



# VIRGINIA WIC RETAIL STORE MANUAL

SPECIAL SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION PROGRAM  
FOR WOMEN, INFANTS & CHILDREN (WIC)



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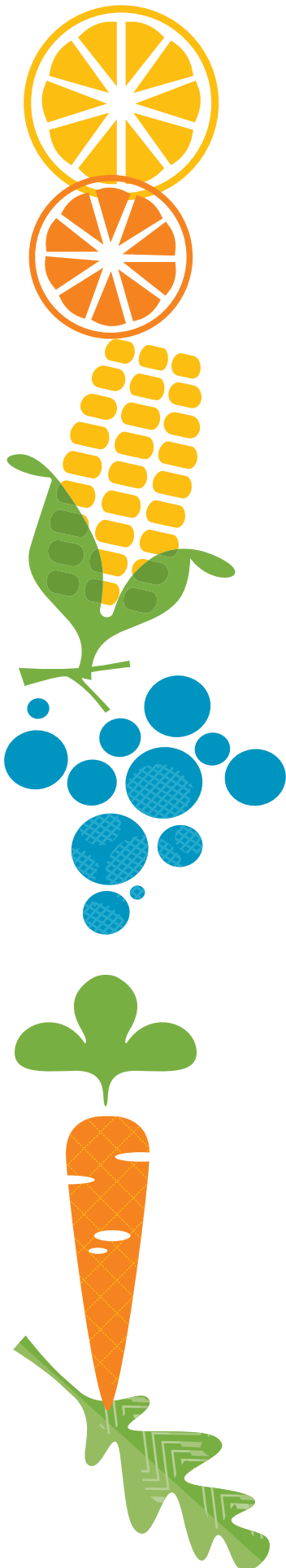
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## Background Information: The Authorized Retailer's Role

Authorized retailers have an important role in providing foods to eWIC cardholders. The program is called Women, Infants and Children (WIC) and the electronic transactions are called eWIC. Contact the store's assigned Vendor Liaison to address questions that may not been answered in this manual.

### Retailer Agreement

- Retailers must sign a Retailer Agreement and meet all selection and authorization criteria before accepting eWIC food benefits.
- eWIC benefit cards are the sole payment method used by the WIC Program. An eWIC benefit card is issued to each eligible cardholder for purchasing selected foods.

### Performance Guidelines

- Authorized retailers are responsible for adhering to all program requirements outlined in the Retailer Agreement, Retailer Manual, federal and state regulations, and other written guidance distributed by the WIC Program.
- Authorized retailers must ensure that cashiers and other store personnel understand and comply with all program requirements when participating in the WIC Program.
- Authorized retailers are encouraged to contact the State WIC Office for guidance if they suspect eWIC cardholders need additional education or counseling in using eWIC food benefits including:
  1. Understanding what foods are WIC approved;
  2. Using the eWIC benefit card; and
  3. Any other eWIC cardholder issues.



## Background Information: Who Gets WIC and Why?

Pregnancy and early childhood are among the most significant times for growth and development. Many women, infants, and children face dietary challenges that threaten their current well-being and future health. To promote healthy eating habits and minimize the negative impact of these challenges, the WIC Program provides nutrition education and supplemental foods to eligible participants.

WIC is a federal program that helps parents make wholesome, informed choices about the foods that they serve their children. It also helps to ensure that mothers eat healthy while they're pregnant or breastfeeding.



A nutritionist assesses each participant's needs, provides counseling, and prescribes food packages as a supplement to their nutritional needs. The prescribed food package is based on needs, regulations, and requirements. The program provides nutrients that participants often lack. When nutrients are addressed, it helps ensure better health, growth, and development.

The program provides supplemental nutritious foods including infant foods, fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. The nutrition education and health counseling that are provided may result in long-term benefits even after eligibility ceases. During the eligible period, participants are provided with screening and referrals to other beneficial programs.

The applicant must be a current resident that meets all of the following criteria:

- Income guidelines and
- Pregnant, postpartum, or breastfeeding women or
- Infant to one (1) year of age or
- Child to five (5) years of age and
- Nutritional risk which may include underweight, overweight and/or poor diet

The WIC Program serves people from many demographics; college students, young parents, single mothers, legal guardians, foster children, military families, and homeless individuals.

eWIC cardholders must uphold conditions identified in the signed Participants and Responsibilities Form and the Participant Handbook. For a copy of the Participant Handbook, contact the store's assigned Vendor Liaison.

## Background Information:

### Customer Service

Excellent customer service is key to business success. It must extend from product delivery to developing bonds with customers. It is essential that a positive customer experience is provided. Stores can create such experiences by anticipating customers' needs and meeting their expectations. Tips outlined in this section apply to all customers, not just eWIC cardholders. eWIC cardholders are to be treated the same as other customers; they are neither to be discriminated against nor shown preferential treatment. This section should be used to supplement other customer service training resources used by stores.

### First Impression

Customers begin developing opinions about the store and the service it provides with the first visit. A bad first impression is difficult to overcome. WIC participants choose where to shop, and WIC revenue helps retailers' bottom line. Serving participants as you would serve any customer will help ensure continued business success.

### The Customer

#### Customers deserve:

- Assistance (when needed);
- Equity;
- Respect; and
- Discretion

#### A customer's mood affects their shopping experience.

- If a customer is upset or negative, don't take it personally. Take a moment, a deep breath, and stay calm.
- Focus on what can be done, not what can't be done. Offer and give assistance.
- If a situation escalates, follow the store's procedure for handling difficult customer situations.





## Delivering Excellent Customer Service

**The following actions promote excellent customer service:**

- Make customer service a priority and a primary focus;
- Give the best customer service possible;
- Personalize interactions to meet customers' needs;
- Respect customers;
- Listen to customers;
- Solve problems quickly; and
- Seek opportunities to improve service quality.



## Communications and Resources:

### Retailer Manual Use

This manual provides administrative guidance pertaining to authorized stores that accept eWIC benefit cards.

The Retailer Manual provides instructions to assist authorized retailers and applicant retailers. It serves as the source for information about proper management practices as well as requirements and responsibilities of authorized retailers. This manual reflects changes due to the implementation of the Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) system known as eWIC. Most questions can be answered by referring to one of the following resources:

1. State WIC Regulations;
2. Retailer Agreement;
3. WIC Approved Food List;
4. Infant Formula Flyer;
5. Other educational materials (e.g., eWIC Cashier Handbook, Cashier DVD)
6. This Retailer Manual

Information about general terms and conditions, selection and authorization processes, sanctions, compliance, program violations, disqualifications, and administrative appeal processes, along with other information essential to the successful operation of a participating store, and other information to help with successful store operations is available in the State WIC Regulations. The State WIC Regulations are the final authority of any discrepancies with available program resources.

Any issues not addressed in this manual should be directed to the store's assigned Vendor Liaison.



## Communications and Resources:

### Electronic Access and Supplementary Information

This section defines electronic access and reference information for materials that supplement this manual. It is critical that retailers maintain Internet and email access to ensure efficient participation in the WIC Program.

#### Electronic Access

- The most up-to-date version of this manual and its references are available at the WIC Program's website: [vdh.virginia.gov/wic-retailers/resources/](https://vdh.virginia.gov/wic-retailers/resources/)
- Regulations referenced in this manual: [vdh.virginia.gov/wic-retailers/resources/](https://vdh.virginia.gov/wic-retailers/resources/)
- Forms are only available electronically. Resources, including forms, referenced in this manual: [vdh.virginia.gov/wic-retailers/resources/](https://vdh.virginia.gov/wic-retailers/resources/)
- Authorized retailers must provide email addresses to the State WIC Office and contact a member of the Vendor Compliance Team to report email address updates.
- In the event of Internet connectivity issues, contact the store's assigned Vendor Liaison for resource access guidance. Refer to the Emergency Procedures (B-5) section of this manual if necessary.



## Communications and Resources:

### Contacting The State WIC Office

These guidelines define the various methods the State WIC Office uses to communicate with authorized retailers. Please see the Quick Reference page at the end of this manual for specific contact information.

#### General Communications

Contact information for the State WIC Office is available online and in the **Quick Reference Guide** section at the end of this manual. Refer to the Vendor Compliance Team Directory on The State WIC Office's website for individual addresses and telephone numbers.

