Winter 2015

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2015 Annual California WIC Vendor Training Newsletter

California Department of Public Health
Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Division

Thank you for your partnership with the California Department of Public Health/Women, Infants, and Children (CDPH/WIC) Division in helping to ensure WIC participants get the food they need. Your courtesy and helpfulness in assisting WIC participants is greatly appreciated. Please know that you and your store play an important role in the WIC Program. By offering WIC participants a safe, friendly place to shop, you are a highly valued component and help WIC achieve its program goals. As a WIC authorized vendor, you are important because you provide nutritious foods to California's women, infants and children. Without your help, WIC participants would not have access to the healthy foods they need. We value you and want you to remain a successful WIC authorized vendor.

PURPOSE OF WIC

The WIC Program is a federally-funded nutrition program that helps families by providing nutrition education, breastfeeding support, prescriptions for nutritious foods, and healthcare referrals. WIC serves low-income women who are pregnant, breastfeeding or postpartum, and infants, and children under the age of five who have a nutritional need.

The purpose of WIC is to prevent health problems and improve participant's health during critical times of growth and development.

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WIC AUTHORIZED FOODS

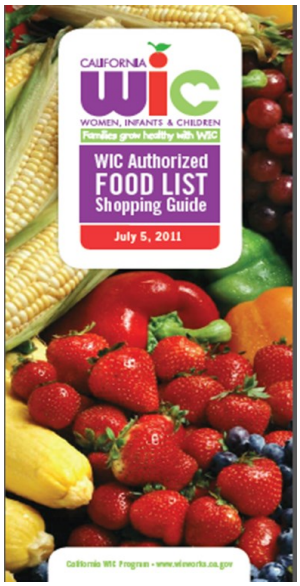
The WIC Authorized Food List Shopping Guide (WAFL SG) is the document that outlines the foods authorized by the California WIC Program. The current version is dated July 5, 2011, and is provided in both English and Spanish.

WIC will be issuing an updated WAFL SG at the beginning of 2016.

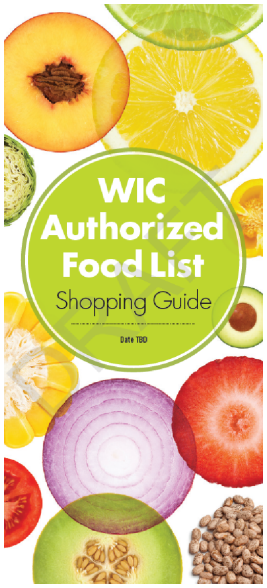
We recommend that you keep a copy at each register to refer to during WIC transactions.

The WAFL SG, along with answers to frequently asked questions, is available online at: http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/wicworks/Pag

Current WAFL SG July 11, 2011



New WAFL SG Coming in 2016



MINIMUM STOCKING REQUIRMENTS

Vendors must maintain on premises ***at all times*** the Minimum Stocking Requirements (MSR) for WIC authorized foods. The MSR is the minimum amount of food items for specific categories that vendors must have on their store shelves at all times. Please ensure that your store meets the MSR. The MSR can be found on our website at the following link:
http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/wicworks/Documents/StockingRequirementCertification.pdf

INFANT FORMULA

Vendors must only purchase infant formula from manufacturers registered with the Food and Drug Administration or wholesalers, distributors, or retailers that have a current seller's permit number verified though the California Board of Equalization. Use the link below to verify a seller's permit:
https://efile.boe.ca.gov/boewebservices/verification.jsp?action=SALES
All vendors must be able to show documentation of where their infant formula is purchased from.

CONDUCTING A WIC TRANSACTION

There are 8 easy steps to conduct a WIC transaction. Here is a quick review:

1. Request the WIC ID Folder from the WIC participant.
2. Ask for the Food Instruments being used in the transaction.
3. Check the First Day to Use and Last Day to Use printed on all the Food Instruments.
4. Group the WIC foods by Food Instrument. Check the foods to ensure they are authorized and the correct quantities.
5. Enter the exact purchase price on each Food Instrument.
6. Ask the WIC shopper to sign each Food Instrument.
7. Compare the participant's signature on the Food Instrument with the signature on the WIC ID Folder.
8. Give the WIC ID Folder and receipt back to the participant.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

SHELF PRICE SUBMISSION

CDPH/WIC is required by federal regulations to collect vendor shelf prices at least every six months to determine if a vendor is cost competitive.

