



2017 Annual Training Information

Greetings WIC Authorized Vendors,

The purpose of this communication is to ensure that you are knowledgeable of all current program requirements, scheduled changes and meeting the federal fiscal year training requirements as outlined by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). Carefully review all information provided, as it will aid you in remaining in compliance with your Vendor Agreement and afford each Georgia WIC participant a meaningful shopping experience. It is the responsibility of the owner and store management to ensure that this training is reviewed by all store employees who handle WIC transactions in any way.

To meet the annual training requirement of the Georgia WIC Program:

- Review and ensure adequate training of all store personnel engaged in WIC transactions, paid or unpaid.
- **Certify training completion by submitting a completed Annual Training Checklist no later than June 30, 2017.**

Click here for checklist: dph.georgia.gov/training-materials-and-resources

If you have any questions, please contact the Vendor Relations Unit at 404-657-2900.



Welcome to Annual Vendor Training for Authorized Three-Year Agreements!

The Georgia Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) is required to offer training to WIC Authorized Vendors on an annual basis. As a three-year agreement holder (Oct.1, 2016- Sept. 30, 2019). Your organization is required to complete the annual training within the time frames outlined below in order to maintain the current agreement with Georgia WIC.

The information in this newsletter covers the following required elements set forth in the federal regulations (7 CFR § 246.12 (i) (2)):

- Purpose of the WIC Program
- WIC Approved or Authorized Foods
- Infant Formula Sources
- Minimum Inventory Requirements
- Transaction and Redeeming WIC Food Instruments and Cash Value Vouchers (Cashier Guidelines)
- Vendor Sanction System
- Program Complaints
- Civil Rights Violations
- Limited English Proficiency Services
- Program Changes
- Prohibited Use of Incentive Items
- Vendor Claims Procedure.

The following additional areas are also covered:

- Vendor Stamp Administration
- Change of Ownership
- WIC Banking
- Shelf Price Survey
- Automatic Clearing House (ACH) Form

Purpose of the WIC Program

WIC is a federally-funded health and nutrition program for infants and children age 1 to 5, pregnant women, breastfeeding mothers up to (1) one year and postpartum women up to six months. Georgia WIC provides information regarding nutrition and health, support and information about breast feeding, assistance with finding healthcare and community services and vouchers to purchase healthy food items from WIC authorized vendors.

WIC Approved Foods

The WIC Approved Foods List outlines foods that are available to the WIC participant. Only these food items may be purchased by the participant or proxy using the WIC food instrument. To view the WIC Approved Foods List click the following link: dph.georgia.gov/wic-approved-foods-list

Reminder:

No WIC approved food items can contain added sugars, fats or oils.

Infant Formula Requirements

All authorized vendors are required to purchase infant formula, used for consumption by WIC participants, solely from suppliers approved by Georgia WIC. The program does not allow vendors to purchase infant formula from other program vendors. Only purchases from the approved list of manufacturers, distributors and wholesalers will be permitted. Records of infant formula purchases must be maintained for a minimum of three (3) previous years plus the current year (or until any pending investigations are closed).

In the event of an investigation, only purchase invoices from those permitted suppliers will be considered legitimate. The list of authorized manufacturers, distributors and wholesalers are posted on the Georgia Department of Public Health WIC website. The program may also require vendors to supply written permission to confirm their infant formula purchase history with suppliers. A list of approved infant formula suppliers can be found here:

dph.georgia.gov/infant%20formula%20supplier

Infant formula wholesalers and distributors interested in becoming an approved supplier for the Georgia WIC Program must complete and submit an Infant Formula Supplier Request Form. Approved manufacturers, wholesalers, distributors and suppliers must be registered with the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for consideration. The request form is located on our website and can be accessed by clicking the link below:

[Infant Formula Supplier Request Form](#)

Completed request forms may be submitted through mail or email.

