paste is a WIC-approved canned produce item. Tomato paste is made by cooking tomatoes for several hours to reduce the water content, straining out the seeds and skins, and cooking the liquid again to reduce the base to a thick, rich concentrate. It is used to impart an intense tomato flavor to a variety of dishes, such as pasta, soups, and braised meat. Try it today!

Ingredients:

- 1/2 lb ground beef
- 1/2 lb bulk pork sausage
- 1 28 oz can crushed tomatoes*
- 1/2 cup diced green pepper*
- 1/4 c grated parmesan cheese
- 2 tbsp tomato paste*
- 2 tbsp Italian seasoning
- 1 garlic clove (minced)*
- 3/4 tsp red pepper flakes
- 1/4 tsp salt and pepper
- Hot garlic bread

* means a WIC-approved food



Directions:

1. In a large skillet, cook and crumble beef and sausage over medium heat until no longer pink, 5-7 minutes. Using slotted spoon, transfer meat to 3-qt. slow cooker.
2. Stir in remaining ingredients, except garlic bread.
3. Cook, covered, on low heat for 2-3 hours, or until heated through. Serve with garlic bread.

Test Kitchen Tips:

- One pound of Italian sausage may be substituted for the 1/2 pound each of ground beef and pork.
- Try topping this dip with sliced olives, pepperoni, or a shake of grated parmesan and dried oregano for even bigger pizza flavor.

UPCOMING TRAININGS

As a reminder, all WIC authorized Vendors—including Pharmacy Vendors—are required to participate in one interactive training each Contract Cycle (i.e. **once every three years**). Below is the upcoming webcast training schedule.

GROCER VENDORS

Sept. 7 at 2 p.m.
Jan. 11 at 2 p.m.
Apr. 12 at 2 p.m.

PHARMACY VENDORS

Sept. 14 at 2 p.m.
Jan. 25 at 2 p.m.
Apr. 26 at 2 p.m.



If your store requires a training, you will be sent an invitation via email. Vendors may also participate in trainings more frequently as desired. This is suggested when there is a new manager or other staff turnover. To register, please visit miwicevents.com/vendor-webcasts-trainings/.

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 [WIC Vendor Training](#) and the [WIC Pharmacy Training](#) can also be viewed at any time online at Michigan.gov/WICVendor.

RESOURCES

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

Elliott-Larsen 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:

- ◆ WIC Vendor Selection Criteria
- ◆ UPC Request Form
- ◆ WIC Vendor Complaint Form
- ◆ WIC Vendor Handbook
- ◆ 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!

The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services will not exclude from participation in, deny benefits of, or discriminate against any individual or group because of race, sex, religion, age, national origin, color, height, weight, marital status, gender, identification or expression, sexual orientation, partisan considerations, or a disability or genetic information that is unrelated to the person's eligibility.