

THE WIC FOOD INSTRUMENT

The WIC food instrument is similar to a check. A vendor must accept all valid food instruments, with the exception of a pharmacy vendor, who may only redeem food instruments for exempt and special infant formula, including medical foods. The vendor shall not accept counterfeit or altered food instruments.

When food instruments are properly redeemed, the vendor will receive credit for the amount of the purchase by depositing the food instrument into the specific account number provided to Georgia WIC by the vendor for deposit of all WIC food instruments at the vendor's bank.

Food instruments are not transferable and cannot be sold. They must only be redeemed and deposited to the account of the vendor that corresponds with the WIC vendor stamp and location listed on the Vendor Agreement or Corporate Attachment Form. Vendors who commit fraud or abuse in the program are subject to criminal prosecution. Those who have willfully misapplied, stolen or fraudulently obtained program funds will be subject to a fine of not more than \$25,000.00 or imprisonment for not more than five years, or both, if the value of the funds is \$100.00 or more. If the value is less than \$100.00, the penalties are fines of not more than \$1,000.00 or imprisonment for not more than one (1) year, or both.

Food Instrument Types and Descriptions

There are (5) five types of WIC food instruments: laser-printed, blank manual, standard manual, computer generated and cash value vouchers. Descriptions and pictures of the food instruments are below.

Laser Printed Food Instruments. The laser-printed food instrument is printed at the clinic site at the time of the participant, parent's, caretaker's and/or proxy's visit.

DO NOT CASH UNLESS THE FACE OF THIS DOCUMENT HAS A COLORED BACKGROUND AND A FOIL LOGO.							
DIST/UNIT/CLINIC	WIC ID NO.	C	P	PARTICIPANT	VOUCHER NO.	ISSUED BY	
United Community Bank 0611196842072112382				GEORGIA WIC PROGRAM		NOT NEGOTIABLE WITHOUT WIC VENDOR STAMP HERE	
PAY TO THE ORDER OF ANY AUTHORIZED GEORGIA WIC VENDOR				FIRST DAY TO USE		05/10/2014	
FOR THESE ITEMS/QUANTITIES ONLY - WIC APPROVED FOODS ONLY - NO SUBSTITUTIONS				LAST DAY TO USE		06/09/2014	
CPA FPC C01 FPC C01 VC C05				VENDOR MUST DEPOSIT WITHIN 60 DAYS OF FIRST DAY TO USE		PAY EXACTLY	
MILK: 1 gallon Whole milk only. Least expensive brand.						DOLLARS	CENTS
WHOLE Pick 2: 16 oz loaf of bread; 16 oz pkg brown rice; GRAIN: 16 oz pkg tortillas; 16 oz pkg buns				PARTICIPANT/GUARDIAN/PROXY SIGNATURE		rev. 1-2014	
BEANS: 1 lb dried OR 4 cans (15 to 16 oz)							
BUYING, SELLING, OR OTHERWISE MISUSING WIC BENEFITS IS A CRIME. TO REPORT SUSPECTED ABUSE, CALL 800-424-9121 OR VISIT WWW.USDA.GOV/OIG/HOTLINE.HTM.							

⑈436401981⑈ ⑆061119684⑆ 2072112382⑈

Blank Manual/Handwritten Food Instruments. All information on the food instrument is either handwritten or typed. Redeem only for the amount of food indicated. Only one (1) number should appear in each box. X's are placed in all boxes where there are no numbers. This helps to eliminate any possible unauthorized alterations on the food instrument. There are two (2) types of Blank Manual/Handwritten Food Instruments, which are shown below.

