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**** IMPORTANT ****

This special edition of the Working with WIC Retailer eBulletin is the annual training issue. This resource serves as the Annual WIC Training curriculum and provides WIC program changes, highlights compliance and integrity issues, and provides useful tips on processing eWIC transactions.

Required Actions

USDA requires that, for **each** WIC-authorized store, a manager or representative must certify that they have completed annual training. For 2018 in Virginia, training is accomplished by reading this bulletin and certifying that it has been read. A manager at each WIC-authorized store is responsible for the following actions:

1. Read this eBulletin **in its entirety** (you are responsible for everything in it).
2. Acknowledge that you have completed your annual training:
 - For "individual" stores (stores without a Certified Trainer): Complete the survey at this link:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/YN536RB>;

- For "corporate" stores (stores with a Certified Trainer): Follow the instructions sent to you by your Certified Trainer;
- For Certified Trainers: You should have received instructions for certifying to the State WIC Office, but you will need to develop the process for having the stores certify to you that the appropriate person has read this bulletin. If you have not received instructions from the State WIC Office when you receive this eBulletin, please contact Alex Acharya (alex.acharya@vdh.virginia.gov).

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Contact your assigned Vendor Liaison if you have questions about the topics covered.

You may also want to print this eBulletin. Post a copy in a central location, and include a copy in your Retailer Manual binder for future reference. This training bulletin may be used as a resource to conduct additional cashier and staff training.

All training is to be completed and all acknowledgements need to be received by the State WIC Office by Friday, August 24, 2018.

[Message from Paula](#)

As summer approaches, I think of the words from Charles Bowden which state "Summertime is always the best of what might be." This time of year allows us to explore the possibilities. Our division has been experiencing a transition for over a year, which has provided opportunities to expand our brand and our working relationships with vendors, local health departments and most importantly, our WIC participants.

As you may have heard, Dr. Mandeep Virk-Baker has left VDH to explore other opportunities. I have been named as Acting Division Director for the Division of Community Nutrition and Acting State WIC Director until a replacement is hired. I do not anticipate any major changes to the WIC Program due to this change in leadership. Alex Acharya will continue as the Vendor Compliance Manager, and his team of Vendor Liaisons, Compliance Liaison, UPC Administrator, and others will continue to support the WIC Retailers.

In closing, please take these words from Wallace Stevens with you: "The summer night is like a perfection of thought." Please know that any thoughts perfect or imperfect; successes or growing edges you may have, I am available to discuss. Have a wonderful summer.

Paula N. Garrett, MS, RD
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Division of Community Nutrition
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804-864-7847

[Virginia WIC Approved Food List 2018](#)

The new [Virginia WIC Approved Food List](#) 2018 has been mailed to each WIC Authorized store. If you have not received your copies of the new Food List, or if you need additional copies, please let us know how many you need either by using the Retailer Supply Request Webform, or by sending an email to WIC_Retailer@vdh.virginia.gov.

The United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children, commonly known as the WIC program, serves to safeguard the health of low-income pregnant, breastfeeding, and postpartum women, infants, and children up to age 5 who are found to be at nutritional risk. As the third largest food and nutrition assistance program, WIC served about 7.3 million participants per month in fiscal year 2017, including almost half of all infants born in the United States. Federal program costs for WIC totaled \$5.6 billion in fiscal year 2017.

Established as a pilot program in 1972 and made permanent in 1974, USDA provides federal grants to states for WIC foods, nutrition education, breastfeeding promotion and support, and administrative costs. The WIC program is administered nationally by USDA's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), and is administered at the local level by 90 WIC State agencies covering all 50 States, the District of Columbia, 34 Indian Tribal Organizations, American Samoa, Guam, Commonwealth Islands of the Northern Marianas, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Formerly known as the Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants, and Children, WIC's name was changed under the Healthy Meals for Healthy Americans Act of 1994, in order to emphasize its role as a nutrition program.