Mail to:

Georgia WIC Program
Office of Vendor Management
2 Peachtree Street NW, Floor 10
Atlanta, Georgia 30303-3142

or

Email to: wic-vendor.relations@dph.ga.gov

For the most current information concerning infant formula, please check the Georgia Department of Public Health WIC Vendor website below:

dph.georgia.gov/wic-formula-resources

Minimum Inventory

Each vendor is required to maintain the minimum inventory of approved WIC foods as well as a substantial amount of non-WIC foods daily. This is an imperative measure to guarantee compliance with WIC Program guidance and policies. Remember, all inventory items must be in the store or in the stockroom and within expiration dates. Expired food does not count towards minimum inventory. For non-WIC inventory, authorized vendors must maintain 200 of the following in each category: meats, poultry and/or seafood, bread and cereal products, dairy, shelf staples, cans, jars, bottled goods, beverages and snack foods. To view the complete Minimum Inventory Requirements List click the following link: dph.georgia.gov/sites/dph.georgia.gov/files/Minimum%20Inventory%20Effective%20April%202015.pdf

Failure to stock the required inventory of any WIC food items will result in a CATEGORY I VIOLATION (see Sanctions and the Sanction System) which could lead to disqualification.

More information about Sanctions and the Sanction System can be found here: dph.georgia.gov/sites/dph.georgia.gov/files/Sanctions%20and%20the%20Sanction%20System.pdf

Transacting and Redeeming Food Instruments and Cash Value Vouchers (CVVs)

Knowing how to properly transact Food Instruments and Cash Value Vouchers (CVVs) can save time and money. Ensure all cashiers are effectively trained on all procedures to guarantee WIC participants are extended exceptional customer service. Observing the steps below will result in an accurate and efficient transaction:

Processing WIC Food Instruments

1. Check the participant's WIC ID Card (folder)
2. Check the dates (first and last day to use)
3. Check the food items
4. Ring up the purchase
5. Write the price (use black ink)
6. Obtain a signature (use black ink)
7. Give receipt
8. Every food instrument transaction must be handled separately. Complete one food instrument before ringing up the next.

Processing WIC CVVs

1. Check the participant's WIC ID Card (folder)
2. Check the dates (first and last day to use)
3. Check the food items
4. Check the value of the CVV
5. Ring up the purchase
6. Write the price *(cannot exceed dollar amount on face value of CVV- use black ink)
7. Obtain a signature (use black ink)
8. Give receipt
9. Include tax for the amount over the maximum on the face of the voucher, when applicable
10. If cash is used to complete the purchase, give change for any amount over the face value of the voucher
11. Every voucher transaction must be handled separately.

Complete one voucher before ringing up the next.

*Georgia WIC will not pay any dollar amount over the face value of the CVV. More information about food instruments and CVVs can be found here: dph.georgia.gov/sites/dph.georgia.gov/files/The%20WIC%20Food%20Instrument.pdf

Vendor Sanction System

It is essential that all authorized retailers comply with WIC Program policies and procedures. Georgia WIC will monitor all vendors for adherence to their agreement. Violations will result in the imposition of sanctions. These sanctions may include termination of the agreement, disqualification from WIC and SNAP for a specified period of time and/or a civil monetary penalty. Sanctions are based upon the Federal and State Sanction System. (see "Sanctions and The Sanction System" in the Vendor Handbook). Vendor Relations Staff are available to provide technical assistance.

Federal Sanctions

- Category IV, Disqualification for one (1) year.
- Category V, Disqualification for three (3) years.
- Category VI, Disqualification for six (6) years.
- Category VII, Permanent disqualification.

State Sanctions

- Category I, Disqualification for six (6) months on third violation.
- Category II, Disqualification for eight (8) months on third violation.
- Category III, Disqualification for ten (10) months on second violation.

For the most recent and approved procedures for the Sanction System, see the latest version of the vendor handbook or click the following link: dph.georgia.gov/sites/dph.georgia.gov/files/Sanctions%20and%20the%20Sanction%20System.pdf



Program Complaints

The Vendor Relations Unit will document all received complaints. If the referral is participant related, the complaint will be referred to the Office of Program Integrity and Strategy for follow up and resolution.

All vendor complaints will be handled as outlined in “Vendor Complaints” and a final report will be provided to the USDA.

Georgia WIC has a vendor customer service hotline available to assist Georgia WIC vendors with any aspect of the WIC Program. The hotline number is **1-866-814-5468** and is available Monday through Friday from 8a.m.-5p.m., Eastern Standard Time with the exception of State holidays.

