

WIC MICHIGAN VENDOR NEWS

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Information for Store Owners, Managers, and Cashiers

Fall 2020

Dear Vendor,

The Michigan WIC Program is grateful for the ongoing commitment of our WIC Vendors during these unprecedented times. We understand the challenges you face in balancing the safety and well-being of store employees and customers, with the duty of providing healthy and nutritious foods to our WIC families.

The impact of this pandemic on our retail partners has been severe and we want to be a resource to you during these important times. So that we can better understand some of the continuing challenges of our WIC Vendors across the state, we recently sent out a survey to all our authorized Vendors. Thank you to those who provided us with important feedback. Please know that we are reviewing comments and will work to appropriately respond to any identified needs and/or concerns.

We know that brighter days lie ahead. But until then, we have a job to do. Let us continue to work to improve health outcomes and the quality of life for WIC participants in our communities. Thank you for your continued support and partnership in our journey to meet the nutritional needs of our WIC families.

Sincerely,

Kimberly Keilen, MSW

Section Manager—Vendor Relations & Program Integrity
Michigan Dept. of Health & Human Services



Conference Cancelled

In an effort to ensure the safety of WIC Vendors, stakeholders and staff, the 2020 WIC Vendor Conference, originally scheduled for Thursday, Sept. 17 at the DoubleTree Hotel in Dearborn, has been cancelled. Please see the back page of this newsletter for information regarding virtual training opportunities. Thank you for your understanding.

Email Communications

As a reminder, all communications to Vendors are now being sent electronically. This includes warning and violation letters, policy updates, newsletters, and WIC Vendor Contracts. Please make sure to check email regularly and respond to communications in a timely manner. If you believe you are not receiving WIC-related emails, please call (517) 335-8917 to ensure we have the correct email on file for your store.

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

MONITORING VISITS REINSTATED

On [March 24](#), [Vendors were notified](#) that monitoring visits were **temporarily suspended** in support of the Governor's executive order ([No. 2020-21](#)), which mandated a "Temporary requirement to suspend activities that are not necessary to sustain or protect life."

On [June 12](#), [another notice](#) was sent informing Vendors that the WIC Program had **resumed monitoring and compliance investigations**, in line with the Governor's executive order ([No. 2020-110](#)), which rescinded the temporary requirement to suspend activities and restriction on the use of places of public accommodation.

As such, the WIC Program **is now conducting** unannounced routine monitoring visits, inventory audits, and compliance buys. If your store is subject to any of these compliance activities, important communications may be sent to the **email address** your store provided to the WIC Program.

As our analysts conduct on-site monitoring visits, they will be prepared to provide **training, WIC materials, and other assistance**. In consideration for your safety and theirs, WIC staff will be wearing protective equipment, using personal sanitation, and practicing physical distancing.



RECORDS MAINTENANCE

On-Site Records Training

Starting this fall, Vendor Relations analysts may be accompanied by a Program Integrity audit analyst during their on-site monitoring visits to provide record keeping training for Vendors with past and/or current monetary claims and those requesting ways to improve their store's record keeping. For reference, the Summer 2020 Newsletter provided helpful ideas on how to maintain legible and acceptable records.

Effective records maintenance benefits Vendors in the following ways:

- ◆ Shortens the length of time to complete an Inventory Audit;
- ◆ Eliminates and/or reduces Monetary Claims against Vendors; and
- ◆ Allows Vendors to check the health and safety performance of their business and make improvements where necessary.

Record Keeping Under a CAP

DON'T WAIT until the end of your Corrective Action Plan (CAP) to submit your records. A Program Integrity CAP is a step-by-step **plan of action** designed to improve record keeping outcomes for Vendors and resolve audit discrepancies. Although being placed under a CAP may feel like an inconvenience, it is an opportunity for the Vendor to:

- ◆ Determine actions to improve and prevent reoccurrences of misplaced and misfiled records;
- ◆ Develop an organizational system for storing and retrieving records, allowing for increased efficiency;
- ◆ Mentor experienced and novice employees by helping them understand the regulatory needs of the WIC Program, thereby providing quality services and meeting organizational goals; and
- ◆ Avoid adverse action, such as a termination or disqualification from the WIC Program, which could cause a hardship to the Vendor and participating WIC households.



REGIONAL VENDOR FORUMS

The Michigan WIC Program is excited to launch virtual **Regional Vendor Forums**. These online meetings will give you, the Vendors, an opportunity to ask questions and join us in a discussion around your experience as a WIC Vendor and ways to improve the WIC Program.

Vendor feedback and input is important to us and we know that Vendors from different areas of the state have different perspectives and needs. We hope you join us for your region's forum (dates below). Additional information will be sent to Vendors via email.



U.P. Vendors	October 14, 1-3 p.m. (EST)
Northern Vendors	December 9, 1-3 p.m.
Central Vendors	February 17, 1-3 p.m.
Western Vendors	April 14, 1-3 p.m.
Southeast Vendors	June 16, 1-3 p.m.
Southwest Vendors	August 11, 1-3 p.m.

Visit <https://miwicevents.com/vendor-webcasts-trainings/> to register today!