DIST / UNIT / CLINIC 09-2 354		WIC ID NUMBER		PARTICIPANT NAME		RSN	VOUCHER NO. 958010 9	ISSUED BY
WIC GEORGIA WIC PROGRAM PAY TO THE ORDER OF ANY AUTHORIZED GEORGIA WIC VENDOR 91058						LAST DAY TO USE VENDOR MUST DEPOSIT BY		EXACTLY DOLLARS CENTS \$00.00
FOR THESE ITEMS / QUANTITIES ONLY - NO SUBSTITUTIONS MILK (circle one): WHOLE LOW FAT GOAT MILK EVAP 12 oz cans BEANS 14 to 16 oz canned MILK half gallon SOY MILK half gallon UHT MILK 8 oz boxes JUICE 16 oz dried 3 QUART POWDERED boxes CEREAL oz 46 to 48 oz cans EVAPORATED MILK 12 oz cans CHEESE 16 oz package 64 oz containers LACTOSE FREE, ACIDOPHILUS, OR ACIDOPHILUS WITH BIFIDUM half gallon EGGS dozen 11.5 to 12 oz cans frozen GOAT MILK quart TOFU pounds 11.5 oz cans pourable quart FISH oz WHOLE GRAIN BREAD 16 oz package PEANUT BUTTER 16 to 18 oz TORTILLA 16 oz package BROWN RICE 16 oz package						SIGN HERE AT WIC OFFICE IMPROPER USE OF THIS VOUCHER IS SUBJECT TO STATE AND FEDERAL PROSECUTION SIGN HERE AT GROCERY STORE		
SIGN HERE AT WIC OFFICE						SIGN HERE AT GROCERY STORE		UNITED COMMUNITY BANK 64-1988-611
⑈ 9 10580 103 ⑈ ⑆ 06 1 1 1968 4 ⑆ 20 7 2 1 1 238 2 ⑈								

DIST / UNIT / CLINIC 09-2 354		WIC ID NUMBER		PARTICIPANT NAME		RSN	VOUCHER NO. 96079010 3	ISSUED BY
WIC GEORGIA WIC PROGRAM PAY TO THE ORDER OF ANY AUTHORIZED GEORGIA WIC VENDOR 96079010						FIRST DAY TO USE LAST DAY TO USE VENDOR MUST DEPOSIT BY		PAY EXACTLY DOLLARS CENTS \$00.00
FOR THESE ITEMS / QUANTITIES ONLY - NO SUBSTITUTIONS CPA FOOD PACKAGE CODE FOOD PACKAGE CODE VOUCHER CODE FORMULA INFANT FOODS FRUITS AND VEGETABLES Name INFANT CEREAL oz infant Fresh, frozen, or canned. No potatoes except sweet potatoes or yams. No products with added sugar, seasoning, fats, or oils. No creamed vegetables. No stewed or diced tomatoes. Form (circle one) Powder INFANT FRUITS AND VEGETABLES 4 oz jars Concentrate 2.5 oz jars Ready To Feed CONTAINER SIZE NOTE: If using as a fruit and vegetable voucher then do not issue formula and/or infant foods. NUMBER OF CONTAINERS						SIGN HERE AT WIC OFFICE IMPROPER USE OF THIS VOUCHER IS SUBJECT TO STATE AND FEDERAL PROSECUTION SIGN HERE AT GROCERY STORE		
SIGN HERE AT WIC OFFICE						SIGN HERE AT GROCERY STORE		UNITED COMMUNITY BANK 64-1988-611
⑈ 960790 104 ⑈ ⑆ 06 1 1 1968 4 ⑆ 20 7 2 1 1 238 2 ⑈								

Blank Standard Manual Food Instruments. Blank standard manual food instruments have the WIC approved foods preprinted on the food instruments. The top portion of the food instrument is completed (handwritten) by the clinic staff. These food instruments have two (2) signature boxes.

