



Iowa WIC Vendor Newsletter

Volume 14 Issue 5 March 2013

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eWIC Update

Iowa WIC EBT

Name change for WIC EBT

Iowa WIC EBT has been renamed **eWIC**. This has been done in part to eliminate confusion with SNAP (Food Stamps) EBT.

What is eWIC?

The Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010, Public Law 111-296, was signed into law by President Obama on December 13, 2010. The act expanded several nutrition assistance programs, including WIC. It also mandates that State WIC food issuance migrate from a paper-based benefit delivery system to an electronic benefits transfer system by October 1, 2020. WIC EBT is commonly referred to as “eWIC”.

eWIC Improving the Delivery of Benefits

eWIC has been successfully implemented in several states, with many other states in the process of transitioning. States that have implemented eWIC noted several improvements to the WIC program, including:

- Elimination of paper checks has improved the shopping experience for WIC participants
- Electronic approval of WIC items has improved the check-out experience for cashiers
- Electronic payment processing has improved the reconciliation process for retail vendors
- eWIC issuance of benefits has streamlined the process in the WIC clinic

eWIC for Iowa

Selecting the right eWIC system for Iowa began with a close analysis of the current system and processes in use by IDPH, Iowa WIC clinics, Iowa retail vendors, and Iowa WIC participants. Currently there are two eWIC systems in use in other states: online eWIC using magnetic strip cards, and offline eWIC using chip embedded “SmartCards”.

Planning for eWIC

The Iowa WIC program began the process of exploring eWIC implementation in early 2011. Analysis and planning activities continued through early 2012. The product of this analysis was documented in a feasibility study approved by the Food & Nutrition Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (FNS) in May 2012. Findings from the feasibility study have provided insight and guidance in planning for eWIC.

The Iowa WIC program submitted a plan outlining the steps to be taken to pursue eWIC for the State of Iowa and received approval of the plan from FNS in October 2012. Based on the approved plan, the Iowa WIC program intends to select the eWIC solution that best meets the needs of the Iowa WIC program through a competitive bid process. Once a solution is chosen, implementation will begin with a “pilot” test, with state-wide expansion to follow.

Iowa Vendor Sanctions

There are five types of sanctions applied to vendors for violations of program regulations:

- **Nonpayment of food instruments,**
- **Issuance of violation points,**
- **Suspension,**
- **Civil Money Penalty, and**
- **Permanent disqualification.**

Corrective training

It is a violation of WIC regulations for a vendor to allow the purchase of unauthorized brands or types of food with a WIC food instrument. If such a violation occurs, the vendor must provide additional training for his employees. A complete listing of violations and violation points may be found in the stores WIC Agreement.

Training guidelines

The nature of the corrective training will be determined by state WIC staff and a vendor representative, usually the owner. The training will be documented in the "Corrective Action" section of the Vendor Monitoring Report. The training should include the use of a training videotape and a review of the "Clerk's Guide to WIC" brochure. The time limit for training is usually 30 days. The vendor must provide proof that the training occurred.

Civil Money Penalty (CMP)

Federal guidelines allow state WIC staff to impose a civil money penalty (CMP) in lieu of a disqualification when:

- Disqualification of the vendor would result in inadequate participant access, OR
- The vendor had, at the time of the violation, an effective policy and program in effect to prevent trafficking; and the ownership was not aware of, did not approve of, and was not involved in the conduct of the violation.

Participant access determination

The following criteria would be used to determine that a vendor should be assessed a CMP rather than be suspended or disqualified to prevent inadequate participant access.

- There must be at least five active WIC participants in the vendor's zip code, AND
- The nearest WIC vendor is over 20 miles for these WIC participants.

Calculation of Civil Money Penalty steps:

1. Program determines the vendor's average monthly WIC redemptions for at least the six-month period ending with the month immediately preceding the month during which the notice of administrative action is dated.
2. Program multiplies the average monthly redemptions figure by 10 percent.
3. Program multiplies the product from Item 2 by the number of months for which the store would have been disqualified. This is the amount of the CMP if the amount is less than \$11,000. The CMP shall not exceed \$11,000 for each violation.
4. The CMP for a violation that warrants permanent disqualification is \$11,000.
5. When during the course of a single investigation, multiple violations are found, a CMP shall be imposed for each violation. The maximum CMP shall not exceed \$49,000 for a single investigation.

When a vendor who has been previously assessed a CMP for any violation receives a second sanction that would result in CMP, the penalty will be doubled. CMP penalties shall not be imposed in lieu of disqualification for third or subsequent violations of this type.

Violation points

Program violation points are detailed in your signed Iowa WIC Agreement. Violation points will be discussed in a later Vendor Newsletter issue.

