



Alaska WIC Vendor Newsletter

July 2014 — Volume 12, Issue

WIC Food Changes Take Effect October 1, 2014

On March 4, 2014, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) published the “Final Food Rule,” a regulation that affects the WIC food items that authorized WIC vendors may or must provide to WIC participants.

The Vendor Management Unit will soon send more details about food and brand changes, including minimum stocking requirements, that will take effect on October 1, 2014. The following is a summary of the significant changes that you may expect:

Milk:

- Most participants will have “whole” milk or “1% or nonfat” milk listed on their checks.
- A small number of participants will have 2% milk listed on their checks.
- Less UHT milk will be prescribed.
- Vendors will be required to stock 1% or nonfat UHT milk.
- Vendors will be required to stock dry (powdered) milk.
- Quarts of fresh milk will no longer appear on participants’ checks.
- Rural vendors may request an exemption for 2% UHT milk.

Whole Grains:

- Breads - approved only if they are 100% whole wheat or bromated wheat, no other grains allowed. Specific brands will be approved in Alaska. Some of the current brands will no longer be allowed.
- 100% whole wheat pasta will be allowed. Specific brands will be approved in Alaska.

Beans:

- Refried beans, without added sugars, fats, oils, vegetables, or meat are allowed. Specific brands will be approved in Alaska.

Fish:

- Jack mackerel (but not King mackerel) will be allowed.

Infant foods:

- Up to 4 bananas will be allowed to replace part of an infant’s fruit and vegetables.



Questions? Call the WIC Vendor Unit at 907/465-3100.

VENDOR TELECONFERENCES:

Please make sure a Manager or WIC Trainer attends one of the following teleconferences.



Tuesday,
August 26

A & B Stores
10:00am AKST



Wednesday,
August 27

C Stores
10:00am AKST

1 (800) 281—5354
Passcode: 259225

Interactive vendor training is required by federal regulations. This is your opportunity to get updates and ask your questions!



Protect Your Profits—Avoid WIC Check Errors

1,894 WIC checks and FVVs were rejected in June because:

743 were missing signature

TIP: Ask for the WIC customer's Food List / ID Booklet at the start of the transaction. Keep it with the WIC check(s) until after you have written in the sales total. After you get the participant's signature, compare it with the signature page and return the booklet to the participant.

278 were accepted before the first date to use

TIP: When accepting a WIC check, circle the first and last dates to use. This will help you ensure you do not accept a check early.

451 were missing purchase date

TIP: After circling the first and last dates to use, write in the current date.

213 were missing vendor stamp

TIP: Thumb through checks before depositing. Make sure each check has your vendor stamp and all other required details.

209 were altered/revised

TIP: To change an incorrect date or amount of sale, draw a single line through the incorrect date or amount, write the correct date or amount as close to the box as possible and initial the change.



No Rain
Checks

Think a check rejection was a mistake?

- ✓ Did the check have your vendor stamp?
- ✓ Did the check have a legible date and amount of sale?
- ✓ Did the check have a valid date (on or between first & last date to use)?
- ✓ Did the check have the customer's signature?

If you answered yes to all of the above and you'd like to appeal the rejection, submit our new **WIC Check Appeal Request form** directly to our office at PO Box 110612, Juneau, AK 99811. The form is available on our website at <http://dhss.alaska.gov/dpa/Pages/nutri/wic/default.aspx>

NEW WIC Vendor Training Available!

The WIC Program is required to provide interactive training to all authorized vendors. To make this training more accessible and convenient for your store managers and cashiers, we have posted a new WIC Vendor Training PowerPoint on our website at:

<http://dhss.alaska.gov/dpa/Pages/nutri/wic/vendors/default.aspx>

The training takes about 12 minutes, and you may print the last page, fill in the name of the staff person who took the training, and fax it to the Vendor Management Unit at (907)465-3416. We will record the training in your vendor file. We will also be very happy to answer questions or follow up with more training via teleconference when it is convenient for you and your staff.

IMPORTANT REMINDER: Before finalizing WIC transactions, you must verify that the participant's signature matches one listed on the back page of the participant's WIC Food ID Booklet. If the participant does not have their ID Booklet, please direct them to their local WIC agency as it is a program requirement that they present their booklet when cashing WIC checks.

MAKING A BIG CHANGE? Vendors MUST notify DHSS in writing of any changes in ownership, store name, store location, or permanent store closure at least 30 days prior to the effective date of the change—it is a requirement of your WIC authorization.

SPIRIT System Implementation Update

The Alaska WIC Program has successfully implemented the new computer system, SPIRIT. You should now only accept our new mint-green WIC checks as all of our previous blue checks have expired.

Customer Service Requirements

- Under WIC regulations you must offer the same courtesies to WIC participants as you do to non-WIC participants.
- Exercise patience, WIC transactions can take a little extra time.
- Don't draw extra attention to a WIC transaction, it could make the WIC participant feel uncomfortable.

SUMMER PRICE SURVEY COMPLETE! We want to thank our vendors who submitted their Summer Price Survey by the July deadline. Your submissions are used to calculate the maximum allowable reimbursements (MAR) for your peer groups. We hope it was a lot easier to complete since we did not ask for inventory counts. Our next price survey will be in the fall.

Email Alert!

In order to provide quicker service, the WIC Vendor Staff is trying to perform more vendor support through email. If you have a store or manager email address, we would send you any needed materials and answer your questions using email. Also if your email address changes, please let us know so we can update our records. The Vendor Unit can always be reached at:
wic@alaska.gov

If you find lost checks

Our WIC participants are your customers. They cannot redeem their lost checks if they do not have them so please notify your local WIC agency or State Office immediately at (907) 465-3100 so the checks can be returned to the participant.



Dairy items on checks must be **LARGEST** size at the **LOWEST** cost

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

Vendors!

Please post this newsletter
for your staff to read

TWO NEW TEAM MEMBERS

Kristen Stouder

Our new Assistant Vendor Coordinator, Kristen Stouder, will join the Vendor Unit staff on August 25th, replacing Gina Heffern. Kristen will be the lead staff person for monitoring and price surveys, as well as providing assistance on banking issues, complaints, and other needs of our WIC authorized vendors.

Pavel

Pavel joined the WIC Vendor team on April 28th weighing 8lbs. 13oz. Pavel is Erin Khmelev's first born.



Please join us in welcoming Kristen and Pavel to WIC!

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.

Sandy Harbanuk

Vendor Coordinator
Sandra.harbanuk@alaska.gov
907/465-4704

Erin Khmelev

Assistant Vendor Coordinator
Erin.khmelev@alaska.gov
907/465-8630

Kristen Stouder (after August 25th)

Assistant Vendor Coordinator
Kristen.stouder@alaska.gov
907/465-6399

The U.S. Department of Agriculture prohibits discrimination against its customers, employees, and applicants for employment on the bases of race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, gender identity, religion, reprisal, and where applicable, political beliefs, marital status, familial or parental status, sexual orientation, or all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program, or protected genetic information in employment or in any program or activity conducted or funded by the Department. (Not all prohibited bases will apply to all programs and/or employment activities.) If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the [USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form](#), found online at: http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, or any USDA office, or call (866) 632-9992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested on the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter to us by mail at U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 200250-9410, by fax (202) 690-7442 or email at program.intake@usda.gov. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339; or (800) 845-6136 (Spanish). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

