

wic MICHIGAN VENDOR NEWS

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Information for store owners, managers and cashiers

Winter 2023/2024



Checking junk email

A friendly reminder to our vendors that they should be checking their junk email or spam for communications from the WIC program. The WIC program regularly sends vendor notices via email, including new policies and procedures, compliance letters and upcoming even notices.

Checking your email is a program requirement and failure to do so is not an excuse for vendor non-compliance.

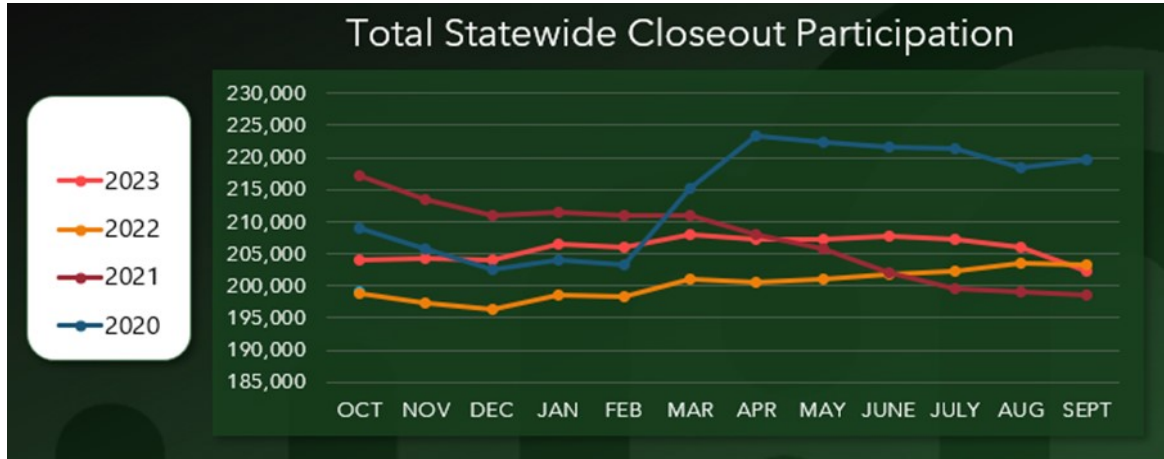


Please email the [Michigan WIC Program](#) or call 517-335-8937 with questions and feedback.

PROGRAM UPDATES

Statewide participation

As shown in the graph below, WIC participation in fiscal year 2023 (FY23) stayed steady at around 205,000 participants per month. This marks an average increase in participation of about 5,000 participants a month from FY22. This was still lower than participation during the beginning of the pandemic, which peaked at over 223,000 participants in April 2020.



Post-shopping client survey

In partnership with WIC's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) committee, the Vendor Relations Unit launched a post-shopping client survey pilot in February. The purpose of the survey is to gather client feedback on individual shopping experiences and vendors, allowing us to identify best practices, highlight high achieving vendors, identify areas for improvement and follow-up with low-ranking vendors.

The pilot will take place in 33 stores around the state who have agreed to post QR codes for the survey around their stores. After an initial period of analysis, we hope to expand the survey statewide.

Thank you to our pilot participants!

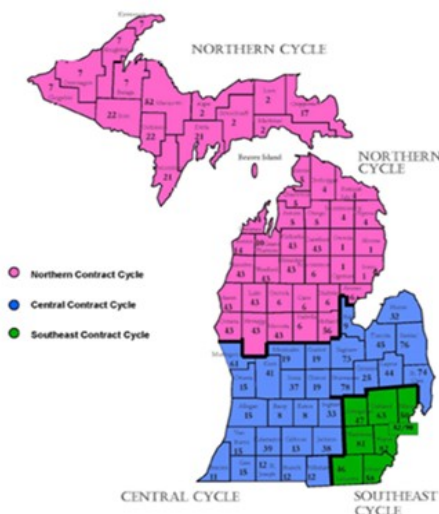


Northern OAP

October 2023 marked the beginning of the open application period (OAP) for vendors in the Northern region. OAP closed December 21, 2023, and WIC Vendor Contracts for all currently authorized WIC vendors located in the Northern region will expire June 30.

All applications received during OAP will be considered for re-authorization for the next three-year contract cycle. Late applications will not be considered. All approved vendors will receive a new three-year contract valid from July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2027.