NEW PHARMACY OPTIONS



We are pleased to announce the addition of several new Walgreens locations in Southeast Michigan to our authorized Pharmacy, *Formula-Only*, Vendor list. Additional Walgreens locations are pending authorization in other regions of the state.

We hope the addition of these pharmacies helps increase client accessibility to specialty formulas. Clients can use the WIC Connect Mobile App to find the most up-to-date list of authorized Vendors around the state.

REMINDER: Required Minimum Stock for WIC-authorized formula is **12 CANS** of Enfamil Infant, Enfamil Gentlease, or a combination of the two. Other formulas may be carried upon request by clients.

FORMULA PURCHASE REQUIREMENTS

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

MDARD is available to answer any questions as to whether a wholesaler, distributor, or retailer is properly licensed or general questions you may have regarding licensing requirements and procedures. You may contact MDARD in a variety of ways:

- Contact by phone: **1-800-292-3939**
- Contact by e-mail: mda-info@michigan.gov
- General website: Michigan.gov/MDARD



Additionally, you can find the licensure status of any Michigan wholesaler or retailer on their website at <https://aca3.accela.com/MDARD/Default.aspx>.

For a list of FDA-approved formula manufacturers, please visit our website at Michigan.gov/WICVendor.

If you are unable to confirm FDA/MDARD licensure status or have any questions regarding this requirement, please call the WIC Vendor Relations Unit at **517-335-8937**.

EMAILING CONTRACTS



For the Northern Contract cycle, all Vendors receiving a WIC Vendor Contract for the new cycle beginning July 1, 2021 will have their contract **sent to the email address** provided on their WIC Vendor Application. It is important that the email address and store contact be listed as the **individual that is authorized** to sign a contract for the store. All new contracts for July 1, 2021 will now have the option to **e-sign** the contract.

In order to e-sign the contract, the authorized signee must simply click the highlighted signature box on the contract and the document will be automatically sent to the Department for execution. We are excited to modernize this process!

APPLICATION DOs AND DON'Ts

DO: All Vendors **MUST** include a valid email address on the application they submit to the Department. The name and email address listed on the application should be the name of the individual that is authorized to sign a WIC Vendor Contract for the store. All communications from the Department will be emailed to Vendors including any application clarification requests and contracts. Please feel free to add multiple email addresses on the application if necessary.

DON'T: Don't submit an incomplete application to the Department. Incomplete applications will not be reviewed and will be considered ineligible.

DO: Answer all questions on the application truthfully. Answers supplied on the application may be verified during an unannounced in-person visit.

DON'T: Don't skip the question at the top of page 5 of the WIC Vendor Application. This question is to be answered based on the inventory currently in your store, not what you agree to carry if approved. Skipping this question will make your application incomplete.

DO: Do talk to a legal representative for your store if you do not understand or have questions about completing the WIC Vendor Application.

DON'T: Don't skip page 6 of the WIC Vendor Application. Page 6 of the WIC Vendor Application asks you to circle the picture that best describes the way that your store currently processes or plans on processing WIC transactions. Please make sure you review this page and complete all questions asked. Skipping these questions will make your application incomplete.

DO: Do review the 13 WIC Vendor Selection Criteria listed on pages 7 and 8 of the WIC Vendor Application and answer the YES or NO question at the bottom of page 8. Skipping this question will make your application incomplete.

DON'T: Don't submit a late application! Late applications will be reviewed last and may be put on the waiting list as a result. A complete application must be submitted to the Department by close of business **Monday, Dec. 14, 2020**.



2020 WIC REPORT



WIC Vendors around Michigan provide an important service in ensuring clients can redeem their benefits and receive the supplemental foods important to attaining good nutrition. Below are the number of clients, authorized Vendors, and WIC dollars spent in our state as of June 30, 2020. Thank you for your continued partnership!

of WIC clients – **222,409**

of authorized Vendors – **1466**

of dollars spent since January 2020 – **\$66,306,249.24**

SUMMER EBT FOR CHILDREN

Reminder, the last day for recipients of **Summer EBT for Children (SEBTC)** to use their benefits is **September 7, 2020**. Eligible children, who receive approximately \$30 per month in food benefits, can redeem their benefits at any WIC-authorized Vendor throughout the state until this time.

For more information about the SEBTC Program, a brochure of eligible foods and a Vendor training video, visit <http://sebtc-mi.com/for-grocery-vendors/wsdindex.html>. Please contact Sarah at GreerS1@michigan.gov with questions.



STAND-ALONE POS DEVICES

As per Public Law 113-79 of the 2014 Farm Bill, authorized WIC Vendors are required to pay for their own stand-alone point-of-sale (POS) devices:

...the Secretary shall require participating retail food stores (including restaurants participating in a State option restaurant program intended to serve the elderly, disabled, and homeless) to pay 100 percent of the costs of acquiring, and arrange for the implementation of, electronic benefit transfer point-of-sale equipment and supplies, including related services.

As such, Vendors currently using state-funded stand-alone WIC POS devices provided by Conduent will be required to return these devices and obtain a new POS device from the company of their choosing. Please do not return your device to Conduent until you have a new POS device set up and functioning properly.



