

ANNUAL TRAINING NEWSLETTER 2023/2024

It is required that each WIC-authorized vendor complete training annually. Annual Vendor Training is being accomplished through distribution of this newsletter. The store's manager or authorized representative is required to read this newsletter and share the contents with all personnel that handle eWIC transactions. Once training is completed, the manager or authorized representative must confirm their attendance and that the material has been shared.



WHAT IS WIC?

WIC is a supplemental nutrition program for Women, Infants and Children. WIC provides nutrition education, breastfeeding promotion and support, healthy supplemental foods, and health referrals for pregnant, postpartum, and breastfeeding women, infants, and children up to the age of five.

Training Topics/Requirements

What is WIC?

Authorized Foods

The APL and Minimum Required Inventory

Infant Formula purchases

The eWIC transaction

Policies and Procedures

Violations and Sanctions

Vendor and Participant Complaints

Claims Procedures

Finalize Training



AUTHORIZED FOODS

WIC PROVIDES NUTRITIOUS, SUPPLEMENTAL FOODS TO WIC PARTICIPANTS TO PROMOTE NUTRITIOUS DIETS AMONG WOMAN, INFANTS AND CHILDREN. WIC FOOD CATEGORIES ARE:

Cheese

Legumes

Infant Fruit/Vegetable

Fruit/Vegetable CVB

WIC Eligible Nutritionals

Milk - Fat Reduced

Eggs

Fish

Infant Meats

Infant Formula

Yogurt

Juice 48 oz

Breakfast Cereal

Juice 64 oz

Bread/Whole Grains

Infant Cereal

Milk - Whole

Exempt Infant Formula



The Approved Products List (APL)

The APL contains thousands of Universal Product Codes (UPC's) and Price Lookup Codes (PLU's), it will always be a work in progress. We need your help to keep it up to date. If you have a UPC that does not scan as approved and you think it should, please report it to us. The current Authorized Product List can be found on our website. You may also submit a new UPC(s) through our website using the following link: [UPC\(formsite.com\)](http://UPC(formsite.com)).

Minimum Inventory Requirements

All stores are required to have the minimum required inventory on hand and available for sale during the hours that the store is open. Below is a list of the NC WIC minimum inventory requirements.

| Food Item | Type of Inventory | Quantity |
|--|---|---|
| Milk | Whole fluid, gallon | 2 gallons |
| | Skim/low-fat (1%) fluid: gallon | 6 gallons |
| Cheese | 1-pound package | 2 packages |
| Cereal | 2 types: whole grain (minimum package size 12 ounces) | 6 packages total |
| Eggs | Grade A, large, white: 1-dozen size carton | 2 dozen |
| Juices | Single strength: 48-ounce container | 4 containers |
| | 64-ounce container | 4 containers |
| Dried Peas & Beans | 1-pound package | 2 packages |
| Peanut Butter | 16 to 18-ounce container | 2 containers |
| Tuna | 5 to 6-ounce container | 6 containers |
| Bread/Tortillas | 16-ounce loaf of bread or package of tortillas | 2 loaves and/or 2 packages OR 1 loaf and 1 package |
| Rice | 14-16-ounce package | 2 packages |
| Infant Cereal | 8-ounce box | 6 boxes |
| Infant Fruits and Vegetables | 3.5 to 4-ounce container | 64 ounces total |
| | 1 type of fruit and 1 type of vegetable | |
| Infant Formula | Milk-based powder: 11 to 14-ounce | 8 cans |
| | Soy-based powder: 11 to 14-ounce (Brands must be the primary contract infant formulas) | 4 cans |
| Fruits | 14 to 16-ounce can: 2 varieties | 10 cans total |
| Vegetables (excludes foods in the dried peas & beans category) | 14 to 16-ounce can: 2 varieties | 10 cans total |

*Please refer to the WIC Vendor Manual for detailed information regarding required minimum variety and inventory.

Infant Formula Sources

WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 requires vendors to purchase infant formula from a State-approved list of sources. Vendors must purchase all infant formula, exempt infant formula, and WIC-eligible nutritionals directly from State-approved sources and provide to WIC customers infant formula, exempt infant formula, and WIC-eligible nutritionals purchased only from the State-approved sources. Failure to comply with these requirements shall result in termination of the WIC Vendor Agreement. Visit our website for the current [Approved List of Suppliers of Infant Formula, WIC-Eligible Nutritionals and Exempt Infant Formula](#).

The eWIC Transaction

There are two ways to process an eWIC transaction, through an integrated system or through a stand-beside machine. For vendors that process eWIC transactions using an integrated system. All items can be rung up together; however, the WIC customer must swipe their eWIC card first before any other tender type is applied to ensure that the proper items are deducted from the WIC customer's benefit balance before another tender type is used for purchase. Questions regarding integrated systems should be directed to the IT staff responsible for the maintenance of your integrated POS system or by visiting the merchant web portal at www.ebtedge.com for assistance.

For vendors that have a stand-beside POS device. It is only used for eWIC transactions, so eWIC purchases must be separated from other purchases. Both systems require that the eWIC card be swiped and the PIN entered, to access the participant's benefits balance and allow for the transaction to proceed. Questions regarding stand beside devices, equipment or eWIC transactions should be directed to FIS EBT Merchant Services at 1-800-894-0050 or visit the merchant web portal at www.ebtedge.com for assistance.

Policies & Procedures

WIC Policies are governed by federal laws and state rules.