Iowa WIC APL (Approved Product Listing)

APL: In an effort to become more EBT- ready, the Iowa WIC Program is renaming the approved foods list to the WIC Approved Products List (**APL**).

⇒ **16-ounce Oatmeal**

The Program only authorizes **16-ounce containers** of Old Fashioned and/or Quick Oatmeal.

The approved labels are:

- 16-Ounce MOMs Best — Malt-O-Meal product
 - Old Fashioned 8-83973-15285-4
 - Quick Oats 0-42400-01692-2
- 16-Ounce Our Family — Nash Finch Private Label
 - Old Fashioned 0-70253-29905-6
 - Quick Oats 0-70253-29907-0
- 16-Ounce Best Choice — AWG Private Label
 - Old Fashioned 0-70038-63170-5
 - Quick Oats 0-70038-63169-9

⇒ **4-ounce Baby Food Fruits and Vegetables**

The Program only authorizes **4-ounce containers** of single ingredient and/or single ingredient blends of fruit and/or vegetable baby food. The Program does not authorize desserts, dinners or vegetable meat combinations. The Program does not authorize 3.5-ounce twin pack baby food.

⇒ **Soy Beverage**

The Program only authorizes 1/2 Gallon containers of **8th Continent Vanilla or 8th Continent Original Soy Beverage**.

The Program does “not” authorize any other flavors of 8th Continent or any other brands (IE: Silk or private label are not authorized) of Soy Beverage.

⇒ **Dry Cereal**

The Program only authorizes **Private Label/Store Brand dry cereal** in 10-ounce or larger packages to be purchased with WIC check's written for 36-ounces or less private label cereal or approved hot cereals.

Transaction Reminders

- Stores are required to **ask for the participant's signed WIC ID Folder**—this is the only identification that indicates a person is authorized to redeem WIC food instruments.
- Participants **sign the WIC check “after”** the WIC check has been properly completed: the correct items have been purchased, the date of the transaction has been entered, and the amount of the purchase has been entered on the check.
- Cash Value Vouchers—the **amount entered in the pay exactly block may not exceed the amount for which the check has been issued**. These values are \$6.00, \$10.00 or \$15.00.
- **WIC checks must be deposited within 15-days** of the date of the transaction.
- Participants may use multiple CVV's to complete a CVV transaction.
- Participants may not receive cash back, IOU's or credit of any type during a WIC transaction.
- Participants are not required to purchase every item on the WIC check.
- Stores must apply their 5-digit WIC Vendor stamp to the WIC check prior to depositing.
 - Black re-inking fluid should be used when re-inking your stamp pad.
 - Illegibly stamped WIC checks will be rejected by the WIC Program bank.

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

Attn: Store Management
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Iowa Program Vendor Contacts

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In-State WIC # 800-532-1579
State WIC Office # 515-281-6650
FAX#: 515-281-4913
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IOWA WIC PROGRAM IOWA DEPT. OF PUBLIC HEALTH 321 EAST 12TH STREET - DES MOINES, IA 50319-0075 PHONE: 1-800-532-1579	75-1248 919	Acct #: 805749	43105179 First Date to Use: 12/15/2012 Last Date to Use: 1/13/2013
VOID IF ALTERED - VOID IF VENDOR DOES NOT HAVE A VALID IOWA WIC CONTRACT ONLY WIC APPROVED FOODS MAY BE PURCHASED - NO SUBSTITUTIONS ALLOWED			
97-97 Family ID: 5091300 Name: WIC Participant	PURCHASE DATE		
\$10.00 Cash Value Voucher (CVV) **Fresh and Frozen Fruits and/or Vegetables **Frozen Fruit - No sugar or syrup **Frozen Vegetables - No sauces, pasta, or rice **The only potatoes allowed are fresh and frozen sweet potatoes and yams.	↑ AUTHORIZED WIC STAMP ↑		
	↑ PAY EXACTLY ↑		
PAYABLE THROUGH SOLUTRAN, Citizens Alliance Bank • Howard Lake Branch • Clara City, MN 56222	AUTHORIZED SIGNATURE: PARENT/GUARDIAN/PARTICIPANT		

WIC Transaction Steps

1. Participant presents WIC ID and check
2. Confirm dates are valid
3. Confirm correct items are purchased
4. Participant or store associate enters transaction date and transaction value
5. Participant signs check after items have been rung up and above information has been entered
6. Compare signature to signature on ID
7. Return WIC ID folder to participant
8. Store applies 5-digit WIC stamp prior to depositing check.

SNAP (Food Stamps) Contact Number

Questions regarding SNAP (Previously known as the Food Stamp Program) contact 1-800-414-1422