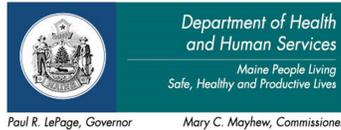


January, 2015
WIC Messenger



Maine WIC Nutrition Program
Department of Health & Human Services
Center for Disease Control & Prevention
286 Water Street
Augusta, ME 04330
287-3991 1-800-437-9300
TTY: Maine Relay 711
Website: www.wicforme.com

Changes Coming to the WIC Program March 1, 2015

White Potatoes

In December, Congress passed legislation that allows white potatoes to be added to the WIC Program authorized food list.

Beginning March 1, 2015, the Maine CDC WIC Nutrition Program will allow the purchase of the following plain forms of potatoes with the fruit and vegetable (cash value) vouchers:

- fresh white potatoes (this includes all varieties)
- canned potatoes or canned mixed vegetables containing potatoes
- frozen plain potatoes (no added sugars, fats, oils, or seasonings) or frozen mixed vegetables containing plain potatoes



French fries, tater tots, twice-baked potatoes and other similar potato products are **not allowed**.

Call us at 1-800-437-9300 or 287-3991 to order stickers with this information to add to your WIC vendor booklets.

Checks for Infant Foods

Beginning March 1, 2015, checks for infant foods will be stated in total ounces allowed rather than total number of jars.

The following lists the quantity of infant foods participants may purchase with infant food checks:

- 64 oz Beech-Nut Stage 2 Inf Frts or Veg = 16 jars
- 32 oz Beech-Nut Stage 2 Inf Frts or Veg = 8 jars
- 38 oz Beech-Nut Stage 1 Infant Meats = 15 jars
- 40 oz Beech-Nut Stage 1 Infant Meats = 16 jars
- 24 oz Beech-Nut Dry Infant Cereal = 3 boxes, 8 oz. ea.

The transition of wording from jars to ounces on infant food checks will take place over a 3 month period. Checks for jars may be seen until the end of May.



The Purpose of the WIC Nutrition Program

The WIC (Women, Infants and Children) Nutrition Program provides supplemental healthy food to eligible Maine residents. Pregnant, postpartum, breastfeeding and non-breastfeeding women, and infants and children up to the age of five are eligible for the program if they are at or below 185% of the federal poverty level and have a medical or nutritional risk.

The WIC Program is a federally-funded program established to provide supplemental foods during critical times of growth and development. Program staff provide nutrition education, breastfeeding support and referrals to other health services.

Vendor Agreements Ended

The following stores no longer have agreements to accept WIC checks:

Arwo Market, Westbrook	Jerry's Market, Sanford	Pleau's Market, Winslow
Babin's Grocery Outlet, St. Agatha	La Bodega Latina Grocery, Portland	Sleeper's Supermarket, Limington
C & R General Store, Harmony	Peace Food Market, Portland	Tobey's Market, China
Indian Lake Market, St. Albans	Peavey's General Store, Liberty	Wal-Mart Supercenter, Waterville

Grocery Bag Fees

Beginning April 1, 2015, all stores in Portland will charge a fee for plastic or paper grocery bags. Treat the fees for the bags like the 5 cent bottle deposit; they must be paid by the customer separately. These fees cannot be charged to the WIC Program.

We will assess penalty points to your store for charging bag fees and bottle deposit fees to the WIC Program. If your store accrues 15 penalty points in one year, it will be terminated from the WIC Program for six months.

Transacting WIC Checks and Fruit and Vegetable/Cash Value Vouchers

First, request the WIC check. Verify that all the items that the customer selected :

