

### Important Dates

- Vendor Teleconference May 11, 9:00—call in number: 1(800)-281-5354 code 259225
- Spring price sheets are due: May 31, 2011



Sandy Harbanuk has joined the WIC Vendor Unit as the new Vendor Coordinator: Phone: (907) 465-4704

or email: [Sandra.Harbanuk@Alaska.gov](mailto:Sandra.Harbanuk@Alaska.gov).

### PURPOSE OF THE PROGRAM

The purpose of the Program is to provide supplemental foods and nutrition education through payment of cash grants to State agencies which administer the Program through local agencies at no cost to eligible persons.

The Program shall serve as an adjunct to good health care during critical times of growth and development, in order to prevent the occurrence of health problems, including drug and other harmful substance abuse, and to improve the health status of these persons. The program shall be supplementary to the Food Stamp Program; any problem under which foods are distributed to needy families in lieu of food stamps; and receipt of food or meals from soup kitchens, or shelters, or other forms of emergency food assistance.

An updated Vendor manual was provided to each vendor this spring. We will provide updates as changes take affect. Vendors are expected to update their manuals when notified of any changes. We will answer questions on these and other topics at the training teleconference on Monday, May 11.

- **Minimum Stock Requirements**—These requirements are listed in the section beginning on page 7-57 and continuing to the end of the manual. The section lists the supplemental foods authorized by the State of Alaska and the minimum varieties and quantities of authorized foods that must be stocked by vendors.
  - **Exemptions:** Approved exemptions will be valid for the contract period unless the local agency contacts a vendor with a request to restock certain exempt items due to local WIC participants' changing needs.
  - The local agency will send vendors the Request to Restock WIC Food Items form when making such a request.

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# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## Vendor Manual Update (continued)

- Infant formula may only be purchased from sources included on the list provided by the State of Alaska. Please see pages 4-1 for information and 7-46 through 7-48 for authorized distributors.
- Transacting and redeeming food instruments and cash-value vouchers (FVVs). Please review all of Section 5. Be sure to remind cashiers that FVVs must not be written over the amount on the warrant.
- We are including a copy of the Request Form for WIC Warrant Electronic Reimbursement Payment. If the bank returns a warrant because the vendor failed to use their vendor stamp, or the amount on the warrant was altered, you may use this form to request reimbursement. If the manager failed to initial the altered amount before submitting the warrant for payment, no reimbursement will be made. (See pages 7-16 and 7-17 for more information.) You must fill out the form, include the returned item and mail it to the Key Bank address in New York, as listed on the form.
- Vendor Sanction System—Please read all of Section 6. There are federal sanctions and State of Alaska sanctions that carry points. Vendors who have not complied with deadlines and records requests will face probation for six months at 40 points, probation for one year at 60 points, suspension for six months at 80 points and disqualified for a year upon reaching 100 points. Please take the Vendor Unit requests seriously. We are governed by USDA and must provide them with our records during our annual audit. The most common sanction issues for Alaska vendors include:
  - Failure to submit a complete price sheet by deadline.
  - Failure to have required minimum stock of WIC foods. (Discovered at monitoring or incomplete price sheets.)
  - Having food on the shelf with expired “sell by” dates. (Please toss outdated foods.)
  - Refusal to allow WIC staff access to inventory records. (This could be a request for taxes for a store identified as a potential 50% vendor or requests such as an inventory audit.)
- Vendor Complaint Process—A Complaint Form is provided on page 7-50. A Retraining Form is provided on page 7-52. Use either form to notify the WIC Vendor Unit if you experience any problems at your store.
- The WIC Vendor Unit addresses each complaint or training request. Due to client confidentiality, we will rarely report back to vendors. Since we began using the retraining form we have had zero repeated complaints or training requests for the same WIC participant.
- Restriction on Authorization of Above 50 Percent (A50%) Vendors - The State of Alaska does not authorize 50% Vendors and will not make payments to any vendor who may be identified during the contract period as an A50.
- WIC Participant Confidentiality—Please maintain confidentiality at the check stand. Do not announce a WIC client as such over the intercom. Try using a special code if your cashier needs to call a manager with a WIC concern.
- Supplies—If you need Cashing Fruit & Vegetable cashier cards or Cashing WIC warrants cashier cards (we suggest you tape these to each register), the We Accept WIC poster, or shelf labels, please email: [WIC@alaska.gov](mailto:WIC@alaska.gov)
- New WIC Vendor Coordinator—Sandra Harbanuk has joined the WIC Vendor Unit. She may be reached at (907) 465-4704 or email: [Sandra.Harbanuk@Alaska.gov](mailto:Sandra.Harbanuk@Alaska.gov).

Client's Unrestricted Access to WIC Foods: You are not allowed to arbitrarily restrict a WIC client from shopping at your store. See WIC Vendor Agreement 7-12, Paragraph 9; "Vendor is accessible to WIC participants and WIC staff in terms of location and hours open for business." If you have any questions about this requirement, please contact the WIC Vendor Unit at (907) 465-3100.