



VENDOR NEWS

Your source for State of Alaska WIC program news related to vendor management. In this newsletter you will find important and useful information affecting vendor agreements with the WIC program. *Enjoy!*

January 2017 — Volume 18, Issue 2

NEW WIC Logo!

We're excited to introduce our new Alaska WIC program logo! The National WIC Association, State of Alaska and countless other states, Indian Tribal Organizations and US territories have joined forces to promote WIC on a national scale. WIC shoppers across the country will be able to recognize the WIC logo no matter where they are!

Mandatory Annual Training Teleconference

Rural and small stores



January 17th
10:00am AKST

Urban and large stores



January 18th
10:00am AKST

Call: 1-800-281-5354
Passcode: 646725

Annual interactive vendor training is required by federal regulations. A manager or WIC trainer must attend one of the teleconferences. If your store is unable to attend your designated call, please join the other.

eWIC Update

The Alaska WIC Program will soon begin our transition to electronic benefits technology – eWIC! The WIC Vendor Management Unit, along with our banking contractor, FIS/CDP, and Quality Assurance contractor, Maximus, will reach out for your assistance with a few projects.

Vendor Technology Survey – we recently mailed every vendor a short survey that will help us understand the technology readiness and needs among our authorized vendors. Please return the survey as soon as possible, but no later than January 23, 2017. Your survey response may be submitted by mail, email to wic@alaska.gov, or fax to (907) 465-3416.

UPC Collection – After we transition to eWIC, only the foods on our Approved Product List (APL) will ring up as “WIC” in your cash register. Foods on the APL will be identified by their UPC codes. The Vendor Management Unit will begin development of our APL in late January and the effort will continue at least through the spring. We may visit your store to scan the UPCs of products for our APL. We will contact the store manager in advance of any UPC scanning at your site.

Approved Formula Suppliers

The Alaska WIC Approved Infant Formula Suppliers list has been revised to include the updates to the FDA approved infant formula suppliers. A copy of the new list is included with this newsletter. Please ensure that your store is purchasing infant formula only from a supplier that is included on this list. It is a program violation to obtain infant formula from an unauthorized source. WIC representatives will confirm your store's infant formula supplier during routine monitoring visits.

NEW Beech-Nut Packaging

As of March 1, 2017, 8 ounce Beech-Nut infant cereals will have new packaging! Currently, these cereals are in cardboard boxes but will transition to plastic canisters. Be advised these new packages will have new UPC codes as well.



NEW APPROVED ITEM: Silk Soy

As of January 1, 2017, WIC shoppers with checks for half-gallon sized Soy milk can purchase refrigerated Silk brand-original flavor only. WIC Local Agencies will be providing stickers for a shopper's WIC Allowed Food List booklet that feature an image of the product. This sticker is to help participants and cashiers identify the correct product. Included in this newsletter you have received a training flyer to post in your store. If you have any questions, please contact the Vendor Unit staff at (907) 465-3100.



Cashier Training

Each month our office reviews banking and reimbursement activity from our Alaskan WIC stores. We monitor and analyze check rejections for several reasons including detecting possible industry changes and identifying training needs. In the near future you may receive a letter detailing your store's top check rejection reason(s). This letter is intended to help identify and encourage cashier and staff training needs. Included in this newsletter you will find a copy of our WIC Check Processing and WIC Bookkeeping informational flyer. Also, if you'd like to schedule a teleconference training call please contact the Vendor Unit staff at (907) 465-3100.

Infant Fruit and Vegetable Containers

Infant fruits and vegetable checks have been changed to read “16 4 OZ. JARS INFANT FRUITS/VEGETABLES—FOR BANANA SEE FOOD LIST” One 2-pack of 4 oz. containers is equal to two 4 oz. jars. Participants may purchase bananas instead of some of the jarred food. Cashiers should use the banana table in the WIC food list to calculate how many bananas are allowed in combination with infant food.



is the same as:



Approved Infant Fruit and Vegetables

Infant fruit and vegetables are allowed if they are Stage 2 and State 2 ½ for the following brands: Beech-Nut, Beech-Nut Naturals, or Gerber. Here are more details on what's allowed and not allowed (please read these carefully):

Allowed:

- ⇒ 4 oz. jars and/or 2-packs that come with two 4 oz. containers
- ⇒ Single ingredient or combinations of single fruit and/or vegetable ingredients.
For example: pears, peaches, strawberry-banana, squash, sweet potatoes & apples, garden vegetables, etc.

Not Allowed:

- ⇒ Organic
- ⇒ Additives such as DHA/ARA
- ⇒ Guava, Mango, Papaya varieties
- ⇒ Mixtures with rice, milk, or cereal

Up to 4 bananas may be substituted for a portion of infant fruits and vegetables. If substituting bananas, please refer to banana table on page 26 of the WIC Approved Food List.

Next Price Survey

The next vendor price survey will be distributed in April of 2017. Federal regulations require State WIC Agencies to collect vendor shelf prices to ensure that the WIC-approved foods are available statewide at a reasonable cost to the program. Price surveys require you to list the price and brand of your highest priced WIC approved item for each food category listed. The prices charged by your store directly affect your reimbursement by the program, so it is important that you provide them by the deadline.

Health and Social Services

Alaska WIC Program
Div. of Public
Assistance
P.O. Box 110612
Juneau, AK 99811

Phone: 907-465-3100
Fax: 907-465-3416
E-mail: wic@alaska.gov



**NO Rain
Checks Allowed**

Vendor Question

Can I accept a WIC check from another state?

Answer: No. WIC checks are not transferable from one state to another. If a customer attempts a WIC purchase in your store using checks that were issued by a different state WIC program, please refer the customer to the Alaska WIC Program. The main program telephone number, (907) 465-3100, is on the back of the Alaska WIC Allowed Food List booklet (which should be at every check stand). Only Alaska WIC checks can be processed and paid by Solutran, our banking contractor.



Contacting the WIC Vendor Unit

The Vendor Unit will provide assistance to vendors at any time. For questions or complaints, please contact us and we will do our best to meet your needs.

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Managers

Please post this newsletter
for your staff to read

IF YOU FIND LOST CHECKS: Please notify your local WIC agency or the State Office immediately at (907) 465-3100 so the checks can be returned to the participant.

WIC is an equal opportunity provider and employer. Go to http://dhss.alaska.gov/dpa/Documents/dpa/programs/nutri/downloads/Admin/Forms/nondiscrimination_statement.pdf for the full Non-Discrimination Statement.