When contacting the State WIC Office, ask to speak to a member of the Vendor Compliance Team. Record the name of the representative, the date and time of the call, the guidance provided, and any other relevant information given in case further action is needed.

Certified letters sent by the State WIC Office typically require follow-up action(s) by the store owner or manager. Advise store personnel to pass on to the store management any certified letters that are sent by the WIC Program.

#### Retailer Advisory Meetings

Attendance at Retailer Advisory Meetings are optional. **However**, these meetings serve as a communication forum between authorized retailers, corporate contacts, professional trade organizations, major food suppliers, and the WIC Program. Attendees meet at least quarterly via conference call with the State WIC Office staff to discuss general updates, proposed and existing policies and procedures, as well as, changes or recommendations for performance improvement. Retailer Advisory Meetings are exclusively advisory and not policy-making.

Minutes from these meetings are available on the State WIC Office's website or by contacting the store's assigned Vendor Liaison.

#### WIC Retailer Bulletin

The WIC Retailer Bulletin is an electronic educational tool used to inform retailers and other interested parties about the State WIC Office changes, compliance issues, eWIC processing tips, cashier reminders, and alerts. The bulletin is published at least biannually.

The July publication is a special training edition of the WIC Retailer Bulletin. The publication is produced and distributed as a resource and to document that annual training has been provided. This training is required by state and federal regulations.

**Retailers are encouraged to take the following actions after receiving this bulletin:**

- Read the bulletin and share relevant articles with others, i.e., managers, cashiers, and bookkeepers;
- Post a copy of the bulletin in a central location for others to read;
- Place the bulletin in the program binder for future reference;
- Use the bulletin as a resource to conduct cashier and store personnel training; and
- Acknowledge receipt according to included instructions, if applicable.

An electronic version of the WIC Retailer Bulletin is available on The State WIC Office's website. Printed copies of recently published WIC Retailer Bulletins may be obtained by contacting the store's assigned Vendor Liaison. Past electronic versions of the bulletin can be found at the The State WIC Office Retailer resources online.

[vdh.virginia.gov/wic-retailers/resources/](https://vdh.virginia.gov/wic-retailers/resources/)

## Communications and Resources:

### Crossroads Vendor Portal

These guidelines define how authorized retailers and new applicants are to use the Crossroads Vendor Portal.

### Crossroads Vendor Portal

The Crossroads Vendor Portal is available. Visit [www.virginiawicretailers.com](http://www.virginiawicretailers.com) and click on "retailer application process" to find the information and instructions on how to use the system to apply for WIC authorization for your store.



## Communications and Resources:

### Emergency Procedures

These guidelines define the procedures that authorized retailers must use whenever eWIC cardholders are unable to shop and make purchases during a store's normal operating hours.

### Emergency Procedures

Retailers shall inform the State WIC Office as early as possible if any situation that negatively impacts eWIC cardholders' ability to shop at an authorized store location occurs. This includes but is not limited to natural disasters, flooding, inclement weather, hazardous road conditions, mechanical/electrical failures, public health emergencies, or any other adverse condition which significantly reduces the store's normal operating hours.

For emergency situations outlined in these guidelines, retailers must send written notice within 72 hours of the qualifying event's occurrence through one of the following methods:

1. **Email:** [wic\\_retailer@vdh.virginia.gov](mailto:wic_retailer@vdh.virginia.gov);
2. **Call:** Vendor Compliance Team at 804-864-7800 or
3. **US Mail:** Attn: Vendor Compliance Team  
Division of Community Nutrition  
Virginia Department of Health  
109 Governor Street, 8<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Richmond, VA 23219.

When sending notices sent to the State WIC Office, the retailer must include:

- Store name and WIC ID number;
- Contact name;
- Daytime phone number; and
- Brief description of the emergency or event that has necessitated limited availability.

## Emergency Contact Information

Upon request, retailers are required to provide written updates to their emergency contact information to the State WIC Office. Updates should include:

- Store name and WIC ID number;
- Emergency contact name;
- Daytime phone number;
- Alternate phone number (if available); and
- Email address.

Retailers are required to provide a written notice within 14 calendar days of any changes to the emergency contact information previously provided.

## Emergency Alerts

The WIC Program may use an automated phone messaging service to advise retail stores about statewide or local emergencies that directly impact eWIC service delivery and/or redemption procedures.



## Communications and Resources:

### Closures and Relocations

These guidelines define the actions an authorized retailer must take in preparation for a store to be closed temporarily or permanently, or relocated to a new physical location.

#### Closure

Retailers must inform the State WIC Office in writing before an authorized store is closed temporarily or permanently. The written notification must include the following information:

- Store name and WIC ID number;
- Store physical address;
- Contact name, phone number, and address (to be used during closure); and
- Actual or projected closure period (including start and end dates).

For reactivation after a temporary closure, the authorized retailer must give the State WIC Office at least 15 calendar days advanced written notice to reactivate their account.

Retailers using stand-beside devices may require equipment maintenance before they can resume accepting eWIC food benefits. Retailers are required to contact the eWIC Processor for guidance at least 15 calendar days prior to resuming eWIC transactions.

Under no circumstances shall a retailer accept eWIC food benefits if indicated as temporarily or permanently closed.

#### Relocation

Retailers must inform the State WIC Office if an authorized store is relocated. A written relocation notice must include:

- Store name and WIC ID number;
- Store physical addresses (both current and new);
- Contact name, phone number, and address; and
- Date of relocation.

Retailers using stand-beside devices may require equipment maintenance before they can resume accepting eWIC food benefits. Retailers are required to contact the eWIC Processor at least 15 calendar days prior to resuming eWIC transactions.



## Communications and Resources:

### Retailer Supply Requests

These guidelines define the procedures that authorized retailers, corporate contacts, and certified trainers must use to request additional supplies and training materials.

#### State WIC Office-Issued Supplies

The Retailer Supply Request Form should be used by authorized retailers, corporate contacts, certified trainers, and support staff to order supplies and training materials. This form contains all key information that is necessary to ensure stores receive appropriate resources.

Personnel should complete the Retailer Supply Request Form and submit it to The State WIC Office. Failure to complete all sections of the form may result in an order filling delay. If the store does not receive requested supplies within two weeks from the date ordered, a store representative should follow up by calling The State WIC Office.

Certified trainers requesting supplies for multiple authorized stores must specify “certified trainer” in the comments section of the form.

#### eWIC Processor-Issued Supplies

Refer to the Xerox eWIC Retailer Manual for information and procedures regarding supplies which must be ordered directly from the eWIC Processor.

If the store does not receive requested supplies within two weeks from the date ordered, a store representative should call the State WIC Office to confirm the order’s status.

## Program Integrity: Verification

These guidelines define that information provided to the WIC Program used to authorize a store which is subject to independent verification.

All self-reported information (including but not limited to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Authorization ID, pricing, hours of operation, annual or projected food sales, and violations assessed by other governmental agencies) is subject to random, independent verification by the WIC Program. This background information is collected from new and existing retailers using Crossroads Vendor Portal and other available resources.

## Above 50 Percent Monitoring

These guidelines define the approach The State WIC Office uses to identify potential and actual above 50 percent (A50%) vendors as required by federal regulations.

- For new applicants, eWIC food benefit redemptions cannot make up more than 50 percent of a store's anticipated annual food sales. New applicants who anticipate 50 percent or more of their food sales will come from eWIC food benefit redemptions will not be authorized by WIC Program.
- For authorized retailers, eWIC food benefit redemption volume is monitored by the State WIC Office to determine if it exceeds 50 percent of total annual food sales. This type of evaluation may require authorized retailers to submit additional documentation including state sales tax records if self-reported food sales or Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) figures cannot be used independently to confirm a retailer's above fifty percent status.
- The State WIC Office's Vendor Management Team (VMT) will assess the status of new vendors within six months after authorization by reviewing the Redemptions by Vendor Summary number to determine whether newly authorized vendors are in fact or are potentially A50% vendors. If the vendor's WIC Redemptions are more than 50 percent of total WIC and SNAP redemptions combined, the vendor is identified as potential A50%. Only SNAP sales classified as closed in FNS systems are used in calculations.
- The Integrity Profile (TIP) system's WIC 6 Report ("Potentially Above 50 percent Vendor" report) will be used to identify existing vendors as potentially A50%. The WIC 6 Report also compares vendors' WIC and SNAP redemptions. Stores appearing on the TIP WIC 6 Report ("Potentially Above 50 percent Vendor" report) will be monitored using the same method as a new vendor.

