



WIC'S WORLD

Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment
WIC Program

2016 Issue #3: July to September

This issue:

A short reference guide published annually to compliment the details in the Retailer Handbook.

eWIC is rolling-out in Colorado!



**Please share
this
information
with all your
staff!**

eWIC is Here

Nationally, WIC spends over \$4.5 billion annually at authorized retailers. Federal rules require WIC Programs across the country to move from paper checks to an electronic payment process by the year 2020. This means that WIC customers will do their WIC shopping using an eWIC card instead of WIC checks.

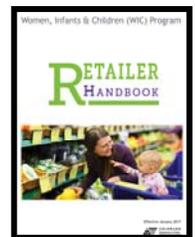
How It's Going?

Here in Colorado, you have probably noticed that WIC has been making the move to eWIC cards throughout 2016. By early 2017, cards will be used by WIC shoppers at authorized stores across the state.

As the stores and WIC shoppers move through the phases of this new process, we are starting to see some interesting trends. One trend is a very large number of WIC shoppers are very excited about using the eWIC card. Overwhelmingly, WIC families that were surveyed found that using the eWIC card is easier (88% of responses) and faster (93% of responses) than checks. When asked why they like using the eWIC cards, participants told us the shopping experience was more like a normal, convenient grocery purchase and that they could pick and choose the items to purchase instead of having to get large amounts.

New: Foods List & Handbook in 2017

A new *Allowable Foods List* will be published in early Spring 2017. Please provide any input or suggestions. Hint: yogurt may be in our WIC Foods List future! With the transition to eWIC, many policies are changing, therefore, a new Handbook is also being prepared for 2017.



Quarterly Newsletter



WIC's WORLD newsletters are going quarterly! If you have topics that you would like to see included or have questions, contact WIC. Contact information for the state office is on the last page.

Minimum Varieties & Quantities of Foods

Retailers are required to stock certain authorized items at all times in sufficient quantities to meet WIC client demand. Specific Colorado WIC authorized brands and sizes are defined in the current *Allowable Foods List* and shown on the WIC check, or swiping the eWIC card for a Balance Inquiry. Failure to meet stocking requirements could lead to sanctions and/or agreement termination. Please refer to [page 7](#) of your Retailer Handbook for the specific minimum stocking requirements for the various types of food items.

Approved Supplemental Foods

Supplemental foods are prescribed for WIC families based on the nutrient content. Food items must meet strict Federal nutrient requirements (as outlined in 7 CFR Part 246) in order to be considered for the Program.

- The specific foods offered are listed in the *Colorado WIC Allowable Foods List*.
- Only approved WIC foods in the quantities and sizes prescribed to the WIC families may be purchased with WIC. Both the WIC customer and retail cashiers should refer to the *Allowable Foods List* during a WIC transaction.
- Your store is responsible for making sure that each cash register has the most current *Allowable Foods List*. Additional copies of the list (in English and Spanish) can be obtained by calling the State Office at (303) 692-2400, or by calling your Local Agency WIC office.
- Please refer to your *WIC Retailer Handbook* for more information on allowable foods.



Vendor Sanction System

The Program has designed systems to detect Retailers who abuse or defraud the Program. These systems also identify Retailers who, through misinformation or lack of training, may intentionally or unintentionally violate Federal regulations, Program policies and procedures, or the terms of the Retailer Agreement. Violations that trigger sanctions do not require the Program to distinguish between fraudulent (intentional) and abusive (unintentional) violations because both types of violations result in loss of Program funds.

The Program determines the type and level of sanctions to be applied against Retailers based upon the severity, nature, and pattern of the Program violations observed, and other factors as appropriate. For example, whether the offenses represented Retailer policy or whether they represent the actions of an individual employee who did not understand the Program rules. The objectives of the Program can best be met through education, training, and the voluntary cooperation of Retailers, your WIC customers and the state and local WIC Programs. eWIC changes will be sent in future editions.

To ensure the integrity of the Program it is necessary to impose corrective actions consistently against Retailers who are in violation of Program policies and procedures. There are six types of actions:

1. Nonpayment of WIC checks,
2. Warning/Notification Letter
3. Corrective Action Plans (CAP),
4. Mandatory training,
5. Civil Money Penalty (CMP) (may be imposed if the Program determines that disqualification would result in inadequate WIC client access), and
6. Disqualification.

Finding of Program violations are assigned points. Details of the violations and points assigned for each are in the Retailer Handbook.

