



WIC Vendor Training Newsletter

FALL 2020

Welcome to the ITCA WIC Annual Training!

The Inter Tribal Council of Arizona, Inc. (ITCA) WIC Program thanks you for partnering to provide nutritious foods for WIC clients in your community!

This newsletter serves as annual training for federal fiscal year 2021 (October 1, 2020 – September 30, 2021). ***It is your responsibility to ensure this training information is available to all store employees involved with stocking WIC foods and conducting WIC transactions.***

The vendor is accountable for its owners, officers, managers, agents, and employees who commit vendor violations.

This newsletter and the handouts include important information for vendors, including:

- WIC Program Purpose
- Authorized Foods and New Food List
- WIC Signage
- Minimum Stocking Requirements
- Infant Formula
- Transaction Procedures
- Complaint Process
- Vendor Monitoring and Sanction System
- Incentive Items
- Payment Adjustments
- Transaction Disputes
- Reporting Changes
- Record Keeping Requirements

WHAT ARE WIC HEALTH OUTCOMES?

Numerous studies show that WIC is effective and helps:

- Reduce premature births
- Reduce low and very low birth weight babies
- Reduce fetal and infant deaths
- Reduce the incidence of low iron anemia
- Increase access to prenatal care earlier in pregnancy
- Increase pregnant women's consumption of key nutrients such as iron, protein, calcium, and Vitamins A and C
- Increase immunization rates
- Improve diet quality
- Increase access to regular health care



WHAT IS WIC?

The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) is a public health nutrition program under USDA providing nutrition education, nutritious foods, breastfeeding support, and healthcare referrals for income eligible women who are pregnant or post partum, infants and children up to age 5. WIC safeguards the health of eligible women, infants, and children who are at nutritional risk. As the third largest food and nutrition assistance program, WIC served 6.4 million participants per month in fiscal year 2019, including almost half of all infants born in the United States.



INTER TRIBAL COUNCIL OF ARIZONA, INC.

Vendor Manual

The ITCA WIC Vendor Manual contains WIC program policies and procedures that apply to authorized vendors. The Vendor Manual is an excellent resource for learning WIC policies and procedures. Authorized vendors must know how to access the vendor manual. It can be accessed on the ITCA website www.itcaonline.com/vendormanual.

WHAT'S NEW?

There is a new ITCA WIC Vendor Manual with an effective date of **October 1, 2020**. This newsletter outlines new policies and policy revisions found in the new Vendor Manual.

WIC Approved Foods

WIC approved foods are carefully selected to ensure they meet the nutrition needs of WIC clients. All approved foods can be found in the Food List: www.itcaonline.com/itca-wic-authorized-foods. Please refer to the Arizona WIC Programs Food List to make sure you are familiar with the allowed types and brands of WIC foods.



WIC Shopper App

The WIC Shopper App is a free app for iPhone and Android cell phone users that allows ITCA WIC clients to check their balance in real time and scan foods to determine if they are WIC eligible. Anyone can use it to scan foods in the store to identify WIC allowable foods, including store staff. The WIC Shopper App also allows any user to view the Food List and submit a request for a product to be added to the authorized product list.



Food List

Food Lists are no longer required to be placed at every register. ITCA will no longer provide a Food List to vendors unless one is requested. Food Lists can be requested at WICVendor@itcaonline.com.

NEW FOOD LIST EFFECTIVE OCTOBER 1, 2020

WHAT'S NEW? New foods are authorized, all foods in the previous Food List are still allowable. The Food List can be found on the ITCA website.

Declared Brands are no longer required for milk, eggs, and cheese.

NEW FOODS

(the foods listed below are now WIC approved)

- Jumbo and Extra Large eggs in the dozen size
- Brown eggs in the dozen size
- Frozen Fruits and Vegetables with no added ingredients
- 14 oz. Instant Brown Rice
- Earth's Best Organic Infant Fruits and Vegetables in the 4 oz. container size
- Earth's Best Organic Infant Cereal in the 8 oz. and 16 oz. package size
- Earth's Best Organic Infant Meats in the 2.5 oz. container size
- Organic Dry Beans, Peas or Lentils in the 16 oz. package size
- Organic Canned Beans up to 16 oz.