Vendors will receive notification to submit shelf prices in a Vendor Alert 30 days before the beginning of a submission period. The submission process will occur generally around Spring and Winter. Once the submission period begins, vendors will see a message when logging into the Vendor WIC Information eXchange (VWIX) website that there is an outstanding shelf price submission to complete. Vendors must submit shelf prices electronically using the VWIX website during the submission period.

For additional information, refer to the Shelf Price Submission Frequently Asked Questions, and the Shelf Price Submission Vendor User Guide, both of which can be accessed online at the links below:

Shelf Price Submission FAQs:
https://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/wicworks/Documents/Regulatory%20Resources/ShelfPriceSubmissionFAQs.pdf

Shelf Price Submission User Guide:
https://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/wicworks/Documents/VMB/ShelfPriceSubmissionUserGuide.pdf

VENDOR SANCTIONS

As a WIC authorized vendor, you can avoid program violations by following state and federal rules and regulations, and the terms of the Vendor Agreement. Violating these rules may result in disqualification from the WIC Program or a civil money penalty in lieu of a disqualification. If you are disqualified, you are not allowed to accept WIC Food Instruments.

The disqualification timeframe varies according to the specific violation. For additional information regarding vendor violations and sanctions, please refer to Article 1 in your Vendor Agreement; Title 7 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Section 246.12; Title 22, California Code of Regulations, Sections 40740 and 40741; & Vendor Authorization Criteria (VAC) W.B.R. § 70000 et. seq.

In addition, the WIC Program and CalFresh Program are required to notify each other of vendor disqualifications or adverse actions. For example, if a store is disqualified from WIC, it may also be disqualified from the CalFresh Program; however, if a store is disqualified from the CalFresh Program, the WIC Program **must** disqualify the vendor. The length of the disqualification period must be the same for each program.

A civil money penalty may be imposed instead of a disqualification if CDPH/WIC determines there is a participant access concern in that area.

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COMPLAINT PROCESS

To file a complaint against a vendor, local agency or a WIC Shopper, please ensure you document the situation, and report the who; what; when; where; and how. Submit the information to CDPH/WIC at Email: WICAbuse@cdph.ca.gov, PHONE: (800) 852-5770, or FAX: (916) 440-5575.

PROMOTIONS & INCENTIVES

If your store is determined to be in Peer Group A, you may only provide specific WIC approved incentive items to your customers. Incentive items must be purchased at a wholesale cost of under two dollars ($2). Incentives can only be offered once a day to a participant family and only at the time of transaction. Some examples of allowable incentive items that can be offered are: prepackaged fresh fruit and vegetables, mature beans, peas or lentils, and prepackaged 100% corn tortillas.

If you are not a Peer Group A vendor, you shall not single out WIC participants and offer incentives to only WIC participants using FIs. Examples of unauthorized incentives would include offering cash, gifts, or using a point system for FIs when redeemed by participants in exchange for free items. Incentives offered to WIC participants must be offered to all customers.

For more information regarding incentive item requirements, see the VAC W.B.R. §70800.

WIC PROGRAM CHANGES

EGGS

In 2010, Assembly Bill 1437 was signed by the Governor, requiring all shelled eggs sold in California to comply with the animal confinement restrictions described in the Prevention of Farm Animal Cruelty Act.

Effective January 1, 2015, all eggs sold in California must comply with the new law. These requirements apply to eggs transported to California from another state for sale. Large white eggs that comply with the new law are WIC authorized and not considered specialty eggs. WIC participants can use their WIC FIs to buy a dozen large white chicken eggs of any brand that meet the criteria listed in the WAFL SG.

Be sure to check with your egg supplier to make sure the eggs you are selling in your store comply with the new law. Sell only eggs that comply with the new law to all customers.

MILK

On March, 4, 2014, the USDA finalized changes to the WIC Food Packages (7 CFR Section 246.10). These changes included the elimination of 2% milk from all standard food packages for women and children 2 years of age and older. As a result, FIs will no longer include 2% milk as an option for women and children over age 2. The FIs will include low-fat (1%) milk and nonfat (fat free, skim) milk only. Some WIC participants may be prescribed 2% milk, and vendors are only allowed to sell 2% milk to WIC participants if printed on the food instrument.

