



The WIC'r Basket

Vendor Newsletter of the West Virginia WIC Program

West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources | Bureau for Public Health, Office of Nutrition Services

SHENANDOAH REGION REAUTHORIZATION

The existing Vendor Agreement between authorized vendors in the Shenandoah WIC Region will expire on December 31, 2017. This area includes the following counties: Berkeley, Hampshire, Jefferson, Mineral, and Morgan. In order for stores to continue to be authorized, a new Vendor Agreement must be in place, which will be effective January 1, 2018. One of the requirements of the Vendor Agreement is all authorized vendors must receive federally mandated training before being authorized to participate in the West Virginia (WV) WIC Program. The State WIC Office offered in-person training on October 30, 2017 and October 31, 2017.

Corporate contacts, certified trainers and retail store managers in this region may schedule additional in store cashier training, or training for new management personnel, anytime during the contract period by calling (304) 558-1115. All original signature applications and agreements must also be received by the Vendor Management Unit no later than November 30, 2017.



GERBER® INFANT CEREAL AND GERBER® INFANT FRUITS AND VEGETABLES PRICE CHANGE

The WV WIC Program has received notification Gerber® Infant Cereal and Gerber® Infant Fruits and Vegetables will experience an increase in wholesale price effective January 1, 2018. With this price change, the WIC Program also anticipates an increase in retail prices. The Vendor Management Unit will be monitoring shelf prices in hopes of responding to this market change with appropriate Maximum Allowable Reimbursement Levels (i.e. Not to Exceed Price) for each peer group. Please notify the Vendor Management Unit if you are experiencing Not to Exceed (NTE) adjustments. Be prepared to report the product name, UPC, and your requested shelf price. NTE adjustments will be noted on the reconciliation receipt of each transaction or on end of day reports.

SIMILAC PRO-ADVANCE™ IS NOT WV WIC APPROVED

Per WIC Federal Regulation §246.16a, WIC Programs are required to have a cost containment strategy for infant formula which is why West Virginia only approves the sale of Similac® products for milk-based formula and Gerber® for soy-based formula.


While the WV WIC Program is aware customers may request the newest products, Similac Pro-Advance™ is not WIC Approved, and may not be purchased with WIC benefits. Similac® Advance®, Similac Sensitive®, Similac Total Comfort™ and Similac® for Spit-Up are the WV WIC Approved Similac® products.



GERBER® INFANT FRUITS AND VEGETABLES—NEW APPROVED PRODUCTS

Gerber has announced new product offerings in their Gerber® 1st Foods® and 2nd Foods® infant fruit and vegetable product lines starting April 2018. These are allowed for purchase with West Virginia WIC benefits.

NEW Gerber® 2nd Foods® Infant Fruit and Vegetable Blends in 4 oz 2-packs

Description	Product UPC	Net Contents	Packaging Example
Gerber® 2nd Foods® Apple Avocado	015000076337	2 packs of 4oz (8 oz in total)	
Gerber® 2nd Foods® Sweet Potato Mango Kale	015000076351		
Gerber® 2nd Foods® Carrot Mango Pineapple	015000076375		

NEW Gerber® 1st Foods® Infant Fruit and Vegetable Blends in 2 oz 2-packs

Description	Product UPC	Net Contents	Packaging Example
Apple	01500003029	2 packs of 2oz (4 oz in total)	
Banana	01500003111		
Carrot	01500003005		
Green Bean	01500003104		
Peach	01500003098		
Prune	01500003012		
Pear	01500003067		
Pea	01500003074		
Squash	01500003036		
Sweet Potato	01500003081		

PILOT PROJECT OF IN-STORE SHOPPING TOOLS

WIC grocery shopping can be overwhelming for customers, often resulting in families not fully redeeming their food benefits. In partnership with Wal-Mart Corporation, the WV WIC Program is piloting a variety of aisle and lane visual shopping aids in 28 stores. The pilot is intended to explore whether in store tools decrease the number of eWIC void transactions as well as increase redemption of WIC benefits. The pilot evaluation will also assess whether the in store tools decrease arguments at checkout, and contribute to a smoother shopping experience. The pilot project, which began November 15, 2017, will guide decisions regarding in store tools and/or training methods which will be utilized when implementing a revised WIC Approved Food List in Fall 2018.

EXCHANGES OR RETURNS OF INFANT FORMULA ARE NOT PERMITTED

It has come to the attention of the Vendor Management Unit that exchanges of infant formula purchased with WIC benefits has been occurring in Authorized Vendor locations. Article 19 of the Vendor Agreement states, "Vendor may not provide refunds or permit exchanges for authorized supplemental foods obtained with the eWIC benefit card, except for the replacement of an identical authorized supplemental food item when the original authorized supplemental food item is defective, spoiled, or has exceeded its sell by, best if used by or other date limiting the sale or use of the food item. An identical authorized supplemental food item means the exact brand and size as the original authorized supplemental food item obtained and returned by the participant."

