ALASKA WIC PROGRAM

VENDOR TRAINING

Presented by:_____

Remember to fill out the attendance sheet at the end of the training and fax it to the WIC Vendor Unit.

Annual Training for WIC Vendors

- All store employees that perform WIC transactions must participate in training each year, per federal regulations.

  Store managers must ensure that employees receive training.

- The WIC vendor newsletter must be posted for all store employees to read.

- Additional vendor training materials are available on the Alaska WIC website in the vendor section.

Interactive Training for WIC Vendors

- At least one representative of each vendor must participate in interactive training once every three years.

- Interactive training may be provided by State or Local WIC staff at a conference, via a teleconference, or during a monitoring visit.

Training Overview

- Purpose of the WIC Program
- Authorized WIC foods
- Role of WIC Vendors
  - Customer Service
  - Complaints Against Participants
  - Minimum Stock Requirements
  - Record Keeping Requirements
  - Approved Infant Formula Suppliers
  - Incentive Items
- Check Out Procedures
- Vendor Compliance
  - Vendor Monitoring
  - Vendor Reauthorization
  - Complaints
  - Reporting Changes of Business
- Vendor Penalties and Sanctions
  - Sanction System
  - SNAP Sanction Reciprocity
  - Vendor Complaints
  - Claims Procedures
  - Appeal/Administrative Review Process
- Program Changes
- Tools for Vendors
  - Request for Technical Assistance
  - Replacement Food Instruments and CVV's

What is WIC?

- "WIC" is the Supplemental Nutrition Program for **W**omen, **I**nfants & **C**hildren.
- WIC is a federal health program, funded by the USDA Food & Nutrition Service.
- Alaska's Department of Health & Social Services administers the WIC Program.
- 11 Local Agencies, State grantees, provide WIC services throughout Alaska.

ALASKA WIC
Good Nutrition For Women, Infants & Children

Who is Eligible for WIC?

- Women who are:
  - Pregnant
  - Breastfeeding (up to one year)
  - Post Partum
- Infants
- Children up to age five
- Have a “nutritional risk”
- Meet income guidelines

WIC participants can also be:

Caregivers of children and infants, including fathers and partners

Foster parents

Grandparents

Individuals who are helping the family

Purpose of the Program

To promote and provide the following health and nutrition benefits:

- Nutrition education

- Healthy growth and development through nutritious foods
- Life-long, healthful habits
- Breastfeeding guidance
- Health and social services referrals

Impact the health of individuals and communities by:

- Reduction of infant mortality and low birth weight
- Reduced incidence of anemia
- Diet improvement
- Improved health of children entering school
- Increased immunization rates
- Health care dollar savings

WIC Approved Foods

The types and quantities of foods authorized for the WIC Program are specified in Federal regulations.

These foods have been chosen because they are high in:

- ✓ Protein
- ✓ Iron
- ✓ Vitamin D
- ✓ Vitamin C
- ✓ Vitamin A
- ✓ Calcium
- ✓ Fiber

WIC Approved Foods

The WIC Approved Food List specifies the types, brands, flavor and sizes of foods allowed with the WIC Program.

WIC participants are issued a WIC Approved Food List booklet that contains their WIC vouchers and lists the foods participants are authorized to purchase with their WIC vouchers.

WIC Approved Foods

Largest Size Available and Least Expensive Brand Policy

WIC participants must purchase the **largest size** and **least expensive** brand of:

- Milk

WIC participants must purchase the **least expensive** brand of:

- Cheese
- Peanut butter

Please Note:

1. WIC participants may take advantage of store specials and should take advantage if the specials makes an approved item the least expensive.
2. If two or more items are the lowest priced, the participant may choose which item to purchase.
3. Vendors who fail to enforce the Largest Size/Least Expensive Brand Policies may incur NTEs (less than full reimbursement for the affected warrants).

Role of the WIC Vendor

Customer Service

1. Treat WIC customers with the same consideration and service as other customers.
2. Do not draw attention to the participant, or the fact that they are on WIC.
3. Exercise patience – WIC transactions can take a little extra time.

Role of the WIC Vendor

Complaints Against Participants

WIC customers are responsible for using WIC warrants correctly.

Local Agencies provide training to WIC participants on the proper use of WIC warrants.

Refer participants with any training issues back to their WIC Local Agency.

If a WIC participant is behaving inappropriately , remain calm and once the participant leaves the store file a complaint with the WIC Office in Juneau.

The Complaint Form can be found in your Vendor Manual or on the WIC website.

Use the Re-training Form (also found in your Vendor Manual or on the WIC website) for customers who may be confused and need more help regarding WIC Program rules.