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FRESH POTATOES

As of April 15, 2015, all Cash Value Voucher (CVV) FIs were changed to include the text “ALL TYPES FRESH POTATOES ALLOWED.” WIC participants may use their CVV FIs to purchase all types of fresh potatoes. Types of fresh potatoes include, but are not limited to:
White Potatoes, Red Potatoes, Purple Potatoes, Gold Potatoes, Russet Potatoes, Sweet Potatoes and Yams.

If your store uses shelf talkers, you may place them under the bins where fresh potatoes are displayed for sale.

WHOLE GRAINS

On March 4, 2014, the USDA released the Final Rule for Food Packages, which included amended requirements for whole wheat bread and tortillas. In the Whole Grain category, breads and tortillas that meet the following criteria are authorized supplemental foods:

Food Type	New Requirement	What to Stock
Whole wheat bread loaves, buns, and rolls	Can only have flour types: Whole wheat flour and/or Bromated whole wheat flour	All brands on the list OR Any brand that conforms to federal requirements
Corn tortillas	Can only be made from ground masa flour using traditional processing methods. Examples of allowable corn ingredients are whole corn, corn (masa), whole ground corn, corn masa flour, masa harina, and/or white corn flour	All brands on the list OR Any brand that conforms to federal requirements
Whole wheat tortillas	Can only have flour type: Whole wheat flour	Only the products on the list are WIC-authorized

Our current WAFL SG does not reflect the new federal requirements. A flyer was developed and distributed covering these changes. A new WAFL SG is scheduled to be released early 2016 and will address the final rule changes including the new requirements for the Whole Grains Category. You can access the approved whole grains flyer at the following link:

http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/wicworks/WIC%20Foods/WIF-WholeGrains-Flyer-8.5x11-Final.pdf

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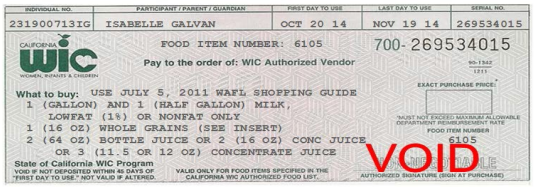
PREVENTING REJECTED FOOD INSTRUMENTS

CDPH/WIC wants to assist vendors in successfully transacting and submitting Food Instruments for payment. The information is important for employees who transact Food Instruments, submit serial numbers, or process Food Instruments that are returned unpaid. Vendors may only submit Food Instrument serial numbers using the following methods:

Internet (VWIX) – Submission of serial numbers electronically, using the Vendor WIC Information eXchange (VWIX) system can be found at this link: https://vwix.ca.gov. With VWIX, vendors can individually submit Food Instrument serial numbers by typing in the ten-digit serial number found on the bottom of each Food Instrument.

Electronic File Submission – Using the File Transfer Protocol software, Food Instrument serial numbers can be directly uploaded from your local system to the WIC Program by using the VWIX website.

- Online file upload VWIX. With the online file upload, vendors can submit a serial number text file from a personal computer using VWIX.
- Direct file upload (MICR Machine). Electronic file upload is best suited if vendors have a high volume of Food Instruments and have equipment that can read the Food Instrument Magnetic Ink Character Recognition (MICR) line.



In addition, please ensure to:

- Confirm the serial number submission was successful in VWIX (verify in the reports tab). The reports tab shows the serial numbers found based on the preference selected, status, vendor name and submission date and time;
- Check for mismatched serial numbers in VWIX;
- Submit serial numbers in VWIX for processing Sunday – Thursday **BEFORE 9 p.m.** to be processed that day. Pacific Standard Time (PST). Food Instruments submitted in VWIX after 9 p.m. PST Thursday - Saturday will be processed by the State Treasurer's Office the following Monday morning.
- Wait at least 24 hours after VWIX submission to deposit Food Instruments into the bank;
- Only deposit vendor-endorsed Food Instruments into the bank.

Additional information can be found at the following link:
http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/wicworks/Pages/RejectedFoodInstruments.aspx

If you have any questions, please call toll free **(855) WIC-STOR** or **(855) 942-7867** or e-mail: WICVENDORINFO@cdph.ca.gov. For technical VWIX issues or technical issues with submitting Food Instruments, please call WIC Technical Support toll free **(800) 224-7472**.