- **For WIC checks:** Match the items listed on the customer's check in size and quantity. The customer is not required to purchase all of the items listed, but they can never purchase more than what's listed. If an item is a specific size, they must purchase that size of product. For example, if the check identifies a 64 ounce bottle of juice, they can only purchase that size bottle of juice;
- Make sure that the customer has selected only items that are WIC-approved;
- Confirm today's date is on or between the first and last days to use listed on the WIC check.
- Ask the customer to enter the total purchase amount on the WIC check and sign the check. Be sure the customer uses blue or black ink.
- **For Fruit and Vegetable/cash value vouchers (CVVs),** have the customer enter an amount which **does not exceed** the dollar value of the voucher. Any amount above the value of the voucher cannot be included in the total sale price and must be paid by the WIC customer by other means.
- Bottle deposits and bag fees cannot be charged to WIC and cannot be included in the total sale price. Those fees must be paid by the customer by other means.
- Ask for the customer's WIC folder and have the customer sign the check in the signature area on the lower-right hand corner on the front of the check in blue or black ink only. Compare the signature on the check with the signatures on the back of the customer's WIC folder. Do not accept the check if:
 - ◇ Today's date is outside of the first and last dates to use identified on the check;
 - ◇ The check appears to have been altered in any way;
 - ◇ The MICR line on the bottom of the check is missing or has strange symbols in it;
 - ◇ The check was previously signed or the signature does not match one of the signatures on their folder;
 - ◇ The check is from a state other than Maine.
 - ◇ The customer does not have their WIC folder.

Never

- Deny a check if the name on the check does not match the name of the customer using the check; only the signatures are required to match;
- Allow substitution of one product for another; only the items listed on the check are allowed to be purchased with that check, even if the products being substituted are WIC-approved;
- Allow the sale of expired products to a WIC customer;
- Ask for ID other than the WIC folder.

Selling or Moving? Notify WIC First.

If you are selling your store, please call WIC six to eight weeks before the closing. We want to make sure that you have time to deposit WIC checks you have already accepted. After you have made all of these deposits, you must return your vendor stamp to us. WIC does not transfer from owner to owner. When you sell your store, your WIC stamp will be cancelled so checks stamped with that number will reject. The new owner will need time to be approved by SNAP (Food Stamps) before they can apply and be approved to accept WIC.



If your store moves to a new location, you must notify WIC so that we can inspect the new site before accepting WIC there. WIC may terminate your store if you move to a new location and do not notify us.

We want to help make these transitions as smooth as possible for both you and your customers. Please call the WIC office if you decide to sell your store or move your store to a new location so that your store's ability to accept WIC checks will not lapse.



Lost and Found WIC Checks and Folders



If a WIC customer leaves WIC checks or WIC folder in your store, return them immediately to the local or state WIC office. The address of the local WIC office is usually on the back cover of the folder and the State WIC office address is printed on the top of the check. Checks that are lost are not replaced by WIC. The WIC customer will lose these food benefits if they are not turned in promptly. Your help in returning these checks to us is greatly appreciated.

eWIC Update

January is roaring in with eWIC. We are still on track for a June 1, 2015 pilot. Over the next six months more information will be becoming available for vendors. Two initial communication items that will be available by mid-February are:

Vendor readiness scoreboard

This webpage will list all participating WIC vendors and what steps they have successfully completed to be ready for eWIC processing. This spreadsheet will be updated regularly as CPD and WIC complete various vendor certification tasks. This information will be available to everyone, so that program participants will know which vendors in their area are able to accept eWIC benefits.

Approved Product List (APL)

An APL will be published on the website in Excel and PDF formats. The APL will list the UPC number along with the product description of all WIC Approved products that we currently know about. We encourage all vendors to download and review the APL. If your store's scanning system identifies WIC approved items, compare the APL to your system's WIC flagged items. You may find items you didn't know were approved on our APL. If an item you think should be on the APL is NOT on the APL list, there will be a form for you to submit the item for review by our nutritionists to see if it should be included. If it's not on the APL, it can't be purchased with eWIC. We need you to help us make our APL as comprehensive and up to date as possible. This will be an on-going process and we will update the APL on the website periodically.



Authorized Distributor Requirement and List of Authorized Distributors

The United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Services requires WIC Vendors to only purchase infant formula from a distributor that has been approved by WIC. In Maine, those distributors are:

Associated Grocers of New England
Auburn Merchandise Distributors
BJ's Wholesalers
Bozzuto's Inc.
C & S Wholesale Grocers
Capitol Candy Co. Inc. Wholesalers
Hannaford and/or Distribution
HD Smith Wholesale Drug Co.



Market Basket, Inc/DeMoulas
Mead Johnson
Pine State Trading Co.
Sam's Club/Distribution Center
Save A Lot—Wells Distribution Center
Shaw's and/or Wells Distribution Center
Town and Country Foods
Wal-Mart and/or Distribution Center

Failure to purchase formula from an authorized distributor or manufacturer is grounds for termination of your Vendor Agreement.

