



Important Date

January 9, 2012, 10:00 a.m.—Statewide teleconference regarding changes to the Mail Order Vendor Program:

Call-in number: 1-800-281-5354 Code: 259225

WIC Program Changes in 2012

About 6 years ago the State of Alaska began analyzing their WIC data management system, in order to improve delivery of services to participants. The solution was determined to be a web-enabled system called SPIRIT, *Successful Partners In Reaching Innovative Technology*. SPIRIT is a management information system developed as a state model by the Chickasaw Nation in Oklahoma. A contractor, AnalyzeSoft (ASI), was hired to implement the system in Alaska. ASI has been working since May 2011 to help the Alaska WIC Program to transition to SPIRIT. SPIRIT will be phased into use across Alaska starting in spring 2012, and fully operational by the end of the year.

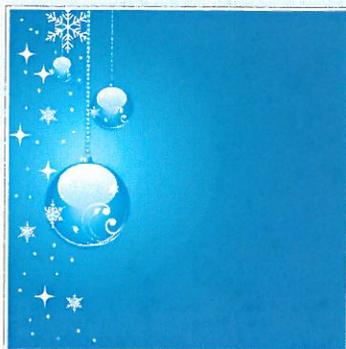
How Will SPIRIT Affect WIC Vendors?

The major difference for WIC vendors will be electronic submission and processing of documents, to the extent that it is possible in Alaska. Documents that have been filled out on paper, such as vendor applications and price sheets, will be electronically distributed and returned on the internet through the SPIRIT system. Please note that Spring 2011 price sheets will be distributed by mail and returned by mail, as usual. We will provide training before implementing changes in your region of the state.

Welcome Eric Hunter

We are pleased to announce that **Eric Hunter** joined the WIC Vendor Unit on December 12, as an Assistant Vendor Coordinator. Eric is a U.S. Coast Guard veteran, who recently completed five years of service in Juneau in marine shipping industry support. He is passionate about the importance of childhood nutrition as the foundation for physical and mental development and excited about the opportunity to work with WIC vendors in support of this goal. Eric enjoys sailing in Southeast Alaska, ice climbing, hiking, kayaking, and performing as a percussionist with the Juneau Symphony.

As an Assistant Vendor Coordinator, Eric will focus on price sheets, compliance, and vendor issues with the transition to the SPIRIT information management system. Alice Albrecht, who has been an Assistant Vendor Coordinator since 2008, will continue to administer the Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP), and work on Food List, vendor training, and banking issues.



*Best wishes for safe and happy holidays to you and yours,
from the
Alaska WIC Program Staff!*

VENDOR ISSUES

Fall 2011 Price Sheets

We'd like to thank every vendor for submitting price sheets by November 15. USDA requires WIC state agencies to collect price sheets twice each year to make sure WIC foods are available for participants. Vendors must keep required inventory at all times; the Vendor Unit will be conducting audits of a percentage of vendors each year to confirm that this critical program requirement is being met. Below are some issues that arose during Fall Price Sheet reviews:

- **Juice:** Many vendors missed the second juice requirement. Vendors are required to stock 46-48 oz cans **or** 11.5—12 oz frozen **PLUS** 64 oz plastic **or** 16 oz frozen. Mothers and children have different nutritional needs, so juice options are important.
- **Similac Formula Name Change Reminder:** Similac Advance (blue can) is also known by the new name Similac Early Shield. Similac Isomil (pink can) is also known as Similac Sensitive Soy, and Similac Sensitive (orange can) is now Similac Sensitive for Fussiness & Gas.
- **UHT Milk:** Vendors who have an exemption for fresh milk must carry 144 quarts of UHT, including at least 24 low fat and 12 whole milk.
- **Evaporated Milk:** Three types of evaporated milk must be stocked. Whole evaporated milk, 2% evaporated milk and either a nonfat/skim **or** 1% evaporated milk.
- **14-16 oz Whole grain bread, roll or bun:** You must maintain a supply of at least one 14-16 oz bread product.
- **Canned fruit:** No added sugar or syrup - fruit must be packed in its own juice.

Lost WIC Warrants

When a WIC participant loses a warrant, it cannot be replaced. If you find a WIC warrant with current valid dates, please contact the WIC Vendor Unit. We will notify the participant to pick up the warrant(s) - most likely they will make their purchase in your store.

Fruit and Vegetable Vouchers (FVVs)

FVVs are worth \$6, \$10, or \$15. If the sale amount exceeds the face value of the FVV, the excess amount will not be reimbursed by the bank. Please remind your cashiers to observe the limit on the FVV, and to give the WIC participant the opportunity to pay the amount over face value for the fresh, frozen, or canned fruits or vegetables purchased.

Contacting the Wic Vendor Unit

The Vendor Unit is available to provide assistance to vendors at any time. For questions or complaints, please call any of us and we will do our best to meet your needs. **The WIC Program telephone number is 907/465-3100, fax 907/465-3416, or you may reach us by phone or email at:**

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