



West Virginia WIC Vendor Advisory Board Quarterly Update

October 30, 2018

Participants: By telephone conference

Minimum Stock Requirements

- Agreement requires vendor maintain stock on the shelves or have products immediately available on-site to satisfy the West Virginia WIC minimum stock requirements at all times during the agreement period.
- Stocking requirements were revised by Peer Group effective October 1, 2018
- Vendors may request exemptions from minimum stock requirements from the Vendor Management Unit via an email to dhhrvuwic@wv.gov, by calling 304-558-1115 or submission via the website at <http://dhhr.wv.gov/wic>.
- Exemptions from minimum stock can be requested for individual food categories or to a lower peer group minimum stock requirement. Exemption approval is for a single store location, and for the duration of the current agreement. The minimum stock exemption approval letter must be on file at the vendor's location.
- If a WIC customer or WIC staff member requests a contract infant formula, the requested product will be ordered at once. Every effort will be made to make the requested product available to WIC participants within 72 hours of the request. If the item(s) will not be available within 72 hours of the request, the Vendor must notify the Vendor Management Unit within 24 hours so the participant access issue may be resolved

Mandatory Shelf Tagging

- Shelf labels will be mandatory as of February 1, 2019
- WIC shelf labels provided by the Vendor Management Unit, or custom WIC labels issued from your corporate parent, must be attached to the shelf price of all WIC Approved items [*except* infant formula NOT required for minimum stock, whole milk, lactose free milk, evaporated milk, powdered milk, or fresh produce].
- You may order WIC shelf tags on our website under forms/materials, choose vendors, then vendor materials order form
- The Vendor Unit has already completed tagging in two regions. Once your store is tagged we recommend your scanning coordinator ensures all labeled frozen and canned fruits and vegetables are mapped to cash value benefit. Also we are unable to check the APL while tagging, and since manufacturers and distributors provided product information over a year ago, the scanning coordinator should also quickly report any tagged products that do not appear to be in the State Agency APL file.
- Corporations and stores which produce their own shelf labels will have only one store visited by the Vendor Unit. We will then provide an excel file from the state agency noting products that need a label.

New Food List:

- All stores should have received a shipment of shopping guides and a new door decal. Please dispose of all 2015 shopping guides and place the new shopping guides at each register. Replace ANY and ALL door decals. The new white decal looks best if placed on the outside of the window, and remember it should be visible from the parking lot. If you need additional supplies you may contact the Vendor Unit, or use the order form available online.
- Although not noted in the shopping guides, 128 ounce containers (gallons) of juice are WIC authorized. Please report any products your store has available as soon as possible.
- The federal WIC office has not approved the West Virginia recommendation to delete the quarts of milk from the WIC food package. Participants may still choose a food package which will contain quarts of milk. However, keep in mind these products are not required for minimum stock.
- The current milk-based and soy-based infant formula contract is effective until January 29, 2019. If there will be changes, you will receive notice by the end of November via email and mail of the new formulas which must be carried for WIC.
- If a cashier encounters a problem processing yogurt, please reference the participant benefit balance. If they have whole milk, then they cannot purchase low-fat yogurt. Keep in mind children age 12-24 months receive whole milk. Hence the yogurt provided to these participants must be whole milk yogurt.

New Website:

- The new URL is: dhhr.wv.gov/WIC. The previous WV WIC web address will offer a redirect through April 2019; be sure to update all print materials or bookmarks as soon as possible.
- Information important to vendors may be found on the Retailers/Farmers page, plus the WIC Foods page.
- An up to date APL file in excel format will always be accessible on the website under the WIC Foods heading, Information for Manufacturers subheading.

Vendor Portal

- The WV WIC Program is working on an online portal system for vendors which allows application and information updates for all stores. It is active for all new store or new owner applications via our website. It is our hope to begin pilot of the online vendor management system for reauthorizations in the spring of 2019. We are considering hosting one day trainings in four locations throughout the state which will cover the portal and revised Vendor Handbook.
- Once the Vendor Portal is statewide the state will transition to all vendors being on the same reauthorization schedule; so all West Virginia WIC stores will have the same three year contract period.

FY 2019 Initiatives of the Vendor Advisory Board (VAB)

- Since less than 13% of eligible stores participate in WIC, and WIC redemptions average 64%, VAB recommendation for stores to be provided more advertising and/or materials sharing WIC messages and eligibility. Ideas that have been presented are digital signage in produce section, aisle floor decals, cooler decals, register decals, and billboards placed close to WIC Vendor locations highlighting the WIC Vendor Door Decal and encouraging choosing a WIC grocery store.

- Other FY 2019 projects the VAB will be involved with are revision of the Vendor Handbook, development of a Cashier Training Guide, input on a cashier training video, and How to become a WIC vendor brochure that will go to all SNAP authorized stores. A customer survey will also be conducted with current participants to assess shopping preferences.

Annual VAB meeting:

- March 20, 2019 from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm at 211 6th Street, Parkersburg, WV 26101. Please email the Vendor Unit if you are interested in attending.

Date of next quarterly voluntary call: **January 24, 2019 9:30 am**

- Dial 1-877-302-0757
- Enter Conference ID, 7232679, and press #

Answers to Questions at the End of the Call:

Once we submit a UPC request, will we receive notification whether it is approved or not? Currently there is no notification process, however, the Vendor Unit can email when a new APL file is issued, and what new products are contained in the file.

What is the frequency WIC customers get quarts of milk? WIC participants may choose benefits which include:

4 gallons of milk; or

3 gallons, 1 - ½ gallon, and 1 quart of milk plus 32 oz of yogurt; or

3 gallons and 1 quart of milk and 1 lb of cheese; or

3 gallons of milk, 1 lb of cheese and 32 oz of yogurt.

Vendors feel the WICShopper app is excellent.

Recommendation for WIC educational programs to include food preparation and recipes.