All issues will be addressed with the participant. Due to confidentiality we will not report back on the participant's training or complaint results.

Role of the WIC Vendor

Minimum Stocking Requirements

- As a WIC vendor you are required to maintain specific minimum stock for WIC food items at all times.
- The minimum stocking requirements are based on your store's location and size. Using location and size, you are categorized as either and A, B or C store.
- Find the minimum stocking requirements on the WIC website.
- Keep in mind which group you belong to as you reference the minimum stock requirements, if you are a "B" store you must stock the quantities listed for "B" stores.

If you do not maintain at least the required minimum stock for all items you maybe subject to penalties.

Role of the WIC Vendor

Record Keeping Requirements

WIC vendors must maintain records for at least 3 years, these records include:

- Purchase records
- Inventory records
- Sales records (used for Federal tax reporting)
- Other records (as required by state agency)

Role of the WIC Vendor

Approved Infant Formula Suppliers

WIC vendors must only purchase infant formula from State agency approved infant formula suppliers

These approved suppliers are registered with the USDA. The list of authorized infant formula suppliers is listed in the Vendor Manual.

Role of the WIC Vendor

Incentive Items

WIC vendors are prohibited from soliciting WIC business with the use of incentive items such as free gifts or services or discounted services offered to WIC participants.

Store specials and coupons that are available to all store customers are **not** considered incentive items and WIC participants are allowed to take advantage of store specials for items a that are WIC approved.

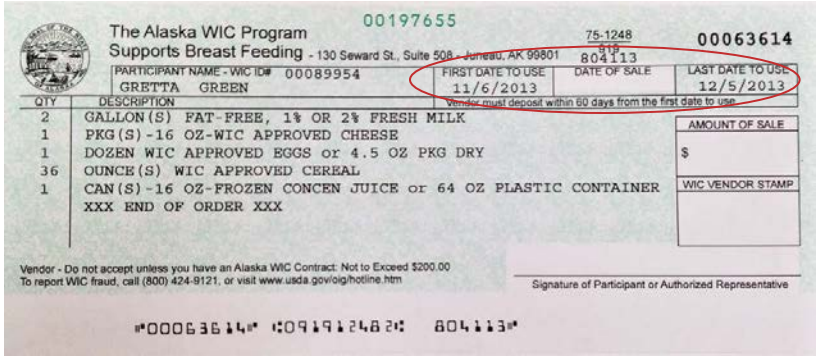
Check Out Procedures

Step 1: Check WIC ID located on last page of the Food List booklet

- There should be at least one signature on the booklet ID page along with the Household ID number.
- Hold onto the booklet until the end of the transaction.
- **Do not proceed** if the customer does not have the booklet ID page or if the page is not filled out, refer them back to the local agency. No other forms of ID are acceptable to make a WIC purchase.

Step 2: Verify WIC check dates

- Checks are valid on the first day of use through the last date of use listed on the check.
- Do not accept checks outside their valid date range. Customers receive checks up to three months in advance so it is very important to make sure they are redeeming the correct check at the correct time, otherwise the store will not be paid and the customer will be unable to purchase food in the appropriate month.



Check Out Procedures

Step 3: Check foods being purchased

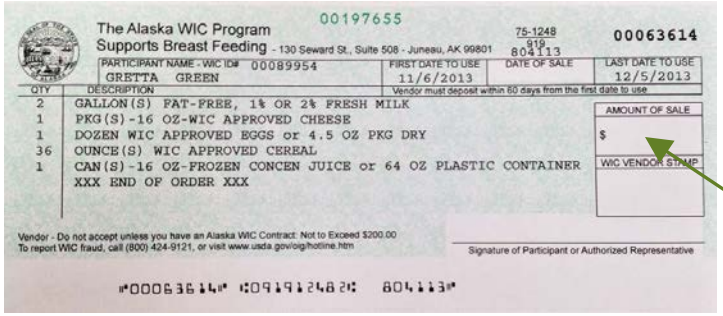
- Make sure WIC purchases are separated for each check.
- Match the quantity, type, brand and size of foods selected with those listed on the food instrument.
- WIC authorized shoppers may choose not to purchase every item listed on a check (unless it is an infant formula check where the customer **must** purchase the full quantity listed on voucher).
- The shopper may also choose to purchase a lesser quantity than listed, though they may only purchase the size listed.

Example: The WIC Check lists 13 12oz cans of evaporated milk, the shopper can choose to buy only 1 can of evaporated milk but it must be a 12oz size.

- Shoppers requesting exceptions or different types of foods should be directed to their local agency.