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



POINT-OF-SALE SYSTEMS

Uploading prices on FIS stand-beside devices

This is a reminder that prices of all WIC-approved items in your store must be loaded into your point-of-sale (POS) system. Loaded prices are verified by WIC Vendor Relations staff during monitoring visits.

The [procedure](#) for loading prices in FIS-issued VeriFone devices is as follows:

1. Select FIS-WIC.
2. Press **MORE** (1st purple function key).
3. Press **F3** (Edit UPC List).
4. To add a new item:
5. Scan the items UPC code. If it is WIC eligible, the description displays.
6. Press **F3** (Edit) to enter the price.
7. To change the price for an existing item:
8. Scan the UPC code or press **F1** (Prev) and **F2** (Next) to navigate through the list to locate the desired item.
9. Press **F3** (Edit) to edit the price.
10. Repeat steps 3 and 4 for remaining items.
11. Press **CANCEL** when you have finished adding items or updating prices.
12. Press **F1** (Yes) to save the changes. (You **MUST** do this step to save the prices in the device.)

The FIS device allows you to print out a list of each item loaded into the machine with shelf prices.

If you have additional questions, refer to the [User Manual](#), [Quick Reference Guide](#) and other resources on the WIC Vendor website under [Point of Sale Equipment and Systems](#).

FIS device troubleshooting

If your FIS device is not working and you are not able to perform WIC transactions, it is your responsibility as a vendor to seek assistance to fix the device. According to the [WIC Vendor Contract](#), the vendor is responsible for the ongoing maintenance of the equipment used to support WIC EBT.

If you are having problems with your FIS device, call the **24/7 FIS Merchant Help Desk at 1-888-529-1693**. Enter your Location ID using your telephone keypad.

Have the following information ready:

- Merchant (Vendor) Name.
- Seven-digit WIC Vendor ID number.
- Location ID number (on the back of your POS device).
- Terminal ID number (near the top of all receipts and reports).
- Description of the problem or error.

Steps for conducting a WIC transaction

Listed below are the general steps that are universally used in performing a WIC transaction, regardless of what type of operating system you use:

1. Select WIC.
2. Customer swipes Michigan WIC card.
3. Customer enters PIN and presses enter.
4. Scan items to be purchased.
5. Enter price total for fresh fruits and vegetables.
6. Enter any available coupons or discounts.
7. Customer approves transaction.
8. Give copy of the receipt to customer.



SPOTLIGHTS

Vendor spotlight: Satbir Singh



Satbir Singh is the owner of Sunny's Spot, a popular WIC-authorized vendor in Benton Harbor. With multiple WIC customers in the area, Sunny's Spot conducts a large amount of WIC transactions each quarter. "[We experience] lots of foot traffic. A lot of residents don't have cars, so we provide a service for them," explained Singh.

Singh has been in the United States since 1989. He has lived in the Benton Harbor area since 2010 and has been a part of Sunny's Spot since 2011. Singh faithfully manages WIC in his store and reported few difficulties.

"It's all scanning and keeping a back stock of items for the shelves," he said. Singh is known for keeping great purchase records and receipts, and for having a distinct way of organizing them. He also advises other vendors in the area on WIC and organizing records.

Staff spotlight: Katie Timer

Katie Timer joined WIC in 2019 as a senior vendor analyst in Michigan WIC's Vendor Relations Unit. She is responsible for the application, contracting and compliance processes. Katie holds a bachelor's from Michigan State University and is a multiple chili cook off champion.

Katie has worked for the State of Michigan for more than 15 years where she has held various positions within MDHHS.

Katie lives in Fowlerville with her husband and two daughters. She enjoys hunting, planning her next chili cook off win and chasing her kids around.



What is WIC?

Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) is a federally funded Special Supplemental Nutrition Program of the Food and Nutrition Service of the United States Department of Agriculture and is administered by MDHHS, serving low and moderate income pregnant, breastfeeding, and postpartum women, infants, and children up to age five who are found to be at nutritional risk.

WIC is a health and nutrition program that has demonstrated a positive effect on pregnancy outcomes, child growth and development. The program provides a combination of nutrition education, supplemental foods, breastfeeding promotion and support, and referrals to health care services.

Participants exchange WIC food benefits at authorized retail grocery stores and pharmacies. WIC foods are selected to meet nutrient needs such as calcium, iron, folic acid, and vitamins A and C.

To learn more, call the WIC Agency nearest you or call 2-1-1.