Redeeming Food Instruments & Cash Value Vouchers (CVV)

Although eWIC cards are now being issued, stores will continue to see and take WIC checks until around the end of 2016 (and maybe even a few into early 2017). WIC checks are generally issued for up to three months at a time to WIC families for the purchase of food items. The specific foods and quantities to be received by each WIC family are determined by WIC based on their specific needs. The WIC families use the checks at a Colorado WIC authorized grocery store, pharmacy, farm or commissary. In order to receive payment for WIC checks it is important that store staff are trained to follow the correct procedures. The Program contracts with a bank for check processing services.

Transitioning from checks to eWIC is a huge change, and it comes with a few headaches along the way. We wanted to take a moment to thank you for your continued support and patience. WIC is grateful to the dedicated cashiers, managers and owners like you. We look forward to an easier experience for our WIC families and stores. Thank you for making it all possible.

Shelf Tags

WIC authorized Retailers are permitted to use shelf tags (i.e., shelf labels, flags, talkers, channel strips or clings) stating WIC approval on grocery shelves under the following conditions:

- The tags must be placed at the exact spot(s) that contain WIC approved items.
- Throughout the WIC agreement period, the Retailer shall be responsible for any food items tagged or represented as WIC approved are listed on the current Approved Foods List. Retailers are responsible for the placement of shelf tags.
- Retailers who wish to develop and use shelf tags must obtain written permission from Colorado WIC by submitting a copy or sample of the final version for approval prior to use. WIC tags/labels are not permitted to be put on individual item containers; labels created by manufacturers stating WIC allowance are not permitted.
- Retailers can decide which food categories in the store to use the shelf tags.
- If using shelf tags in the food categories of breakfast cereal, bread or 100% juice, Retailers must place WIC approved shelf tags under all WIC approved products that are stocked within that food category. (This does not mean that Retailers need to keep stock of every approved cereal, bread or juice option.) Stores are not allowed to promote one product over another in these categories.

Shelf Price List

The *Shelf Price List* (in the Retailer Handbook) must be submitted to Colorado WIC at least every six months. (Many chain stores submit the Price List for all their stores through their Headquarters office.) Retailers are encouraged to submit an updated price list when prices change significantly. Prices must reflect the full shelf price—sales or promotions should not be included. Grocery stores and commissaries must mark the prices clearly on the product or shelf at all times. Violations will be assigned to retailers that do not submit a price survey at least once every six months.

Shelf prices must be found at application and remain competitive with other retailers in the peer grouping to within 10%. A peer group is based on criteria that classifies the store type (i.e., supermarket, small grocer, supercenter, pharmacy, commissary), the geographic area (based on US Census Bureau), and the number of WIC authorized stores owned and operated in Colorado.

The Program will evaluate prices throughout the agreement period (January 1, 2017-December 31, 2019). If Retailer prices are not competitive, one request will be made to the Retailer asking for a re-evaluation of their prices and resubmission of an updated *Shelf Price List*.

Claims Procedure

WIC transactions are reviewed before payment to determine if Program policies and procedures have been met. A Retailer that has a high percentage of rejected WIC transactions is considered a high-risk Retailer. Compliance investigations may be conducted on high-risk Retailers, as well as randomly, to document compliance with Program policies and procedures. Please refer to **Section V** of the Retailer Handbook for more information. eWIC changes will be sent out in future editions.

Checks will not be paid by the Program's bank if they are:

- Accepted outside the valid dates,
- Submitted for payment later than 60 days after the "First Date to Use",
- Over-the-maximum dollar amount,
- Unsigned/missing WIC customer signature,
- Altered, or
- Stamped incorrectly (missing or unreadable WIC vendor ID stamp imprint).