Step 4: Verify transaction total

- WIC shoppers get to use the same types of coupons as any other shoppers, as long as they are for approved WIC foods.
- "Buy one, get one free" offers are okay if the item being purchased with the WIC check must be a WIC-approved food, but the "free" item does not have to be on the Food List.
- Do not charge sales tax.
- Write the total amount of the sale on each check for the listed items that were purchased. A single check (does not refer to FVV) cannot exceed $200.


The Alaska WIC Program
Supports Breast Feeding - 130 Seward St., Suite 508 - Juneau, AK 99801
00197655
75-1248 919 804113
00063614
PARTICIPANT NAME - WIC ID# 00089954
GRETTA GREEN
FIRST DATE TO USE 11/6/2013
DATE OF SALE
LAST DATE TO USE 12/5/2013
Vendor must deposit within 60 days from the first date to use

QTY	DESCRIPTION
2	GALLON(S) FAT-FREE, 1% OR 2% FRESH MILK
1	PKG(S)-16 OZ-WIC APPROVED CHEESE
1	DOZEN WIC APPROVED EGGS or 4.5 OZ PKG DRY
36	OUNCE(S) WIC APPROVED CEREAL
1	CAN(S)-16 OZ-FROZEN CONCEN JUICE or 64 OZ PLASTIC CONTAINER
	XXX END OF ORDER XXX

AMOUNT OF SALE
$
WIC VENDOR STAMP
Vendor - Do not accept unless you have an Alaska WIC Contract: Not to Exceed $200.00
To report WIC fraud, call (800) 424-9121, or visit www.usda.gov/oig/hotline.htm
Signature of Participant or Authorized Representative
⑈00063614⑈ ⑆091912482⑆ 804113⑈

Total Amount of Sale

Check Out Procedures

Step 5: Shopper signs the check

- After you fill in the amount of sale on the check hand the check to the shopper to sign and date.

- Compare the signature on the check with the signature on the booklet ID; make sure the signature of the shopper matches one of the signatures on the booklet ID.

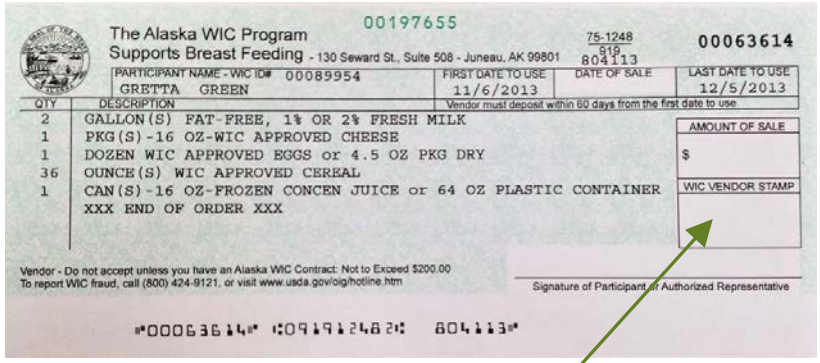
- If the signature of the shopper does not match any signature on the booklet ID, **do not proceed** with the transaction and refer shopper to their local agency.

Step 6: Finish transaction

- Return the booklet ID to the shopper.

- Write or imprint "WIC" on the back of the cash register receipt before giving it to the shopper.

- Stamp the store's vendor number in the box below the actual amount of sale on the front of the warrant.



Vendor Stamp

Vendor Compliance

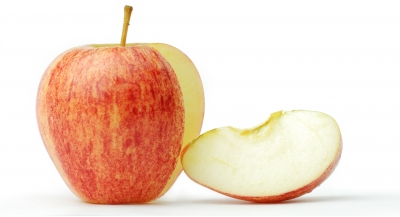
Monitoring

At least 5% of all vendors must be monitored each year per federal regulation.

Local agencies conduct routine monitoring visits which may, or may not be announced.

Monitoring of vendors includes, but is not limited to review of the following:

- Inventory of WIC items
- Shelf prices
- Redeemed WIC warrants and FVVs on hand
- Quality of WIC items in terms of food storage and "sell-by" dates
- Use of the WIC acronym or logo
- Treatment of WIC shoppers



Vendor Compliance

Vendor Reauthorization

- Vendors are authorized to accept WIC checks for a three- year authorization period
- Vendors must apply for reauthorization at the end of each authorization period and meet all selection criteria to continue to accept WIC checks

Some factors considered for WIC authorization:

- Number of local participants
- Number and proximity of vendors in area
- Quantity and variety of foods stocked
- Compliance with WIC rules and procedures
- Status with the Food Stamp Program

Alaska does not authorize convenience stores

Vendor Compliance

Reporting Changes of Business

Written notice of the following changes must be provided to the State of Alaska at least 15 days prior to the change taking effect:

- Change in ownership
- Change in location
- Going out of business

The State agency must be notified immediately if a vendor closes temporarily for longer than one week.