## Program Integrity: Conflicts of Interest

These guidelines define common conflict of interest issues that may arise during WIC Program participation. The State WIC Office encourages authorized retailers to contact the store's assigned Vendor Liaison to discuss situations where the retailer is uncertain if a potential conflict of interest issue exists.

Management shall ensure that no conflicts of interest exist between any store personnel and any local, state, or federal WIC agency. This group includes (but is not limited to) store employees or spouses of store owners who are also employees of a local, state, or federal WIC agency.

Management shall ensure that federal and state confidentiality requirements are met in addressing any potential conflict of interest, such as action involving store employees that are also eWIC cardholders.

**Management must remind store personnel of these conflict of interest requirements annually at minimum. Specific situations that shall be addressed during this review include:**

- If a store employee (or any member of their immediate family<sup>1</sup>) is also employed by a local, state, or federal WIC agency, they must notify store management to ensure that no conflict of interest will exist in handling their job duties.
- Store personnel must not offer any gratuities including food, cash, coupons, or gift cards to employees of local, state, or federal WIC agencies.
- Store personnel must not accept food items purchased using another individual's eWIC benefit card.
- Store personnel must not process redemptions of eWIC food benefits for themselves (as eWIC cardholders) or for members of their immediate family<sup>1</sup>.
- If an authorized retailer does not have a policy that prohibits employee self checkout or checkout of family members, the WIC Program expects that such a policy will be developed, communicated to all affected parties, and enforced by the retailer. Store managers must identify and communicate to affected employees how conflict of interest issues will be handled.

**If an authorized retailer identifies an actual or potential conflict of interest, they must contact the store's assigned Vendor Liaison and provide the following information:**

- Store name and WIC ID number;
- Contact name and phone number;
- Name and title of store employee with a potential conflict of interest; and
- Brief summary of the potential conflict of interest situation.
- Management is encouraged to contact the store's assigned Vendor Liaison for additional guidance on any conflict of interest issues brought to their attention.

<sup>1</sup>Living in the same household.



## Program Integrity: Solicitation

These guidelines define limitations associated with authorized retailers soliciting and promoting eWIC food benefit redemption. This section identifies restrictions pertaining to solicitation issues that exist in the relationship between authorized retailers and eWIC cardholders or agency representatives.

**For the terms “vicinity” and “solicitation”, the following definitions apply:**

- “Vicinity” means any area near, in the neighborhood of, or in the surrounding areas of the local WIC agency. At a minimum, a 20-foot buffer zone shall be observed. Retail stores and their agents cannot make direct or indirect contact with eWIC cardholders within 20 feet of the local WIC agency’s entrances and exits.
- **“Solicitation”** means approaching with information or otherwise enticing any eWIC cardholder in an attempt to influence their choice of authorized retailer.
- Authorized retailers and their agents must not distribute flyers, business cards, or any other promotional materials to eWIC cardholders in the vicinity of a local WIC agency.
- Authorized retailers must not offer incentives or giveaways to eWIC cardholders or agency representatives.
- Authorized retailers must comply with local ordinances that outline acceptable solicitation practices within their communities.



## Performance Guidelines:

### Approved Foods and eWIC Food Benefits

These guidelines define the types of food and formula items approved for sale and purchase by eWIC cardholders.

#### Approved Foods

Each state WIC office creates a list of WIC approved food items using federal guidelines as well as other variables including nutritional value, availability, size, and price.

Only those specific food items approved by the State WIC Office are eligible for purchase using an eWIC benefit card. Only WIC approved food items prescribed specifically to a participant are eligible for reimbursement.

Foods approved by the WIC Program fall into one of several categories. Refer to the The State WIC Office Food List located at each eWIC terminal for specific categories and food items.

#### **All foods approved by the WIC Program may be further limited based on the following variables:**

- **Brand** – some products have brand restrictions (e.g., only specified brands of frozen juices are approved).
- **Size** – some products have package size restrictions (e.g., only 64 ounce containers of liquid juice are approved).
- **Ingredients** – some products have ingredient restrictions (e.g., only whole wheat breads with no artificial sweeteners are approved).
- **Cost** – some products have price restrictions (e.g., only contract formula is approved)

#### Approved Formulas

Authorized retailers are required to stock a specific contract formula at quantities identified in the Minimum Stocking Requirement guidelines.

Authorized retailers are only allowed to sell formulas and medical foods included in the Approved Product List.

Formulas and medical foods redeemable at retail stores are listed in the Infant Formula Flyer published by the State WIC Office.

If a eWIC cardholder requests a contract formula, special formula, or medical food approved for purchase through an authorized retailer, the retailer is expected to procure the formula within 48 hours. If an eWIC cardholder requests formula that the retailer does not have access to, the retailer should refer the eWIC cardholder to another authorized retailer.

## Approved Foods and eWIC Food Benefits (cont.)

### Specific Brands

Authorized retailers may sell any brand identified in the WIC Approved Food List unless otherwise stated.

Authorized retailers must sell specific brands for specific categories of food items. Questions about these categories should be directed to the store's assigned Vendor Liaison.

The WIC Program requires brand designation for milk products to ensure eWIC transactions do not exceed the Not-to-Exceed value and the individual authorized retailer's reimbursement level. Additionally, The WIC Program recommends a single brand (preferably the best value brand available) be used for all milk products.

Food categories (e.g. breakfast cereal) may include multiple brands. For each food category, if the brand is included in the the State WIC Office Food List, it can be purchased by the eWIC cardholder.

### Approved Product List (APL)

An Electronic data file identifying food items approved for purchase with WIC benefits by food category and subcategory and by a unique product identifier, either a Universal Product Code (UPC) or Price Lookup (PLU) code. The APL is created from UPCs/PLUs and maintained by the state WIC agency, and made available to retailers for download to their point-of-sale systems via a secured FTP site.

The APL file is uploaded to our website and updated daily. It can be viewed online by retailers any time. [VA Approved Product List \(VAAPL\)](#)

### UPC Updates and Changes

UPC update requests must be submitted to the State WIC Office for consideration. Submission review is conducted in the following manner:

1. Retailers are encouraged to submit UPCs for products believed to be approved under current WIC Approved Food List guidelines. UPC update requests must be submitted using a completed UPC Update Request Form.
2. UPC update requests are reviewed by the UPC Coordinator, Nutrition Team, and other WIC Program staff.
3. The authorized retailer or individual responsible for UPC Update Request Form submission will be notified of the WIC Program's decision by email only.
4. If the UPC is approved, the food item will be added to the APL and made available for purchase through downloading the daily APL file.

## Approved Foods and eWIC Food Benefits (cont.)

Authorized retailers should contact WIC Program's UPC Coordinator if they have questions about the UPC submission process. Refer to the Quick Reference Section of this manual for contact information.

### Identifying Approved Foods at Checkout

The Approved Product List (APL) contains Universal Product Codes (UPCs) for each WIC-approved food item, flagging them as eligible for purchase using the eWIC benefit card.

Authorized retailers are responsible for ensuring that the most current version of the APL is available at all registers that process eWIC transactions.

At checkout, the UPC of each food item must be scanned, allowing the UPC to be automatically validated against the current APL. Food items eligible for purchase will be authorized by the store's integrated point-of-sale system or stand-beside device. Items flagged as ineligible for purchase should never be processed as part of the eWIC transaction.

Fresh produce may have a store-assigned Product Lookup (PLU) Code instead of a State WIC Office-assigned UPC. Authorized retailers and corporate support staff are responsible for mapping store-assigned PLUs to the generic PLU recognized by the APL. At checkout, canned, fresh, and frozen fruits and vegetables should be scanned in the same manner as UPC food items. These types of food items are classified as cash value benefits and have a defined dollar amount.

If a WIC-approved food item is not listed in the APL, the authorized retailer should submit a UPC Update Request Form to the State WIC Office for consideration.

### Redeeming eWIC Food Benefits

The eWIC benefit card provides access to eWIC food benefits.

The eWIC benefit card defines a specific family's balance of eWIC food benefits over a designated period of time. Like a debit card, once the selected food benefits have been redeemed no additional eWIC purchases may occur until additional eWIC food benefits are added to the eWIC cardholder's account.

eWIC cardholders may redeem food benefits over many or few occasions and are not required to purchase all items either in one transaction or by the end of the benefit period.