New online complaint forms

Michigan WIC is excited to announce the launch of our online complaint forms!

Vendors, clients, local agencies and the general public may now submit program complaints and comments electronically on our [website](#).

Online complaint types include:

- Vendor complaints.
- WIC clinic complaints.
- WIC fraud complaints.
- Other/general program complaints.



PROGRAM COMPLIANCE

Start of on-site audits



WIC PI staff at Global Food Market in Lansing.

Effective October 1, 2023, on-site audits now provide the WIC program an additional compliance tool to help ensure the integrity of the program. The Program Integrity (PI) team recently visited a Lansing store to walk through the new process for conducting onsite audits. The team worked with the vendor to test the [new policy](#) in the real store environment.

Vendors can expect PI staff to arrive at their store throughout the year to take an inventory count of WIC-approved foods. The staff members will be available to help with any questions you may have, as well as go over any training areas they identify. Once this visit is complete, the rest of the audit process remains the same, starting with a request for records letter being sent to the vendor.

Going forward, PI will utilize undercover compliance buys, desk audits (current process), and now on-site audits. The team looks forward to seeing you and working with you in your stores!

Lost & found WIC cards

Did a WIC participant accidentally forget their WIC EBT card at the register or lose it somewhere in your store? If you find a WIC card, **DO NOT** keep it behind the counter. Instead, **please send the card to the address on the back of the card to report it as lost.** The card will then be deactivated, and the WIC participant will be sent a new card to their address of record.



Cashier duties

Cashiers at WIC-authorized stores should be able to perform the following functions when doing a WIC transaction:

- Troubleshoot error messages.
- Scan items to let the POS device decide if an item is approved.
- Run a balance inquiry.
- Read a shopping list printed or displayed on a customer's phone.
- Read the Michigan WIC Food Guide.
- Help customers identify appropriate WIC-approved substitutes if an item is not ringing up.

Train your staff

Training your employees on WIC is a requirement of the [WIC Vendor Contract](#). In addition to on-the-job training, we recommend sharing the [quarterly newsletter](#), inviting staff to attend the [quarterly vendor calls](#) and encouraging staff to take the [online WIC Vendor Training](#) course.

You can also request an in-person training at your store by emailing MDHHS-WICVendor@michigan.gov.

WIC NUTRITION

Get involved in breastfeeding

Parents who are interested in breastfeeding often need information and support. Your pregnant customers are eager and motivated to learn. After delivery, parents are often too overwhelmed, tired and stressed to absorb new information.

What can vendors do to help?

Share resources to help parents reach their breastfeeding/chestfeeding goals. Consider posting a flyer with the QR codes below for free virtual prenatal breastfeeding/chestfeeding classes ([H.U.G. Your Baby](#) and [Ready Set Baby](#)) as well as the [Michigan WIC Breastfeeding Warmline](#) for support during pregnancy or after delivery. You could also include breastfeeding support resources in your area. Target the aisles in your store expecting or recently delivered parents might frequent, such as areas with formula, baby items, maternity clothing and breast pump supplies.

Show your customers you care about their feeding journey with their little ones and be a breastfeeding/chestfeeding advocate in your community!



[Ready Set Baby](#)



[H.U.G. Your Baby](#)

Formula purchase requirements

To ensure formula has been packaged, shipped and stored under the required conditions, the Michigan WIC Program mandates all authorized WIC vendors purchase infant formula from WIC-Authorized supplies:



- Wholesalers, distributors and retailers licensed to distribute food by the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD).
- Non-Michigan based wholesalers, distributors and retailers licensed to distribute food by the MDARD equivalent in the jurisdiction in which it is located.
- Pharmacies licensed by Michigan Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (LARA).
- Non-Michigan based pharmacies licensed by the LARA equivalent in the jurisdiction in which it is located.
- Manufacturers registered with the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

Vendors unable to confirm licensure status or with questions regarding this requirement may email the Vendor Relations Unit at MDHHS-WICVendor@michigan.gov or call us at (517) 335-8937. A list of MDARD licensed retailers is also available on our [website](#).

Similac Sensitive RTF

Effective Nov. 9, 2023, WIC clients may receive Similac 360 Total Care Sensitive ready-to-feed (RTF) when **Similac Sensitive 32 oz RTF** is unavailable.

