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Iowa WIC Vendor Newsletter

Volume 14 Issue 10 August 2013

eWIC Update

Iowa eWIC Planning Phase completed.

The Iowa WIC program partnered with the Colorado WIC program to produce a joint request for proposal (RFP) in the first step of the process to procure a contractor for eWIC implementation. The two states worked collaboratively from August, 2012 until FNS provided approval of the RFP in June, 2013. The approval of the RFP marks the conclusion of the planning phase of the eWIC project; however, the 2014 USDA federal budget does not include funding for eWIC implementation. What this means for the Iowa WIC program is that work toward an eWIC environment will continue, although the impact of such efforts will be minimally visible until federal funding is available to fully fund implementation activities. Once funding is made available, the Iowa and Colorado WIC programs will proceed to procure an implementation contractor through the approved joint RFP.

What does this mean – is eWIC going to happen or not?

Yes. Despite the unavailability of implementation funding, the USDA has maintained the 2020 mandate for WIC EBT; therefore, it is expected that the Iowa WIC program continue to make progress toward implementation. During the remainder of 2013 and into early 2014, Iowa eWIC efforts will be concentrated on preparing for the Approved Product List (APL) requirement of eWIC. In an eWIC environment, the program must be able to provide an electronic file to all Iowa WIC approved retailers identifying all products by universal product code (UPC) that are eligible for purchase with WIC benefits. The tasks and equipment associated with the ability to produce and provide an APL include capture of UPC and product data, creation and maintenance of a database of Iowa WIC UPC data. Completing the APL project prior to full eWIC implementation will allow the Iowa WIC program to carefully manage the collection of UPC data to ensure that all WIC approved products are included in the APL when eWIC implementation proceeds.

What can Vendors do to help prepare for eWIC?

- Inform the state WIC Program of new products for consideration as authorized WIC item during our next review in 2015. Information that should be sent to the state includes basic product description including brand name, container size, suggested retail and UPC.
- Ask questions — send questions regarding eWIC by email to Don Gourley (donald.gourley@idph.iowa.gov—800-532-1579) **or** Send questions to the Iowa Grocery Industry Association (info@iowagrocers.com—800-383-3663), IGIA in turn will forward questions to the Program.

Where can I find a listing of Iowa WIC Approved Foods?

- On line at <http://www.idph.state.ia.us/wic> **OR**
- Multi-color food flyers are available through the State WIC Office Vendor Management Team 800-532-1579.

WIC's National Mission:

To safeguard the health of low-income women, infants, and children up to age 5 who are at nutrition risk by providing nutritious foods to supplement diets, information on healthy eating, and referrals to health care.

WIC Story

The WIC Program is America's premier public health nutrition program serving over 9 million mothers and young children (over half of all America's infants and one-quarter of its young children 1-5 years of age) through 12,200 service provider agencies nationwide. WIC has improved the nutrition status and health of at-risk women and children and prevented the future development of nutrition related health problems for over 35 years. The primary nutrition goals of the WIC Program are to provide nutritious foods, improve dietary intake and feeding practices, improve birth outcomes, increase breastfeeding rates, and prevent obesity in the population WIC serves. In addition to providing healthy foods, and critical health and social service referrals, the program works intensively with WIC families to help them form healthy eating habits. The foods included in the WIC food packages are specifically selected for their nutritional value to supplement the nutrients found lacking in the diets of low-income populations. The food packages are prescribed based upon the participant's life cycle stage and the foods are selected for the food list based upon the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and recommendations by professional organizations such as the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP). WIC food benefits are redeemed in retail grocery settings and special purpose vendor settings. The benefits are accessed with paper based food instruments provided in up to three (3) month issuance.

WIC is effective in improving the health of pregnant women, new mothers, and their infants. A 1990 study showed that women who participated in the program during their pregnancies had lower Medicaid costs for themselves and their babies than did women who did not participate. WIC participation was also linked with longer gestation periods, higher birthweights and lower infant mortality.

Building a Healthier Iowa

In 1972, the U.S. Congress legislated the Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC). Beginning as a two-year pilot project under the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), the WIC Program linked health care and food assistance for pregnant women, nursing mothers, infants and children considered at health risk because of malnutrition and low income. After a two-year trial, the WIC Program (later renamed the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children) officially began in Iowa with the first clinic opening in Davenport on March 12, 1974. In 1975, the Davenport program served approximately 1,050 at-risk women, infants and children up to the age of five years.

The Iowa WIC Program has been successful because it recognizes the far-reaching implications of proper maternal and early childhood nutrition. The individuals who originally planned the program had the foresight to combine nutrition education, nutritious foods, and healthcare referrals in a program that provided not just immediate food benefits, but education to influence eating habits for a lifetime. Dedication and hard work have brought WIC from a two-year pilot project to the premier public health nutrition program in the nation. The Iowa WIC Program ensures that children in Iowa are ready to learn and, in turn, makes an investment in a future productive work force. As WIC continues to provide quality services to Iowa families, it is with the mission of building a stronger and healthier Iowa, and protecting and nurturing the next generation of Iowa leaders.