Some of the policies are:

Vendors may not ask the WIC customer to make up the difference in price for eWIC transactions

Vendors are responsible for keeping their prices at or below the NTE for their peer group

Per 7 CFR 246.12 (g)(4)(iii) Subsequent price increases. The State agency must establish procedures to ensure that a vendor selected for participation in the program does not, subsequent to selection, increase prices to levels that would make the vendor ineligible for authorization.

Stores are required to have prices posted for all WIC authorized foods at, on, or near the item.

A vendor discount is an in-store promotion that reduces the price or increases the quantity of a given product. Please remember that per Federal regulations [7 CFR 246.12 (h)(3)(iii)], WIC-authorized vendors may not treat WIC customers differently by not extending the same vendor discounts to them that are extended to non-WIC customers. Similarly, WIC authorized vendors may not treat WIC customers differently by offering them vendor discounts that are not offered to non-WIC customers.

Allowing WIC participants to use vendor discounts in WIC purchases reinforces wise food purchasing practices, which is a goal of WIC nutrition education.

A Free-standing Pharmacies does not operate within a retail store and may ONLY accept eWIC benefits for exempt infant formula and WIC-eligible nutritionals.

Free-standing Pharmacies may NOT accept eWIC benefits for other food categories including Cash Value Benefits (CVB) for fresh fruit and vegetables

Violations & Sanctions

Violations can be accumulated through routine vendor monitoring visits, compliance buys, and inventory audits.

- There are two types of violations. Federal Violations and State Violations
- Federal violations are the most serious, carry the longest disqualification period, are found during compliance buys/inventory audits and may lead to disqualification from both WIC and SNAP
- State violations are found during Local WIC Agency monitoring and compliance buys
- Vendor disqualifications are a result of a pattern of occurrences and severe violation can result in disqualification for up to six years or permanently
- Vendors have the right to appeal a disqualification
- As a result of disqualification vendors could be subject to unexpected costs during their disqualification period like Civil Money Penalties (CMP), potential claims, potential SNAP disqualification, and loss of income from WIC Program redemption
- The Vendor Sanction System for Federal and State Sanctions can be found in the current Vendor Manual.

Vendor and Participant Complaints

Vendors should report customer service issues to their Local WIC agency concerning:

- WIC customer inappropriate behavior. Vendors are not required to tolerate behavior from a WIC customer that they would not tolerate from other customers
- Repeated efforts by WIC customers to get cash for food or cash-value benefits
- Other vendors that appear to engage in fraudulent WIC activities
- The WIC Vendor Management Customer Service Issues form can be found on our website www.ncdhhs.gov or by clicking [here](#).

Claims

The NC WIC Program may make monetary claims against vendors that have committed certain violations, in addition to any other sanctions applied against such vendors. Those include but are not limited to:

- Inventory audits when a vendor's records cannot support all its redemptions
- Any overcharges or errors made on a WIC transaction discovered during undercover compliance buys
- Transaction audits when a review of a vendor's redemptions is performed to determine if the vendor has overcharged the WIC Program.

WIC authorization will be terminated for failure to pay a monetary claim by the due date.

Important Reminders

North Carolina WIC Program converted eWIC systems to Fidelity Information Services (FIS) from Solutran

- BNFT® app is no longer available
- ebtEDGE® is the new mobile application for the NC WIC Program
- As of October 1, 2023, NC WIC Program transitioned to a new Infant Formula contract with Abbott Nutrition/Similac
- Training materials will be available on the Vendor webpage under [Vendor Training Information](#)
- Per the Terms of the WIC Vendor Agreement, vendors must “Process EBT transactions, accurately and in a timely manner
 - Failure to process EBT transactions accurately may result in termination of the WIC Vendor Agreement
 - Please ensure that all fresh produce is mapped accordingly in your store(s). These items must be mapped to a corresponding product look-up (PLU) code in the North Carolina WIC Authorized Product List (APL) file or to the standard generic PLU for produce (4469) or organic produce (94469).

Final Steps

All forms referenced in this newsletter are available by clicking the link or going to <https://www.ncdhhs.gov/wicvendorsconnection>. As a reminder, please share this newsletter with all staff that handle eWIC transactions and then complete the Verification of Attendance Form linked below. Failure to complete annual vendor training by reviewing the 2023-2024 Annual Vendor Training Newsletter and submitting the completed 2023-2024 Verification of Attendance Form (VOA) by the designated due date will result in the vendor being non-compliant with the annual training requirement and disqualified from the WIC Program. Access the 2023-2024 Verification of Attendance Form on the next page or by clicking [here](#).”

Contact Us

The WIC Vendor Unit is available to help and answer questions at 919-707-5800 or you may send questions via email to NCWICVendorQuestions@dhhs.nc.gov.



This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

WIC Program Vendor Renewal Training 2023/2024 Verification of Attendance

This verifies that I completed the WIC Program Annual Vendor Training. I understand the instruction provided and agree to instruct all store personnel who process WIC transactions. The vendor that I represent was given the information/forms checked below and instructions for their completion, if necessary. **I understand that this form must be completed and returned to the North Carolina WIC State Agency via email at NCWICVendorQuestions@dhhs.nc.gov by September 6, 2024**

Verify with a check () all items included in packet:

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Link for accessing the WIC Vendor Manual

Vendor ID Number

Vendor Store Name and Number

Name of Vendor Representative (Print)

Signature of Vendor Representative

Date

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/USDA-OASCR%20P-Complaint-Form-0508-0002-508-11-28-17Fax2Mail.pdf>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted 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; or
2. **fax:**
(833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
3. **email:**
program.intake@usda.gov

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