DIST / UNIT / CLINIC	WIC ID NUMBER	PARTICIPANT NAME	RSN	VOUCHER NO.	ISSUED BY
02-0 059				81081922 7	
GEORGIA WIC PROGRAM 81081922 PAY TO THE ORDER OF ANY AUTHORIZED GEORGIA WIC VENDOR FOR THESE ITEMS / QUANTITIES ONLY - NO SUBSTITUTIONS			FIRST DAY TO USE		
			LAST DAY TO USE		
4 FOOD PACKAGE #21 VOUCHER #06 DRY MILK: 1-3 quart container non-fat dry powder OR 4-12 oz cans low-fat (fat-free, skinned, 2%) evaporated milk BEANS OR 1 lb dried OR 4 cans (14 to 16 oz) beans PEANUT BUTTER: OR 1 container (16 to 18 oz) peanut butter			VENDOR MUST DEPOSIT BY		
			PAY EXACTLY DOLLARS CENTS		NOT NEGOTIABLE WITHOUT WIC VENDOR STAMP HERE
SIGN HERE AT WIC OFFICE			SIGN HERE AT GROCERY STORE		
IMPROPER USE OF THIS VOUCHER IS SUBJECT TO STATE AND FEDERAL PROSECUTION					
UNITED COMMUNITY BANK 64-1968-611					

⑈ 8 1 0 8 1 9 2 2 5 ⑈ ⑆ 0 6 1 1 1 9 6 8 4 ⑆ 2 0 7 2 1 1 2 3 8 2 ⑈

Emergency Computer Generated Food Instruments. These food instruments are used in case of emergencies. All information on the food instrument is computer printed.


DISTRICT / UNIT / CLINIC	WIC ID NO.	C	P	PARTICIPANT	FIRST DAY TO USE
01 1 008	008 679 543	2	6	Wicperson, Jane	07-01-02
GEORGIA WIC PROGRAM WICES				VOUCHER NO.	
				24612297	
PAY TO THE ORDER OF ANY AUTHORIZED GEORGIA WIC VENDOR FOR THESE ITEMS / QUANTITIES ONLY - NO SUBSTITUTIONS FOOD PACKAGE CODE 404 VOUCHER CODE 028 MILK: 1 GAL OR 4-12 OZ CNS EVAP OR 1-5 QT BOX EGGS: 1 DOZEN JUICE: 2-12 OZ CANS FROZEN OR 2-46 OZ CANS OR 2-11.5 OZ CANS POURABLE					PURCHASE PRICE IT EXCEEDS 17.
					PAY EXACTLY DOLLARS CENTS
YOUR BABY NEEDS SHOTS AT 2 MONTHS, 4 MONTHS, 6 MONTHS, 15 MONTHS, & 5 YEARS					SIGN HERE AT GROCERY STORE VOID VOID VOID VOID
IMPROPER USE OF THIS VOUCHER IS SUBJECT TO STATE AND FEDERAL PROSECUTION					

⑈ 2 4 6 1 2 2 9 7 3 ⑈ ⑆ 0 6 1 1 1 9 6 8 4 ⑆ 2 5 0 3 1 4 2 ⑈

12/96

Cash Value/Fruit and Vegetable Vouchers (CVV). A CVV is issued for fruits and vegetables.

- CVVs are used to purchase approved fresh, frozen, and canned fruits and vegetables.
- CVVs have a maximum amount listed.
- The WIC participant will be allowed to pay the difference when the cost of their produce exceeds the price stated on the CVV. The amount over the CVV maximum is be subject to tax, when applicable. The WIC participant is responsible for paying the difference plus the applicable sales tax.
- The vendor may need to adjust its current procedures to allow for WIC clients to use payment methods such as Food Stamps EBT cards, cash, credit cards, or debit cards to complete the CVV transaction.

