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Retailer Mail

..... Georgia WIC Updates

Third Quarter 2021



Application Period for Retailers

The application submission period for new retailer authorization will open as of October 1, 2021 to December 31, 2021.

Please visit the program website: <https://dph.georgia.gov/vendor-application-and-forms> to review selection criteria and retrieve documents to correctly complete an application. To avoid delays with processing your application, please ensure that all submitted documentation is complete and accurate.

Georgia WIC has two (2) open application periods during each Federal Fiscal Year (FFY):

- **Period 1: Oct. 1 – Dec. 31**
- **Period 2: March 1 – May 31**

*All applications must be postmarked within the designated application period to be processed.



eWIC Update



Georgia eWIC* Update

* eWIC is an electronic method of issuing and redeeming nutritional food benefits in the WIC program.

Georgia DPH WIC is dedicated to statewide eWIC Implementation by October 2022. Our dedicated Retail partners are essential to Georgia's success.

While Georgia DPH WIC continues to progress through the various phases of implementation, several key initiatives, listed below, will require your engagement:

- 2021 – 3rd Quarter Kick-off of eWIC Retailer Forums
- 2022 – Evolution of GA WIC and GA WIC Retail Partner Relationship
 - ✚ Modification of WIC Retail Agreements
 - ✚ Moratorium on new store applications (with exceptions)

As we near the launch of our mutual engagement activities, more detailed updates will be provided in late June 2021. This will allow you to begin scheduling our collective, collaborative work. In the meantime, direct all inquiries to the eWIC project team at EBT-MISWIC@dph.ga.gov.

Retailer Stamps

Do's

- Report lost or stolen stamps immediately.
- Return all damaged stamps to Georgia WIC, immediately
- Refill the removable pad using only **water based black** liquid ink.
- Contact the Vendor Relations Unit at (404) 657-4470 for a replacement stamp.

Don'ts

- Do not use any stamp that was not provided by Georgia WIC— if used, your store will not be paid for the voucher and will be terminated.
- Do not reproduce the vendor stamp. If the vendor stamp is reproduced, your store will be **terminated**.



Infant Formula

INFANT FORMULA

To prevent errors, please make certain to match the formula voucher wording to the correct infant formula label.

CONTRACTED FORMULA LABEL EXAMPLE OF VOUCHER MESSAGE



**FORMULA: 2-12.4 oz
cans powder Enfamil
Gentlelease**



**FORMULA: 2-12.9 oz
cans powder Enfamil
AR**



**FORMULA: 2-12.9 oz
cans powder Enfamil
ProSobee**



**FORMULA: 2-12.5 oz
cans powder Enfamil
Infant**



Friendly Reminders for Infant Formula

- All authorized WIC Stores are permitted to redeem vouchers for Special Infant Formula and Medical Foods (Nutritionals).
- All retailers are required to purchase infant formula directly from a WIC approved supplier or manufacturer included on a list provided by the Georgia WIC Program.
- The Infant Formula Food Instrument clearly states the required formula that the WIC participant must purchase. Those details include:
 - The Full Quantity
 - Brand
 - Product Name
 - Type and Size
- Substitutions are not allowed.
- An identical exchange is only permitted if the original formula is defective, recalled, spoiled or has exceeded its "sell by" or "best if used by" dates.



Compliance Corner

Georgia WIC may terminate the vendor agreement for cause after providing at least fifteen (15) days written notice. Below you will find a list of the most frequent reasons for termination.

6 MOST FREQUENT REASONS FOR TERMINATION OF THE VENDOR AGREEMENT

1 Voluntary withdrawal from the WIC program

Termination period of 6 months

2 The decision to sell the store (The vendor agreement is not transferrable)

Termination period of 6 months

3 Determination that the vendor's SNAP license is invalid or not current

Termination period of 6 months

4 Reproducing the WIC vendor stamp or the use of a stamping device that was not issued by the Georgia WIC Program

Termination period of 12 months

5 Failure to complete and submit documentation for annual training by the deadline specified by Georgia WIC

Termination period of 12 months

6 Failure to provide Georgia WIC with written notice of a change in the vendor's business within at least twenty-one (21) days in advance of the change. Including but not limited to:

- A change in ownership
- Name
- Location
- Corporate structure
- Sale or transfer of the business
- Closure of operation