Authorized Product List (APL)

The Approved Product List (APL) is a consolidated list of products that are WIC approved. Each product is uniquely identified by a Universal Product Code (UPC) or Price Look Up code (PLU) for WIC Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT). Vendors use the ITCA APL to transact WIC food items at the cash register. The APL is owned and maintained by the ITCA WIC Program and made available for vendors to download to their Point of Sale (POS) systems

The APL file plays a vital role in the eWIC transaction process and must be downloaded to the vendor's POS every 24 hours or every day the vendor is open for business.

Vendors are responsible for reporting WIC foods that are missing from the APL. If a vendor suspects that a particular food is WIC allowable but it is not ringing up as WIC allowable, the food needs to be reported to ITCA. Requests to add a food to the APL can be submitted to WICUPC@itcaonline.com. Submit the following information in the request:

- Full UPC or PLU code
- Brand Name
- Full product description, including size
- Image of the product and barcode

Foods are reviewed to ensure they meet the requirements for nutrition information, ingredients, size, cost and availability. If a food item is approved, it is available in the APL within 24-72 hours of being added.

WIC Approved Shelf Labels

WIC Approved shelf labels are used to help WIC customers identify WIC authorized foods in your store. If a vendor chooses to use the WIC Approved shelf labels on WIC approved food items, all food items in the same category must have the WIC Approved label on the shelf.



WHAT'S NEW? WIC Approved shelf labels are no longer required to be placed on milk, eggs, and cheese, since the declared brands policy is no longer in effect.

EXAMPLE: If you place a WIC Approved shelf label on Langers 64 oz. shelf stable apple juice, you must use the WIC Approved shelf labels to identify all other 64 oz. shelf stable WIC approved juices.

ITCA WIC Approved shelf labels can be requested at ITCAWICVendor@itcaonline.com.



WIC Signage

WE ACCEPT ITCA WIC WINDOW DECAL

Authorized vendors are required to display the We Accept ITCA eWIC window decal at entrances where they can be clearly seen by the public. The window decal helps ITCA WIC clients find an authorized location to redeem their ITCA WIC benefits. ITCA WIC window decals can be requested at ITCAWICVendor@itcaonline.com.

**Note every WIC Program has a different decal. If your store accepts WIC from multiple WIC programs, post the decal for each program.*

WE ACCEPT ITCA eWIC



INTER TRIBAL COUNCIL OF ARIZONA, INC.

Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women Infants and Children

www.itcaonline.com/WIC



2214 North Central Avenue | Phoenix, Arizona 85004

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Minimum Stocking Requirements

ITCA has established minimum stock requirements for WIC foods, which must be maintained by the Vendor at all times. The minimum stock and varieties required are outlined in the enclosed minimum stocking requirements document. We want to make sure that WIC clients can purchase their WIC foods when they are in your store. The foods listed in the minimum stocking requirements must be stocked in a minimum of the quantity and variety listed.

All Vendors are required to maintain minimum stock and variety of all WIC foods prior to submitting an application for authorization and throughout the contract period. Failure to maintain minimum stock and variety of WIC foods may result in administrative sanction, repeat violations result in termination of the Vendor Contract.

WHAT'S NEW? Effective October 1, 2020, the minimum stocking requirements no longer require a vendor to provide tofu or soy milk to client within 5 days of request from the WIC client. See the enclosed Minimum Stock Requirements document to review the types and quantities of WIC foods that are required to be in stock at all times.

Having trouble selling WIC foods? You may be eligible for a reduction in the types and quantities of WIC foods required to be maintained in inventory. To learn more, see the Request for Reduced Minimum Stock document enclosed.

Infant Formula Suppliers

Vendors must only purchase formula from sources that are approved by ITCA WIC. The enclosed list of infant formula wholesalers, distributors, retailers, and infant formula manufacturers are approved sources of infant formula.



WIC Transaction Procedures

WIC Transaction Procedures can be found in the Cashier's Guide to eWIC Transaction document enclosed with this Newsletter.

Complaint Process

We welcome any input you may have that may help improve the WIC program. ITCA WIC values the relationship with the vendor community. If you experience an issue or concern with a WIC customer, please don't hesitate to let us know about it. Complaints and concerns can be submitted to ITCA the following ways:

Email: WICVendor@itcaonline.com

Online: www.itcaonline.com/complaint
select **FILE A COMPLAINT**

Phone: **602.258.4822**

Sanction System

Authorized Vendors shall comply with the ITCA WIC Program regulations, policies and procedures. If any violations are found through the monitoring efforts, ITCA may take certain measures to assist the vendor in complying with the rules and regulations of the WIC Program or may disqualify the vendor for a period of time. The Sanction Schedule does not encompass all contract terms and potential violations.