DO NOT CASH UNLESS THE FACE OF THIS DOCUMENT HAS A COLORED BACKGROUND AND A FOIL LOGO.							
DIST/UNIT/CLINIC	WIC ID NO.	C	P	PARTICIPANT		VOUCHER NO.	ISSUED BY
05 1 087	008 456 104	3	6	SAMPLE, SAMPLE		56376849	CSC
United Community Bank 0611196842072112382 GEORGIA WIC PROGRAM PAY TO THE ORDER OF ANY AUTHORIZED GEORGIA WIC VENDOR FOR THESE ITEMS/QUANTITIES ONLY - WIC APPROVED FOODS ONLY - NO SUBSTITUTIONS				NOT NEGOTIABLE WITHOUT WIC VENDOR STAMP HERE		FIRST DAY TO USE	04/14/2015
						LAST DAY TO USE	05/14/2015
CPA FPC C21 FPC C21 VC P01 PRODUCE: \$8 for fresh, frozen, or canned fruit and vegetables. No products with added sugar, seasonings, fat, or oils. No creamed or candied vegetables.						VENDOR MUST DEPOSIT WITHIN 60 DAYS OF FIRST DAY TO USE	
						PAY EXACTLY	
						DOLLARS	CENTS
							
BUYING, SELLING, OR OTHERWISE MISUSING WIC BENEFITS IS A CRIME. TO REPORT SUSPECTED ABUSE, CALL 800-424-9121 OR VISIT WWW.USDA.GOV/OIG/HOTLINE.HTM.				PARTICIPANT/GUARDIAN/PROXY SIGNATURE		rev. 1-2014	

⑈ 563768496 ⑆ 061119684 ⑆ 2072112382 ⑆

Processing WIC Food Instruments Including Cash Value Vouchers

The vendor's bank should be informed that WIC food instruments are negotiable instruments that must be processed through the Federal Reserve Bank. Georgia WIC will provide each vendor location a Program issued stamp that is embossed with a unique WIC identification number. All food instruments accepted by the vendor location must **only** be stamped with the Georgia WIC Program provided stamp in preparation for a bank deposit. **Only** food instruments stamped with an authorized vendor stamp that is issued by Georgia WIC will be paid. The stamp should be fully depressed onto the WIC food instrument so that it is clearly recognizable on the food instrument.

REPRODUCTION OF THE VENDOR STAMP AND USE OF A STAMP NOT ISSUED BY THE GEORGIA WIC PROGRAM 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 stamped or imprinted with an unauthorized stamp, number, stamping device or process will **not** be paid (see section entitled "Important Notes about the Vendor Stamp" for further instructions on the vendor stamp). Payment on any food instrument rejected by the WIC banking system is at the sole discretion of Georgia WIC.

Vendors who submit food instruments for payment by stamping or imprinting the food instrument (1st or subsequent attempts) with a device or action other than with the Georgia WIC Program issued stamp are subject to termination of the vendor agreement and may be subject to investigation for fraud as well as a claim for restitution.

Lost, stolen or damaged stamps must be reported to Georgia WIC immediately. Return damaged stamps to the Georgia WIC Office of Vendor Management.

Minimum Requirements for Payment

- Food instruments must be issued by Georgia WIC or its authorized local agencies, printed on official Georgia WIC paper, and unaltered.
- Food instruments are accepted on the "First Day to Use" date through the "Last Day to Use" date.
- An authorized WIC vendor stamp appears on the food instrument, is legible, and the food instrument is deposited to the single account provided to Georgia WIC by the vendor.
- Deposited within sixty days of the "First Day to Use" date.
- The amount of purchase is entered in the "PAY EXACTLY SPACE" in ink.
- When stamping, use black ink ONLY with your WIC vendor stamp. DO NOT use any other color of ink.
- A signature is obtained from the participant, in black ink, provided by the vendor, at the time of purchase.
- For cash value vouchers, the vendor must not issue change to a WIC customer for purchases that are less than the total value of the cash value voucher.
- For cash value vouchers, the WIC customer may use his/ her own funds for purchase amounts in excess of the monetary limit for his/her cash value voucher.

WIC Customer Transactions at the Store

WIC food instruments may be presented at authorized vendor locations by WIC participants, parents, caretakers or proxies (WIC customer). WIC customers are required to take their WIC ID folder to each visit to the store. Vendors must request the WIC customer to present the WIC ID folder at the time of the transaction. WIC vendors shall **not** request any other form of identification from WIC customers in order to transact a WIC food instrument.

