



VENDOR NEWS

Your source for State of Alaska WIC program news related to vendor management. In this newsletter you will find important and useful information affecting vendor agreements with the WIC program. *Enjoy!*

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Peer Group Changes

A notification of peer group changes has been mailed to all vendors. Federal regulations require State WIC programs to organize authorized vendors into groups of stores with common characteristics in our banking and management information systems. The average prices charged by stores in peer groups help determine the maximum reimbursement for each food package. If you have any questions about the peer groups, or your store's peer group assignment, please contact the WIC Vendor Management Unit. The new peer group assignments will take effect on April 15, 2016.

Vendor Teleconference



Tuesday, April 26th
10:00am AKST



Wednesday, April 27th
10:00am AKST

Call: 1-800-281-5354
Passcode: 646725

If your store is unable to attend your designated call, please join the other.

eWIC Update

Planning has started for implementing electronic banking transfer (EBT) for WIC. Originally scheduled for rollout in Alaska stores in mid-2017, eWIC will likely begin later in 2017. The Alaska WIC Program is awaiting USDA's final review of our banking and implementation contracts to begin working directly with the contractors. We will continue to provide eWIC updates as we move closer to implementation.

New Food List Coming SOON!



Check Appeal Form

If you believe that a check was incorrectly rejected by the WIC banking system, you may request the Vendor Management Unit to review the transaction and determine whether the check actually should be reimbursed. Please use the WIC Check Appeal Form, available at <http://dhss.alaska.gov/dpa/Pages/nutri/wic/default.aspx> to make your request. Also, please make sure that you state the reason why you believe a check should be reimbursed. We cannot process an appeal without your written explanation.

Remember, checks cannot be reimbursed if they are:

- * Fruit and Vegetable Vouchers written for an amount over the value stated on the check;
- * Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) coupons that are valid at farmers' markets only;
- * Missing an essential item, such as the participant signature, sales date, and/or sales amount.

Maximum allowable reimbursements are calculated from prices submitted on price surveys. If a check is presented for payment with a sales total significantly above the total of prices that you have submitted, that is an indicator that the store may be allowing substitutions of non-WIC approved items, or that there is a cashier error that should prompt retraining.

Check Rejections Last Quarter

These check rejection types have continued to be our most common errors. We encourage you and your staff to review proper WIC Check Processing Procedures. Please contact us if you'd like assistance with training as we are always willing to help.

259 **Missing Signature** – This is a required step that should never be missed. Checks submitted for reimbursement without a participant signature will be rejected by the bank and cannot be fixed. Under federal regulations, the state may not

86 reimburse a vendor if the participant's signature is missing from the check.

86 **Incorrectly Altered** – If an error is made on a check your cashier can correct it by drawing one line through the incorrect information, write the correct date or amount within the same box and initial the change. Writing over, multiple lines or

74 scribble on a check will result in bank rejections.

74 **Purchase Date Missing** – The purchase date is required to verify the check was redeemed within the valid dates. If we cannot identify what date the check was redeemed it will be rejected.



Yogurt - Vanilla & Strawberry OK'd

Since June 2015, the WIC Program has allowed participants to buy plain, nonfat or low fat yogurt with WIC checks. As of April 1, 2016, we have added two flavors – vanilla and strawberry to the approved list. The yogurt still must be 32 oz (quart), nonfat or low fat, and only of a brand in the current Food List booklet. No Greek or organic. The minimum stocking requirements may be fulfilled with a combination of approved flavors, brands and types. Yogurt exemptions will be allowed in rural areas only if the local WIC agency certifies that no participants in a community have opted to get yogurt.

Rules for Infant Formula Checks

Please remind cashiers of these two important rules for infant formula checks the participant *must buy*.

- * *only* the infant formula brand and type listed on the check.
- * the *exact number of cans* listed on the check, participant may not buy fewer!

If a participant presents a WIC check with zero cans of infant formula listed, do not accept the check! An infant formula check that states “FORMULA BENEFIT PAID BY MEDICAID—DO NOT REDEEM” cannot be reimbursed. Tell the participant to contact their clinic for assistance.

Vendor Manual Online Now

The Vendor Manual has been revised and updated to include all of the significant changes to vendor requirements, processes, and procedures since 2011. The draft manual is available on the Alaska WIC website <http://dhss.alaska.gov/dpa/Pages/nutri/wic/default.aspx>. You may request a hard copy of the manual by calling the Vendor Management Unit, or by emailing wic@alaska.gov. Please send any comments or questions about the information contained in the manual by mail or email to Sandy Harbanuk, WIC Vendor Coordinator.

Beware Of Farmers Market Coupons

Reminder: Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) coupons are not valid at your store and should not be accepted. These coupons are only redeemable at authorized WIC farmers, farmstands and farmers' markets.

 Alaska WIC Program 2016 Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP)		SOLUTRA by Citizens Alliance Bank Howard Lake Branch Clarks City, MN 56222 Account #804121		600001
VALID FROM: June 1, 2016 to October 31, 2016 GOOD ONLY AT: Authorized Alaska WIC Farmer and FMNP approved sites FOR PURCHASE OF: Approved Alaskan grown fresh fruits, vegetables and herbs only		VENDOR STAMP HERE		MUST BE DEPOSITED BY NOVEMBER 15, 2016 PAY EXACTLY \$5.00 NO CHANGE GIVEN
Vendor – Do not accept unless you are an Alaska WIC FMNP authorized vendor. To report WIC fraud, call 800-424-9121, or visit www.usda.gov/oig/hotline.htm		2016		NOT VALID AT GROCERY STORES. NOT REDEEMABLE FOR CASH.

Health and Social Services

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

Managers-

Please post this newsletter
for your staff to read

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.

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Vendor Question

Why is brown rice allowed only in a 16 oz. size?

Answer: The 32 oz. amount of whole grains is prescribed only for children age 5 and under. The Allowed Food List includes only a 16 oz. size for brown rice to encourage participants to choose 16 oz. of eligible pasta, tortillas, or bread for the remainder of the prescription to provide variety. A participant may choose to buy two 16 oz. bags/boxes of brown rice, or a combination of whole grains.

NO Rain
Checks Allowed



IF YOU FIND LOST CHECKS: Please notify your local WIC agency or the State Office immediately at (907) 465-3100 so the checks can be returned to the participant.

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