

California WIC Program Vendor News October 2013



Vendor Authorization Criteria Webinars

Have you heard the news? There are major changes coming to the CA WIC Program. The Vendor Training Section will host webinars to authorized vendors regarding the Vendor Authorization Criteria. The WIC Regulatory Bulletin 2013-01 was released on September 17th, 2013 and changes will be implemented on October 17th, 2013.

The webinars will review the major changes and assist vendors with the updates. These changes will benefit both the WIC vendors and the participants. The Vendor Authorization Criteria updates are also posted on the WIC website.

Below are the details to the Vendor Authorization Criteria webinars:

- A 30 minute online presentation
- Every Tuesday and Thursday at 2:00PM
- Now through October 17th, 2013

To register, visit <https://wicworks.webex.com>. For more information regarding the VAC webinars email: WICvendored@cdph.ca.gov.

Minimum Technology Requirements

With computers at the front of technology, the CA WIC Program is transitioning from paper-based to electronic communications. Therefore, new authorization criteria require that all vendors have access to a computer or other electronic device that has the ability to:

- Access the internet
- Receive and send emails
- Use web-based applications, and
- Apply an electronic signature to official documents

Additionally, vendors must access the Vendor WIC Information eXchange (VWIX) system to submit their Shelf Price Survey information. It is imperative that vendors ensure they can log into VWIX. If you are unable to log into your VWIX account, please contact WIC Technical Support at 1-800-224-7472. In the future, the CA WIC Program will provide documents online, so it is important that vendors have internet access.

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Competitive Price Criteria

In order to make sure vendor foods are competitively priced, the CA WIC Program has established competitive price criteria to evaluate the prices vendors are charging the program. We are mandated by the USDA to collect vendor shelf pricing every six (6) months.

Vendors are required to enter the price information using the Vendor WIC Information eXchange (VWIX) system. We will ask for information regarding “the Market Basket” items. The Market Basket will consist of 10 types of foods: Breakfast Cereal, Cheese, Corn Tortillas, Dry Beans, Dozen Large Eggs, Shelf-Stable Bottled Juice, Milk, Milk-based infant formula, Peanut Butter, and Whole Wheat Bread.

Vendors will enter the HIGH and LOW price for all items within the Market Basket. This information must be entered into VWIX through the new VWIX tab titled Shelf Price Survey. The CA WIC Program will evaluate pricing to determine the Average Overall Market Basket of all vendors in a peer group based on the semi-annual submissions.

The Market Basket example:

A vendor has 10 units of 1 pound cheese for sale: Smoked Cheddar, 1 pound round for \$6.99 and Generic brand Colby, 1 pound block for \$3.99. The HIGH price is \$6.99, the LOW price \$3.99.

Vendors with a Market Basket price that exceeds one hundred and twenty percent (120%) of the average overall Market Basket price in their peer groups shall be determined as “noncompetitive” because they do not meet the competitive price criteria. Vendors will have 30 days to correct their prices. However, if a vendor is noncompetitive twice within a 24-month period, they will be disqualified.

A vendor who fails to submit their semi-annual shelf price information will be issued a written notice of their failure to comply with vendor selection criteria. If after thirty (30) days from the date of the written notice the vendor has failed to submit their semi-annual price information, the CA WIC Program will terminate the vendor from participation in the program.

Minimum Stocking Requirements

We've heard you loud and clear! The CA WIC Program has made major changes to the Minimum Stocking Requirements that will benefit all vendors. The following items no longer have a minimum stocking requirement:

- Tofu
- Soy beverage
- Lactose free milk
- Prosobee Infant Formula



All items still remain as authorized foods; however, vendors are not required to stock these items. We believe these changes will be beneficial to everyone.

Incentive Item Requirements



Everyone appreciates a good deal and it is important to know the incentive items vendors can offer to WIC shoppers. Incentive item regulations are specified for above-50-percent vendors. Above-50-percent vendors are vendors who derive over 50 percent of their sales from WIC transactions.

