

## Retailer Bulletin

**VDH** VIRGINIA  
DEPARTMENT  
OF HEALTH

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### Paula's Perspective

As we transition from a very warm summer into a crisp autumn, it is the season to discuss new opportunities. The Virginia WIC Program embarked on a WIC Process Improvement Plan in an effort to increase the number of people participating in the program. As a result, we have grown the program by nearly 3,000 individuals. This growth has been attributed to various methods of best practices, i.e. nutrition education classes, follow-up telephone calls and referrals from other agencies. One of our best practices has developed from a partnership with the Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) and Benefits Data Trust (BDT). The intent of this workgroup is to increase participation in the WIC Program by increasing access. The Virginia Department of Health (VDH) sends their participant database to VDSS (SNAP benefits) for a cross-referenced match. All unmatched files are sent to BDT for special coding and text messaging. Each family receives a text message that then allows them to decide if they would like to enroll in the WIC program. Thus far, we have received 2,087 referrals with a 31.2% rate of interested persons being scheduled for an appointment and/or are a WIC participant. This project will continue until December 20, 2019. Increasing participation helps to increase sales with authorized vendors.

We will continue to work on growing the VA WIC Program to its full potential. Thank you for your valued partnership!

**Paula Garrett, MS, RD**  
Division Director  
Division of Community Nutrition  
[Paula.Garret@vdh.virginia.gov](mailto:Paula.Garret@vdh.virginia.gov)





### Meagan's Message

Happy Fall from the Virginia WIC Program! As the leaves and temperatures change, we are also looking to transition from the planning phase of many projects to the execution and implementation phases. On the horizon, we have the 2020 Virginia WIC Food List expected to go to print early in 2020 with distribution to retailers and local agencies planned for early spring. Content and color scheme is expected to be consistent with the previous food list; however, we are evaluating the format and size to make it as user friendly as possible. As always, any feedback and/or suggestions are encouraged and welcome.

Speaking of feedback, we have completed the *2019 Participant Satisfaction Survey*. This survey was given to WIC participants throughout the state with the questions focused in the areas of nutrition education and the retailer experience. Data collection is complete and has been submitted to the State WIC Office (SWO). The SWO will now begin the data analysis and evaluation portion of the process. Once the analysis is complete, we will provide all of the major findings. Data from this survey is used to make continued improvements and we value the feedback.

We hope you have a wonderful holiday season! Thank you for all your contributions to the Virginia WIC Program.

#### **Megan Nason, MS, RD**

Virginia WIC Program Manager

Division of Community Nutrition

[Megan.Nason@vdh.virginia.gov](mailto:Megan.Nason@vdh.virginia.gov)

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### Annual Training Updates

**Job well DONE!** Thanks to all WIC authorized stores for completing the 2019 annual training on time. Congratulations – it was a team effort with you, our retailer partners and the State WIC office. We have recorded the results and submitted to the USDA as being fully compliant with training for 2019. Thank you for your continued support of the WIC program.

#### **Alex Acharya**

WIC Vendor Manager

[Alex.Acharya@vdh.virginia.gov](mailto:Alex.Acharya@vdh.virginia.gov)

### Who to Call When Your Point of Sale (POS) System Malfunctions



For questions and issues regarding your state issued single function stand-beside POS equipment, please contact WIC Retailer Help Desk at 1-877-436-6057. For questions and issues regarding your integrated POS system, please contact your IT department, POS system provider, or third party payment processor (TPP).

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### Certification Requirement for New Integrated Point of Sale (POS) System

When a WIC retailer is switching from a state issued single function stand-beside POS to a multi-function integrated POS equipment, a level III certification may be necessary to ensure that the new POS system meets Federal WIC operating rules and is properly configured in accordance with the FNS Technical Implementation Guide (TIG).

If the current integrated POS system undergoes a significant modification, a re-certification may also be required depending on the extent of the changes and the perceived risk. Based on the information a retailer provides, the Virginia WIC Program will determine what level of testing is necessary for certification/recertification. Please contact Brian Tun at [Brian.Tun@vdh.virginia.gov](mailto:Brian.Tun@vdh.virginia.gov) for more information about the POS testing.

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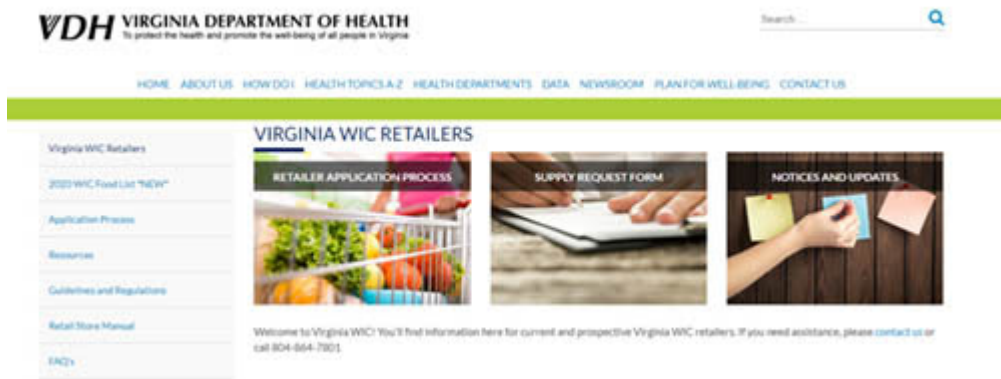
### Daily WIC Approved Product List (APL) is Available for Download

An Excel worksheet of the daily VA APL file is available to view or download from this link: [“Current Approved Product List”](#) You can find the date/time of the current APL file printed on the worksheet’s name tab.

