



**Iowa WIC Program**

## **Vendor Guidance**

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**January 1, 2021 – September 30, 2024**



*Protecting and Improving the Health of Iowans*

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Updated 1.1.2021

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## **Section I: Overview**

### **A. Purpose**

The purpose of this Vendor Guidance is to provide information to potential vendors who have interest in being an authorized WIC vendor. To be authorized to accept WIC food instruments, a vendor must have a signed agreement with the Iowa WIC Program. A vendor may begin to accept WIC food instruments only after an agreement has been signed and all store associates who will be handling WIC food instruments have been trained. Agreements must be renewed every three years.

### **B. What is WIC?**

WIC, the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children, is a nutrition program for women, infants and children. The U.S. Congress established WIC in 1973 in recognition of the need for adequate nutrition during pregnancy and early childhood, especially among limited income families. The Iowa WIC Program provides nutrition education, breastfeeding support, supplemental foods, and referrals for health services to approximately 70,000 individuals per month.

### **C. Who is Eligible for WIC?**

WIC services are available to women who are pregnant or who recently had a baby, infants, and children up to the age of 5. Participants must meet income eligibility criteria (less than 185 percent of the federal poverty guidelines), must be a resident of Iowa, and be determined as having a nutrition need by a licensed dietitian.

### **D. How is WIC Funded?**

The Iowa WIC Program is funded by the United States Department of Agriculture through the Iowa Department of Public Health, Bureau of Nutrition & Health Promotion.

### **E. What is my Role as a Vendor?**

Approved WIC vendors enable WIC participants to redeem their food instruments for nutritious foods. By completing an application, you are agreeing to follow state and federal WIC regulations as outlined in the WIC Vendor Agreement and WIC Vendor Handbook. Prices charged to WIC participants must be equal or less than the prices charged to all other customers.

### **F. Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT)**

Iowa uses the Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) eWIC card for participant benefits.

## Section II: Authorization Criteria

Iowa WIC, as required by federal regulations, authorizes vendors that meet certain requirements that will ensure that WIC food funds are being spent in the most efficient and cost-effective manner, ensure adequate participant access, and allow for effective program management, oversight and review of store performance. Authorized vendors are made up of grocery stores, special purpose (pharmacies), and grocery stores with pharmacies. Iowa WIC will review vendors' compliance with the authorization selection criteria throughout the agreement period. Failure to remain in compliance with these criteria may result in program sanctions or termination of the WIC Vendor Agreement.

### A. General Business Requirements

#### No Current Disqualification

The owner must not currently be disqualified from the SNAP or WIC Programs or been assessed a CMP for hardship and the disqualification period that would otherwise have been imposed has not expired.

#### No Denial

Not have received a WIC Program disqualification or a WIC application denial within the six month period preceding the date of the application.

#### No Conviction

In accordance with 7 CFR Part 3017 (Subpart A-6), the owner, officers or managers must not have been convicted of or had a civil judgement entered against them for any activity indicating lack of business integrity at any time during the last six years. No history of business-related criminal convictions.

#### Regular Hours

The vendor must maintain regular business hours. This shall include a minimum of two, four-hour blocks of time on each of five days per week. Daily operating hours shall be consistent from week to week, and shall be posted.

#### Permanent Location

Vendor must be in a permanent location.

#### Minimum Stocking Requirements

Vendor must stock, at all times, the varieties and minimum quantities of WIC-approved foods as outlined in Section III of this Vendor Guidance. Before authorization and throughout the agreement period, Iowa WIC reviews applicant stocking levels of WIC-approved items to ensure that adequate amounts are available for participant redemption.

#### WIC Redemption Less than 50 percent

Vendor must not realize nor expect to realize more than 50 percent of its annual revenue from the sale of food items that are obtained with WIC food instruments.

#### Other Sales

No more than 20 percent of the vendor's gross retail sales may be from the sale of gasoline or other automotive supplies. No more than 20 percent of the vendor's gross retail sales may be from the sale of alcoholic beverages and tobacco products.

#### Competitive Pricing

All WIC vendors must be competitively priced.

