

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Are cashier training sessions mandatory?

Answer: *Cashier training sessions are not mandatory. However, vendors are encouraged to take advantage of these sessions to ensure that staff handling WIC transactions are knowledgeable in WIC policies and procedures. The WIC Program, under state regulations, can mandate training for vendors with a high percentage of check handling errors or other violations.*

What should we do if someone leaves their WIC ID Folder in the Store?

Answer: *Please contact the WIC Local Agency using the phone number at the bottom of the WIC ID folder. You may also contact the State WIC office at 1-800-242-4942.*

What should we do if there is not enough stock to process a WIC order?

Answer: *WIC Vendors are required to maintain the required minimum stock at all times during business hours. However, if your store cannot fill the order, you should advise your customer when you expect to have the stock available so that they can decide if they want to return at a later date, or make their purchases at another store. Remember: rain checks are not allowed!*

What should we do if we have a WIC customer that insists they have purchased unauthorized food items at another store?

Answer: *You should always refer to the current WIC Authorized Foods List. If your customer does not have one, offer them one (You may obtain a supply from this office). Politely inform them that your store is required to sell only WIC authorized items. You may also refer them to their WIC Local Agency, or the State WIC office. If you believe the customer is intentionally violating program rules, please submit a complaint form.*

Where can we obtain replacement vendor stamps?

Answer: *Replacement stamps may be obtained from any supplier (Staples, Office Max, etc.) as long as the vendor stamp specifications on page 30 of this manual are followed.*

We have unsigned WIC checks. How can we get the customer to return and sign them?

Answer: *Your cashiers are responsible for obtaining the WIC customer's signature on the checks only after filling in the purchase amount. If the cashier fails to do so, you may contact the Local WIC Agency, or the State Office for*

assistance. However, it is not always possible to contact the WIC Participant, and WIC Local Agencies are under no obligation to do so.

My store was cited for not having enough formula in stock. We realized after the monitor left that there was a sufficient quantity in our storeroom. What can we do to remove the citation?

***Answer:** Once a citation is issued, it cannot be revoked. WIC monitors are required to inquire if there is stock anywhere else on the premises before issuing a citation. Please make sure all your store personnel are familiar with where stock is kept in your store.*

My store received a returned check from the bank due to incorrect check procedures. How can I get reimbursed?

***Answer:** You should complete the payment review form located in this manual and online at www.mdwic.org and submit the check to the State office within 45 days of the last date to spend on the check.*

I received a copy of the rejected check from my bank. Can I submit the copy for reimbursement?

***Answer:** As long as the check copy is stamped "Legal Copy", you can submit it for payment review purposes.*

Can I be reimbursed for my rejected check fees?

***Answer:** The WIC Program cannot reimburse you for rejected check fees.*

My store received a rejected check for exceeding the maximum price. My store only charged a small amount above cost. Can I be reimbursed for my cost?

***Answer:** Your store may not be paid more than 125% of the store's Peer Group Average. If your cost is in excess of the Peer Group Average, you will be required to lower your prices. If the item you are selling is not mandatory stock, you will have to decide if you should continue to offer the product in question.*

We submitted rejected checks for reimbursement. How long does it take to get reimbursed? When will we know we've received payment?

***Answer:** Reimbursement times vary depending upon the volume of rejected checks being processed. Reimbursement may take anywhere from 45 to 60 days. Once an ACH payment is made by our bank, you will receive a statement from the bank. If your store is part of a chain of stores, the report is sent to your corporate office.*

Do vendors have to use WIC shelf tags?

***Answer:** Vendors are not required to use shelf tags or talkers that identify WIC authorized foods. However, as a customer service, your store is encouraged to use them. Shelf tags are available from the WIC Program at no cost. If your store uses shelf tags, please make sure they are properly placed and do not misidentify WIC food items.*

My WIC customer signed the check, but the signature does not match any signature on the WIC ID folder. What should I do?

