

WISCONSIN WIC PROGRAM—Vendor Manual Addendum

Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC)

This addendum to the existing WIC Vendor Manual, P-44537 (Rev. 8/13), is being made to reflect changes in the rights, responsibilities and procedures for authorized WIC vendors related to the implementation of Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT or *eWIC* card) as the new form of food instruments.

The State WIC Office informs authorized vendors of changes in program policies and procedures through notices and periodic updates. Vendors are responsible for ensuring that cashiers and other employees are advised of the changes. Vendors are responsible for the acts of their employees related to the WIC Program.

Definitions

Approved Product List (APL) – Electronic files identifying WIC food items authorized by the Wisconsin WIC Program for purchase with WIC benefits.

Benefit Balance - A listing of benefits available with the *eWIC* benefit card that specifies the quantity, food category, size, dollar amount, and sometimes brand of food prescribed to a WIC household that must be redeemed within a designated time.

Cash Value Benefits - A fixed-dollar amount associated with the *eWIC* card used by a WIC cardholder to obtain authorized fruits and vegetables. In the event the amount of fruits and vegetables exceeds the dollar amount available, it is the cardholder's responsibility to pay the difference.

***eWIC* Contractor** – FIS (Fidelity Information Services) Government Solutions is the WIC EBT contractor hired by the Wisconsin WIC Program to process *eWIC* transactions. FIS leases stand-by equipment to non-integrated vendors through a Merchant Agreement. Contact FIS at 1-800-894-0050 or 11000 W Lake Park Dr., Milwaukee, WI 53224-3003.

***eWIC* Card** - A payment instrument with a magnetic stripe to perform a series of real-time transactions between the POS device at the WIC Vendor and the EBT Card Issuer Processor to approve the WIC transaction. The *eWIC* card number and PIN link to an *eWIC* cardholder account that contains a benefit balance. The *eWIC* card is issued by a local WIC Agency and used to purchase approved food items at an authorized vendor location.

***eWIC* Cardholder** – An authorized person (i.e., participant, parent, legal guardian, caretaker, proxy) in possession of an *eWIC* card. This benefit card allows the WIC cardholder to purchase approved food items prescribed to one or more participants assigned to a family account.

NTE (Not to Exceed) - The maximum price for individual food items/peer group.

Product Look Up (PLU) – A 4- or 5-digit number defined by the International Federation for Produce Standards (IFPS). PLUs are used to identify products that are typically of variable measure.

UPC (Universal Product Codes) – A specific type of barcode used to identify products sold by the WIC Vendor. Approved WIC food item codes are entered on the APL file.

eWIC Guidelines

These guidelines define the procedures that authorized vendors must use for eWIC business and eWIC cardholders' purchases during a store's normal operating hours.

I. Emergency Procedures

- A. Vendors shall inform the State WIC Office, as early as possible, of any situation that negatively affects eWIC cardholders' ability to shop at an authorized vendor location. This includes, but is not limited to: natural disasters, flooding, equipment/technical/electrical failures, public health emergencies, or any other adverse condition that significantly reduces the store's normal operating hours.
- B. Vendors using stand-beside devices may encounter equipment issues or technical/electrical failures as well. When these situations occur, contact the FIS Help Desk at 1-877-227-6347.

II. Accepting eWIC Card

- A. The eWIC card provides access to food benefits.
- B. The eWIC card defines a specific family's balance of food benefits for a designated period of time. When the issued food benefits have been redeemed, no additional eWIC purchases may occur until additional food benefits are added to the eWIC cardholder's account.
- C. eWIC cardholders may redeem food benefits over as many or few transactions as desired until the last date to use for the account. Cardholders are not required to use all of their benefits.
- D. Vendors must not ask for or enter the eWIC cardholder's PIN.
- E. No eWIC transactions are allowed to be processed without either swiping the eWIC card or key-entering the Primary Account Number (PAN). The eWIC card must be present during the transaction.
- F. If an authorized vendor suspects that an eWIC card is being used improperly, the store should report such activity to the State WIC Office with a Participant/Vendor Complaint form (F-44322).