SANCTION SCHEDULE

WHAT'S NEW? New Sanction Schedule, effective October 1, 2020. A copy of the new sanction schedule is enclosed with this newsletter.

- Declared Brands violations removed
- Added information about requesting a reduced minimum stock
- Added information about disqualification and terminations
- Added information about the use of stand beside device terminals



Program Integrity

You can also help control program costs and protect the integrity of the WIC Program by reporting WIC customer and vendor fraud. Buying, selling or otherwise misusing WIC benefits is a crime. Suspected program abuse by anyone should be reported to the ITCA WIC Program Vendor Manager or call **602.258.4822** or visit www.usda.gov/oig/hotline.

How We Monitor You

The ITCA WIC Program must ensure that all WIC vendors fully understand and comply with program rules and regulations that are outlined in the Vendor Manual. Therefore, vendors are monitored in several different ways, including:

- Vendor Site Reviews
- Rejected Check Reviews
- Inventory Audits
- Customer Complaint Reporting
- Compliance Investigations

WHAT IF WE FIND PROBLEMS AT YOUR STORE?

If we find your store is not following program rules, you may receive a written warning, training, fines, disqualification and/or termination depending on the severity of the violation. Fines are monetary penalties that are issued when a pattern of violations has been established. Stores may also be disqualified for a minimum of one year to a permanent disqualification for federally mandated sanctions. See the enclosed Sanction Schedule for more information on violations and penalties.



Incentive Items

The ITCA WIC Program, in accordance with federal regulations, prohibits WIC Vendors from offering incentive items** solely to WIC customers in an effort to encourage clients to redeem their WIC Food Benefits at their store. Vendors can provide incentive items to WIC customers, as long as the same incentive items are being provided to all customers.

***Incentive items or other free merchandise are defined as: free or reduced price food or other items like gasoline; cash, lottery tickets; buy one, get one free or buy one, get one at a reduced price; free amounts added to an item by a manufacturer; manufacturer coupons; store loyalty cards; sales and specials for supplemental food; and free or reduced price services except for the minimal customary courtesies of the retail food trade, such as bagging food for the WIC shopper and assisting the WIC shopper with loading the food into his/her vehicle.*

Payment Adjustments

Payments made by the ITCA WIC Program to authorized vendors may be adjusted for the following reasons:

- Item over the Not To Exceed amount
- Food removed from WIC customer benefits but not received by WIC customer
- Transaction communication errors

Not To Exceed (NTE) amounts are calculated for each WIC item sold during a WIC transaction. An NTE is determined by using historical redemption data to calculate the value of WIC foods. Vendors are not paid more than the NTE for an item, even if the requested price was higher than the NTE amount.

Payments may also be adjusted for items charged to the WIC Program that were not received by the WIC customer.

If for any reason, there is a dispute regarding a payment, the vendor must communicate the dispute to the ITCA WIC Program following the Transaction Dispute Resolution procedures detailed in the Vendor Manual.

If a transaction communication error results in over payment to the vendor, the ITCA WIC program will adjust the payment to reflect the accurate dollar amount. If transaction communication errors result in underpayment to an authorized vendor, the vendor must follow the procedures for Transaction Dispute Resolution.

Claims Procedure

ITCA may delay payment or establish a claim in the amount of the full purchase price of each food item that contained vendor overcharges or other errors. ITCA will provide the vendor with an opportunity to justify or correct a vendor overcharge or other error. The vendor must pay any claim assessed by ITCA. In collecting a claim, ITCA may offset the claim against current and subsequent amounts to be paid to the vendor. In addition to denying payment or assessing a claim, the vendor may be sanctioned for vendor violations found in the Contract and in the Sanction Schedule of the Vendor Manual. Sanctions may include termination, disqualification, administrative fines, and civil money penalties in lieu of disqualification, or any combination of sanctions.

Transaction Dispute Resolution

Dispute resolution addresses conditions where one or more parties to an eWIC transaction have or may incur a financial loss. Transactions can be disputed by the WIC cardholder, the WIC Vendor or other parties to the transaction. For more information on transaction dispute resolution, refer to the Vendor Manual.

Reporting Changes

Authorized vendors must provide ITCA 30 days advance written notification for changes related to:

- Banking management
- Cash register
- Third party processor
- Hours of operation
- Mailing Address

Failure to report changes in banking information, cash register information, or third party processing information will result in the ITCA WIC Program losing the ability to reimburse a vendor for benefits redeemed.