Completing WIC Checks

Iowa WIC check guidelines

- First Date to Use and Last Date to Use
 - Checks may only be accepted during the dates indicated on the check. Checks presented outside of the printed dates should not be accepted.
- Checks may only be accepted for the items issued
 - WIC vendors are not authorized to make substitutions. Participants should return to the issuing WIC clinic if they need to make changes to the items they have been issued.
- Check value
 - WIC participants do not receive cash back, IOU's or credit of any type for items not purchased.

Identification "WIC Folder"

- Store associates are required to match the signature on the WIC check with one of the authorized signatures on the participants WIC Identification folder.
- If the participant does not have the WIC Identification folder, the participant should not be allowed to use their WIC checks.
- The WIC participant should sign the WIC check **AFTER** the product has been rung up.

Cash Value Voucher (CVV) — Fruit and Vegetable WIC Check

CVVs may only be used to purchase fresh or frozen fruits and vegetables.

The image shows a WIC Cash Value Voucher (CVV) with the following details and callouts:

- 1:** Check number 43105179
- 2:** First Date to Use: 12/15/2012 and Last Date to Use: 1/3/2013
- 3:** VOID IF ALTERED - VOID IF NOT PURCHASED - VOID IF DOES NOT HAVE A VALID IOWA WIC CONTRACT OR DOES NOT HAVE A VALID IOWA WIC CONTRACT BE PURCHASED - NO SUBSTITUTIONS ALLOWED
- 4:** PURCHASE DATE field
- 5:** Amount field showing \$10.00
- 6:** AUTHORIZED SIGNATURE: PARENT/GUARDIAN/PARTICIPANT
- 7:** AUTHORIZED WIC STAMP
- 8:** PAYABLE THROUGH SOLUTRAN, Citizens Alliance Bank • Howard Lake Branch • Clara City, MN 56222

Additional text on the voucher includes: IOWA WIC PROGRAM, IOWA DEPT. OF PUBLIC HEALTH, 321 EAST 12th STREET - DES MOINES, IA 50319-0075, PHONE: 1-800-532-1579, Acct #: 805749, Family ID: 5091300, Name: WIC Participant, and a list of allowed items: Fresh and Frozen Fruits and/or Vegetables, Frozen Fruit - No sugar or syrup, and Frozen Vegetables - No sauces, pasta, or rice. It also notes that only fresh and frozen sweet potatoes and yams are allowed.

Participants are required to present their Iowa WIC Identification folder at the time of purchase.

1. This is the assigned check number (example is 43105179).
2. This is the first day to accept and the last day to accept.
3. The fruits and vegetables food instrument (FI) is the only FI with a dollar amount. Only the actual amount of the purchase (NOT to EXCEED the prescribed value) may be entered. WIC shoppers are allowed to pay the difference using an alternative form of payment if the total exceeds the value of the FI ; however they cannot receive change for any unused amount. CVVs are issued in denominations of \$6.00, \$10.00 and \$15.00.
4. The cashier or WIC participant fills in the date of purchase.
5. The cashier or the WIC participant fills in the amount of the purchase.
6. The WIC participant signs the FI after the amount and date have been entered. The store associate is required to compare the signature on the check to one of the authorized signatures on the ID folder.
7. The authorized WIC vendor applies their authorized Iowa WIC Vendor Number.
8. Vendors have 15-days from the date of purchase to deposit the CVV into their financial institution.

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
August 2013 WIC Newsletter Vol 14 Issue 10**

Iowa Program Vendor Contacts

WIC Vendor Coordinator—Don Gourley donald.gourley@idph.iowa.gov	515-281-6205
WIC Vendor Representative—Ken Kane kenneth.kane@idph.iowa.gov	515-281-3929
WIC Vendor Nutritionist—Nikki Davenport nikki.davenport@idph.iowa.gov	515-725-2642
WIC Bureau Secretary — Sherry Smith sherry.smith@idph.state.gov	515-281-6650
<u>SNAP / Food Stamp</u> Program Questions	800-414-1422

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>



Iowa WIC Facts — 2012 Information

- **650** The number of Iowa WIC Authorized Vendors—includes grocery, pharmacies and medical supply businesses.
- **65,657** The number of WIC participants in the Iowa WIC Program.
- **27,357** The number of Families participating in the Iowa WIC Program.
- **7th** Iowa WIC ranking—national ranking of “Average WIC Food Price” related to WIC purchases. Average WIC Food Prices range from \$29.33 (Texas) to \$56.05 (Georgia). This number is influenced by the number/type of items Iowa WIC approves, including Iowa WIC’s approval of store brand items. Plus the competitive nature of the grocery retail industry within Iowa.

Iowa residence are fortunate to live in a state with competitive grocery retail prices.

Thank you for supporting the Iowa WIC Program!