WIC foods must be separated from other food purchases prior to the WIC transaction. When approved supplemental food is being purchased with a WIC food instrument, the cashier must complete each food instrument separately and do the following:

Steps to Follow When Accepting WIC Food Instruments

1. Check the participant's WIC ID card/folder. The WIC customer's name must be listed on the ID card/folder. If the WIC customer does not present a WIC ID card, then the food instruments cannot be redeemed.
2. For manual food instruments that contain two signature boxes, make sure that the "*Sign here at WIC office*" signature box contains a signature.
3. Check the dates on the food instrument. Food Instruments cannot be used before the "First Day to Use" or after the "Last Day to Use" dates.
4. Ring up the current shelf price of the food for each food instrument. Make sure that the exact types and amounts of approved WIC foods are being purchased.
5. Print in black ink the amount of the WIC purchase in the "Pay Exactly" space on the food instrument in the presence of the WIC customer. Complete this step for one food instrument prior to moving on to the next food instrument.
6. Obtain a signature from the WIC customer, which must match the signature on the WIC ID card.
7. WIC customers must not be given credit or cash in exchange for WIC food instruments.
8. If the cashier makes a mistake entering the price on the food instrument, the incorrect price should be marked through, and the correct price written above the error. The cashier must initial the correction as verification.
9. If the cash registers do not automatically imprint "WIC" on the receipt, cashiers must write "WIC" vertically on all receipts for food purchased with WIC food instruments.
10. The cashier must provide the WIC customer with a receipt and keep a copy of the receipt for the vendor's records.

Steps to Follow When Accepting Cash Value Vouchers (CVV)

1. Check the participant's WIC ID card/folder. The WIC customer's name must be listed on the ID card/ folder. If the WIC customer does not present a WIC ID card, then the food instruments cannot be redeemed.
2. For manual vouchers that contain two signature boxes, make sure that the "*Sign here at WIC office*" signature box contains a signature.
3. Check the date on the face of the food instrument. CVVs cannot be used before the "First Day to Use" date or after the "Last day to Use" date.
4. Check the food items. They must be fruits and vegetables that cannot be purchased with the regular WIC food instrument.
5. Weigh the fruits or vegetables and/or ring up the current shelf price of the food for each item chosen. Make sure that the exact types of approved WIC foods (fruits and vegetables) are being purchased.
6. CVVs will be issued in specified, maximum dollar amounts.
7. Ring up price of the purchase.
8. Write the price of the purchase in the "Pay Exactly" space in black ink in the presence of the WIC Customer. Complete this step for one CVV before moving on to the next CVV.
9. Obtain a signature from the WIC customer, which must match the signature on the WIC ID card.
10. If the purchase amount is over the max price listed on the face of the CVV, the participant may pay cash or check, credit or EBT for the amount over the max price on the CVV.
11. Include tax for the amount over the maximum on the face of the CVV, if applicable. This amount is not a part of the WIC transaction. Give change for any amount over the face of the CVV. This is not a part of the WIC transaction. Change is not permitted for purchases that are less than the max price listed on the CVV.
12. WIC customers must not be given credit or cash in exchange for CVVs.
13. If the cashier makes a mistake entering the price on the CVV, the incorrect price should be marked through, and the correct price written above the error. The cashier must initial the correction.
14. If the cash register does not automatically print "WIC" on the receipt, cashiers must write "WIC" vertically on all receipts for WIC food purchases.
15. The cashier must provide the WIC customer with a receipt and keep a copy for the vendor's records.

If the amount of the CVV is less than the maximum amount on the face of the food instrument, do not give change and do not charge sales tax. If the price of the purchase is over the amount on the face of the CVV, charge the maximum amount of the purchase to the CVV. Your store will be

responsible for collecting any difference over the maximum amount of the CVV. Tax can be charged for the amount over the maximum on the face of the food instrument. The WIC customer can pay the amount over the maximum in cash, credit, debit, EBT, or check. Change can be given for cash payment for any difference over the amount of the maximum for the CVV. That amount is not a part of the WIC transaction.