Termination period of 12 months

Please see the "Terminations" section in the current Georgia WIC Vendor Handbook

APPLICATION DENIALS

A Few Tips To Avoid Application Denials

- **DO** confirm that the store location demonstrates a minimum of twelve (12) months experience as a retail grocer. All applicants must also have a minimum of twelve (12) consecutive months of retail sales history as a store location under the SNAP Program.
- **DO** make certain that there is adequate store square footage. The minimum square footage requirement for store locations is 3,000 square feet of continuous retail food sales space open to the public, *excluding* all administrative and storage space.
- **DO** verify that there has not been any criminal history or convictions of fraud, embezzlement, theft, forgery, false statements, or obstruction of justice within 6 years.
- **DO** ensure that the store location purchases infant formula from the list of suppliers approved by the Georgia WIC Program. If a supplier is not listed, an application can be submitted for state approval.
- **DO NOT** begin accepting WIC vouchers prior to obtaining a fully executed vendor agreement. Once approved, the store location will also receive an approval letter, a state issued vendor stamp, window clings, and shelf talkers.
- **DO NOT** apply if the store location currently has unexpired sanction or disqualification history with SNAP or WIC in Georgia or other states.
- **DO NOT** submit false or misleading information on the vendor application or within supporting documentation. Please provide accurate and truthful information during the application process.

If the application for authorization is denied, the denial period is one (1) year before you can re-apply with the exception of the following reasons.



Accepting WIC vouchers prior to Authorization
The denial period is three (3) years



Business Integrity Reasons
The denial period is two (2) years

You must submit a new application after the denial period has expired.

Please see the 'Vendor Authorization and Participation' section in the current Georgia WIC Vendor Handbook

Customer Service

Delivering excellent customer service is crucial to the success of any business. Shoppers who feel appreciated and respected by an establishment will come back again and again. Conversely, those who have negative experiences may not return.

Cashiers play an important role in the Georgia WIC participant's overall shopping experience. Interactions between the two not only determine if the participant will become a loyal store customer, but also ensure they are receiving healthy, nutritious WIC foods.

Here are a few tips to help cashiers offer great customer service to WIC shoppers:

- Ask for the customer's WIC ID folder at the beginning of the WIC transaction. This will help the transaction go smoothly.
- Practice patience and understanding. Remember, just as there is a learning curve for cashiers to learn the correct procedures for WIC vouchers, there is a learning curve for WIC participants. Many of your Georgia WIC customers are using their vouchers for the first time. It may take them a while to understand which foods are approved, and how to separate their items by vouchers.
- Keep copies of approved foods brochures at the registers to assist WIC shoppers who might need them.
- Set a positive tone for those in the checkout lane. Smile and treat each WIC participant courteously.

Practicing these tips helps the customer feel at ease, and makes them want to come back to your store for all of their purchases.

Coupons and Buy One Get One (BOGO) Promotions

WIC shoppers can use the same coupons, discount cards, and store promotions as non-WIC shoppers including buy one get one free offers.

Buy One Get One Free Offers

In this promotion, the WIC vendor sells one WIC food item at reduced price and sells either a second identical WIC food item or a different food item also at a reduced price. For example, a vendor offers a half price box of cereal with each box of cereal that is purchased at half price. A buy one, get one at a reduced-price promotion is a price discount. In a transaction that only includes WIC items, this discount type only applies when the second, reduced price item is a WIC the participant has the item on his or her food instrument. If a participant purchases a cereal that is part of a promotion, he or she is able to receive the second box of cereal as well.



Manufacturer's Cents Off Coupons

Manufacturer's cents off coupons allow customers to purchase certain items at a lower price. For example, a coupon may offer a price discount of 50 cents off a box of cereal. In a transaction that only includes WIC items, the value of the coupon would be applied to the WIC transaction.

Contact Information

Georgia Department of Public Health

Georgia WIC Program Vendor Relations Unit
2 Peachtree Street, NW
10th Floor
Atlanta, Georgia 30303-3142

Request Georgia WIC materials: contact the Vendor Relations Unit by phone at 404-657-2900 or email: wic-vendor.relations@dph.ga.gov.

The following materials are available:

- Approved Foods Brochures
- Approved Foods Posters
- Window Clings
- WIC Approved Shelf Talkers
- Replacement Retailer Stamp.

Main Number: 404-657-2900

Customer Service Hotline: 1-866-814-5468

Website: dph.georgia.gov/vendor-information

Georgia WIC Program Vendor Relations Team:

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