Participant Complaints

Authorized WIC vendors are encouraged to report all participant complaints to the Georgia WIC State office. Examples of participant complaints include, but are not limited to:

- Adverse treatment of a vendor’s owner, manager or employees;
- Use of altered WIC food instruments (i.e., changing dates, names, or food amounts);
- Attempting to purchase unauthorized foods with WIC food instruments;
- Persistent attempts to purchase larger quantities of an authorized food item than listed on a WIC food instrument;
- Transaction of WIC food instruments outside of the valid period (first day to use, last day to use);
- Transaction of WIC food instruments at an unauthorized vendor;
- Sale of WIC food instruments or other Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) authorized coupons;
- Transaction of WIC food instruments by a person not listed on the Georgia WIC Program ID Card (WIC ID)

Vendor Complaints

Vendor complaints are those complaints filed by WIC participants or others concerning an authorized WIC vendor. Examples of vendor complaints include, but are not limited to:

- Adverse treatment of a WIC participant by a vendor’s owner, manager or employee;
- Charging WIC participants more than other customers;
- Providing outdated or spoiled food items;
- Refusal to accept manufacturers’ coupons, or other store discounts; and
- Inadequate variety and/or quantity of WIC-authorized supplemental food items.

More information regarding Performance Compliance can be found here: dph.georgia.gov/sites/dph.georgia.gov/files/Performance%20Compliance.pdf

Civil Rights Violations

Complaints of Civil Rights violations will be handled in accordance with Federal Law and the USDA policy. The policy states:

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD-3027) found online at: ascr.usda.gov/sites/default/files/Complain, and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

- (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
- (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or
- (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

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Limited English Proficiency (LEP) – Other Language Services

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, prohibits discrimination based on language. Any individual who applies to or participates in the WIC program who is not proficient in English must be provided with an interpreter.

All participants must be advised at the service delivery point of the availability of other language services at time of service. **Please review the Georgia WIC Program Vendor Handbook or the link below for instructions on how to access the language line:** dph.georgia.gov/sites/dph.georgia.gov/files/Administrative%20Review%20and%20Appeal%20Procedures.pdf

Program Changes

NUTRITION UPDATES

- Pasta and yogurt will be added to the updated Georgia WIC Approved Foods List. The program is currently collecting pricing data and checking availability throughout the state.
- Beech-Nut Infant Cereal:
 - Name changed to Beech-Nut Complete
 - Packaging changed
 - Approved as a WIC eligible Infant Cereal
- Gerber Infant Cereal:
 - Packaging change (No additional changes)

Beech-Nut Infant Cereal Packaging and Name Change:

Old Packaging:



New Packaging:



Gerber Infant Cereal Graphics Update:

Old Packaging:

New Packaging:



Prohibited Use of Incentive Items

The Georgia WIC participants must be allowed to partake in in-store or manufacturer promotions that are available to the public. These allowances extends to special promotions on WIC approved food items that includes coupons and "buy one get one free. However, Georgia WIC prohibits any vendor from using incentives to solicit the patronage of WIC participants. Vendors who use advertisements to solicit the business of WIC participants, or who offer incentives or delivery services to participants will be subject to sanctions as explained in the Vendor Agreement and Handbook. Incentives are defined as any item, service, or gimmick used to solicit the patronage of a WIC participant. Incentives may include the following:

- Free or complimentary gifts
- Home delivery of foods
- Store memberships
- Other free or discounted services that are offered to WIC customers to entice them to transact food instruments.

Georgia WIC will not authorize or continue the authorization of a vendor that advertises, promises, provides or indicates an intention to provide prohibited incentive items to customers.

Vendor Claims Procedures

When it is determined that a vendor has committed a vendor violation that affects payment to the vendor, or the program identifies errors in a food instrument submitted and paid, Georgia WIC will establish a claim against a vendor to recoup funds. A vendor will be afforded an opportunity to justify or correct the claim amount. Should Georgia WIC not approve the justification or correction, a vendor will be responsible for repayment of the assessed claim in its entirety. Such claims are not subject to administrative review.

Claims for repayment will be collected as follows:

1. Submitting a written request for payment to a vendor specifying repayment within 30 days of the date of the request.
2. Pursuing collection efforts through the State Attorney General's Office if a claim is not paid within 30 days of written request for repayment.