Important Notes about the WIC Customer for Cashiers and Store Managers

The WIC customer:

1. Must present a WIC ID card to redeem food instruments.
2. Must sign the food instrument, at the time of purchase, in black ink, provided by the vendor.
3. May not use a WIC food instrument to purchase items not listed on the food instrument.
4. Must never be required to pay cash for items purchased except for items purchased with the cash value/ fruit and vegetable food instrument, in excess of the amount on the food instrument.
5. Must be allowed to purchase all foods listed on the food instrument or CVV, regardless of price.
6. Must be afforded the same courtesies given to other store customers.
7. Must be permitted to purchase eligible food items without making other purchases.
8. Must be charged the same shelf prices as other non-WIC customers.
9. Must not be charged sales tax, except on the purchase amount that is in excess of the amount on the cash value/ fruit and vegetable voucher, if applicable.
10. Must be reported to Georgia WIC immediately if they attempt to purchase foods that are not approved or create other problems in the store.
11. Must not be required to purchase every item on the food instrument.
12. Must not be contacted regarding restitution, payment or to obtain a missing signature.

More Important Notes.

1. WIC approved foods purchased with a WIC food instrument cannot be returned for a cash refund.
2. WIC food instruments from other states must not be accepted.
3. If a manager is called to approve a WIC food instruments transaction, it is imperative that the customer is not identified as a WIC participant, parent, caretaker and/or proxy. Every effort must be made to protect confidentiality and discussion of the transaction should be kept at a conversational level.
4. Separate checkout lines for the WIC customer are prohibited. Signs such as "WIC food instruments not allowed in this line" or "No Checks-No WIC" cannot be displayed. However, vendors who wish to ensure that the WIC customer does not enter certain lines, such as express lines, may post "Cash Only" signs in those lines.

5. Every store must check the customer's WIC identification card for the proper WIC ID number and authorized signature(s). WIC customers have been instructed about the importance of carrying the WIC ID card to the grocery store when using WIC food instruments. Food Instruments cannot be redeemed without the WIC ID card which shows the name of the person redeeming the food instruments.
6. Whenever food instruments are lost or stolen from a WIC health facility, Georgia WIC will notify area vendors that a stop payment has been placed on the food instruments. Vendors will be provided the food instrument numbers and informed not to accept the food instruments for redemption. These food instruments will not be paid.
7. The vendor must not provide refunds or permit exchanges for authorized supplemental foods obtained with food instruments except for exchanges of the same brand and size of authorized supplemental food item when the original authorized supplemental food item is defective, recalled, spoiled, or has exceeded its "sell by" or "best if used by," or other date limiting the sale or use of the food item.
8. The WIC customer must be allowed to participate in in-store or manufacturer promotions that are available to all other customers, and that includes WIC approved food items. This includes 'buy one get one or more free' promotions.
9. The WIC authorized vendor, its paid or unpaid owners, officers, managers, agents and employees shall not engage in any activity with the WIC participant, proxy, or caretaker that would create a conflict of interest, as determined by Georgia WIC. Authorized WIC vendors are not permitted to act as a proxy for a WIC participant.
10. The vendor is not permitted to provide transportation for the WIC customer to or from the vendor's premises.
11. The vendor is not permitted to deliver WIC approved foods to the WIC customer's residence.
12. The vendor shall not take back items purchased by the participant nor shall a vendor ask about obtaining food items that the participant chooses not to buy with the WIC food instrument.
13. The vendor must not provide unauthorized food or non-food items, cash, credit (including "rain checks") in exchange for food instruments.
14. Georgia WIC will review food instruments submitted for redemption to ensure compliance with price limitations and to detect suspected vendor overcharges and other errors.
15. Georgia WIC may require reimbursement for the full price of the food instrument that contains a vendor overcharge or other error detected as a result of compliance investigations, food instrument reviews, or other reviews or investigations of a vendor's operations.