Some violations also involve WIC Vendors providing store credit, gift cards or cash for returned infant formula or to account for price differences in the exchanged formula and original authorized formula. Article 20 of the Vendor Agreement states, "Vendor may not provide unauthorized food items or non-food items in exchange for eWIC benefits, nor permit any unauthorized product or service to be paid for with an eWIC benefit card." Furthermore, Article 21 affirms, "Vendor shall not provide cash or credit (including rain-checks) for redemption of food benefits in addition to and/or in lieu of authorized food."

Though we cannot influence store policy for non-WIC customer exchanges, to ensure the integrity of infant products, it is a best practice not to accept returned infant formula. For example, there is no evidence of how the product has been stored nor tamper resistant packaging. However, if your store will continue accepting infant formula exchanges, you **must** check receipts to ensure the products were not purchased with eWIC benefits. When products are purchased with eWIC benefits, the receipt will note "WIC TEND" as well as note "eWIC" or "EFT WIC" as the account settling the purchase.

SIM ADV 12.4 007007455958 X	15.78 N
SIM ADV 12.4 007007455958 X	15.78 N
SUBTOTAL	31.56
TOTAL	31.56
WIC TEND	31.56
CHANGE DUE	0.00
EFT WIC	31.56
PAY FROM PRIMARY	
TOTAL PURCHASE	

SOME OTHER REMINDERS FROM THE WV WIC VENDOR AGREEMENT

Please ensure you offer WIC customers the ability to purchase discount produce per Article 25: "Vendor shall offer the WV WIC Program and participants, parents or caretakers of infant and child participants, or authorized proxies the same courtesies as offered to other customers. Vendor shall offer a sales receipt, honor manufacturer coupons, store reward/loyalty cards, extend a sale or any other promotional or discount offers to the WV WIC Program and participants as offered or extended to other customers."

Please contact the Vendor Management Unit if the store changes ownership, ceases operation, or no longer needs a stand beside Point-of-Sale device per Article 57: "Vendor shall notify the WV WIC Program of change in ownership or store location or cessation of operations. Vendor understands that authorization is non-transferable; if ownership changes, this Agreement shall be terminated. Vendor shall provide such notification in writing at least thirty (30) days in advance so that another Vendor may be authorized, if deemed appropriate by the WV WIC Program."

VENDOR ADVISORY BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS

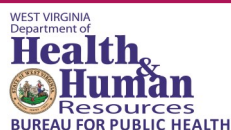
Policy dialogues are critical for developing responsive, effective, sustainable, evidence-informed policy and procedures. The WV WIC Program has initiated a Vendor Advisory Board to evaluate Vendor Management policies and procedures. By engaging vendors, eliciting feedback, and refining policy directions, we will develop a foundation to establish the vision and framework for improving not only the WIC customer shopping experience, but the business case for WIC vendor operations.

The first Vendor Advisory Board meeting occurred on Wednesday, August 23, 2017, with the agenda focused on the participant access policy, minimum stock requirements, and peer group classification. The Vendor Management Unit will initiate revisions of these policies guided by the recommendations of the Board.

Participant Access Policy—Inadequate participant access will be determined and documented when considering whether the WV WIC Program should retain a store in lieu of disqualification or termination; make an authorization exception decision; waive the selection criteria for the initial authorization of an applicant; or provide assistance to obtain eWIC capability. To be considered inadequate participant access, the proximity of another authorized Vendor must be more than three (3) miles driving distance, or geographic barriers or conditions make normal travel burdensome or impossible to another authorized WIC Vendor.

Minimum Stock Requirements—Minimum stock requirements will be developed for each peer group with attention to the required variety of infant formula and quantity of infant foods, milk and frozen juice. The Board did recommend implementing exemption requests which offer the ability for retailers to be exempted from carrying a required minimum stock item, but if requested by a customer must provide the item within a specified timeframe.

Peer Group Classification—The Vendor Management Unit will begin peer group construction by store types (mass merchandiser, discount and limited assortment chains, national grocery chain, regional grocery chain, local grocery chain, independent grocer, and convenience/gas stations) taking into consideration if the entity has their own distribution center and geographic location. Each peer group will contain 30 or more vendors.



Jim Justice, Governor
Bill J. Crouch, DHHR Cabinet Secretary
Dr. Rahul Gupta, Commissioner and State Health Officer

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

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

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

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

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

The WIC'r Basket is published quarterly by: West Virginia WIC Program, 350 Capitol Street, Room 519, Charleston, WV 25301.