Authorized retailers should refer eWIC cardholders to the local WIC office if they have questions about eWIC food benefits.



## Performance Guidelines:

### Minimum Stocking Requirement

These guidelines define the Minimum Stocking Requirement for new applicants and authorized retailers that participate in the WIC Program.

### Minimum Stocking Requirement

Authorized retailers must stock a reasonable variety of WIC-approved foods. The specific brands (if applicable), package sizes, and quantities required are outlined below. Product categories include:

- Cereal
- Cheese
- Eggs
- Infant Cereal
- Infant Food
- Infant Formula
- Juice
- Milk
- Legumes (beans, peas, lentils, peanut butter)
- Whole Grain Products
- Cash Value Benefit Products: canned, fresh, and frozen fruits and vegetables

Authorized retailers must stock the food items at quantities identified in these guidelines throughout the contract agreement period.

For WIC-approved foods for which a Minimum Stocking Requirement does not exist (e.g., salmon, tuna, selected contract formulas), the authorized retailer is expected to stock a sufficient supply of these products based upon customer demand.

Authorized retailers must purchase contract and special formulas from a WIC-approved supplier. A listing of approved resources can be downloaded from the WIC Program's website.

Refer to the WIC Approved Food List and Approved Product List, or contact your Vendor Liaison for WIC approved brands.

## Performance Guidelines: Minimum Stocking Requirement

The Minimum Stocking Requirement (MSR) is detailed in this section

Category/ Item	Description	Size, Form	Quantity, MSR
<b>Breakfast Cereal</b>	Non-Whole Grain Examples include: • Corn Flakes • Crisp Rice	12 to 36 ounces	24 ounces total
	Whole Grain Examples include: • Frosted Shredded Wheat • Toasted Oats • Instant Oatmeal	12 to 36 ounces, cold 11.8 to 12 ounces, hot	48 ounces total Must stock at least 2 different varieties.
<b>Cheese</b>	American (Sliced)	16 ounces	1 package
	Cheddar (Block)	16 ounces	1 package
<b>Eggs</b>	Grade “A” or “AA”, Large, White	dozen	2 cartons
<b>Infant Cereal</b>	Rice	8 ounces	3 containers
<b>Infant Food</b>	Vegetables: single ingredient or combination of single ingredients	4 ounces	128 ounces total <sup>2</sup> , Must stock at least 2 different varieties.
	Fruits: single ingredient or combination of single ingredients	4 ounces	128 ounces total <sup>2</sup> , Must stock at least 2 different varieties.
<b>Infant Formula</b>	Similac Advance Powder	12.4 ounces	9 cans
<b>Juice</b>	Single flavored juice: apple, grape, grapefruit, or orange (Frozen)	12 ounces	2 containers total Must stock at least 2 different varieties.
	Single flavored juice: apple, grape, grapefruit, or orange (Liquid/Refrigerated)	64 ounces	2 containers total Must stock at least 2 different varieties.
<b>Milk</b>	Reduced Fat: 1%, Skim/Fat Free <sup>1</sup>	gallon, half gallon, or quart	5 gallons total, any combination of approved sizes  Must stock at least 2 different sizes.

## Performance Guidelines:

### Minimum Stocking Requirement

Category/Item	Description	Size, Form	Quantity, MSR
<b>Legumes</b>	Beans, Peas, and Lentils(Canned)	15 to 16 ounces	8 cans
	Beans, Peas, and Lentils (Dry)	16 ounces	2 packages
	Peanut Butter (Creamy, Smooth, Chunky, Crunchy, or Extra Crunchy)	16 to 18 ounces	2 containers
<b>Whole Grain Products</b>	Whole Wheat Breads	16 ounces	1 package
	Brown Rice	16 ounces	1 package
<b>Cash Value Benefit Products</b>	Fruit Subcategories: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Canned</li> <li>• Fresh</li> <li>• Frozen</li> </ul>	\$20.00 Total - Must stock a total of 4 different varieties for 2 different subcategories.	
	Vegetable Subcategories: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Canned</li> <li>• Fresh</li> <li>• Frozen</li> </ul>	\$20.00 Total - Must stock a total of 4 different varieties for 2 different subcategories.	

<sup>1</sup>No Minimum Stocking Requirement exists for soy and lactose free milks. Refer to the WIC Approved Food List and Approved Product List, or contact your Vendor Liaison for WIC-approved brands.

<sup>2</sup>Includes WIC-approved twin packs. Pouches are excluded. 128 ounces is 32 4-ounce containers, or 32 2-ounce twin packs, or 16 4-ounce twin packs.

## Performance Guidelines: Monitoring

These guidelines define the authorized retailer's role when an agency representative from the WIC Program conducts an on-site inventory or formula monitoring visit.

### General Monitoring

A store representative (preferably a manager) is encouraged to accompany the agency representative during an on-site visit. The agency representative may be local, state, federal, or other staff. Anyone representing the WIC Program is required to show picture identification to a store manager prior to completing the on-site visit.

The store representative must identify whether any Minimum Stocking Requirement food items are located anywhere other than the customer shopping areas. The store representative may need to move available stock to the customer shopping area for stock to be counted during an on-site visit.

Areas of noncompliance observed during these visits will result in a warning letter from the State WIC Office. Retailers will be notified of documented violations including (but not limited to) failure to meet the Minimum Stocking Requirement and failure to post prices and/or shelf labels with WIC-approved foods.

A store representative is required to sign the on-site visit record, acknowledging documentation of any findings during the visit. If after completion of the on-site visit a manager cannot be located or does not respond within 10 minutes of notification, the agency representative must obtain the signature of any available employee or record the reason why the results were not signed.

Authorized retailers must contact the store's assigned Vendor Liaison to address questions about the corrective action required to resolve any areas of noncompliance documented during an on-site visit.

### Formula Monitoring

Authorized retailers must maintain at least twelve months of the most current infant formula purchase invoices from all sources including the primary formula supplier.

The formula purchase invoices retained by the store must include the following information:

1. Supplier's name, phone number, and address;
2. Date of the purchase; and
3. Itemized list of the items purchased including:
  - Size;
  - Stock number;
  - Quantity;
  - Unit price; and
  - Extended price



## Performance Guidelines:

### Formula Monitoring (continued)

If retail cash receipts are used, this documentation must include the following information:

- Store name and address or a code number by which the store location can be identified;
- Date of purchase; and
- Itemized list of the items purchased including:
  - Quantity;
  - Unit price; and
  - Extended price.

Cash receipts are considered complete when a computer code (which can be verified by the store) accompanies the item description. Cash receipts without an item description require listing the exact WIC-approved items purchased (including brand, type, and size) on the back of the receipt and must be signed by a store manager.



## Performance Guidelines: Signage and Shelf Labels

These guidelines define specific requirements associated with using signage and shelf labels. All authorized retailers must use window decals and some retailers are also required to use checkout lane signage. Authorized retailers must correctly and consistently use State WIC Office-issued or approved custom shelf labels. Refer to the chart in this section for labeling requirements.

### Signage

Authorized retailers are required to post an eWIC Processor-issued window decal in a highly visible location (the store's main entrance window or door).

Authorized retailers having registers that do not accept WIC are required either to use checkout lane signage to identify which registers accept eWIC food benefits, or to indicate what methods of payment are accepted on registers that do not accept eWIC food benefits.

Authorized retailers may obtain checkout lane signage by submitting a Retailer Supply Request webform.

Other signage using WIC, WIC logos, or other WIC branding requires approval by the State WIC Office before posting.

### Shelf Label Use

Authorized retailers must use State WIC Office-issued or approved custom shelf labels to identify WIC-approved foods.

Authorized retailers who do not have an approved custom label may obtain State WIC Office-issued shelf labels from the State WIC Office. Authorized retailers who do have an approved custom label should order labels from their corporate office. State WIC Office-issued shelf labels are not to be used and not available to authorized retailers with an approved custom shelf label.

Authorized retailers may use shelf labels for WIC-approved foods in a food category without a label requirement (e.g., infant food, brown rice, etc.); however if shelf labels are used on any item in a food category without a label requirement, shelf labels must be used on all items in that food category.

Authorized retailers must consistently use the same type of shelf label (either State WIC Office-issued or custom, but not both) across all WIC-approved foods.