Food Instrument Payment Procedures

All authorized vendors are required to enroll in the Automated Clearing House (ACH) for payment of WIC food instruments that exceed the maximum allowable price. At the time of authorization and re-authorization, vendors are also required to provide a single account number to which the vendor will deposit all WIC food instruments. If this account number changes, the vendor must notify Georgia WIC in writing within two (2) business days. Upon authorization, the ACH Enrollment Form is sent with the Vendor Stamp. **The form must be completed and submitted immediately to the address indicated on the form.** Vendors will have five (5) business days from the date of receipt of the ACH Enrollment Form to enroll. Failure to enroll within the allotted timeframe will result in termination of the vendor agreement.

Approved payments will be posted to the vendor's bank account immediately. Vendors will be able to view their ACH statements on-line at any time on the WIC Banking website at www.wicbanking.com by entering their personal User ID and Password.

User ID and Passwords will be provided by Georgia WIC once the ACH enrollment form has been completed and forwarded to the WIC data processing contractor indicated on the form. Users are urged to change their password when entering the system for the first time. Assistance with changing passwords may be obtained from Georgia WIC at 404-657-2900 or toll free at 1-866-814-5468.

Return Food Instrument Payment Procedures

- If the purchase price on a food instrument exceeds the maximum allowable price for the food instrument, it will be returned from the bank and stamped "Amount Exceeds Limit – Paid via ACH – Do Not Resubmit". The food instrument will be paid at a rate equal to the **average redeemed price for that food instrument code for the vendor's peer group.**
- Food instruments returned by the vendor's bank stamped "invalid vendor stamp," "unreadable vendor stamp," "missing vendor stamp," or "encoding error" should be corrected and resubmitted for payment through the vendor's bank of deposit. When in doubt, contact the Vendor Relations Unit for technical assistance when the food instrument has been returned for "unreadable vendor stamp" or "missing vendor stamp". Once a submitted food instrument has been rejected for any of the above reasons, the vendor has 45 days to resubmit the food instrument before it will be considered stale and unredeemable.
- If the redeposit is unsuccessful, or for food instruments returned by the vendor's bank for reasons other than those listed above, send an email communication requesting technical assistance to the Office of Vendor Management. Provide an explanation outlining why the food instruments were returned and require a review for payment consideration. Do not send actual food instruments to the Georgia WIC Program. They will be returned to the vendor.
- Food Instrument returned by the vendor's bank stamped "stale date," "post date", "altered" or "signature missing" **will not be paid.**

Vendor Redemption and Pricing Assessments

Food Instrument redemption data on all vendors will be reviewed on a quarterly basis, at a minimum.

Any vendor with less than \$2,000.00 in annual WIC redemptions (annual equals a 12-month period) or not redeeming any WIC food instruments within a sixty (60) day timeframe will be terminated from the program for a period of one (1) year.

WIC vendors are required to maintain competitiveness throughout the entire agreement period.

Non-competitive pricing for redemptions occurs when the amount paid per food instrument by Georgia WIC to a vendor, per quarter, for all food instruments except cash value food instruments, exempt infant formulas, and medical foods exceeds the statewide average amount paid per food instrument redeemed within the peer group by more than 50% on 10 or more items. If a vendor is found to be non-competitive during an assessment, the vendor will receive written notice. If the vendor is identified as non-competitive for three (3) additional assessments, the vendor agreement will be terminated for a period of twelve (12) months.

Vendors are required to submit and maintain prices that are at, or lower than, other vendors currently participating in the program, within their designated peer group. Vendors must submit shelf pricing each quarter, at a minimum. If a vendor's prices **are more than ten (10) percent higher** than the maximum prices of others in its Peer Group **on more than three (3) items** – the vendor will receive a written notification that its pricing is not competitive. Vendors may be assessed at any time and those whose prices remain non-competitive for three (3) additional assessments, the vendor agreement will be terminated for a period of twelve (12) months.

Pharmacies and military commissaries are exempt from these redemption assessments.