WIC Regulatory Bulletin 2013-01, published on September 17, 2013, provides a list of allowed and prohibited incentive items for above-50-percent vendors that can be provided to WIC participants. For more information regarding regulatory alerts and incentive items visit the CA WIC website at www.WicWorks.ca.gov.

The new authorization criteria also restrict non above-50-percent vendors from providing incentive items solely to WIC participants. Incentive items provided by non above-50-percent vendors must be offered to all customers.

Cash Register and Z-Tape

The CA WIC Program is requiring better documentation from our vendors. The new regulations mandate vendors to keep inventory records for auditing purposes. During compliance investigations the WIC Program documents the types, quantities, and prices of food purchased.

Vendors must:

- Use a cash register for all sales transactions and print a daily detail transaction summary (Z-tape)
- Provide receipts to all WIC customers for all transactions

The summary of all sales transactions from the cash register system must have the vendor's name and address, transaction date, quantity purchased, sale price of the item purchased, the amount of tax charged, and the indication of tax status. Cash register receipt detail and daily summaries are part of the standard business records vendors are required to maintain for a minimum of three (3) years and are subject to both verification and program audit. Receipt detail and daily summaries can be either paper or electronic.

Store Hour Requirements

It is very important that WIC participants have access to the foods needed. For this reason, the CA WIC Program is requiring authorized vendors to operate at least six (6) days per week, for at least eight (8) hours each day, and at least four (4) of those hours must be during core business hours (9:00am - 5:00pm).

The new hours will allow for better access and service to the community. In addition, these operating hours are needed in order to enable the CA WIC Program to conduct routine monitoring visits and compliance investigations each fiscal year.



Vendors must be SNAP/CalFresh Authorized

In order to better serve the WIC community all authorized vendors will be required to be Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) authorized. SNAP provides nutrition assistance to millions of eligible, low-income individuals and families in the United States and is known as CalFresh in California. As of February 28, 2014, vendors must be authorized for participation in the SNAP/CalFresh Program at the time of the application and at all times during the term of the vendor agreement. In addition, vendors disqualified from SNAP/CalFresh will not be WIC authorized, unless denying authorization would result in inadequate participant access.

For more information on how to become a SNAP authorized retailer, access the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) website at: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/retailers/application-process.htm>

Circumvention of WIC Sanctions



The CA WIC Program is taking additional steps to investigate and perform background checks on those vendors which try to circumvent WIC sanctions. The program may deny authorization to any vendor or vendor applicant if the store has been sold by its previous owners in an attempt to circumvent a WIC sanction. The program will also consider such factors as a store being sold to a relative by blood or by marriage, or whether a store is being sold to an individual or organization for less than its fair market value.

Additionally, previous owners with a history of an outstanding claim or a current WIC sanction who retain a role in the operation of the store, such as acting as a manager, director, officer or shareholder may also be denied authorization.

Contact your
Vendor Consultant
at
1-855-WIC-STOR

Still have
questions?



WIC Acronym and Logo

Vendors will have more online access to print and utilize the CA WIC logo. The WIC acronym and the WIC logo remain registered service marks of the USDA. The CA WIC Program has established new requirements for the CA WIC logo, similar to those previously outlined in the Graphics Standards Manual (GSM). Changes to the current allowed uses of the WIC acronym and WIC logo include, but are not limited to, vendors printing signs and shelf talkers. The GSM will no longer be available as it is replaced by the WIC Regulatory Bulletin 2013-01.

Below are examples of the Shelf Talkers that may be printed through VWIX. It is important to note that when printing materials, vendors must comply with the formatting and printing requirements.

A. Logo for Signs



A. Right Shelf Talker



B. Left Shelf Talker



C. Standard Shelf Talker



Thank you for being a CA WIC Vendor!



www.WicWorks.ca.gov

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.



USDA Nondiscrimination Statement

The USDA 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 derived from any public assistance program, or protected genetic information in employment or in any program or activity conducted or funded by the USDA. (Not all prohibited bases will apply to all programs and/or employment activities.)