Authorized retailers must ensure that shelf labels are clearly visible when posted with the associated WIC-approved foods.

## Custom Shelf Labels

Authorized retailers are permitted to use approved custom shelf labels that contain a service mark (such as the WIC acronym or WIC logo) to identify WIC-approved foods.

Authorized retailers using custom shelf labels must confirm the procedures for ordering additional WIC shelf labels with their corporate offices.

Requests for the review and approval of a custom shelf label must be submitted to the State WIC Office prior to use.

Authorized retailers must submit, at minimum, one print-ready image of the proposed shelf label. The image of the shelf label must state the proposed total size, font name and size, dimensions, color, and any other distinguishing features. The retailer must disclose all variations of the proposed shelf label, (e.g., promotional). The WIC Program recommends a font size of at least 18 point. Requests must be submitted at least 30 calendar days prior to the intended first date of use.

The proposed shelf label image and request may be submitted to the Vendor Compliance Manager by email.

Custom shelf labels submitted for review must include, at minimum, the following terminology: “WIC” or “W.I.C.”

The Vendor Compliance Manager will notify the requester of the proposed shelf label within 30 calendar days after the submission is received of the decision to approve or disapprove.

Authorized retailers may use approved alternative materials such as posters, flyers, and inserts in addition to custom shelf labels. Retailers must not, however, use any such materials as a substitute for custom shelf labels when identifying WIC-approved foods. Requests for the review and approval of alternative materials must be submitted to the State WIC Office prior to use.

## Shelf Label Monitoring

Authorized retailers must not use shelf labels provided by a product supplier that display the WIC acronym or logo unless approved in writing by the Vendor Compliance Manager.

Store personnel must routinely monitor all posted shelf labels to ensure they are accurately and consistently used with WIC-approved foods.

During on-site visits, an agency representative will document any noncompliance related to an authorized retailer’s use of WIC-approved shelf labels.

## Performance Guidelines: Shelf Label Comparison Chart<sup>1</sup>

Shelf Label Required	Shelf Label Optional <sup>2</sup>
Breakfast Cereal	Eggs
Cheese (sliced and blocked)	Infant Cereal
Juice (frozen and liquid)	Infant Food <sup>3</sup>
1% Milk Skim/Fat Free Milk	Infant Formula
Yogurt	Beans, Peas, and Lentils (canned and dried)
Peanut Butter	Canned Fish
	Fruits and Vegetables <sup>3</sup>
	Lactose Free Milk
	Soy Milk
	2% Milk
	Whole Milk
	Whole Grains (bread, pasta, tortillas and rice)

<sup>1</sup> Refer to the WIC Approved Food List, Formula Flyer and Approved Product List for more information about specific varieties, sizes, types, flavors, and manufacturers.

<sup>2</sup> Retailers must be consistent in labeling all eligible products within a food category when using shelf labels on WIC-approved foods for which there is no label requirement.

<sup>3</sup> The WIC Program recommends not labeling these items, unless the label is automatically generated from the Approved Product List.

<sup>4</sup> Refer to the WIC Approved Food List and Approved Product List for WIC-approved brands.



## Performance Guidelines: Complaints and Incidents

These guidelines define how and when authorized retailers should complete and submit a Retailer Complaint and Incident Form. The State WIC Office uses this information to promote program integrity and educate eWIC cardholders.

### Reporting

Authorized retailers, corporate contacts, and support staff must use the Retailer Complaint and Incident Form to report suspected abuse and potential violations experienced while serving eWIC cardholders. This form includes details listed on the eWIC shopping list receipt. Completed forms must contain the following information:

- eWIC cardholder's name and Personal Account Number;
- Any other identifying information available to the retailer<sup>1</sup>; and
- Brief description of the complaint or incident.

This form and any attachments (such as receipts) should be submitted to the State WIC Office. Retailers should keep a copy of the submission for future reference.

If an incident requires the involvement of police or other law enforcement personnel, the authorized retailer should submit a copy of the police report.

For immediate assistance in the complaint submission process, contact the store's assigned Vendor Liaison. For guidance in reporting any type of complaint or incident not outlined in this section (e.g., program abuse by another authorized retailer), contact the Vendor Compliance Manager.

<sup>1</sup>"Available" information is information that is not requested (e.g. physical appearance). All WIC Program confidentiality guidance must be observed during complaint and incident reporting.

## Performance Guidelines: Confidentiality

These guidelines define important considerations that retailers must follow in handling confidential information associated with processing eWIC transactions.

### Confidentiality

Retailers shall neither ask for personal information to transact an eWIC sale nor capture or use the information available from the eWIC transaction for building client files without the eWIC cardholder's knowledge and permission.

Authorized retailers have the right to use information contained on the eWIC benefit card (i.e., eWIC cardholder's name and Personal Account Number) to file a complaint against a cardholder that does not follow established WIC Program procedures.

With the consent of the State WIC Office, authorized retailers have the right to use information including data from an eWIC transaction to file a complaint of criminal activity to law enforcement authorities. However, the retailer should not give personal information regarding an eWIC cardholder, participant, or proxy to such authorities investigating incidents unrelated to a WIC transaction.

Authorized retailers may not ask for the eWIC cardholder's telephone number, address, Social Security Number, or any additional personal information as might be requested with non-WIC transactions. Such information is confidential.

If a cashier must call for manager assistance, the cashier must not identify "WIC" when seeking this type of assistance.

## Financial Considerations: Peer Group Classification

These guidelines define the State WIC Office's method of categorizing stores by specific attributes. The result of this grouping process identifies an authorized retailer's peer group. The primary purpose of the peer group structure includes (but is not limited to) competitive redemption analysis, risk analysis, calculation of Not-to-Exceed values, and compliance monitoring.

### Peer Group Classification

Peer group assignments are made based on the following attributes:

- Type of authorization (e.g., retailer, commissary, or special formula contractor);
- Geographic classification (e.g., urban or rural);
- Number of total checkout lanes; and
- Annual eWIC food benefit redemptions

Authorized retailers will be notified of the peer group to which the store is assigned.

Geographic location, number of checkout lanes, and projected sales data will be used to determine initial peer group assignment for new applicants and authorized retailers with less than six months of redemption history.

The State WIC Office may periodically recalculate a store's assigned peer group using the most recent available redemption data.

## Financial Considerations:

### Price Competitiveness

These guidelines define state and federal requirements that authorized retailers must remain price competitive in order to participate in the WIC Program. A price competitiveness analysis is completed for new applicants using collected pricing data and for authorized retailers using actual eWIC benefit redemption data.

#### New Applicants

Applicants must apply for WIC Program authorization using the Crossroads Vendor Portal system or current approved online system.

The application process includes a store pre-authorization visit, which includes price collection of select WIC Food Items. The collected prices are analyzed to determine the level of price competitiveness for selected food items and combinations of food items (also referred to as market baskets). If the applicant's market basket prices are identified as noncompetitive, WIC Program authorization will be denied. If authorization is denied, the applicant has 15 calendar days from the application submission date to request an administrative review. Prices collected by the State WIC Office must reflect the highest price for selected WIC-approved food items. Applicants can locate the WIC-approved food items in the Minimum Stocking Requirement section of this manual.

If the applicant passes the initial market basket analysis, the State WIC Office will send a written confirmation letter notifying the store of its selection status.

#### Authorized Retailers

The State WIC Office monitors prices in real-time and analyzes the price competitiveness of all authorized retailers, at minimum, twice each federal fiscal year. Paid redemption amounts for WIC-approved food items are analyzed by the WIC state office for competitiveness within the store's assigned peer group.



## Financial Considerations: Reimbursement Levels

These guidelines answer some common questions that authorized retailers have about how eWIC food benefits are reimbursed by the State WIC Office.

### Not-to-Exceed Value

Authorized retailers are reimbursed for WIC approved foods purchased by eWIC cardholders. A reasonable price is determined based on the food item's category, subcategory, or Universal Product Code (UPC). A maximum, Not-to-Exceed (NTE) value is calculated based upon previous eWIC food benefit redemptions for the store's assigned peer group. NTE values are recalculated weekly.

Authorized retailers connect to a centralized database which identifies authorized food items and their NTE reimbursement levels.

Authorized retailers should contact the NTE Coordinator at the State WIC Office if they have questions about the NTE reimbursement level set for their store's peer group. The UPC for the food item in question must be provided.

