Iowa WIC Vendor Newsletter

Volume 15 Issue 4 January 2014

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Happy New Year !

Thank you for Supporting the Iowa WIC Program in 2013 !

The Program is looking forward to the challenges and opportunities that will be presented during the development of WIC EBT (eWIC) in 2014 and 2015.

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eWIC Update

IDPH Receives Grant to Transition to Electronic WIC Benefits

$5.3 million grant will move WIC from paper to plastic

The Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) has announced that the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Program has received a $5.3 million grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Services to implement an electronic benefit transfer (EBT) system. The grant is a two-year technology grant to be used by September 30, 2015 to transition the Iowa WIC Program from a paper-based food benefit delivery system to an electronic system. All state WIC Programs are mandated to transition to an EBT system by October 1, 2020 by the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010.

The funding will be used to select a full-service WIC EBT contractor to provide the system and support needed. Currently WIC benefits are issued to WIC participants in the form of a paper check that can be used to purchase specific nutritionally-appropriate foods at local WIC-approved grocery stores. An EBT system issues WIC benefits using a plastic card similar to a debit card.

The WIC Program provides supplemental nutritious foods, nutrition education and counseling to low-income, nutritionally at-risk women, infants (up to their 1st birthday), and children (up to their 5th birthday). The Iowa WIC Program served approximately 69,159 participants each month last year.

For additional WIC information, visit the USDA web site at www.fns.usda.gov/wic/aboutwic/.

For additional information on Iowa WIC EBT (eWIC), visit www.idph.state.ia.us/wic/eWIC.aspx.

With the New Year comes new store openings and change of ownerships.

Contact the respective Programs for the appropriate application forms and guidance .

WIC: 515-281-6205 **SNAP: 800-414-1422 or 515-281-4913**

Approved Product List—Description Changes

Effective Monday December 16, 2013 an **OR** statement was added to the FI description for Carnation Breakfast Essentials. This product is changing from a 4 pack 11 oz. selling unit to a 6 pack 8 oz. selling unit.

NEW 6 pack-8 OZ. selling unit

4-pack 11 OZ.selling unit

Replacing

Carnation Breakfast Essentials RTD Vanilla 6 pack 8-ounce	**50000-41569**
Carnation Breakfast Essentials RTD Chocolate 6 pack 8-ounce	**50000-41517**
Carnation Breakfast Essentials RTD Strawberry 6 pack 8-ounce	**50000-41579**

This product will be shipping to the major warehouses supplying Iowa stores in January 2014.

- The new WIC check description reads:
  Four-pack of 11 oz. OR Six-pack 8 oz. RTU Carnation Breakfast Essential

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Vendor Price Assessment Report Survey (PARS)

Stores are required to submit PARS reports at the time a WIC Vendor application is submitted. Random PARS are completed as needed to keep Not To Exceed (NTEs) values in line with competitive price changes. Corporate and/or individual store PARS are requested at least every six months. Prices submitted are subject to on-site verification by State Agency staff. Providing false/incomplete price data may affect your store's selection/continued participation with the Iowa WIC Program.

The Iowa WIC Program reviews all redeemed food instruments to ensure that prices charged to WIC participants are the same as, or lower than, prices charged to non-WIC participants for the same items. If a food instrument exceeds it's state wide peer group value, the food instrument will be rejected by the WIC bank and returned to the vendor.

Incentives

According to Section 246.12(h)(3)(iii) of the Federal WIC regulations requires that vendors must offer WIC participants the same courtesies that are offered to non-WIC customers. A WIC authorized vendor may not treat WIC customers differently by offering incentive items that are not offered to non-WIC customers. This is a violation of Federal WIC regulations and will result in a vendor violation.

Coupons

Both in-store and/or national brand coupons may be used by WIC participants to reduce the cost of WIC approved foods purchased with WIC checks.

Non-discrimination

Vendors may not refuse to accept a properly presented WIC food instrument from any participant. The vendor must comply with the nondiscrimination provisions of Departmental regulations 7CFR parts 15, 15a and 15b. (Nondiscrimination statement on last page of newsletter)

Violation points

The assignment of violation points does not limit the Department's right to impose more severe penalties and sanctions in cases in which there is evidence of an intentional or systematic practice of abusing or defrauding the Iowa WIC Program. The following table lists the vendor violations and the points assigned for each event.