References: <https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/food-nutrition-assistance/wic-program/>

[Approved Supplemental Foods](#)

The WIC approved food and formula changes made in the [Virginia WIC Approved Food List](#) 2018 are summarized in the table below. The changes meet federal regulatory requirements for WIC eligible foods and were implemented on April 1, 2018. Retailers and cashiers should carefully review the new food list and formula flyer to be familiar with the new layout and information. Please contact your assigned Vendor Liaison if you have specific questions regarding any of these changes.

Changes for food subcategory:

- Beans, Peas, and Lentils – all varieties are now approved
- Breakfast Cereals – national brands added, hot cereals shown by brand vs. variety
- Cheese – national brands added
- Peanut Butter – national brands added
- Whole Wheat Bread and Tortillas -- contains images for approved brands
- Whole Wheat Pasta (new) - contains images for approved brands
- Yogurt (new) –approved brands of 32-ounce plain or vanilla flavor
- Brown Rice – no change from 2016 Food List
- Canned Fish – no change from 2016 Food List
- Eggs – no change from 2016 Food List
- Fruits & Vegetables – no change from 2016 Food List
- Infant Formula – no change from 2016 Food List
- Milk – no change from 2016 Food List
- Soy Milk – no change from 2016 Food List

[Minimum Stocking Requirements](#)

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must be in the store during normal business hours. Expired foods do not count toward the requirement. **Failing to meet the MSR three times in a 12-month period will result in disqualification from the WIC Program.** There were no changes made to the MSR due to the new Food List.

Use the Approved Product List (APL) and the Approved Food List to determine approved brands, varieties, and UPCs that may be used to meet the MSR. Below is a summary of the current MSR.

Item	Type	Size	Variety	Quantity
Milk	1% OR Fat Free	Gallons, ½ gallons, quarts	2 sizes	5 gallons
Cheese	Sliced American	16 oz	-	1 pkg
	Block Cheddar			1 pkg
Eggs	Large, White A or AA	Dozen	-	2 pkg
Beans	Dry	16 oz	-	2 pkg
	Canned	15-16 oz	-	8 cans
Peanut Butter	Any approved	16-18 oz	-	2 containers
Cereal	Non-whole grain	12-36 oz	-	24 oz total
	Whole grain	12-36 oz cold 11.8-12 oz hot	2 types	48 oz total
Frozen Juice	Single flavored: apple orange, grapefruit, grape	12 oz	2 flavors	2 containers total
Refrigerated/shelf stable juice	Single flavored: apple, orange, grapefruit, grape	64 oz	2 flavors	2 containers total
Whole Grains	Whole wheat bread	16 oz	-	1 pkg
	Brown rice			1 pkg
Infant cereal	Rice	8 oz	-	3 pkg
Infant vegetables	Single ingredient or combination	4 oz	2 flavors	128 ounces total
Infant fruits	Single ingredient or combination	4 oz	2 flavors	128 ounces total
Infant Formula	Similac Advance Powder	12.4 oz	-	9 containers
Fruits and Vegetables (cash value benefit)	Fruit subcategories: canned, fresh, frozen	-	4 types of fruit AND 2 subcategories	\$20.00 total each
	Vegetable subcategories: canned, fresh, frozen		4 types of vegetables AND 2 subcategories	

[Infant Formula Sources and Record Keeping Requirements](#)

WIC retailers are required to purchase infant formula sold to WIC participants from a State approved Supplier/Distributor. The state maintains a [WIC Authorized Infant Formula Supplier List](#).