Authorized retailers whose prices are higher than established NTE values will only be paid up to the NTE value. Requests for reconsideration of NTE reimbursement levels must be submitted to the NTE Coordinator.

Authorized retailers whose prices are lower than established NTE values will be reimbursed the actual price submitted.

Authorized retailers using stand-beside devices to process eWIC transactions can identify the NTE reimbursement level by reviewing settlement and reconciliation reports produced daily by the eWIC Processor.

### Cash Value Benefits

A dollar amount is loaded on the eWIC benefit card for fresh, frozen, and canned fruits and vegetables. No NTE level exists for these benefits.

### Adjusted Payments

Payment adjustment requests must be submitted in writing to the State WIC Office within 30 calendar days of the original transaction date. The retailer should include a detailed explanation of the issue as well as the corrective action taken to prevent future occurrences if applicable.

## Financial Considerations:

### Automated Clearing House Reimbursements

These guidelines define the roles of the State WIC Office, the eWIC Processor, and the authorized retailer in providing banking information used to process Automated Clearinghouse (ACH) adjustments.

#### Automated Clearing House (ACH) Adjustments

Authorized retailers must provide current banking information to the State WIC Office and third party eWIC Processor as such information is required to process ACH reimbursements for eWIC transactions. The ACH system is used to reimburse authorized retailers for eWIC food benefits redeemed by eWIC cardholders or to recover overcharges.

The retailer's point-of-sale system transmits a daily file to the eWIC Processor, which triggers reimbursement to the authorized retailer for eWIC transactions processed that business day. The eWIC Processor forwards all reimbursements electronically to the authorized retailer's bank account.

To ensure that ACH adjustments are applied correctly, it is critical that retailers provide banking information, including changes, to the State WIC Office and third party eWIC Processor immediately. Retailers that fail to submit updated banking information to the eWIC Processor may not be eligible to receive payment for eWIC transactions.

Retailers must contact the State WIC Office and eWIC Processor directly to set up or make changes to their ACH banking information.

Settlement reimbursements paid to authorized retailers shall be for the total dollar amount as approved by the WIC Program at the time of purchase. This amount represents the lesser of either the store's per item price or the WIC Program's Not-to-Exceed value.

Retailers using stand-beside devices are encouraged to reconcile eWIC transactions against the daily settlement and reconciliation reports available from the eWIC Processor.

The State WIC Office does not provide ACH statements or settlement and reconciliation reports for eWIC transactions.

## Financial Considerations: WIC Purchase Receipts

These guidelines define store-level requirements for providing WIC purchase receipts to eWIC cardholders. WIC purchase receipts document the eWIC food benefits both currently available and used during the most recent transaction. The WIC purchase receipt is important in verifying that the WIC Program and the eWIC cardholder's benefit account were charged only for intended items. The WIC purchase receipt is helpful to both the eWIC cardholder and the authorized retailer; it is a complete listing of the food items selected by the WIC Program for a specific eWIC cardholder.

### WIC Purchase Receipts

Authorized retailers are required to provide a WIC purchase receipt for foods purchased with an eWIC benefit card. This receipt, shall include at minimum, the following:

1. Last four digits of the eWIC card's Primary Account Number (PAN);
2. Store name and address;
3. Transaction date and time;
4. Products purchased including quantity, description and unit of measure;
5. Price charged for each product
6. Total purchase amount;
7. Benefits Remaining, including the description, quantity and unit of measure; and
8. Unique transaction identifier or system trace audit number.

Authorized retailers must give a copy of WIC purchase receipt to the eWIC cardholder either directly or by placing it in the customer's shopping bag. Retailers should encourage the eWIC cardholder to retain a copy of the WIC purchase receipt but are not responsible for ensuring the eWIC cardholder keeps it.

### Balance Inquiry

Authorized retailers must offer a balance inquiry option to eWIC cardholders. This option must accurately identify available eWIC food benefits and should serve as a shopping tool. A balance inquiry receipt shall list at minimum, the following:

1. Last four digits of the eWIC card's Primary Account Number (PAN);
2. Store name and address;
3. Date and time of balance inquiry;
4. Benefit expiration date; and
5. Remaining benefits available in the eWIC cardholder's account for the current benefit period including the description, quantity and unit of measure.

## Financial Considerations: (continued)

The eWIC cardholder must not be required to make a purchase in exchange for requesting a balance inquiry.

The eWIC cardholder must not use the eWIC benefit card to purchase more than the quantity listed on the balance inquiry receipt. Other forms of tender (i.e. SNAP card, credit or debit card, and cash) must be used to pay any difference between available eWIC food benefits and the total at checkout.

## Exchanges and Refunds

These guidelines answer some common questions that authorized retailers have about restrictions and limitations that apply to eWIC cardholders' requests for exchanges and refunds. Authorized retailers cannot issue cash refunds or store credits for food or formula purchased with an eWIC benefit card.

### Exchanges and Refunds

An eWIC cardholder may exchange a WIC-approved food or formula for the exact type purchased. For example, the item previously purchased may be expired, have damaged packaging, or have spoiled or inedible contents. Authorized retailers are allowed to provide an even exchange in accordance with the store's policy for all customers, which may or may not require a receipt as proof of purchase.

Items purchased using an eWIC benefit card must be exchanged for the exact quantity and type selected for the eWIC cardholder's shopping list. The WIC Program does not allow cash refunds or store credits to be provided to the eWIC cardholder. At no time may an authorized retailer exchange eWIC food benefits for cash.

Rain checks and the use of the eWIC benefit card as a due bill are not permitted. Due bill processing occurs when an authorized retailer provides food benefits on the eWIC shopping list but does not process the eWIC benefit card until the date the benefits become available. If the authorized retailer does not have the food or formula available, then the sale must be refused and the eWIC cardholder should be referred to another authorized store.

## Financial Considerations: eWIC Benefit Card Handling

These guidelines define the process for handling lost or improperly used eWIC benefit cards.

### Lost eWIC Benefit Cards

If an authorized retailer finds an eWIC benefit card, the store must report it immediately by calling the Conduent eWIC Retailer Help Desk: 877-436-6057.

The authorized retailer may mail the recovered eWIC benefit card to the State WIC Office, Attn: Vendor Compliance Manager. Until it is mailed, the store must keep the lost eWIC benefit card in a secure location.

### Damaged eWIC Benefit Cards

If an authorized retailer cannot process a damaged eWIC benefit card, the store should refer the eWIC cardholder to the local WIC office for assistance.

If an eWIC benefit card Personal Identification Number (PIN) is rejected after three entry attempts, the retailer must advise the eWIC cardholder to call the Xerox eWIC Cardholder Help Desk. This phone number is printed on the back of the eWIC benefit card. Under no circumstances should the retailer call on behalf of the eWIC cardholder.

Retailers should only manually enter the eWIC cardholder's Personal Account Number (PAN) if the card cannot be read by their POS system. Under no circumstances can the PAN be manually entered without the eWIC benefit card being physically present at the time. Cashiers should encourage participants to contact the Xerox customer service number on the card so it can be replaced.

### Improperly Used eWIC Benefit Cards

A. If an authorized retailer suspects that an eWIC benefit card is being used improperly, the store should report such activity to the State WIC Office with the Retailer Complaint and Incident Form.



## **Training:** Retailer Interactive Training

These guidelines define training requirements for authorized retailers. Training provided to cashiers and store personnel is designed to prevent errors, abuse, and other noncompliance as well as promote delivery of quality services to eWIC cardholders.

### **State WIC Office Training**

The State WIC Office is responsible for training authorized retailer management staff in most program functions except point of sale transactions. For additional guidance, contact the store's assigned Vendor Liaison.

Authorized retailer management or representatives are responsible for training all store personnel involved in processing eWIC transactions.

Authorized retailers must should contact the store's assigned Vendor Liaison to request training assistance.

Authorized retailers must seek out their own translation resources to assist them in understanding English language presentations and training materials, if needed.

### **Certified Trainer Program (optional)**

Authorized retailers not currently participating in the Certified Trainer Program must submit the participation request in writing to the Vendor Compliance Manager via email.

Authorized retailers may designate one or more individuals to become certified trainers. Once certified, each trainer is encouraged to contact their Vendor Liaison for technical assistance as needed.