Vendor Compliance

Complaints Against WIC Vendors

WIC participants may file complaints against WIC vendors for any violation of the Vendor Agreement.

The State Agency follows up on complaints against WIC vendors and corrective actions are often required.

<u>How to avoid complaints against your store:</u>

Follow the check out procedure

Provide excellent customer service

Use the Food List to make distinguish WIC allowed items

Stock the required amounts of WIC items at all times

Vendor Penalties and Sanctions

Sanction System

Vendors will be notified of violations and may be offered, or required to participate in additional training to correct and prevent errors. Certain types of errors will result in assessment of monetary claims or imposition of penalty points or other sanctions.

If errors continue, and it appears that efforts to correct them through education and training are not effective, the State Agency will impose sanctions in accordance with the **Penalty Point and Sanction Schedule** (located in the WIC Vendor Manual).

Sanctions may include monetary claims, penalty points assessed for violations that, may result in:

- probation
- suspension or disqualification
- mandatory federal sanctions
- civil money penalties
- reciprocal Food Stamp/WIC Program disqualification
- reciprocal WIC disqualification for a Food Stamp Program civil money penalty in lieu of disqualification

Vendor Penalties and Sanctions

Sanction System

No prior warning will be provided by the State before imposing sanctions; except in the case of violations that require a pattern of occurrences prior to imposition of a sanction, the State will provide a warning letter notifying vendor of the initial occurrence of such a violation, unless it determines that notification would compromise an investigation.

A vendor who commits fraud or abuse of the Program is liable for prosecution under applicable Federal, State or local laws. Those who have willfully misapplied, stolen or fraudulently obtained program funds will be subject to a fine of not more than $25,000 or imprisonment for not more than five years or both, if the value of the funds is $100 or more. If the value is less than $100, the penalties are a fine of not more than $1,000 or imprisonment for not more than one year or both.

Vendor Penalties and Sanctions

SNAP Sanction Reciprocity

The State agency shall disqualify a vendor who has been disqualified by the Food Stamp Program. WIC disqualification due to Food Stamp program disqualification shall not be subject to administrative or judicial review under the WIC Program and shall be for the same length of time as the Food Stamp program disqualification, although it may start at a later date.

The State may disqualify a vendor who has been assessed civil money penalty for hardship by the Food Stamp Program. The vendor may request an administrative review of a WIC disqualification based on an assessment of a civil money penalty for hardship by the Food Stamp Program. Disqualification from the WIC program may result in disqualification as a retailer in the Food Stamp Program. Such disqualification may not be subject to administrative or judicial review under the Food Stamp Program and may start at a later date than the WIC disqualification.

Vendor Penalties and Sanctions

Claims Procedures

The State agency may make monetary claims in lieu of disqualification, against a vendor for vendor violations. Monetary claims may constitute the partial or full purchase price of each warrant that contained a vendor overcharge or other error. Monetary claims must be paid by the vendor within thirty (30) days of notification.

The State agency may offset the claim against current and subsequent amounts to be paid to the vendor. The State agency will provide the vendor with an opportunity to justify or correct the vendor overcharge or other error.

IN ADDITION TO CLAIMS, if a pattern of redeeming warrants outside of valid dates, overcharges or other errors continues, the State agency may take administrative action such as issuing an administrative warning, placing the vendor on probation, suspending or disqualifying the vendor.

Vendor Penalties and Sanctions

Claims Procedures

Monetary claims by the State agency may result from (butare not limited to) the following:

- Redeeming a WIC warrant outside the 30-day period during which it is valid for redemption by a WIC participant. The valid dates are printed on all WIC warrants. The claim will be the total amount charged on the WIC on the WIC warrant(s).

- Charging a WIC participant more than the current shelf price for an item, for a WIC item not received by the customer or at prices that exceed the prices quoted on the vendor's price sheet. The claim may be up to the total amount charged on the WIC warrant(s).

Vendor Penalties and Sanctions

Appeal/Administrative Review Process

The vendor may request an administrative review of a WIC disqualification based on an assessment of a civil money penalty for hardship by the Food Stamp Program. Disqualification from the WIC program may result in disqualification as a retailer in the Food Stamp Program. Such disqualification may not be subject to administrative or judicial review under the Food Stamp Program.

See the Vendor Manual for a list of adverse actions subject to administrative review, as well as the process by which to request an administrative review.