



Iowa WIC Vendor Newsletter



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WIC History

In 1968, a group of physicians described to the Department of Health, Education and Welfare and the USDA that young women, often pregnant, came to their clinics with various ailments that were caused by a lack of food. The doctors would prescribe needed foods, with the prescription acting as a sort of food voucher. WIC's program beginnings surface in 1969, when the White House Conference on Food, Nutrition, and Health recommended that special attention be given to the nutritional needs of low-income pregnant women and pre-school children.

WIC was formally created by an amendment to section 17 of the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 on September 26, 1972. The legislation established the Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) as a 2-year pilot program. Eligibility was limited to children up to age 4 and excluded non-breastfeeding postpartum women. By the end of 1974, WIC was operating in 45 states. On October 7, 1975, WIC was established as a permanent program. Eligibility was extended to non-breastfeeding women (up to 6 months postpartum) and children up to 5 years of age. However, all participants must be deemed to be at nutrition risk and with inadequate income. In 1978, P.L. 95-627 defined nutrition risk and established income eligibility standards that were linked to the income standards associated with reduced price school meals. Another income standard change took place in 1989, when P.L. 101-147 established similar income eligibility for Food Stamp, Medicaid, and AFDC participation, thus lowering the WIC income standard and simplifying the application process. WIC began to promote and support breastfeeding women in the late 1980s. In 1989 Congress mandated \$8 million be used specifically for promoting and supporting breastfeeding. In 1999, the WIC program standardized nutrition risk criteria for program eligibility and began assigning individual nutrition risk priority levels.

Participant Eligibility

Applicants to the WIC program must meet eligibility requirements in four areas: (1) categorical, (2) residential, (3) income, and (4) nutrition risk.

1. Categorical

The categorical requirement simply means that participants must fall into three major categories:

a. Women:

- Pregnant (during their pregnancy and up to six weeks after birth or at the end of the pregnancy)
- Postpartum (up to six months after giving birth or end of pregnancy)
- Breastfeeding (while they are breastfeeding up to their infant's first birthday)

b. Infants up to their first birthday

c. Children up to their fifth birthday

2. Residential

Must be a resident of the state to which they are applying for assistance.

3. Income

To be eligible on the basis of income, applicants' gross income (i.e. before taxes are withheld) must fall at or below 185 percent of the U.S. Poverty Income Guidelines. State income requirements may be between 100 percent and 185 percent of Federal poverty guidelines, though most states use the maximum guideline. This is approximately \$43k annually for a family of four in the 48 contiguous states in 2013.

4. Nutrition risk

Must have a nutritional risk assessment by a qualified health professional (physician, nurse, or nutritionist). The Nutritional evaluation is based on height, weight, and growth assessment; hematocrit or hemoglobin levels; general health history; and a diet assessment.

Regulations for WIC Service Marks

WIC service marks include the WIC acronym and WIC logo. Following these regulations protect against infringement of the service marks.

Federal and state regulations about WIC service marks include the following:

- Vendors are not permitted to use the WIC service marks, or close facsimiles, in the name of the business.
- Vendors are restricted from using the WIC service marks in their advertising and other promotional material.
- Vendors are restricted from developing and using promotional materials, including channel strips or shelf talkers, with the WIC service mark, to identify WIC approved foods.
- Vendors may not apply stickers, tags, or labels that have the WIC service mark on WIC-approved foods.
- Vendors are only permitted to use the State WIC Vendor Identification decals provided (grocery vendors = blue decal, special purpose vendors = orange decal) to indicate the store is an authorized WIC vendor.
- Vendors may identify individual stores as WIC authorized by using the WIC acronym on the vendor's website provided that the website does not falsely identify stores.
- Vendors may use the WIC acronym in the same size and proportion as other accepted tender depictions in tender type signs at the point of sale provided that the WIC acronym is used only in WIC authorized stores.

Regulations for WIC Transactions

When handling WIC food instruments, there are federal and state regulations that every vendor must follow. These regulations are outlined in this booklet. Each time a vendor accepts a WIC food instrument, the vendor certifies that the program regulations were followed in that transaction. Any vendor that accepts WIC food instruments in accordance with the program regulations is guaranteed payment. Failure to adhere to these regulations could result in a vendor's suspension from participation in this program.

The WIC vendor's cooperation is essential to the WIC Program. It is the vendor's responsibility to ensure that this information is clearly understood by all store associates who will be involved in WIC transactions.