#### Shelf Labels

Vendors must consistently identify all WIC products using shelf labels that meet the following criteria and meet price points:

- Product description indicating brand/company name, and product description,
- Selling unit size (indicating ounces, pounds, container and sleeve/pack),
- Selling unit retail,
- Signage dimensions – block lettering. Tags shall measure no less than 2 inches by 1 inch,

- and
- Price point font no less than 48 font.

#### Infant Formula

Vendors shall only purchase infant formula from wholesalers, distributors and retailers licensed in the state and in accordance with state law (including regulations) and infant formula manufacturers registered with FDA that provide infant formula. A listing of the current approved wholesalers, distributors, retailers and manufacturers is available from Iowa WIC. Vendors may be required to produce purchase invoices to document compliance.

#### No Discriminatory Business

The vendor must not discriminate on grounds of race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability, and must make reasonable accommodations for shoppers with disabilities.

#### Preventing WIC Returns

The vendor must have a policy in place that will ensure no WIC foods will be returned or exchanged.

## **B. EBT Capability Requirements**

Vendor must implement a certified system prior to accepting eWIC benefit cards for purchase that performs online eWIC transactions in accordance with published rules, policies and specifications, including:

- USDA-FNS WIC EBT Operating Rules as amended from time to time
- USDA\_FNS Technical Implementation Guide

For access to the most recent versions of these documents, visit <http://fns.usda.gov/wic/wic-electronic-benefits-transfer-ebt-guidance>.

To ensure the integrated ECR system you own or will be purchasing is certified for Iowa eWIC transactions, contact the eWIC contractor. At the time of this writing, the eWIC contract contact is:

Custom Data Processing (CDP)  
Jim Chilcoat- Retailer Relationship Manager  
Office: 502-695-1999  
Cellphone: 859-779-5332  
E-mail: [jim.chilcoat@cdpehs.com](mailto:jim.chilcoat@cdpehs.com)

#### EBT Capable Systems

The Vendor shall demonstrate its capability to accept WIC benefits electronically (i.e., the vendor has an EBT capable register system) prior to authorization and shall comply with WIC Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) operating rules, standards and technical requirements such as those in the Technical Implementation Guide.

#### Minimum Transaction Types

At a minimum, the system shall be able to process a balance inquiry (without requiring a purchase be made), purchase, void, and reversal (in compliance with 7 CFR 246.12(h)(3)(xxi) and 7 CFR 246.12(bb)(1).)

#### Liability

Vendor must accept liability for any redemption of eWIC benefits 1) for which an approval has not been received from Iowa WIC; and 2) for the incorrect redemption of benefits (e.g., providing an item not authorized by Iowa WIC or not available in the cardholder's account).

#### Approved Product List (APL)

Ensure that the most current Iowa APL is downloaded to the ERC system or stand-beside device.

#### Receipts

ERC system or stand-beside device must provide the eWIC cardholder with a receipt which, at a

minimum, shows the store name and address, the date of the transaction, product(s) purchased, price charged for each purchase, and the remaining balance of available benefits.

Maintenance

Vendor must be capable of maintaining the certified ERC integrated system or stand-beside device in a manner necessary to ensure system availability for eWIC processing during all hours the store is open for business.

Personal Identification Number (PIN)

Ensure the eWIC redemption process requires the eWIC cardholder to use a Personal Identification Number (PIN) in a manner that protects the security of the PIN and in which no one other than the eWIC cardholder will have knowledge of the PIN.

### **C. Grocery Stores/Supercenters Additional Requirements**

License

Vendor must have a current State of Iowa Food Establishment License.

Full Service Grocery

Must be considered a full service grocery store with a primary function of selling groceries. A full service grocery store is described as a business which stocks all of the following items:

- Fresh produce (minimum of 5 linear feet of refrigerated display space). Inventory requirement of 10 varieties of fresh fruits and 10 varieties of fresh vegetables,
- Fresh or frozen meats and poultry (minimum of 12 linear feet of fresh or frozen unbreaded meat, pre-packaged luncheon meats do not qualify). Inventory requirement of 5 chicken, 5 beef, and 5 pork fresh varieties. Stores may substitute 5 lamb for pork,
- Frozen vegetables,
- Dairy products, and
- Cereals and bread.