Colorado WIC Program Shelf Price List			
WIC ID #	Store Name & #	Date:	
Contact Name:	Phone #		
Instructions: * Please enter the HIGHEST cost WIC ALLOWED item that your store stocks. * Certain items need additional information and are highlighted. Specifically, the brand name is needed for cereal and the number of ounces are needed for the cereal, bread, salmon/hardines and tortillas. * Providing the brand names (unless highlighted) is optional. * WIC uses the prices that stores provide to calculate the allowed amounts and determine payment of WIC checks. Please complete as thoroughly as possible so there is WIC check success. * Page 2 lists optional Formula items; provide prices for items that your store stocks. * By federal regulations, a shelf price list is required to be completed AT LEAST every six months. * Please remember to enter the contact information and the date.			
Required WIC Stock			
Food Item	Brand Name (Or Notes)	Size	Price
Infant/ Premium Infant Powder	Mead Johnson (UPC: 5087136521)	12.5 oz	\$
Infant/ ProSobee Powder	Mead Johnson (UPC: 50871214415)	12.5 oz	\$
Infant Cereal		8 oz	\$
Milk- Whole, Skim, 1%, or 2%		1 Gallon	\$
Cheddar Cheese		1 Pound	\$
Baby Food- Fruit & Vegetables		4 oz	\$
Baby Food- Meat		2.5 oz	\$
Eggs- Large		D dozen	\$
Dry Beans/ Pasta/ Lentils		1 Pound	\$
Ground Turkey		16.18 oz	\$
100% Juice- Frozen Can		11.5 - 12 oz	\$
100% Juice- Bottle		64 oz	\$
Breakfast Cereal- Highest cost per ounce	Brand _____	_____ oz	\$
-Fill in brand and number of ounces.			
Bread- Kilo, or Buns- 12-16 ounce		_____ oz	\$
-Fill in number of ounces.			
Fish, Canned- Chunk Light Tuna		5 oz	\$
General			
Fish, Canned- Pink Salmon or Sardines		_____ oz	\$
-Fill in number of ounces. *5 - 14.75 oz.			
Corn Tortillas		_____ oz	\$
-Fill in number of ounces. 8 or 16			
Brown Rice- Box or bag		16 oz	\$
Cheese- Kasher		1 Pound	\$
Chutney		1 Pound	\$
Tofu Tubs	Any brand	1 Pound	\$
Beans- Canned		15 - 16 oz	\$
Milk- Whole, Skim, 1%, or 2%		1 Gallon	\$
Milk- Whole, Skim, 1%, or 2%		Quart	\$
Milk- UHT Long-Life		Quart	\$
Milk- Sterilized		1/2 oz	\$
Milk- Lactose Free	Lactaid or Dairy Base Milk	Quart	\$
Milk- Lactose Free	Lactaid or Dairy Base Milk	1 Gallon	\$
Milk- Merenberg Goat Milk		Quart	\$
Milk- Kasher		1 Gallon	\$
Soy Beverage	Pacific Natural Foods Ultra Soy	Quart	\$
Soy Beverage	8th Continent	1 Gallon	\$

Required: Formula Only From Approved Sources

Retailers must purchase infant formula from approved suppliers. A list of approved formula vendors can be found at www.coloradowic.com under the 'Retailers' section, then 'Retailer Authorization' titled: 'Approved Suppliers of Infant Formula'.

Vendor Complaint Process

WIC strives to make the transaction experience flow as smoothly as possible. In the event that this is not the case, complaint forms are available to WIC families and retailers. If you have questions, comments or concerns, contact your Local Agency Retailer Coordinator (LARC). If you are calling about a WIC customer, please try to have their name, check and ID number. This information assists WIC to identify the correct individual, and is listed on the WIC check, along with the clinic number.

Use of Incentive Items

Incentive items are not to be offered solely to WIC customers by any WIC-authorized vendor. Stores must offer WIC customers the same courtesies as offered to other customers, e.g., no separate lines or hours. Any practice that singles out your WIC customers from other customers is prohibited. Such practices include keeping lists of your WIC customers, having them sign cash register receipts, having specific register lines WIC customers must use, keeping folders for each WIC customer, keeping WIC customer receipts or the offering or denial of incentives solely to WIC customers. In accordance with Federal law and US Department of Agriculture policy, all authorized Retailers are prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability.

Purpose of WIC & WIC Foods

WIC stands for the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children. WIC was established by Congress in 1972 in recognition of the need for better nutrition during pregnancy and early childhood development. WIC provides Federal grants to States for supplemental foods, breastfeeding support, health care referrals, and nutrition education for low-income pregnant, breastfeeding and postpartum women, and to infants and children up to age five who are found to be at nutritional risk. Women participating in WIC have improved diets and give birth to healthier babies. WIC combats poor nutrition at an early stage and, as a result, health care costs are reduced.

Vendor Role in WIC

WIC grocers, commissaries, pharmacies and farmers play an vital role in helping to improve the health of their community. WIC foods are like a food prescription designed to supplement the WIC family's nutritional needs. The cashier helps fill the prescription by making sure the family receives exactly what is prescribed. The Handbook and Allowable Foods List assist with determining what foods are approved. WIC vendors are important partners in improving the health of Colorado communities.

WIC Website

The website is: www.ColoradoWIC.com. Information available to vendors:

- WIC Contacts-local & state WIC staff
- Cashier Training
- Allowable Foods List
- Retailer Handbook
- Vendor Notes & Updates
- eWIC Updates & Information

Thank you for your continued support in making the WIC Program a success!!

WIC Vendor Management Staff
Melanie Jacobs "MJ", Retailer Specialist
melanie.jacobs@state.co.us
(303) 692-2448