**REMINDER** – The APL file should be downloaded and integrated with your Point of System daily. Please contact Brian Tun at [Brian.Tun@vdh.virginia.gov](mailto:Brian.Tun@vdh.virginia.gov) with questions about the WIC Approved Product List.

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### Updates to the Retailer Website



Recently we renovated part of the retailer website! Specifically, we added a large section on the application process. This website has been designed to be more user friendly for new retailers. As a reminder, applications are accepted via web form, and that form may be found on the new process page as well. Please review and send us feedback: [VIRGINIA WIC Retailers](#).

## [Monitoring](#)

The Virginia WIC Program performs various types of monitoring reviews and audits of authorized stores to comply with USDA standards. Two common types of monitoring are Inventory Audits and Compliance Buys.

### **Inventory Audits**

- You will receive a letter announcing the audit via certified mail or a letter will be hand delivered to your store.
- VDH staff will visit your store twice. During each visit, a physical count of the audit items will take place with a store team member.
- You are required to supply VDH with copies of purchase invoices for a period of time before the audit and during the audit period. Failure to provide the requested documents may result in a monetary fine or suspension from the WIC program.
- Any WIC approved food item may be audited and will be defined on the announcement letter.
- Sixteen stores were audited last year; the results of the audit are forthcoming.

### **Compliance Buys**

- Compliance buys take place covertly during store hours.
- Agents will observe in the store and purchase preselected items using a WIC EBT card.
- Your store will be notified via certified mail if any violations are observed.

## [Retailer Training for 2020](#)

**WIC Certified Trainers Workshop** (Train the Trainer) will be in Spring 2020. The workshop is a two-day event intended to train new corporate trainers. After completion of the workshop, a certified trainer will be authorized to conduct store personnel training for initial WIC authorization (new applicants), contract reauthorization and annual WIC training. There is no registration fee for attending this training workshop. Please contact Ephraim Ewing at [Ephraim.Ewing@vdh.virginia.gov](mailto:Ephraim.Ewing@vdh.virginia.gov) for more information.

**Current certified WIC trainers** will receive re-certification training in Spring 2020. Training will be part of the 2020 contract reauthorization guidance webinar. Company contacts and trainers will be notified by email of webinar broadcast dates and how to register.

**Stores without a certified WIC trainer**, the 2020 contract reauthorization training will be offered April through June 2020. At least one store management representative **MUST** attend a mandatory training session provided by the WIC Program. The stores without a certified WIC trainer will be notified of training sites, dates and how to register.

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## Customer Service / Recent Complaints



The Virginia WIC Program maintains a system of receiving, documenting and investigating all complaints and incidents submitted by retailers. Authorized retailers, corporate contacts, and support staff can use the Retailer Complaint and Incident Form to report suspected abuse and potential violations experienced while serving eWIC cardholders. The Retailer Complaint and Incident Form and instructions can be downloaded from the Virginia WIC retailer webpage: [Click here](#)

For immediate assistance or guidance in the complaint or incident submission process, contact the store's assigned Vendor Liaison.

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## What to Do When Things Go Wrong ... Incident Reporting

We encourage authorized retailers to report any incidents/problems (related to eWIC cardholders), by completing the [Retailer Incident/Complaint form WIC #387](#) and [instructions](#) which are downloadable from our [Resources](#) website. 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 whenever a WIC Participant:**

- Tries to purchase ineligible food items with eWIC food benefits. Include in your complaint the details, e.g. brand, food item, and most importantly, the UPC.
- Returns or tries to return WIC food items for ineligible exchange, store credit, or cash.
- Tries to purchase excess Cash Value Benefits, and/or did not understand the additional payment requirement.
- Does not understand how to use eWIC benefit card (e.g., PIN, eligible or available food items, spend dates, etc.).

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## Ask Alex

**Q.** If milk has a one-day sale price, does the (Stand Beside equipment) need to be reflected in the sale price?

**A.** Yes, the sale price should be submitted for reimbursement. The current price should be charged to



the WIC program. Please see Sanction Section violation C3.

**Q. Can Price Look UP (PLU) #44691 be used for all produce items**

**A.** No. UPCs and International Federation for Produce Standards (IFPS) should be used for fresh produce. If fresh produce has a UPC and does not scan as WIC eligible please check with your manager to confirm if the generic code #44691 can be used: It is very important to submit a picture of the UPC and brand name to the UPC coordinator ([Brian.Tun@vdh.virginia.gov](mailto:Brian.Tun@vdh.virginia.gov)).



**Q. Where can I find items needed for stocking visits?**

**A.** Minimum Stocking Requirement (MSR) is located on the Virginia WIC website.

Click here [MSR REQUIREMENT](#).

**Q. Where can I get the Food List and other WIC materials?**

**A.** Three ways - 1. Online Supply form on VA WIC website under Resources, 2. Print the Supply form and follow the instructions on the form, or 3. Call your WIC Vendor Liaison ([Click here](#) for the directory).

## Quarterly Focus

### WIC Shelf Labels:

Shelf Label Required	Shelf Label Optional
Breakfast Cereal	Eggs
Cheese (sliced and blocked)	Infant Cereal
Juice (frozen and liquid)	Infant Food
1% Milk, Fat Free	Infant Formula
Milk	Beans, Peas, and Lentils (canned and dried)
Yogurt	Canned Fish
Peanut Butter	Fruits and Vegetables
	Lactose Free Milk
	Soy Milk
	2% Milk
	Whole Grains (bread, pasta, tortillas, and rice)

[Click here for more details.](#)

### Importance of shelf labels

- Assist WIC shoppers in finding correct products which creates a smooth transaction and more efficient service.
- Eliminates sanction fines after pattern has been established

## [Important Links](#)

Find important links and Virginia WIC contact information [here](#) .

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Holidays are fast approaching...  
**Have a Safe and Happy Holiday**



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