***Answer:** WIC Participants are instructed by the Program to sign their checks using the same signature that appears on their WIC ID folder. WIC vendors have the discretion to reject checks that are not properly signed. However, you are encouraged to carefully consider the ramifications of choosing not to accept a WIC check for this reason. You may also submit a complaint form to the State office if you feel a WIC customer is not properly following WIC procedures.*

My WIC customer signed the WIC ID folder in front of the cashier. Should my store accept the check?

***Answer:** The same advice in the answer above applies. Occasionally, a WIC Participant may forget to have their Proxy sign the WIC ID folder before going to the store. If this happens, the best course of action to take is to notify the State WIC office using the Vendor Complaint Form.*

My WIC customer purchases the most expensive brands sometimes resulting in rejected checks. Can I require my WIC customer to purchase the least expensive brand?

***Answer:** You may **not** require WIC customers to purchase the least expensive brand. WIC customers may purchase any brand or variety of the food items reflected on the WIC Authorized Foods List. If your store experiences rejected WIC checks because they exceeded the maximum amount allowed, this is an indication that your prices are too high and should be adjusted accordingly.*

Is our store required to post the *WIC Accepted Here* sign or can we develop our own?

***Answer:** WIC vendors must post the Program provided sign even if the store has developed its own sign. Note: use of the WIC acronym or logo is prohibited unless prior approval has been obtained from the Program.*

Can a customer buy fruit like applesauce in the “snack pack” size?

Answer: *As long as the product is 100% unsweetened fruit, the participant is allowed to purchase the snack pack size. Such a product would fall under the canned fruit category.*

Why are we required to stock quarts of milk?

Answer: *Providing quarts of milk allows WIC participants to receive the maximum amounts of milk and cheese allowed by USDA regulations.*

Is whole grain bread allowed?

Answer: *Only 100% whole wheat bread is allowed. The label should clearly state 100% whole wheat bread and whole wheat flour should be listed as the first ingredient in the ingredient listing on the label. Refer to the Authorized Foods List for examples of brands of 100% whole wheat bread. If your store sells a 100% whole wheat bread not found on the list, contact the State WIC Office.*

Can baby food fruit and vegetables be purchased with the Fruit and Vegetable Check (FVC)?

Answer: *No, the FVC is intended for women and children participants. Baby food fruits and vegetables can only be bought with the infant fruit and vegetable checks.*

Why can't the FVC be used to buy extra juice or beans?

Answer: *USDA designed the WIC food package to provide specified types and amounts of nutrients. The amounts of juice and beans were set at levels that provided the right balance of nutrients for the package.*

Why does WIC put restrictions on foods, such as those in the DO NOT BUY list?

Answer: *WIC is a USDA funded program. Because the goal of WIC is to promote good health in women, infants, and children, the foods it provides must supply the highest level of nutrients. Added ingredients such as fat, oil, breading, and sugar add calories at the expense of nutrients. WIC also is cost-conscious and must consider the form of a food when making decisions about what will and will not be allowed*

My store carries cultural foods like Aloe Vera and Cactus. Are these considered vegetables?

Answer: *Cultural foods used as vegetables may be purchased with fruit and vegetable checks.*

Can WIC customers purchase pumpkins with a fruit and vegetable check?

Answer: A pumpkin is a fruit and can be purchased with FVCs.

Can WIC customers buy Saurkraut with their FVCs?

Answer: No. It is a pickled product therefore not a WIC allowed product

Some canned vegetables contain sugar. Are they allowed for WIC purchase?

Answer: The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food Nutrition Service (USDA/FNS) has learned from the Food and Drug Administration that small amounts of sugar are added to some foods that are naturally sugar-containing during the canning process to prevent stress resulting in membrane rupture (i.e. sweet peas). This small amount of added sugar is minimal and helps to maintain the quality and structure of the food. To encourage greater variety in food choices in the WIC food packages, canned vegetables that contain a small amount of sugar for processing purposes, such as plain canned sweet peas and corn, are allowed.

Is “red salmon” allowed for WIC purchase?

Answer: Only pink salmon is allowed for WIC purchase.