



California
Department of
Health Services
DIANA M. BONTÁ, R.N., Dr. P.H.
Director

State of California—Health and Human Services Agency
Department of Health Services



ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER
Governor

November 25, 2003

GROCER ALERT 2003-11

TO: All WIC Grocers

SUBJECT: THE USE OF LOGOS AND THE WOMEN, INFANTS, AND CHILDREN (WIC) SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION PROGRAM ACRONYM

Purpose This alert restates existing policy on the use of the acronym and logos used by the WIC program. This policy was initially provided to grocers in a letter dated August 23, 1996, and has been continually provided to all new grocers upon their authorization.

Background The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), in its June 2, 1992, Food and Nutrition Services Instruction, number 800-2, states, "A WIC food vendor is not permitted, without specific State agency authorization, to use either the acronym 'WIC' or the WIC logo, including close facsimiles thereof, in total or in part, either in the official name in which the vendor is registered or in the name under which it does business, if different. The purpose of this restriction is to avoid giving the impression to participants that the business is owned and operated by the WIC State agency and/or that the business is officially endorsed and preferred by the State. In the event of dispute, determination as to whether a vendor's acronym or logo is impermissibly similar to the WIC acronym or logo shall be made by the WIC State agency, which shall respond in writing to the WIC food vendor as to its finding in the matter."

Summary

WIC ACRONYM

The acronym "WIC" was first used by USDA in January 1974. The acronym is registered with the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office under register number 1,630,468. The use of the "WIC" acronym is reserved for the official and exclusive use of the WIC program pursuant to Federal regulations. USDA has granted State agencies the discretion to determine the appropriate use of the acronym, with the restriction that it can be used only in the following manner:

- ❖ To identify a grocer as authorized by the WIC program. The only acceptable example is the current poster provided by the WIC program that states, "We Accept WIC Food Instruments."
- ❖ To identify authorized supplemental food through the use of "shelf-talkers." Shelf talkers are small signs prepared by food manufacturers, approved by the California WIC program, which can be used to identify the food items that are WIC authorized. Grocers may place shelf talkers on the shelf directly under an authorized food item to assist participants in selecting their supplemental food.
- ❖ To be displayed on materials prepared and distributed by the WIC program. No alterations may be made to the materials prepared by the WIC program.

LOGOS

The restrictions stated above also apply to the use of the USDA logo, which is registered under the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office number 1,641,644 and the California WIC program's logo. The logos are identified at the end of this Grocer Alert.

Action

Grocers may not use the USDA or California WIC logos in any manner through the use of materials not prepared or distributed by the WIC program. Grocers may not use facsimiles of the logos for any purpose.

Grocers may not use the acronym in any manner through the use of materials not prepared or distributed by the WIC program.

The above restrictions apply to signs, paintings on store buildings, posters, business cards, pens, pencils, banners, etc.

Any violation of this policy may result in the grocer's disqualification as an authorized grocer and may be in addition to any action or prosecution pursued by USDA.

Additional Posters

If you need additional 8 ½ x 11 WIC posters, please contact your grocer consultant. The WIC Program will be looking into creating and reproducing additional materials, such as large posters or banners, for grocers to post at their stores. There is no estimated time frame for distribution of these materials, but you will be notified as soon as they become available.

Questions

If you have any questions, please contact your WIC Grocer Consultant at (916) 928-8705.

David Markell, Chief
Food Management and Integrity Section
WIC Supplemental Nutrition Program