Violation	Points /Event
Accepting food instrument(s) outside the valid dates of use.	5
Depositing food instrument(s) more than 15 days after purchase date.	5
Accepting food instrument(s) with no printed valid dates of use.	**5**
Refusal to accept valid WIC food instruments from participants.	10
Discriminatory treatment of WIC participants, such as requiring WIC participants to use special checkout lanes or provide extra identification.	10
Providing to WIC participants incentive items not prior authorized by the department.	10
Failure to carry out corrective action plan developed as a result of monitoring visit.	10
Failure to reimburse department for potentially overpaid food instrument or provide reasonable explanation for the cost of the food instrument.	5
Accepting the return of food purchased with WIC food instruments for cash or credit toward other purchases.	10
Failure to use the WIC vendor stamp issued by the Iowa WIC program.	5
Issuing "rain checks" or credit in exchange for WIC food instruments.	10
Stocking out–of–date, stale, or moldy WIC foods.	10
Failure to submit vendor price assessment reports as requested.	10
For vendors that have special WIC prices, failure to post WIC prices on the shelf or on the package.	15
Cashing food instrument(s) without amount, date of purchase, or participant signature.	15
Contacting WIC participants in an attempt to recover funds not paid by WIC.	15
Providing false information on the price assessment report.	15
Failure to train all employees and ensure their knowledge regarding WIC program procedures set forth in the vendor's current agreement and in the current publication of the Iowa WIC program's vendor instruction booklet.	10
Requiring WIC participants to purchase a particular brand when other WIC approved brands are available.	10
Not allowing WIC participants to use discount coupons or promotional special to reduce the WIC food instrument amount.	10
Requiring other cash purchases to redeem WIC food instruments.	15
Failure to allow purchase of up to the full amount of WIC foods authorized on the food instrument if such foods are available and desired by the WIC participant.	20
Failure to obtain infant and/or special needs formula from an approved source listed by the State WIC program.	15
Offering incentive items with a value more than $1.99.	15
Developing and using promotional materials, including stickers, tags, labels, or channel strips with the WIC service mark to identify WIC approved foods.	5
Developing and using store created WIC vendor identification decals to indicate store is an authorized vendor.	5

Iowa Department of Public Health
WIC Program
Lucas State Office Building
321 East 12th Street
Des Moines, Iowa 50319-0075

Attn: Store Management and Store Associates
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Iowa Program Vendor Contacts

WIC Vendor Coordinator—Don Gourley	515-281-6205	donald.gourley@idph.iowa.gov
WIC Vendor Representative—Ken Kane	515-281-3929	kenneth.kane@idph.iowa.gov
WIC Vendor Nutritionist—Nikki Davenport	515-725-2642	nikki.davenport@idph.iowa.gov
WIC Bureau Secretary—Sherry Smith	515-281-6650	sherry.smith@idph.state.gov

In-State Toll Free #: 800-532-1579 **State WIC FAX#: 515-281-4913**

Iowa Web site:: www.idph.state.ia.us/wic **FNS Web site: http://www.fns.usda.gov/wic.**

WIC Non-discrimination Statement

The Iowa WIC Program reserves the right to limit the purchase of products that cost more than average price of similar products, in order to serve as many participants as possible under USDA guidelines. Products with special claims may not be approved.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture prohibits discrimination against its customers, employees, and applicants for employment on the bases of race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, gender identity, religion, reprisal, and where applicable, political beliefs, marital status, familial or parental status, sexual orientation, or all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program, or protected genetic information in employment or in any program or activity conducted or funded by the Department. (Not all prohibited bases will apply to all programs and/or employment activities.)

If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, or at any USDA office, or call (866) 632-9992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter to us by mail at U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, by fax (202) 690-7442 or email at program.intake@usda.gov.

Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339; or (800) 845-6136 (Spanish).

The Best to All in 2014 !