Special Formula (Direct Bill) Vouchers

The WIC Program provides Special Formula (Direct Bill) vouchers for the purchase of some infant formulas. These vouchers can be taken at the pharmacy register or at a regular register. If your store has a pharmacy, please be sure that pharmacy staff are aware that they must accept these vouchers. The redemption procedure for these vouchers is printed on the back of the vouchers. The WIC Program will pay your store the regular retail price of the formula. Please remember that sales tax cannot be charged to the WIC Program.

It is against WIC rules to deny a valid direct bill voucher or a valid WIC check, and your store can be assessed a penalty for doing so.

Maine WIC Nutrition Program
Special Formula Voucher

Maine Department of Health and Human Services
WIC Nutrition Program
8185 11
Augusta, Maine 04333-0011
207 287-0901 / 800-437-9000

Voucher No: 20360

Please read the information on the back of this form.
This voucher can be used at the following store only:

Store name _____
Store address _____
WIC local agency at _____ WIC Representative Initials _____ Authorization No. _____
WIC Participant ID _____ Authorized Representative Name _____

Voucher Valid from _____ to _____

Am't	Unit	Product Description

Unit cost _____ Total cost _____

Signature Store Representative _____ Date of purchase _____

X _____
Signature WIC Authorized Representative or Proxy

Voucher: Fill in the unit and total costs. Sign and date the voucher. Have the WIC authorized representative or proxy sign the voucher. Keep a copy of the voucher for your records and mail the original to the Maine WIC Nutrition Program, 11 8185 Key Plaza, Augusta, Maine 04333-0011.

Reporting WIC Customer Issues

We would like to know about any problems or concerns you have with WIC customers or processing WIC transactions. The problem may be a misunderstanding. Some clients may be new to WIC or do not understand the Approved Foods List or transaction procedures.

However, sometimes a WIC customer, as with any customer, can be challenging. Please assist them, in a discreet manner, to resolve the conflict. You may report the WIC participant issue using the form that can be found on our website, www.wicforme.com if: (1) you were unable to resolve the problem or question; (2) it is a WIC customer with whom you have repeated problems; (3) an incident occurs that causes concern for you or your staff.

If client issues arise, our office works with the local agency that serves the client in resolving the problem. It is important that you give us as much information as possible so that we may better assist you. Please provide us with the following information: (1) the client name and ID number; (2) the WIC check number; (3) the name of the shopper if available to you—it may be a client, a representative, a proxy or an unauthorized individual attempting to use the checks; (4) a description of the incident or problem and a description of the shopper; (5) date and time of the incident.

If you or your staff are threatened in any way, do not hesitate to call the proper authorities and notify us immediately.

Incentive Policy



You cannot offer a WIC customer incentives that you do not offer to all your other customers. You can offer buy-one-get-one and other types of promotions to WIC customers, and you can accept valid manufacturer coupons from WIC customers if you allow these for all your customers. Remember, you must always treat a WIC customer exactly as you would any other customer.

Signature on WIC Folders

You must compare the signature of the WIC customer to the signatures on their WIC folder. If a customer presents an unsigned WIC folder, you cannot proceed with the transaction. It is the customer's responsibility to sign the folder and this is usually done at the WIC clinic. If the customer has a proxy, however, the proxy may not have been present at the WIC clinic. It is the proxy's responsibility, however, to be sure to sign the WIC folder before shopping. If the signature of the customer does not match any of the signatures on the WIC folder, do not proceed with the transaction and call the WIC office at 287-3991.