III. Cash Value Benefits (CVB)

- A. Cash Value transactions are handled similarly to purchasing regular eWIC foods. The difference is if the value of the fruit/vegetable exceeds the CVB balance, the eWIC cardholder may choose to purchase the excess by using other forms of tender (i.e., SNAP, credit, debit, gift card, or cash).
- B. Vendors using a stand-beside device will not scan individual UPCs for CVBs. They will select the CVB button and enter the dollar value for each item.

IV. Discounts and Coupons

Discounts and coupons provide a greater quantity or lower price for food items and must be applied by the vendor. The following rules apply to the use of these:

- A. The eWIC cardholder may use cents-off coupons/Internet applications/loyalty reward cards on all approved WIC foods.
- B. The dollar amount for the WIC food item must reflect all posted store specials, coupons, discounts, and other reduced prices extended to non-WIC customers.

- C. Store offers or coupons for free items or free ounces may result in the participant receiving more ounces than specified on the prescription benefit purchase.
- D. If the vendor's store policy includes price matching, these policies must also be extended to WIC customers.
- E. The vendor must apply the discounts and/or coupons to the purchase transaction prior to requesting reimbursement through the *eWIC* card.

V. Transaction Receipts and Benefit Balance

- A. Authorized vendors are required to provide a receipt for foods purchased with an *eWIC* card. The receipt must provide, at a minimum, the following information:
 - 1. Store name and address;
 - 2. Transaction date;
 - 3. Products purchase;
 - 4. Price charged for each product; and
 - 5. Benefit balance.
- B. Authorized vendors must provide a receipt to the *eWIC* cardholder. Vendors should encourage the *eWIC* cardholder to keep the receipt for remaining balance list.

VI. Voided Transactions

- A. A vendor may cancel the purchase of a single WIC food item, a method of payment or the entire transaction at the WIC cardholder's request. All rules of voiding transactions must be followed.
- B. A void must be performed prior to completing the transaction and tendering WIC or prior to the next transaction. When this process is completed, the *eWIC* cardholder's benefits will be restored to the card.
- C. A voided transaction shall not be used to return or provide a credit for WIC foods.

VII. Lane Operations

- A. Authorized vendors must offer a balance inquiry option to *eWIC* cardholders either in-lane or at another identified location available to cardholders.
- B. The *eWIC* cardholder must not be required to make a purchase in exchange for requesting a balance inquiry.
- C. Only one *eWIC* card may be accepted per transaction.

VIII. Exchanges and Refunds

- A. Returns shall not be allowed for *eWIC* purchases other than in exchange for the same brand, package size and type of food.
- B. Acceptance of returns for exchange of the same WIC food item may be completed at the WIC vendor's option.
- C. Vendor shall not request additional payment for the same WIC food item provided in exchange of the same WIC food item.
- D. Returns shall not result in an *eWIC* card transaction.
- E. Vendor shall not provide cash or other consideration to an *eWIC* cardholder for a return under any circumstance.

IX. *eWIC* Card Handling

- A. Vendors must provide *eWIC* cardholders with the opportunity to enter the *eWIC* card PIN in a manner that prevents viewing by anyone other than the cardholder.
- B. Any *eWIC* cards found in the store or on the store property, if left unclaimed for 24 hours, should be returned to the State WIC Office by mailing the cards to WIC, PO Box 2659, Madison, WI 53701-2659.

X. Damaged eWIC Cards

- A. If an authorized vendor cannot process a damaged eWIC card, the vendor should refer the eWIC cardholder to the local WIC office for assistance. The vendor may manually key in the eWIC card number only if the card is damaged.
- B. If an eWIC card Personal Identification Number (PIN) is rejected after four entry attempts, the card will be locked. The vendor must advise the eWIC cardholder to call the WIC Project for assistance.