Shelf Price Survey

Shelf price surveys are used to identify stores that are in compliance with competitive pricing criteria.

USDA regulations require the Georgia WIC Program to "ensure that a vendor selected for participation in the program does not, subsequent to selection, increase prices to levels that would make the vendor ineligible for authorization." Each vendor is required to submit the shelf prices for WIC food items carried in each store location. Georgia WIC collects mandatory shelf prices quarterly, but reserves the right to collect shelf prices outside of that time frame at its discretion.

Georgia WIC may request shelf prices for as many or as few items as it desires. Vendors are encouraged to submit updated prices for any food item as frequently as the price fluctuates. In an effort to collect accurate pricing data, Georgia WIC accepts the submission of Universal Product Code (UPC) files as another method in submitting shelf prices. Approved vendors are encouraged to submit pricing via UPC files as:

- The process is efficient and saves the vendor time.
- Files can be sent at any time there is an update in pricing.
- Data received has been found to be more accurate.
- Submission of files helps to account for all items listed on survey.

Encourage your suppliers and wholesalers to forward formal notices of price increases, including percentage mark ups to the Vendor Relations Unit utilizing their company's formal letterhead.

Notices may be sent via email to:

wic-vendor.relations@dph.ga.gov.

Learn more about Changes in Vendor Information here: dph.georgia.gov/sites/dph.georgia.gov/files/Changes%20in%20Vendor%20Information.pdf

WIC Banking

WIC Banking is a valuable tool that provides vendors with an efficient and accurate audit trail for tracking voucher payments. Vendors are strongly encouraged to consistently use this resource as a means of assuring competitive product pricing. If you are in need of your assigned login and password, please contact the Vendor Relations Unit. For more information on WIC Banking, please click the link: wicbanking.com

If there are any updates to your banking information, it is imperative that you provide the program with your most current and accurate information. Please notify your assigned Vendor Relations Consultant directly of changes regarding:

- Special Payment Arrangements Needed
- Routing/Account Numbers
- Banking Institution
- Returned Vouchers

Vendor Stamp Administration

REPRODUCTION OF THE VENDOR STAMP IS STRICTLY PROHIBITED!

Authorized vendors may not use any other means of placing a vendor number on a food instrument other than with the vendor stamp issued by the Georgia WIC Program.

- Food instruments (vouchers) stamped or imprinted using an unauthorized vendor stamp (any other stamping device not issued by Georgia WIC) will not be paid.
- Vendors who submit food instruments for payment by stamping the voucher (first or subsequent attempts) with a device other than the Georgia WIC Program issued stamp may be subject to investigation for fraud, a claim for restitution and are subject to termination of the vendor agreement.
- Vendors will be held responsible for the unauthorized use of the vendor stamp by their paid or unpaid owners, officers, managers, agents and employees.
- The vendor stamp is not transferable to another location or individual.
- The vendor stamp must be kept in a secure location at all times.

- Lost, stolen or damaged stamps must be reported to Georgia WIC immediately.
- If the inkpad dries out, it is the vendor's responsibility to replenish the removable pad.

NOTE: Use only water based, black liquid ink

For replacement stamps or any vendor related concerns, contact the Vendor Relations Unit at (404) 657-4470.

Automatic Clearing House Form

Vendors who are authorized for participation in the Georgia WIC Program will receive an Automatic Clearing House (ACH) enrollment form. Vendors have five (5) business days from the date of receipt of the form to enroll.

Should the banking information change, you are required to complete a new ACH form and remit the document, with a voided check, to the Vendor Relations Unit immediately. Please mail the form to:

Georgia Department of Public Health
Georgia WIC Office of Vendor Management
2 Peachtree ST., NW
10th floor
Atlanta, GA 30303.

Change of Ownership

All vendors must provide Georgia WIC with at least 21 days advance written notice if the following changes occur:

- Ownership
- Operation
- Corporate structure
- Store management
- Closure of business
- Addition of new owners
- Corporate officers
- Partners
- Affiliates



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Contact Information Georgia Department of Public Health

Georgia WIC
Office of Vendor Management
2 Peachtree Street, NW
10th Floor
Atlanta, Georgia 30303-3142
404-657-2900
Customer service hotline: 1-866-814-5468
dph.georgia.gov/vendor-information

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Georgia Department of Public Health