Please refer to the following documents, or contact your assigned Vendor Liaison for further information:

- Virginia WIC Program's Retailer Manual, Section D2
- Retailer Agreement, Section G, Retailer Item 3
- Federal Regulation 246.12(g)(11)

Don't forget: The Retailer Agreement states that all retailers are required to maintain inventory records used for federal tax reporting purposes for a minimum of one (1) calendar year; and maintain purchasing records (invoices) for a minimum of

[Procedures for Transacting and Redeeming WIC Benefits](#)

eWIC Transactions For Stores Using Conduent (Xerox) Stand Beside Devices:

1. Separate WIC-approved items and process them first
2. For all non-produce items, scan each item's Universal Product Code (UPC) individually.
3. For produce (Cash Value Benefit (CVB) items)
 - a. Scan/weigh each item into the store's Point-of-Sale register and obtain total dollar amount
 - b. Enter the total dollar amount into the eWIC device using code 44691/4469 or the item's generic Product Look-Up (PLU) code. This generic PLU applies to CVB purchases only.
4. Depending on internal procedures, you may need to process eWIC purchases twice:
 - Once using the Conduent (Xerox) stand beside device to determine if the item is eligible against the specific cardholder's benefits (this is the step that alters their benefit balance) and to report the sales to the State WIC Office for reimbursement, and;
 - Once using your Point-of-Sales register to capture the actual sale amount and inventory quantity.

Reminder: Check the Conduent (Xerox) eWIC Retailer Manual (see pages 6-7) for specific steps in processing eWIC transactions using WIC SMART Keys (see pages 58-62) with stand beside devices. Refer to pages 22-29 for error codes and descriptions.

eWIC Transactions For Stores Using Integrated Point-of-Sale (POS) Systems

Processing eWIC benefits with integrated POS systems varies, so operations and instructions depends on the way your POS system has been programmed. Contact your corporate office or Value Added Reseller (VAR) for information on processing eWIC benefits with your integrated system.

For all transactions (Stand-beside and Integrated POS Systems)

Be particularly careful when voiding a transaction, to prevent an eWIC customer's benefits being lost. Follow instructions for voids carefully, and check before and after balances to ensure that no benefits have been lost.

Reimbursement

Reimbursement for items purchased via WIC conducted after Noon daily for the previous 24-hours. A single electronic settlement payment is made to the eWIC Retailer's designated bank, and a detailed account of each eWIC transaction is provided via the Conduent (Xerox) Vendor Portal or POS System vendor.



Click on graphic to open for printing

[The Vendor Sanction System](#)

The Virginia WIC Program is mandated by the USDA to conduct undercover compliance investigations at authorized retailers. The type of violations tested is identified in the current [Sanctions, Compliance and Program Violation](#) schedule which was previously provided to you with the [annual compliance reminder letter](#) that was mailed earlier this year.

The sanction schedule addresses both state and federal violations. The sanction schedule also shows different levels of severity for the offense, ranging from a warning letter to permanent disqualification. Some of the minor offenses include not providing a receipt to cardholders unless expressly declined or charging sales tax on eWIC purchases. The most severe charges include trafficking and illegally buying and selling WIC benefits for firearms, ammunition, explosives, or controlled substances. During an investigation, the WIC Program will always provide a written notice of the violation, unless the notice will compromise the investigation. Please review the sanction schedule to familiarize yourself with activities that are deemed a violation. It is also important that you share this information with your store personnel and cashiers to ensure everyone understands these program requirements.

The sanction schedule is available online and can also be provided upon request. If you have any questions about WIC violations, please contact Alex Acharya by email or at 804-864-7811.

Don't forget: The WIC and SNAP (Food Stamps) Programs share data relating to imposed sanction. Losing your SNAP authorization may affect your WIC authorization, and vice versa.

[What To Do When Things Go Wrong - Incident Reporting](#)

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[Incident/Complaint form WIC #387](#) and [instructions](#).

Keeping us informed of these incidents as they happen allows us to address them in a timely manner and perhaps reduce repeat occurrences. Incidents to report include when an eWIC Customer:

- Attempts to purchase ineligible items with eWIC food benefits;
- Attempts to return WIC food items for ineligible exchange, store credit, or cash;
- Attempts to purchase excess Cash Value Benefits, not understanding that additional payment is required;
- Does not understand how to use eWIC benefit card (e.g., PIN, eligible or available food items, spend dates, etc.);
- Was abusive and/or rude to store personnel while redeeming eWIC benefits.

