

Arizona WIC Vendor Training 2006 is here!

The Annual Training Edition will cover the following topics:

- ⇒ What is WIC
- ⇒ Authorized WIC Foods
- ⇒ Minimum Stock Requirements
- ⇒ Redemption Procedures
- ⇒ Complaint Process
- ⇒ Violations and Sanction
- ⇒ Vendor Claims
- ⇒ Upcoming Program Changes

Remember: It is the responsibility of the owner, store director or manager to ensure that this Training Alert is made available to all employees who handle WIC transactions.

What is WIC?



WIC is a nutrition program that is designed to improve the nutritional health of income eligible pregnant, breastfeeding and postpartum women, infants and children up to five years old. Participants must meet income guidelines and have a nutritional or health risk identified. The foods provided by the WIC program are intended to supplement the foods currently being consumed by the participant.

The WIC Program has three major components: nutrition education (includes breastfeeding promotion and education), referrals to other services, and supplemental foods.

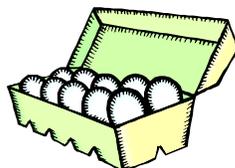


WIC is available to eligible participants without regard to race, color national origin, sex, age or disability.

Authorized Foods and Minimum Stock Requirements

Authorized WIC foods are selected to meet nutritional requirements for calcium, iron, protein, Vitamin A and Vitamin C. The food instrument is like a prescription with **NO** substitutions. The enclosed Arizona WIC Programs Food List shows the authorized foods that can be purchased and examples of foods that are not allowed.

All Vendors are required to maintain at least a minimum stock and variety of all WIC foods either on its shelves or at the store's location. Stock requirements ensure WIC foods are available at the store when WIC Customers go to shop. See the enclosed handout "Arizona WIC Program Minimum Stock and Variety Requirements".



WIC Redemption Procedures

Cashiers play an important role in the WIC Program; they must be familiar with food instrument redemption procedures and authorized foods. WIC customers should receive the same courtesies as any other customer. Keep each WIC transaction separate. The following are the procedures that must to be followed when redeeming WIC food instruments.

- ✓ Identify the WIC Customer: Ask to see the WIC ID Folder **or** signed Proxy form.
- ✓ Check the Dates: Do not accept the food instrument before the "First Date To Use" or after the "Last Date To Use"
- ✓ Check to ensure that the food instrument has not been reported as lost or stolen.
- ✓ Enter the date in the 'Date of Use' box: The date can be corrected only once and in the presence of the WIC customer (see the enclosed handout 'Correcting the Date of Use').
- ✓ Check the selected items, quantities and units being purchased are as specified on the food instrument. ALL infant formula must be purchased. Do not allow substitutions of non-approved food items.
- ✓ Allow the WIC Customer to take advantage of coupons and promotional specials. Coupons are not allowed on infant formula purchases.
- ✓ Enter the actual amount in the '\$ Amount' box: Do not include sales tax. Correct any mistakes by following the procedures on the enclosed handout 'Correcting the Dollar Amount'.
- ✓ Witness the customer's signature and verify that the signature on the food instrument matches one of the signatures on the ID folder (or Proxy form). Allow the WIC customer to re-sign the food instrument if: 1) if the signature does not match one of the signatures on the ID folder or Proxy Certification form; or 2) the food instrument is pre-signed (see the enclosed handout 'Correcting a Signature').
- ✓ Give the WIC customer a legible cash register receipt for their WIC purchases.

Remember, when redeeming food instruments, the cashier should not accept a food instrument that is altered, charge more than the current shelf price or charge for items not purchased (No rain checks).





Complaint Process

There may be some occasions when a WIC Customer has problems when redeeming their food instruments. To report any complaint on WIC fraud or abuse you may call toll-free **1 (866) 229-6561**. Remember, the complaints you report will assist the Arizona WIC Program in identifying WIC customers who are in need of additional training on the proper redemption procedures and in the selection of authorized foods.

Violations and Sanctions

All authorized WIC Vendors are monitored to ensure that they understand the program's rules, regulations and procedures. It is important that the Vendor become familiar with the Arizona WIC Program's Sanction Schedule (enclosed). Sanctions can range anywhere from a warning letter to disqualification and termination from the Arizona WIC Program.

A Vendor who is disqualified from the Food Stamp Program will be disqualified from the WIC Program. The disqualification would be for the same length of time as the Food Stamp Program disqualification and may begin at a later date than the Food Stamp Program disqualification.



Vendor Claims

The Arizona WIC Program may establish a claim in the amount of the full purchase price of each food instrument that contained Vendor overcharges or other errors. The Vendor must pay any claim that is assessed by the Department. In collecting a claim, the WIC Program may offset the claim against current and subsequent amounts to be paid to the Vendor. The Vendor may also be sanctioned for overcharges or other errors in accordance with the WIC Program's sanction schedule.



Things to come in the Future!

The future of the Arizona WIC Program will bring new and exciting challenges. We will be moving toward developing and implementing WIC Vendor Training on the Internet. This would allow authorized Vendors to go through training modules for management staff, cashiers and bookkeepers. Vendors would have access to these modules any time they wish.

USDA has proposed changes in the federal regulations that will increase participants' choices, and improve the health and nutritional quality of the foods in the WIC program. It will also expand cultural food options by offering fruit and vegetables (cash vouchers may be used), whole grain bread (with the option to substitute corn tortillas, or whole grain rice) and the option of soymilk and tofu. In addition, breastfeeding women will have the option to select salmon instead of tuna. For the infants, there will be the addition of infant fruit and vegetables instead of infant juice and infant stage I meat for the breast fed infant.



We will also continue to work with authorized Vendors on cost containment measures arising out of the Federal Regulation – WIC Vendor Cost Containment Interim Rule. This interim rule has played a major part in the revision of the Arizona WIC Program’s policies and procedures as they apply to how WIC food instruments are paid to authorized WIC Vendors.

Finally, the Arizona WIC Program website has been updated to include more information for WIC Vendors. Documents that can be found on the website include:

- ⇒ Arizona WIC Vendor Manual
- ⇒ Vendor Contract
- ⇒ Vendor Contract Amendment #1
- ⇒ Vendor Applicant Selection Criteria
- ⇒ Least Expensive Milk Declaration Form
- ⇒ Arizona WIC Program Infant Formula Suppliers
- ⇒ Arizona WIC Programs Food List
- ⇒ Minimum stock requirements
- ⇒ Semi-annual WIC Vendor Price/Stock Report
- ⇒ Arizona WIC Alerts (FFY 2005 and FFY 2006)

The Arizona WIC Program website is located on the Internet at:

http://www.azdhs.gov/phs/oncdps/wic/wic_vendors/vendors.htm

Reminder: Before you make any type of change such as choosing a different infant formula supplier, increasing food item prices, changing bank accounts, etc., please notify the Arizona WIC Program at least thirty (30) calendar days prior to the change.

If you have any questions, need technical assistance or you would like to schedule a training session please contact any member of the Vendor Management Team at 1-866-737-3935.



We must all do our part for WIC to work.

We look forward to providing assistance throughout fiscal year 2007!