Before receiving his/her food instruments, each WIC participant receives detailed instructions on how to use the food instruments. In addition, WIC participants are advised to inform vendors at the checkout counter that they are using WIC food instruments. Most WIC participants should have no problem using their food instruments. However, on occasion it may be necessary for store associates to assist some participants in completing their food instruments correctly. When purchasing food or formula with WIC food instruments, a participant must present his/her WIC Identification (commonly known as the "ID card.") This card is required for identification purposes before WIC food instruments can be accepted. This card is also used for comparison with the signature on the food instruments.

No other identification may be required of a WIC participant.

Only the food items and quantities printed on the front of the food instruments may be purchased. Where brand names are specified, only those brands can be chosen. A Cash Value Voucher (CVV) is a type of food instrument issued to some WIC participants for the purchase of fruits and vegetables. The WIC participant may purchase fresh and /or frozen fruits and vegetables meeting WIC guidelines. The dollar value of the CVVs varies based on the value of benefits the participant is authorized to receive. A participant cannot buy more than the total quantity of food that appears on each food instrument. WIC participants are permitted to use vendor and manufacturers coupons and buy-one-get-one promotions to purchase WIC foods.

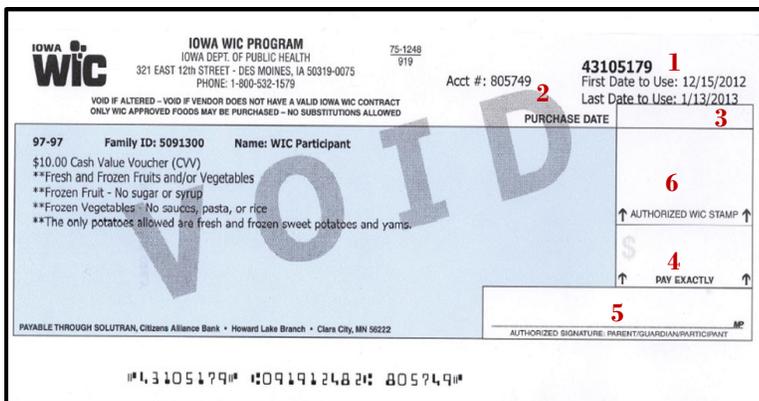
Federal WIC Policy

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.

Regulations for WIC Transactions (cont.)

- Vendor shall not allow substitutions, cash, credit, refunds, or exchanges.
- WIC food instruments are not to be transacted by WIC participants prior to 12:01 am on the “First Valid Day of Use” and not later than 12:01 pm (midnight) of the “Last Valid Day of Use.”
- The vendor is responsible for stamping it’s WIC vendor number in the “**AUTHORIZED WIC STAMP**” box on the face of each food instrument.
- **The Department supplies stamps. The Vendor may not create or use their own WIC stamp.** This stamp may be applied at the time of the transaction or in the office, as long as it is applied prior to depositing the food instruments. This vendor number must be legible for the food instruments to be honored by the bank. It is the responsibility of the vendor to properly maintain the stamp issued by the Department.
- A vendor shall be allowed to accept an alternative form of payment in conjunction with a **WIC CVV transaction only.**
- Because a WIC food instrument is good only for the actual cost of the authorized foods, change or credit is never to be given to the participant following redemption of a WIC food instrument.
- Foods purchased with WIC food instruments are not to be returned for cash or credit toward other purchases.
- Retailer should print WIC on all WIC receipts to avoid any confusion.
- WIC food instruments can never be exchanged for cash.
- Vendors must submit food instruments for payment within 15 days of the date of receipt.
- A vendor will receive payment within 60 days (Iowa Code 8A.514) only if the food instrument is properly completed in accordance with the following program regulations. A food instrument will not be honored by the state’s bank if it:
 - Exceeds the maximum amount allowed,
 - Is not stamped with an authorized vendor stamp,
 - Is missing the signature,
 - Is invalid (redemption date is prior to the first date of use,
 - Is expired (redemption date is past the last valid date of use),
 - Has been altered in any way, or
 - Is issued by a State agency outside of Iowa.

Six steps to follow when accepting Iowa WIC checks



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. Cashier or WIC participant fills in the date of purchase.
4. The cashier or the WIC participant fills in the amount of the purchase.
5. WIC participant signs the FI after the amount and date have been entered.
6. Store applies 5-Digit WIC stamp prior to depositing check.

- Store associate is required to compare the signature on the check to one of the authorized signatures on the ID folder.
- Vendors have 15-days from the date of purchase to deposit the check.

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**Attn: Store Management or Owner
March 2014 WIC Vendor Newsletter**

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>

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).