Your store will be contacted individually with more information regarding next steps and the return of your current POS equipment. Please note, if you are a Vendor serving a client access need you may still qualify for state-funded equipment and will be notified of this status by the Department.

To read more about the 2014 Farm Bill, visit <https://www.congress.gov/113/plaws/publ79/PLAW-113publ79.pdf>. Please contact the Vendor Relations Unit at 517-335-8937 or via email at MDHHS-WICVendor@michigan.gov with questions.

REMINDER: If there is a broken or unused stand-alone point-of-sale device in your store, it is the Vendor's responsibility to contact Conduent at 1-888-529-1693 to arrange for the replacement and/or return of the POS equipment.



WIC FOOD FACTS



- ◆ Make at least half of the grains you eat whole grains – such as bread, tortillas, pasta, and cereals. Whole grains contain **fiber** and are good for your heart and digestion and can help you maintain a healthy weight.
- ◆ Strong bodies need strong bones. **Calcium** and **vitamin D**, found in dairy foods, work together to protect bones. Skim, 1% or 2% milk have the same amount of nutrients and protein as whole milk. Just less fat and fewer calories.
- ◆ Everyone needs **iron** for growth and development, especially your child’s developing brain! Many WIC Foods are high in iron, like breakfast cereal and beans. Many other WIC foods are good sources of iron, including lentils, tofu, spinach, sardines, chickpeas, canned stewed tomatoes and baked potatoes.
- ◆ Fish is packed with lots of nutrients, including **protein**, **vitamins** and **omega-3 fatty acids**, which are important for your child’s growth and development.
- ◆ Eggs have been a great **protein** source worldwide for centuries. One large egg has about 80 calories and is loaded with nutrients.
- ◆ Beans and legumes come in many different colors, shapes, and sizes and contain a protein-packed punch. One cup of black beans contains 13 grams of **protein** as well as **fiber**, **folate**, **iron** and other important minerals.
- ◆ All fruits and vegetables (fresh, frozen, or canned) are good for you – as long as you eat them!
- ◆ Small amounts of WIC juice are a good source of **vitamin C**. **Be sure to eat plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables to get more fiber in your diet.**

WIC RECIPE:

Asian Chicken and Pineapple Rice



Ingredients

- ◆ 1 tbsp. oil
- ◆ 1 lb. boneless, skinless chicken breasts, cut into bite-sized pieces
- ◆ 2 c. frozen or fresh stir-fry vegetables*
- ◆ 1 can (8 oz.) pineapple chunks in juice, undrained*
- ◆ 1 1/2 c. water
- ◆ 2 c. instant brown rice*
- ◆ Green onions, chopped (optional)*

*Designates a WIC-approved food item

Directions

Heat oil in large skillet on medium-high heat. Add chicken. Stir for four minutes, or until chicken is cooked through. Add vegetables, pineapple, and juice; mix well. Stir in water and bring to boil. Stir in rice and cover. Reduce heat to medium low and simmer for five minutes, until liquid is completely absorbed, and rice is tender. Garnish with green onion, if desired.

Makes six servings.

BROWN RICE

GOOD FOR YOU, GOOD FOR ME, GOOD FOR ALL!

When brown rice was included as a full-line grocery requirement for WIC-authorized Vendors it was for good reason; brown rice is a filling food and an excellent source of **fiber** and **protein**. While the same grain as white rice, brown rice contains more fiber, **antioxidants**, **vitamins** and **minerals** because the hull, bran layer, and cereal germ have not been removed.

Additionally, whole grains, such as brown rice, may help reduce the risk of diabetes, heart disease and certain cancers, and may even contribute to maintaining a healthy weight.

To meet our full-line grocery requirement, WIC Vendors are required to carry **one additional variety of brown rice (6 units)** over minimum stock.

It is a delicious way to please our WIC clients and promote healthy eating for everyone. Have you tried the nutty flavor of brown rice?



2020 TRAINING SCHEDULE

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 for 2020.

GROCER VENDORS

Sept. 22 @ 2 p.m.
Dec. 8 @ 2 p.m.
Mar. 9 @ 2 p.m.
June 8 @ 2 p.m.
Sept. 7 @ 2 p.m.

PHARMACY VENDORS

Dec. 15th @ 2pm
Mar. 16th @ 2pm
June 15th @ 2pm
Sept. 14th @ 2pm

If your store requires a training, you will be sent an invitation via email. Vendors may also participate in trainings more frequently as desired. To register, visit <https://miwicevents.com/vendor-webcasts-trainings/>.

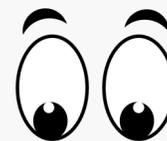
If you would like to know the date of your most recent training or would like more information regarding registration for these events, please contact the **Vendor Relations Unit** at **517-355-8937** or by email at MDHHS-WICVendor@michigan.gov.

A [recorded version](#) of the training webcast 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:

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

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To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD-3027) found online at: http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call **866-632-9992**. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

(1) Mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;

(2) Fax: 202-690-7442; or

(3) Email: program.intake@usda.gov

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