Once a certified trainer has met all WIC Program training requirements, they will be added to a database with the State WIC Office and must be recertified as required by the State WIC Office.

Certified trainers are responsible for training all store personnel involved in processing eWIC transactions. These individuals must work through their corporate offices to provide interactive training at the following times:

1. Initial WIC Program authorization (new applicants);
2. Contract reauthorization; and
3. When requested by the State WIC Office.

## Certified Trainer Program (optional) continued

A new authorized store must submit a copy of the WIC Certified Retailer Training Reporting Form to the State WIC office prior to accepting WIC food benefits. This form documents that at least one member of management has been trained by a certified trainer. Completed forms must contain the following information:

1. Company name (including store number if applicable);
2. Certified trainer name;
3. Attendee names;
4. Training date; and
5. Training type.

Certified trainers do not have to submit records of training provided to non-management store personnel to the State WIC Office.

Certified trainers should keep copies of training materials and attendee rosters. This information may be requested by the State WIC Office.

The State WIC Office requires authorized retailers to submit required documentation to ensure mandatory training requirements have been met.

The State WIC Office may assist authorized retailers and certified trainers in developing training resources for store personnel.

## eWIC Processor Training

Basic training will be provided for authorized retailers using stand-beside devices by contacting the Conduent help desk.

The eWIC Processor is responsible for confirming with the WIC Program that the store's stand-beside equipment is operational.

Authorized retailers should contact the eWIC Processor if they require additional training or have questions about using eWIC stand-beside equipment.

## eWIC Integrated Training

Certified trainers or designees are responsible for training management and other store personnel in any unique processing and transaction requirements for eWIC food benefits.

Certified trainers are responsible for developing and distributing internal training resources to be used by cashiers in facilitating eWIC transactions.

## Program Administration: Compliance Investigations

The WIC Program shall conduct undercover investigations to monitor authorized retailers' level of compliance. These guidelines define compliance investigation procedures for which eWIC food benefits are the payment method.

### Administrative Issues

The specific violations assessed during a compliance investigation are outlined in the Sanctions, Compliance, and Program Violations Schedule.

All violations documented during the investigation will count toward the establishment of a pattern of noncompliance. Multiple occurrences of the same violation documented during a single compliance buy will only be charged once. Authorized retailers that receive a warning letter as a result of a compliance investigation are expected to take the following corrective actions:

- Complete training of store personnel in proper eWIC and reimbursement procedures. Resources that outline these procedures may include the Xerox eWIC Retailer Manual for stores using stand-beside devices and processing instructions developed by corporate retailers for stores using point-of-sale integrated systems;
- Review the final compliance investigation letter and implement appropriate corrective actions to address all documented violations; and
- Contact the store's assigned Vendor Liaison to request assistance if needed.

Once a compliance investigation has been closed, the retailer may request a copy of any supporting documentation (e.g., eWIC transaction records, store receipts, and investigation reports) by writing to the State WIC Office.

If an authorized retailer accumulates any chargeable violations, the retailer may request training by contacting the store's assigned Vendor Liaison.

After the retailer receives a final compliance letter, the store manager or owner must remit payment for any assessed fine within 20 calendar days to the Virginia Department of Health in the form of a cashier's check or money order. Payment should be mailed to the contact person and address identified on the invoice sent to the retailer.

Questions regarding a warning letter received by the retailer must be directed to the State WIC Office personnel who sent the compliance results letter.

A disqualified store may reapply for WIC Program authorization after completion of all performance requirements outlined in the final written disqualification letter. These requirements may include the return of any stand-beside equipment used to process eWIC transactions.

A copy of federal regulations 7 C.F.R. §246.12(L)(3)(xx) which further outline WIC Program abuse issues can be obtained by contacting the store's assigned Vendor Liaison or from the Food and Nutrition Service of the United States Department of Agriculture's website.

## Program Administration: Inventory Audits

The WIC Program shall conduct inventory audits to monitor authorized retailers' level of compliance. Inventory audits are used to identify potential discrepancies between a store's purchasing records compared to eWIC transactions processed at the retailer's location. These guidelines define inventory audit procedures.

### Administrative Issues

The specific violations assessed during an inventory audit are outlined in the Sanctions, Compliance, and Program Violations Schedule.

All violations documented during an inventory audit will count towards the establishment of a pattern of noncompliance. Multiple occurrences of the same violation may be charged during this type of audit.

Once an inventory audit has been completed, the authorized retailer will be notified by the State WIC Office in writing of the audit results and any required follow up actions.

After the retailer receives a final compliance letter, the store manager or owner must remit payment for any assessed fine within 20 calendar days to the Virginia Department of Health in the form of a cashier's check or money order. Payment should be mailed to the contact person and address identified on the invoice sent to the retailer.

Questions regarding an inventory audit final results letter received by the retailer must be directed to the State WIC Office personnel who sent the compliance results letter.

A disqualified store may reapply for WIC Program authorization after it has completed all performance requirements outlined in its final written disqualification letter. These requirements may include the return of any stand-beside equipment used to process eWIC transactions.

A copy of federal regulations 7 C.F.R. §246.12(L)(3)(xx) which further outline WIC Program abuse issues can be obtained by contacting the store's assigned Vendor Liaison or from the Food and Nutrition Service of the United States Department of Agriculture's website.

## Program Administration: Sanctions, Compliance, and Program Violations

Category A	Class I Violation Descriptions	Administrative Actions (See VII)	St/Fed Violations
1.	Limits participants in their choice of WIC approved food.	\$100 fine, second occurrence within a 12- month period.	St
2.	Minimum food stocking requirement not met for any WIC approved food item(s), including contract formula.	\$100 fine, second occurrence within a 12-month period.	St
3.	Cardholder not given a shopping receipt for their WIC purchase and cardholder did not expressly decline the receipt.	\$100 fine, second occurrence within a 12-month period.	St
4.	Prices not displayed in the immediate area of WIC approved food(s).	\$100 fine, second occurrence within a 12-month period.	St
5.	Requests additional identification, beyond requesting the cardholder enter their Personal Identification Number (PIN), to process a eWIC transaction.	\$100 fine, second occurrence within a 12-month period.	St
6.	Asks for and/or enters the eWIC cardholder's PIN in order to process a eWIC transaction.	\$100 fine, second occurrence within a 12-month period.	St
7.	Equitable treatment is not provided to the eWIC cardholder/ participant when these options are offered to cash paying customers, including the use of manufacturer and/or store coupons, incentives or discounts.	\$100 fine, second occurrence within a 12-month period.	St
8.	Offers incentives or in-store promotions exclusively targeted at eWIC cardholders/ participants.	\$100 fine, second occurrence within a 12-month period.	St
9.	Required training of cashiers on how to process a eWIC transaction is not provided.	\$100 fine, second occurrence within a 12-month period.	St
10.	Charges the WIC Program sales tax on a eWIC purchase.	\$100 fine, second occurrence within a 12-month period.	St
11.	Violates participant's confidentiality.	\$100 fine, second occurrence within a 12-month period.	St
12.	Scanning UPC of WIC approved food items and providing food items that are different from the WIC prescribed benefits.	\$100 fine, second occurrence within a 12-month period.	St



## Program Administration: Sanctions, Compliance, and Program Violations

Category B	Class II Violation Descriptions	Administrative Actions	St/Fed Violations
1.	A federally mandated requirement or documented corrective action is not complied with, i.e., fails to purchase formula from an approved supplier, distributor or manufacturer.	2 incidents = pattern; 1 year DQ or CMP.	St
2.	Prices of WIC authorized foods/formula is not provided as requested by the WIC program.	2 incidents = pattern; 1 year DQ or CMP.	St
3.	Minimum food stocking requirement is not met within a 12-month period.	3 documented incidents within a consecutive 12-month period= pattern; 1 year DQ or CMP.	St
4.	Discriminates against a eWIC cardholder based on race, color, national origin, age, sex or disability.	2 incidents = pattern; 1 year DQ or CMP.	St
5.	An administrative fee, compliance fine, overcharge, as requested by the WIC Program, is not paid.	2 incidents = pattern; 1 year DQ or CMP.	St
6.	Does not attend mandatory WIC Program training after having the opportunity to reschedule once.	2 incidents = pattern; 1 year DQ or CMP.	St
7.	Fails to properly use "WIC" shelf labels on food(s) as outlined in the WIC Approved Food List.	3 documented incidents within a consecutive 12-month period equates to a pattern, 1 year DQ or CMP.	St

