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Megan's Message

As we wrap up the calendar year, I want to thank each and every one of you for your support of the WIC program and its participants throughout this most trying year. We appreciate you and could not serve those women, infants and children who need our help without you.

Due to the ongoing pandemic, the WIC program is continuing remote services through February 20, 2021. The Virginia WIC Program conducted a participant survey in 2019 and results have been analyzed. The survey results indicate positive shopping experiences overall with 90% of respondents reporting WIC shopping to be very easy or somewhat easy. Respondents also indicated a smartphone app would be beneficial.

Virginia WIC is in the process of developing a smartphone app which we anticipate will be a valuable addition to improve the shopping experience even further.

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

Thanks!

Megan Nason, MS, RD

Virginia WIC Program Manager

Division of Community Nutrition

Megan.Nason@vdh.virginia.gov

Reauthorization Training Update

Job well DONE! Thanks again to all WIC authorized stores for completing the 2020 Reauthorization Training on time. Congratulations – it was a team effort, 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 2020. All signed Retailer agreements for the 2020 – 2023 contract have been emailed to the corporate contact on file. If you have not received your copy please contact us at WIC_Retailer@vdh.virginia.gov.

We would appreciate your feedback on the process. What worked well? What didn't? Should we continue with virtual training as much as possible? Email us and let us know.

Thank you for your continued support of the WIC program.

Alex Acharya

WIC Vendor Manager

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WIC Equipment - System Testing

Contact Brian Tun, UPC Coordinator, at brian.tun@vdh.virginia.gov or your WIC vendor liaison for any questions related to level III testing and certification of your integrated point of sale system (POS).

Any questions related to Point of Sale (POS) system, please contact your system provider or third party processor (TPP), this is only if you use an integrated system. For WIC stand beside equipment issues, contact the Retailer Help Desk at 1-877-436-6057.

Approved Product List Downloadable Spreadsheet/ APL Access

WIC authorized retailers are able to access the daily WIC approved product list (APL) in an Excel format from the Virginia WIC retailer webpage below:

<https://apps.vdh.virginia.gov/content/uploads/sites/44/2017/02/VAAPL.xlsx>

Or simply click the following link:

[Current Approved Product List \(APL\)](#)

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 with questions about the WIC Approved Product List.

Temporary Food Waiver Extensions

In response to the shortage of certain WIC food products due to COVID-19 crisis, USDA's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) granted the temporary waivers for additional sizes and types of eggs and milk products regardless of fat content on March 26, 2020. The temporary food waivers have been extended until further notice.

For more information about the food waivers visit the link below:

[Food waivers](#)

How to Request a Change in EBT Settlement Authorization

When there is a change to your ACH payment account, your new account information needs to be updated with the State WIC Office and Conduent, State eWIC processor.

1. Complete the [Direct Deposit ACH Information form](#) and return it to the Virginia WIC Program:

By Email: wic_retailer@vdh.virginia.gov

2. Contact the Retailer Help Desk at 1-877-436-6057 to request a change in EBT settlement authorization.
3. Request the following forms be sent to the store's authorized agent :
 - EBT Settlement Authorization form
 - W9 form
4. Complete and return the forms by email or USPS mail as instructed.

5. Contact your WIC vendor liaison if you have any questions. See Team directory below under Important Links.

Customer Service / 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 <http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/wic-retailers/resources/>

Contact your assigned Vendor Liaison for immediate assistance or guidance in the complaint or incident submission process. See Important links for Vendor Team directory.

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](#) page on our website. Keeping us informed of these incidents as they happen allows us to address them in a timely manner and perhaps reduce repeat occurrences. Whenever any of the following incidents occur with a WIC participant it needs to be reported.

If the 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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Updates to the VA Wic Retailer Website

Recently we renovated our [Virginia WIC Retailers website](#). The newest updates include the 2020 WIC Retailer Agreement, Direct Deposit ACH & EBT Settlement form and the Vendor Compliance Team directory. Find out the topics and issues being discussed by retailers in the WIC Retailer Bulletin and Retailer Advisory Meeting minutes. The [WIC Retailer Resources web page](#) contains the newest training materials, manuals and Approved Product List (APL) available for download. Access retailer information all in one convenient place [Virginia WIC Retailers web site](#).

Monitoring

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic the USDA has suspended store monitoring visits. The Virginia WIC Program will give you notice before we resume with the unannounced store visits. During our unofficial visits we have noticed several label violations. We are aware of the difficult and very busy times but please be mindful that we have an important service to offer our customers. As a result store complaints are rising. Let's work together to create a positive experience for all your customers. See Quarterly Focus section of this newsletter for more shelf label details.

Compliance

In compliance with USDA standards, the Virginia WIC Program performs various types of monitoring reviews of authorized stores to comply with USDA standards. Two common types of monitoring are Supply Validations and Compliance Buys. We will resume these types of monitoring activities once the Governor's Emergency Order has expired.

Supply Validation:

- You will receive an announcement letter via Certified Mail or a letter will be hand delivered to your store. Your letter will define the WIC approved food items and the time frame of the Validation
- VDH staff will visit your store twice; during each visit, a physical count of the selected items will take place along with a store team member.
- **You are required to supply Virginia WIC with copies of purchase invoices for a period before the validation and during the validation period. Failure to provide the requested documents may result in a monetary fine or suspension from the WIC program.**

Compliance Buys

- Compliance buys take place covertly during store hours.
- Agents will make observations 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 Advisory Meeting (RAM)

The RAM is a quarterly conference call in which VA WIC opens the line of communication between WIC management and WIC retailers to give updates and answer vendor questions. Last month's RAM minutes were emailed and are available on the web: <https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/wic-retailers/resources/>

Next RAM: Thursday, Jan 21, 2021 at 2:00 pm.

Call 1-866-845-1266 code 76976587

Please consider joining us! Email amy.romero@vdh.virginia.gov if you have questions or want to be added to the distribution list.

ASK ALEX

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

Answer: 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. Where do I find the latest WIC program updates?

Answer: [Notices and Updates](#) section

Q. Where can I get more Food Lists and other WIC materials?

Answer:

- **Online Supply form on VA WIC website under Resources**

- **Print** Supply form and follow the instructions
- **Call** your WIC Vendor Liaison ([Click here](#) for the directory).

Alex Acharya

WIC Vendor Manager

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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)

Shelf labels are very important during the COVID-19 pandemic. Please [click here](#) for more labeling 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

- [WIC Homepage](#)
- [WIC Retailer Homepage](#)
- [WIC Retailer Resources](#)
- [2020 Approved Food List](#)

- [Current Approved Product List](#)
- [Vendor Team Directory](#)
- [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](#)
- Non-Discrimination Statement (<https://www.usda.gov/non-discrimination-statement>)

**Holidays are fast approaching...
HAVE A SAFE and**



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