XI. Confidentiality

- A. Vendors 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.
- B. Authorized vendors have the right to use available information contained on the eWIC card (e.g., Personal Account Number) to file a complaint against a cardholder who does not follow established WIC Program procedures.
- C. Authorized vendors may not ask for the eWIC cardholder's driver's license, telephone number, address, Social Security Number, or any additional personal identification or information as might be requested with non-WIC transactions. The eWIC card and PIN are the only identifiers allowed to complete the eWIC transaction.
- D. If a cashier must call for manager assistance, the cashier must not identify "WIC" when seeking this type of assistance.

XII. Approved Product List

- A. On a daily basis, a current/updated APL is available for download to point-of-sale integrated systems and stand-beside devices.
- B. The APL contains UPCs for each WIC-approved food item.
- C. Authorized vendors are responsible for ensuring that the most current version of the APL is available at all registers that process eWIC transactions.
- D. At checkout, the UPC of each WIC food item being purchased with the eWIC card must be scanned. The only exception is CVB transactions using a stand-beside device.
- E. Any item presented for purchase with an eWIC card must be scanned or entered during the transaction. Vendor personnel must use the eWIC device to determine if the item presented is eligible. Items not approved by the system should never be processed as part of the eWIC transaction.
- F. If a WIC-eligible food item is not listed in the APL, authorized retailers may submit a UPC update request to the State WIC Office for consideration.

XIII. Not-to-Exceed (NTE) Price

- A. Authorized vendors are reimbursed for WIC-approved foods purchased by eWIC cardholders. A reasonable price is determined based on the food item's category, subcategory, or UPC.
- B. Authorized vendors whose prices are higher than established NTE prices will only be paid up to NTE reimbursement levels. A request for reconsideration of NTE reimbursement levels must be submitted to the State WIC Office for review.
- C. Settlement reimbursements paid to authorized vendors 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 vendor's shelf price or the WIC Program's NTE price.
- D. Authorized vendors using stand-beside devices to process eWIC transactions can identify the NTE reimbursement level by reviewing settlement and reconciliation reports found on the FIS vendor portal.

XIV. Payment Adjustments

- A. Payment adjustment requests must be submitted in writing to the State WIC Office Vendor Manager within 30 calendar days of the original transaction date.
- B. The request must include an explanation of the error as well as the corrective action taken to prevent future occurrences.

XV. Penalties

- A. As described in Wis. Stat. § 253.06, Wis. Admin. Code ch. DHS 149, 7 CFR 246, and the 2013-2016 Vendor Agreement and Vendor Manual, all sanctions for WIC Program fraud or abuse and penalties apply to the new WIC tender, the eWIC Card. All references to WIC checks and benefits apply interchangeably to the eWIC Card.
- B. Failure to comply with the requirements listed in this Vendor Manual Addendum and all requirements in the original Vendor Manual may result in sanctions against the vendor, including but not limited to, termination, disqualification, recoupment and forfeiture assessments, a warning letter, additional training, a corrective action plan, or any combination thereof.
- C. The State WIC Office will determine the action to be taken whenever vendor abuse, fraud, or administrative violations are discovered. If the State WIC Office determines that the vendor has violated applicable rules or regulations, the vendor will be disqualified from participation in the WIC Program for a period of no more than the maximum allowed under 7 CFR 246. To obtain re-authorization, vendors who are disqualified must re-apply and meet all current requirements for authorization.
- D. State WIC Office sanctions for program abuse shall not be construed as excluding or replacing any criminal or civil sanctions or other remedies that may be applicable under federal and state statute or local ordinance. A vendor who commits fraud or abuse of the program is liable to prosecution under applicable federal, state, or local laws.
- E. Refer to Section C, Sanctions for Fraud or Abuse, of the 2013-2016 Vendor Agreement for further sanction guidelines.