As shown in the table to the left, Similac Sensitive 360 RTF is available in both 32 oz and 8 oz sixpacks. Clients assigned Similac Infant Formula RTF can purchase any of the products in the table.

As a reminder, to successfully redeem newly added products, Vendors must **download the latest Authorized Product Listing (APL)**. For download instructions, please visit our [website](#).

	Formula	Counts as	UPC
Contract	Similac Advance 32 oz RTF	1 bottle	070074533643
Contract	Similac Soy Isomil 32 oz RTF	1 bottle	070074559681
Contract	Similac Sensitive 32 oz RTF	1 bottle	070074575346
Temporary Choice	Similac 360 Total Care Sensitive	1 bottle	070074681610
Temporary Choice	Similac 360 Total Care Sensitive	1.5 bottles	070074681597

WIC FOOD CORNER

Recipe: Chicken and Rice Casserole

Ingredients:

- 3 cups cooked brown rice*
- 1 10-ounce package frozen green peas*
- 2 cups cooked chicken pieces
- ½ cup light mayonnaise
- ⅓ cup slivered almonds or chopped peanuts (optional)
- 2 teaspoons low-sodium soy sauce
- ¼ teaspoon ground black pepper
- ¼ teaspoon garlic powder
- Vegetable cooking spray

* Indicates a WIC-approved food

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
2. Combine rice, peas, chicken, mayonnaise, almonds, soy sauce, pepper and garlic powder in a bowl.
3. Transfer to a 3-quart baking dish with cooking spray.
4. Cover and bake for 15 to 20 minutes.



Bimbo 100% whole wheat bread

Bimbo 100% Whole Wheat Bread is **NOT** WIC approved.

Make sure you are checking the [Michigan WIC Food Guide](#) for breads that are authorized on WIC.

The Michigan WIC Food Guide and more are available on our [website](#).



Shelf-talkers

Please ensure that you are only placing shelf talkers under WIC-approved foods.

Putting a shelf talker under a non-WIC-approved item is considered advertising a non-WIC food item as a WIC-approved food item and is a [contract](#) violation.

Please reach out to the Vendor Relations Unit at MDHHS-WICVendor@michigan.gov if you would like help labeling your shelves or have questions about WIC-approved foods.

Find shelf labels and other promotional materials available for print on our [website](#).

Juicy Juice

In December, Juicy Juice underwent a packaging graphics redesign. While Juicy Juice labels will now have a refreshed look, no changes will be made to Juicy Juice products themselves:

- **No change to the ingredients or nutrition panel.** Juicy Juice continues to be made with 100% Juice with no artificial sweeteners or added sugar and provides the 30mg of Vitamin C per 100ml required by WIC regulations.
- **No change to the sizes available for WIC participants.** Juicy Juice continues to be available in approved sizes to meet the monthly serving size requirements for women and children in the WIC program.
- **No change to product UPCs.**



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ONLINE TRAINING

Need to complete your federally required training? The training webcasts have been replaced with the new **online WIC Vendor Training course**.

Visit the [Learning Management System](#) (LMS) Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. to complete the 10-lesson course at your leisure.

[Instructions](#) to complete the course as well as a recording of our [‘How-to’ Webcast](#) are posted on the [WIC Vendor website](#). We hope you enjoy this new and convenient training opportunity!

If your store requires a training, you will be sent an invitation via email. Call or email the Vendor Relations Unit for the date of your most recent training or for help registering.

QUARTERLY CALLS

Please join us for our regularly scheduled **Quarterly Vendor Calls**. These calls will provide Vendors an opportunity to:

- Learn more about program updates and changes as they happen.
- Share individual store experiences with the WIC Program.
- Ask questions and engage in dialogue with state staff.



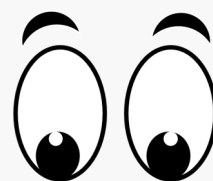
Calls will last one hour and will be hosted via Zoom. The next Quarterly Call is scheduled for **1:00 p.m., Tuesday, April 16**. [Click here to access the meeting](#). We hope you can join us!

RESOURCES

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

Elliott-Larsen Bldg., 5th Floor
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.
- ♦ WIC Vendor Policy.
- ♦ 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 (MDHHS) does not discriminate against any individual or group on the basis of race, national origin, color, sex, disability, religion, age, height, weight, familial status, partisan considerations, or genetic information. Sex-based discrimination includes, but is not limited to, discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, sex characteristics, and pregnancy.

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