## Program Administration: Sanctions, Compliance, and Program Violations

Category C	Class III Violation Descriptions	Administrative Actions	St/Fed Violations
1.	Transacts and/or redeems eWIC transactions outside of authorized channels or the actual store location as identified in the signed Retailer Agreement, including the use of an unauthorized store location. 7 CFR 246.12(l)(1)(iii)(D)	4 incidents = pattern; 3 year DQ or CMP. (See footnote for additional information related to the CMP).	Fed
2.	Uses a different Universal Product Code (UPC) than what was charged to the WIC program which results in allowing the eWIC cardholder to purchase an ineligible food or non-food item. 7 CFR 246.12(l)(1)(iv)	4 incidents = pattern; 3 year DQ or CMP. (See footnote for additional information related to the CMP).	Fed
3.	Charges the WIC program more for supplemental WIC food(s) purchased than non- WIC customers (overcharge). 7 CFR 246.12(l)(1)(iii)(C)	4 incidents = pattern; 3 year DQ or CMP. (See footnote for additional information related to the CMP).	Fed
4.	Charges the WIC Program for supplemental foods not received by the eWIC cardholder (overcharge). 7 CFR 246.12(l)(1)(iii)(E)	4 incidents = pattern; 3 year DQ or CMP. (See footnote for additional information related to the CMP).	Fed
5.	Manually enters a cardholder's Personal Account Number (PAN) without having actual physical possession of the eWIC benefit card for the items charged as being purchased by the cardholder.	4 incidents = pattern; 1 year DQ or CMP. (See footnote for additional information related to the CMP).	Fed
6.	Threatens/inflicts physical harm/ commits verbal harassment against a WIC representative or a participant using program benefits.	4 incidents = pattern; 3 year DQ or CMP. (See footnote for additional information related to the CMP).	St
7.	Provides false and/or incomplete information, including pricing data, as part of the selection and evaluation process.	4 incidents = pattern; 1 year DQ or CMP. (See footnote for additional information related to the CMP).	St
8.	Transacts and/or redeems eWIC transactions outside of normal operating hours as reported to the WIC Program.	4 incidents = pattern; 3 year DQ or CMP. (See footnote for additional information related to the CMP).	St

## Program Administration:

### Sanctions, Compliance, and Program Violations

Category D	Class IV Violation Descriptions	Administrative Actions	St/Fed Violations
1	Trafficking/Illegal sales, including the buying or selling of eWIC benefits for cash; exchanging WIC benefits for fire arms, ammunition, explosives, or controlled substances (as defined in section 102 of the Controlled Substances Act (21 U.S.C.802). 7 CFR 246.12(l)(1)(ii)(A) & (B)	1 incident = 6 year DX or CMP. (See footnote for additional information).	Fed
2	Sells cigarettes/tobacco or alcoholic beverages to eWIC cardholder - one documented occurrence is sufficient for imposing this sanction. 7 CFR 246.12(l)(1)(iii)(A)	1 incident = 3 year DQ or CMP. (See footnote for additional information related to the CMP).	Fed
3	Provides cash, in whole or in part, for eWIC benefits. 7 CFR 246.12(l)(1)(ii)(A)	1 incident = 6 year DQ or CMP. (See footnote for additional information).	Fed

Category E	Class V Violation Descriptions	Administrative Actions	St/Fed Violations
1	A conviction of trafficking or illegal sales. Trafficking/Illegal sales-the buying or selling of eWIC benefits for cash; exchanging WIC benefits for fire arms, ammunition, explosives, or controlled substances (as defined in section 102 of the Controlled Substances Act (21 U.S.C. 802). 7 CFR 246.12(l)(1)(i)	1 incident = permanent DX (see footnote for additional information).	Fed

## Program Administration: Sanctions, Compliance, and Program Violations

### References:

- i. The Sanctions, Compliance, and Program Violations Schedule applies to eWIC transactions only.
- ii. Federally mandated violations are designated with the notation of Fed, state mandated violations are designated with the notation of St.
- iii. CMP means Civil Monetary Penalty. The State WIC Office may impose a CMP in lieu of a disqualification if the disqualification of the store would result in inadequate participant access.
- iv. DQ means WIC Program disqualification.
- v. A pattern of noncompliance for federally mandated violations equates to four or more documented incidents unless stated otherwise.
- vi. A pattern of noncompliance for state mandated violations equates to two or more documented incidents unless stated otherwise.
- vii. Patterns established for routine monitoring are established when two (or more) occurrences of the same violation occur within a consecutive 12-month period. Patterns established for compliance investigations are established when two (or more) occurrences of the same violation occur within the single (same) compliance investigation.
- viii. For violations documented during the first compliance buys of an investigation, the State WIC Office will send a written warning letter to the retailer. The State WIC Office will conduct additional buys two weeks after sending this warning letter. Once the investigation is closed, the store will receive a final summary of the documented violations.
- ix. Exception – no written warning may be sent to a store prior to completing additional compliance buys if this notice would jeopardize the integrity of the investigative process. The State WIC Office may decide not to provide written notification to the retailer if it determines that said notification would compromise the investigative process. The State WIC Office must document in the store's file the reason(s) supporting this administrative decision.
- x. All violations flagged as overcharge will result in assessment of a financial vendor claim and the retailer will have to repay the amount of the overcharge.
- xi. Refer to State WIC Regulation 12VAC5-195-600 (Sanctions and administrative actions) for additional information pertaining to state agency policies.

## **Program Administration:**

### **Disqualification and Administrative Actions**

These guidelines define procedures for requesting review or appeal of administrative actions and payment of Civil Monetary Penalties (CMPs) and administrative fines. Penalties and fines are exacted after specific areas of noncompliance (as outlined in the Sanctions, Compliance, and Program Violations Schedule) have been documented by the WIC Program.

#### **Administrative Review Request**

Authorized retailers and new store applicants have the right to request administrative review or appeal of disqualification (except in cases of reciprocal SNAP disqualification), denied authorization, or other administrative action. To pursue this option, the retailer must submit a written request for administrative review to the Vendor Compliance Manager within 15 calendar days of receipt of the State WIC Office's administrative decision.

#### **Civil Monetary Penalty (CMP) Assessment**

The authorized retailer must remit a lump sum payment within 20 calendar days after receiving an administrative fine letter unless other arrangements, such as installments, are agreed upon in writing.

#### **Administrative Fine Assessment**

The State WIC Office will send an administrative fine letter and invoice to the retailer or corporate contact. The invoice will identify the amount due, the remittance date, and the specific violations documented by the WIC Program.

If the authorized retailer pursues a second review of the original amount assessed, they must submit a written request to the State WIC Office within 20 calendar days after receiving the administrative fine letter and invoice. In the written request, the authorized retailer must include any documentation that should be considered by the Division Director in evaluating the merit of the reconsideration request. The payment amount identified in the original invoice is not due until the authorized retailer receives an updated written decision. If a fine still applies once an administrative decision is made then the authorized retailer must submit payment within 20 calendar days after receiving the updated written notice.



## Quick Reference: Contacts and Web Links

**State WIC Office Program** commonly used contact information and website links.

### Contacts

**State WIC office email for retailers:** [WIC\\_Retailer@vdh.virginia.gov](mailto:WIC_Retailer@vdh.virginia.gov)

Use email to contact Vendor Liaisons, Vendor Manager, or UPC Coordinator

**State WIC office receptionist:** 804-864-7800

Use to contact Vendor Liaisons, Vendor Manager, or UPC Coordinator

**Conduent Vendor Helpdesk:** 877-436-6057

Use to contact Conduent regarding stand-beside equipment used for processing eWIC transactions.

### Links

[VirginiaWICRetailers.com](http://VirginiaWICRetailers.com)

**Use to find the most up to date versions of:**

- Retailer Supply Request Form (Webform)
- Retailer Bulletins,
- Approved Food List
- Approved Formula Suppliers
- Formula Flyer
- Minimum Stocking Requirement
- WIC approved Food Brochure
- UPC Update Request Form
- Retailer Complaint and Incident Form
- Other training and manuals

### Address

**Send hard copy correspondence (if needed) to:** Vendor Compliance Manager  
Virginia Department of Health  
109 Governor Street, 8th floor  
Richmond, VA 23219



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