Test Your WIC Knowledge (answers on back page)

1. The WIC Program serves: a. Pregnant, Post-partum and Breastfeeding Women; b. Infants; c. Children under 5 years of age; d. All of these.
2. Which authority requires that WIC vendors purchase infant formula only from WIC-approved distributors? Is it the: a. Institute of Medicine (IOM); b. United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Services; c. American Academy of Pediatrics; d. All of these.
3. The WIC Program must inspect store locations for: a. New WIC Vendors; b. Existing WIC stores with new owners; c. Existing WIC stores that have moved to a new location; d. All of these.
4. You must **not** charge the WIC Program: a. Sales tax; b. Grocery bag fees; c. Bottle deposits; d. All of these.
5. Which is **not** a WIC-approved infant formula distributor? a. K-Mart; b. Pine State Trading; c. Bozzuto's; d. Associated Grocers of New England.
6. When conducting a WIC transaction, you must **not**: a. Compare the signature of the customer to one of the signatures on their WIC folder; b. Make sure that today is on or between the dates identified on the check; c. Ask for a driver's license as identification; d. Verify that the items the customer selected are listed on the WIC check presented.
7. If an issue with a WIC customer arises, you should contact us with the following information: a. The name and ID number of the customer; b. The customer's driver's license number; c. The date, time, name of the cashier involved and a description of what occurred; d. A and C.
8. If you find a WIC check on the floor, you should: a. Put it in your store's lost and found until the customer comes for it; b. Return it immediately to the State or local WIC office; c. Announce on the loud-speaker that you found the WIC check and ask the customer to come get it; d. Throw it away.
9. If the customer presents a WIC folder that is not signed: a. Do not proceed with the transaction; b. Have the customer sign the folder and proceed; c. Tell the customer to go back to the WIC office to sign the folder in front of WIC staff; d. Proceed with the transaction without the folder being signed.
10. To process a WIC Fruit and Vegetable (Cash Value) Voucher, the WIC customer must: a. Use the check only for fresh, frozen or canned fruit and vegetables; b. Sign the check in the bottom, right hand corner on the front of the check; c. Pay the difference by another means if the total amount of the sale exceeds the value of the check; d. All of these.

Answers To Test Your WIC Knowledge

1. D. All of these populations are served by the WIC Program. Please review the Purpose of the WIC Program, page 1.
2. B. The United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Services this. Please review the Authorized Distributor Requirement, page 4.
3. D. All of these. Please review the article on Moving or Selling Your Store, page 3.
4. D. All of these. Please review the article on Grocery Bag Fees, page 2.
5. A. K-Mart is not a WIC-approved infant formula distributor in Maine. Please review the list of WIC Authorized Distributors, Page 4.
6. C. You can ask for no other form of ID from a WIC customer other than their WIC folder. Please review the WIC Transaction Procedures, Page 2.
7. D. Get as much information about the customer and situation as possible and contact us. Please review the Reporting WIC Customer Procedure, Page 4.
8. B. Return it immediately to the State or local WIC office. See Page 3.
9. A. Do not proceed with the transaction. You are required to compare the signature of the WIC customer to the signatures on their folder. See Page 2.
10. D. All of these. Please review the WIC Transaction Procedures on page 2

Help Us Detect Fraud



Nationally, fraud costs the WIC Program and stores millions of dollars every year. If you suspect fraud, please contact us at 1-800-437-9300 or contact us on our website at www.wicforme.com. You can also report suspected fraud for both WIC and SNAP (Food Stamps) on the website of the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) at <http://www.oig.dot.gov/Hotline>.

DHHS Non-Discrimination Notice

The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) does not discriminate on the basis of disability, race, color, creed, gender, sexual orientation, age, or national origin, in admission to, access to, or operations of its programs, services, or activities, or its hiring or employment practices. This notice is provided as required by Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and in accordance with the Civil Rights Act of 1964 as amended, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and the Maine Human Rights Act and Executive Order Regarding State of Maine Contracts for Services. Questions, concerns, complaints or requests for additional information regarding the ADA may be forwarded to DHHS' ADA Compliance/EEO Coordinators, 11 State House Station – 221 State Street, Augusta, Maine 04333, 207-287-4289 (V), 207-287-3488 (V), TTY users call Maine relay 711. Individuals who need auxiliary aids for effective communication in program and services of DHHS are invited to make their needs and preferences known to the ADA Compliance/EEO Coordinators. This notice is available in alternate formats, upon request.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Questions? Need supplies? Contact Us.
Ana Scovil, Vendor & Data Specialist
Tina Bernier, Vendor & Data Manager

TTY: Maine Relay 711
Ana.Scovil@maine.gov 287-5366
Tina.Bernier@maine.gov 287-5367

Maine WIC Program: 1-800-437-9300

www.wicforme.com



Paul R. LePage, Governor

Mary C. Mayhew, Commissioner