The vendor will be asked at both initial authorization and subsequent reauthorizations, for retail sales and stocking information. The information provided by the vendor as well as anything discovered during an on-site review will be compared to SNAP information as appropriate and available.

### **D. Special Purpose/Pharmacy Additional Requirements**

License

Vendor must have a current Pharmacy License from the State of Iowa.

Ordering

Must be able to special order formula within 48 hours (72 hours for weekend and holidays) for WIC participants.

### **E. Grocery Stores/Supercenters with Pharmacy Additional Requirements**

Grocery Stores with Pharmacies shall be expected to meet not only the general business requirements (as outlined in Section X-A) but also requirements for both Grocery Stores (as outlined in Section X-B) and Special Purpose/Pharmacy (as outlined in Section X-C).

### **F. Participant Access**

Vendors will also be selected based on access to WIC participants. Specifically, if at all possible, at least one vendor contract will be maintained in rural counties where a WIC clinic is located. Note that the Iowa WIC Program does not limit the number of vendors who may participate in the agency service area.

## G. Adherence to WIC Regulations

Vendors who apply to be a WIC-authorized vendor indicate their intent to comply with ALL WIC regulations as outlined in the Vendor Agreement & Handbook and in Chapter 73 of the Iowa Administrative Code (IAC).

## Section III: Minimum Stocking Requirements

All WIC grocery, supercenter and grocery/supercenters with a pharmacy are required to stock the varieties and minimum quantities of WIC-approved foods as listed on the current WIC-approved food list to meet participant demand. The minimum requirements are as listed below.

Special Purpose/Pharmacy ONLY vendors do not have a minimum stocking requirement.

### A. Minimum Stocking Requirements

Note: The variety and quantity in stock are defined as including both inventory on display and on-premises storage, but not inventory on order from suppliers.	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Cereal</u></b></p> <p><i>Cold, ready-to-eat cereals:</i> 10 boxes. Two (2) boxes of five (5) approved varieties-of the five (5) approved varieties, three (3) varieties must be whole grain</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Milk</u></b></p> <p>Four (4) gallons of whole Four (4) gallons low-fat or fat free</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>100% Whole Wheat Bread</u></b></p> <p>Four (4) 16 ounce loaves</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Dried Beans/Peas</u></b></p> <p>Two (2) 1 pound bags, any variety</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Brown Rice</u></b></p> <p>Two (2) 14-16 ounce instant or Boil in Bag</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Peanut Butter</u></b></p> <p>Two (2) containers of 18 ounces or less</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Juice</u></b></p> <p><i>Shelf Stable:</i> Fifteen (15) 64 ounce containers of at least three (3) approved varieties <i>Concentrate:</i> Ten (10) 12 ounce containers of at least two (2) approved varieties</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Formula</u></b></p> <p>Twenty-four (24) 13 ounce cans of any current rebate contract concentrated formula, OR six (6) cans of any current rebate contract powdered formula</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Cheese</u></b></p> <p>Two (2) pounds of two (2) varieties, 8 or 16 ounces</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Eggs</u></b></p> <p>Five (5) dozen large, grade A, white or brown</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Fish</u></b></p> <p><i>Tuna:</i> Eight (8) containers, 5 ounce minimum <i>Salmon:</i> Eight (8) containers, 5 ounce minimum</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Baby Food (Fruits &amp; Vegetables)</u></b></p> <p>Fifty (50) 4 ounce containers, or twenty-five (25) 4 ounce twin-packs of at least five (5) varieties</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Fruits and Vegetables (CVB)</u></b></p> <p>Ten (10) varieties of fresh fruits and vegetables each Ten (10) varieties of frozen fruits and vegetables each</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Baby Meats</u></b></p> <p>Ten (10) 2.5 ounce containers of at least two (2) varieties</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Infant Cereal</u></b></p> <p>Twenty-four (24) ounces of at least two (2) varieties</p>

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