Vendor Cost Containment

The dollar amount that a store will be paid for each WIC food instrument will be calculated pursuant to the terms and conditions prescribed and approved by USDA. (See USDA website at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/regspublished/vendorccinterim.pdf>). Food Instruments that are deposited in the vendor's bank, and that contain a dollar amount in the "pay exactly box" that exceeds the statewide and/or peer group Maximum Allowable Reimbursement Level (MARL) will be returned by the bank.

Georgia WIC will conduct an annual assessment of each current vendor, except pharmacies and military commissaries, to determine if they derive more than fifty (50) percent of their food revenue from WIC food instruments. Vendors will also be assessed at re-authorization. New vendors will be assessed within six (6) months of authorization to determine if they derive more than fifty (50) percent of their food revenue from WIC food instruments.

Georgia WIC uses vendor reported shelf prices to determine the Maximum Allowable Prices for food items and the Maximum Allowable Reimbursable Limit for food instruments redeemed monthly. Food instruments submitted by vendors in peer groups J through E are paid according to the MARL for their peer group. The

WIC vendor agrees to accept an adjustment in the dollar amount written in the 'pay exactly' box of the WIC food instrument if the dollar amount exceeds the statewide average and/or peer group MARL. Vendors who exceed the MARL will be paid based upon the average shelf price, which will be based on the average shelf prices for all comparable stores in the same peer group and/or the statewide average for a given time period.

All redeemed food items must have a corresponding and preceding shelf price submission for each authorized store location. Shelf price data is used to establish a database of prices and will aid in alleviating redemption issues for infrequently used food instruments. Vendors are encouraged to submit prices for new items as well as price changes of existing items **at any time**.

All vendors, except pharmacies and military commissaries, will be assessed at application, within six (6) months after authorization, and annually thereafter to determine whether they derive more than fifty (50) percent of their SNAP eligible food sales from WIC redemptions. Georgia WIC will conduct an initial Food Sales Assessment based on programmatic reports to determine whether a vendor is a Probable Above Fifty Percent Vendor (A-50).

Upon notification of Probable A-50 Status, vendors may challenge the initial findings by requesting a detailed Food Sales Assessment to demonstrate that their eligible food sales are less than their WIC sales. A vendor must submit its request for a detailed Food Sales Assessment within fifteen (15) days of the date of the Notice of Probable A-50 Status. A vendor will be determined to be an Above Fifty-Percent Vendor if: (1) it fails to follow the procedures to request a detailed Food Sales Assessment, (2) it fails to provide the documents or information required, (3) it fails to cooperate with the assessment process; or, (4) if the detailed Food Sales Assessment confirms that a vendor is an Above-Fifty Percent vendor.

Applicants or vendors that are determined to be an A-50 vendor will be denied at authorization or terminated from the program unless it is determined that denial of authorization for the vendor would result in inadequate participant access. Vendors determined to be A-50 will receive notification, which contains instructions on how to appeal the denial or termination under the Administrative Review procedures in place. Vendors that remain on the program due to inadequate participant access will be moved to Peer Group G.

Important Notes about the Vendor Stamp

- Lost, stolen, or damaged stamps must be reported to Georgia WIC immediately.
- Damaged stamps must be returned to Georgia WIC immediately.
- The vendor stamp must be kept in a secure location at all times.
- Vendors are NOT permitted to reproduce the vendor stamp. Vendors who redeem food instruments stamped with a reproduced stamp or stamping device that was not issued by the Georgia WIC Program may be subject to investigation for fraud and a claim for restitution.
- Vendors will be held responsible for the unauthorized use of the vendor stamp by their paid or unpaid owners, officers, managers, agents, and employees.
- If the inkpad dries out, it is the vendor's responsibility to replenish the removable pad, **using only water based, black liquid ink**.
- The vendor stamp is **not** transferable to another location or individual.
- Food instruments stamped with an unauthorized vendor stamp or stamping device **will not** be paid.