

8.10 Vendor Training

POLICY:

The West Virginia WIC Vendor Management Unit must provide interactive training to at least one representative of each Vendor location:

- 1) Prior to or at the time of initial authorization;
- 2) Annually during the two years in between Agreement renewal;
- 3) During reauthorization to renew an Agreement;
- 4) After a break in the Agreement term (resignation, termination, expiration, etc.);
- 5) In response to non-compliance with the West Virginia WIC Vendor Agreement (accumulation of sanction points) as revealed during monitoring visits, educational buys and/or compliance investigations; or
- 6) Upon request from an Authorized Vendor.

The training must include, but is not limited to, instruction on the:

- Purpose of the WIC Program;
- Supplemental foods authorized by the West Virginia WIC Program;
- Minimum varieties and quantities of authorized supplemental food that must be stocked by WIC Vendors;
- Requirement that Vendors obtain infant formula only from sources included on a list provided by the State Agency;
- Procedures for transacting and redeeming eWIC benefits and cash-value benefits;
- Sanction system;
- Complaint process;
- Claims procedures;
- State Agency's policies and procedures regarding the use of incentive items; and
- Changes to program requirements since the last training.

The West Virginia WIC Vendor Management Unit must define the audience in which the training is directed as well as designate the date, time, and location of the interactive training. At least one alternative date on which to attend training will be made available.

Examples of acceptable vendor training include on-site cashier training, off-site classroom style train-the-trainer or manager training, training video(s), training modules, computer-based training, and/or a training newsletter.

All Vendor training must be designed to prevent Program errors and noncompliance, and improve WIC customer service. A WIC Vendor Agreement will not be authorized or reauthorized if a representative does not complete West Virginia WIC mandatory interactive training.

The Vendor is responsible to inform and train cashiers and other staff on program requirements. The vendor is accountable and responsible to ensure all employees who handle WIC transactions (cashiers) are trained on WIC redemption procedures, or personnel responsible for labeling shelves (stockers/front end managers) are trained on the foods authorized by the West Virginia WIC Program.

The Vendor and/or corporate offices should use WIC training materials supplied by the West Virginia WIC Vendor Management Unit. The Vendor or corporate offices are not permitted to edit or change any WIC training material supplied by the West Virginia WIC Program.

The WIC Program has no legal obligation to provide vendor training materials in multiple languages. The WIC Program holds the retailer responsible for providing or bringing an interpreter for on-site visits, communication or questions with the West Virginia WIC Vendor Management Unit or Local WIC Agency, completing initial or renewal agreement applications, required training sessions, or other meetings, as necessary.

PROCEDURE:

A. Initial Authorization Training

New vendors are required to receive face-to-face, interactive training at the time of the Vendor's initial authorization. Initial authorization training for a new vendor should be provided to one store manager/supervisory staff and one store trainer for cashiers (customer service manager, head cashier, etc.) although exceptions can be made for stores with fewer than five (5) employees. The training will occur at an off-site location within the community (i.e. WIC clinic). Other personnel, such as cashiers and management/supervisory staff who conduct WIC transactions may be invited to attend. If other personnel are not planning to attend, it is the store manager's responsibility to train other store personnel in accordance with the West Virginia WIC Vendor Agreement.

If a Vendor is being seen for a pre-authorization on-site visit, interactive training may be scheduled during the same visit if store personnel is familiar with WIC (i.e. change in ownership, reinstate following Agreement expiration, etc.).

The interactive training must be in a format which includes a contemporaneous opportunity for questions and answers. The Vendor Management Unit must coordinate the date, time and location of the training with the Vendor.

The Vendor is accountable to ensure all employees who handle WIC transactions are trained on WIC redemption procedures once the initial pre-authorization training visit has been accomplished.

B. Annual Training

During the years in between contract renewal, each vendor is required to receive annual training through self-paced training materials and quizzes, web-based training sessions or by participating in a face-to-face, interactive training.

C. Reauthorization Training

In West Virginia, Vendor Agreements are considered for renewal every three years. Reauthorizing Vendors are required to receive face-to-face training once every three years as part of the contract renewal process.

The interactive training must be in a format which includes a contemporaneous opportunity for questions and answers. The Vendor Management Unit must designate the date, time, and location of the interactive training. At least two dates and locations within the Local WIC Agency will be made available.

Each Vendor must inform and train its cashiers and other staff on the most current WIC Program policies and procedures.

D. Sanction Training

USDA Federal Regulations and West Virginia WIC Program policy require the sanctioning of Authorized WIC Vendors determined to be violating Program rules and procedures, engaging in abusive WIC food benefit redemption practices, and/or fraudulently obtaining Program funds. For violations which result in State sanctions (see Appendix J of the Vendor Handbook for the West Virginia WIC Program sanction schedule), Vendors are required to receive classroom style training at the WIC State Office in Charleston, WV.

The interactive training must be in a format which includes a contemporaneous opportunity for questions and answers. Training content will focus on addressing the violation resulting in the sanction. The Vendor Management Unit must designate at least four dates and times available to attend the interactive training. The Vendor must select and schedule the preferred date and time by calling the Vendor Management Unit within 14 days of written notification.

If an Authorized Vendor chooses not to attend the required training, the West Virginia WIC Program Vendor Agreement will be terminated within 60 days of the written training notice, and the store will be unable to serve as an Authorized WIC Vendor during the remaining term of the Vendor Agreement Period. Furthermore, a vendor resignation cannot be rendered to avoid mandatory training or eliminate sanction points.

E. Requested Training

An Authorized WIC Vendor may request training at any time during the Agreement term. The Vendor Management Unit must define the audience in

which the training is directed as well as coordinate the date, time and location of the training with the Vendor. If a Vendor is being seen for a monitoring on-site visit, interactive training may be scheduled during the same visit.

ATTACHMENTS:

WV WIC Vendor Training Checklist

REFERENCES:

WIC Regulations 7 CFR § 246.12(h)(3)(xii)
WIC Regulations 7 CFR § 246.12(h)(3)(xiii)
WIC Regulations 7 CFR § 246.12(i)