When completing the form, please provide as much detail as possible, to include:

- The exact date and time of the incident;
- A receipt or which checkout line was used (if applicable);
- Details about an ineligible item attempted to be purchased (if applicable), to include product descriptions, brand, size and UPC
- A description of the complaint, with names of store personnel who witnessed the event, and a description of the eWIC customer (assuming that the customer's name isn't known).

The Vendor Liaison assigned to the store location will process the complaint and may follow-up with your staff for additional details to help with providing the resolution and/or corrective action needed. The WIC Program strives to ensure that complaints are resolved in a manner that improves the services provided to all participants and support our retailers.

We recommend for incidents of a more serious or urgent nature, please call your assigned WIC Vendor Liaison or the State WIC Office at (804) 864-7800.

Problems with specific Universal Product Codes (UPC) should be submitted using the [UPC Update form](#) and [instructions](#), or by contacting the Virginia UPC Administrator (Brian Tun, 804-864-7849 or brian.tun@vdh.virginia.gov).

We ask that all incidents be reported in a timely manner. Remember that there is a separate form and process that allows the WIC cardholders to submit Incidents and Complaints against stores. There are always at least two sides to every incident, so documenting the dates, times, individuals involved and other salient facts immediately after the incident occur will help protect your store should the incident result in a customer complaint against your store.

[Conflict of Interest Reminder](#)

One definition of "Conflict of Interest" is when an individual or organization is involved in multiple interests, one of which could possibly corrupt the motivation for an act in the other. An example of a potential conflict of interest is when a WIC authorized store employee (or a family member living in the same household) is also employed by a local or state WIC agency. It is important that WIC staff, in carrying out their duties, do not show favoritism toward retailers – including those where they have secondary employment.

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management must remind all employees involved with WIC about the WIC Program's "Conflict of Interest" policy. Additional information about these Conflict of Interest requirements may be found in [Section C3](#) of the Retail Store Manual.

The Virginia WIC Program has developed an easy to use [handout](#) that can help stores meet this annual reminder requirement. However, this is only one of the options available for retail stores to use in meeting this annual requirement. Each organization must decide which option works best for them (handout, workshop, or meeting).

The Virginia WIC Office encourages authorized stores to contact their assigned Vendor Liaison to receive additional guidance on potential conflict of interest situations. By working together, we can ensure that the Virginia WIC Program maintains the highest level of integrity while serving eligible participants.

[Vendor Claims](#)

A Vendor Claims assessment is a requirement for a retailer to repay the Virginia WIC Program for an erroneous or unauthorized reimbursement. Reimbursements for any foods, formulas or medical foods ineligible for purchase using the eWIC benefit card may result in a Vendor Claims assessment. An example of when a Vendor Claim may be assessed is when a generic Product Look-Up (PLU 4469 or 44691) code is improperly used when processing an eWIC transaction. These types of violations discovered during a compliance investigation can lead to a Vendor Claim being assessed, as well as the store's WIC Program authorization being at risk for disqualification.

Vendor Claim and a Compliance Investigation – A store must reimburse the WIC Program for the amount paid on ineligible products purchased during a compliance investigation. If repayment is required, then the WIC Program will send a written request to affected stores identifying the amount owed and due date of the Vendor Claim.

Vendor Claim Dispute – Stores are required to send in their Vendor Claim payment within 20 calendar days after receiving notice of the payment obligation. To dispute a Vendor Claim, the store must send a written request to the Virginia WIC Program explaining the reasons for disputing the claim within 15 calendar days after receiving notice of the payment obligation.

[Incentives](#)

Federal WIC regulations forbid offering incentives solely to WIC participants in an effort to encourage them to redeem food benefits at your store. Some examples of incentives include giving away free food or non-food items such as raffle tickets or lottery tickets. Section 246.12(h)(3)(iii) of the Federal WIC regulations requires retailers to offer WIC participants the same courtesies that are offered to non-WIC customers. The reverse is also true -- WIC authorized stores may not deny WIC participants incentive items that are offered to non-WIC customers. Remember to always treat WIC and non-WIC customers the same.

[Changes to the WIC VA Program Since July 2017](#)

[Approved Food List](#) 2018 became effective on April 1, 2018, which now:

- Adds two new food categories: yogurt (32-oz, plain or vanilla flavor) and whole-wheat pasta;
- Allows national brands in these food categories: peanut butter, yogurt, breakfast cereal, whole grain (bread, tortilla and pasta), cheese and juice;
- Allows any single variety of dried/canned beans, peas and lentils;
- Requires a WIC shelf label for yogurt if it is stocked;
- Removes the WIC shelf label requirement for whole wheat bread and canned and dry beans;
- Requires that all new brands added to food categories that currently require shelf labels need to display a WIC shelf label (e.g. cereal, cheese, peanut butter, and juice)

Note that while the minimum stocking requirement (MSR) does not change per se for the 2018 Food List, any new WIC item added by the new Food List can now be used to meet MSR (e.g. National Brands). Also the other food categories that required a shelf label are unchanged: breakfast cereal, cheese (sliced and blocked), juice (frozen and liquid), milk (1% and skim/fat Free) and peanut butter.

Due to the changes associated with the new 2018 Food List, several sections of the Retail Store Manual were updated effective April 1, 2018:

- Section D1 (Approved Foods and eWIC Food Benefits);
- Section D2 (Minimum Stocking Requirements);
- Section D4 (Shelf Label Requirements).

These updated sections are available from the Retailer Resources [website](#).

Other Program changes include:

- Dr. Mandeep Virk-Baker was named as the new Director of the Division of Community Nutrition, replacing Dr. Mike Welch in August 2017; however, Dr. Virk-Baker left VDH effective May 30, 2018. Ms. Paula Garrett is the acting Director pending the hiring of a new Director;
- Alex Acharya was named the new Vendor Compliance Manager, replacing Sheila Brewer
- Bob Altermatt was selected as the new Compliance Liaison, replacing John Stajduhar;
- All authorized WIC Retailers who desired to continue in the WIC Program were recertified for the new contract period that began on 10/1/2017 and runs through 9/30/2020;
- A new Infant Formula Flyer was printed, reflecting the new UPC for Enfamil Nutramigen 32 Fl. Oz. ready-to-feed (UPC 300875115640), and the new name, size and UPC for Similac Alimentum powder (12.1 oz., UPC 070074647128)

Other Administrative Reminders

- Please contact your assigned Vendor Liaison, or the WIC Vendor Compliance Team, if your store ever needs technical assistance with WIC. If we don't have the answer, we will be able to direct you to someone who does;

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contract cycle;

- As indicated in Retailer Agreement and in the Retail Store Manual, WIC Authorized Stores are required to notify their Vendor Liaison in writing (email is acceptable) at least fifteen (15) calendar days before a store closes, changes ownership, or of any other circumstances that impacts service delivery, i.e., change in location, relocations, renovations, permanent and/or temporary closures, etc.

[Important Links](#)

- [WIC Homepage](#)
- [WIC Retailer Homepage](#)
- [WIC Retailer Resources](#)
- [2018 Approved Food List](#)
- [2018 Approved Product List At A Glance](#)
- [Current Approved Product List](#)
- [Contact Us \(list of assigned Vendor Liaisons\)](#)
- [Commonwealth of Virginia WIC Regulations](#)
- Retailer Incident/Complaint form WIC #387
 - [Instructions](#)
 - [Form](#)
- Retailer Supply Request Form
 - [Web Form](#)
 - [Paper Form](#)
- UPC Update Form
 - [Instructions](#)
 - [Form](#)

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American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD-3027) found online at: http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

(1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
(2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or
(3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

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