Vendors who change the location of their business will not be authorized at their new location unless they have applied for authorization and received a vendor contract for the new location.

To report changes, the Notice of Change form in the Vendor Manual can be used. The Vendor Manual can be found at www.itcaonline.com/wic/vendor.



Record Keeping Requirements

Vendors must maintain program related records and records relating to WIC transactions, for a period of four years from the vendor contract expiration date, and must be provided to ITCA upon request. Records that are required to be kept for three years and five months include the following:

- Inventory records showing all wholesale and retail purchases
- Invoices for purchase of WIC foods
- State and federal tax returns
- Other records that are necessary to support the quantity of foods and prices charged
- Records relating to WIC transactions
- Shelf price records
- Financial records
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) sales

A vendor's inventory records may be used to audit the vendor to determine if contract violations have occurred. These records may also be used to determine the amount of money owed to ITCA in the event of any improper WIC transactions or other program violations related to inventory. Vendors authorized to accept WIC benefits are subject to audit by the WIC state agency they are contracted with, and additionally subject to audit by the US Department of Agriculture (USDA). In the event of an audit, vendors must provide ITCA, or USDA, access to their facility and provide access to records associated with WIC transactions and other documentation needed to verify vendor compliance with program rules and regulations at the time of the audit.

In addition to purchase and receiving records, vendors must keep any and all records related to disputes, litigation, and financial claims imposed upon the vendor for program violations. These records must be kept for a period of three years and five months from the contract expiration date or until the dispute is resolved, whichever is later.

Purchase and Inventory Records

Vendor purchase records must reflect the name and address of the supplier, distributor, wholesaler or manufacturer, the date of the purchase, list of the items purchased, size, stock number, quantity and the unit price (Handwritten invoices are not acceptable). See the Vendor Manual for additional requirements.

NEW

Self-Checkout

The ITCA WIC program is allowing WIC shoppers to use self-checkout lanes effective **October 1, 2020**. Self-checkout registers must be certified by the ITCA WIC program prior to processing WIC transactions.

Authorization Selection Criteria

New selection criteria are effective **October 1, 2020**. Selection Criteria are a set of requirements a vendor must meet to be eligible to become an authorized ITCA WIC Vendor. Selection Criteria must be met prior to authorization and maintained throughout the contract period. Review the Selection Criteria to ensure adherence to program contract conditions. The Selection Criteria are enclosed with this newsletter.

WHAT'S NEW?

Here is a summary of the changes:

- Full line grocery store criteria removed
- Open for at least a year prior to application criteria removed
- Declared brand criteria removed
- Conflict of Interest criteria updated/ vendors must declare a conflict of interest if one exists

Contract Expiration and New Contract Cycle

The current fiscal year 2019-2021 contract period expires on September 30, 2021, for all vendors.

All vendors need to go through the application process prior to entering into a new contract with the ITCA WIC program. The New Contract Cycle Application Process is used for vendor authorization prior to the start of a three year contract. ITCA WIC will contact each vendor starting Spring 2021 regarding contract expiration and reauthorization. The New Contract Application Process consists of the following:

- Vendor submits a completed application at least 60 days prior to contract start date. Applications are due on or before **August 2, 2021**.
- The ITCA WIC Program reviews the application and ensures the store meets the limiting and selection criterion.
 - The vendor will be notified of application approval by **September 16, 2021**.
 - The vendor will be notified of application denial by **September 1, 2021**.
- The vendor must attend a mandatory interactive training provided by the ITCA WIC Program. Training is scheduled in advance and will be available on different dates and multiple locations in Arizona. Training sessions can occur prior to, or after the application due date.
- The Vendor Contract is mailed to the store, or corporate office, and signed by the vendor then returned to ITCA.
- A fully executed Contract is sent to the vendor or corporate office.
- The vendor accepts ITCA WIC benefits on **October 1, 2021**.





Client Access

The ITCA WIC program has measures in place to ensure that WIC clients living in rural and remote areas have adequate access to purchase their WIC food items. By ensuring adequate access to authorized vendors, ITCA assists WIC clients in meeting their nutritional needs to improve health outcomes. ITCA applies the client access determination criteria listed below to determine a vendor's client access status prior to authorization. A vendor is also evaluated to determine if they meet client access criteria prior to termination.

CLIENT ACCESS CRITERIA

WHAT'S NEW? New client access criteria effective October 1, 2020.

Inadequate client access is determined by meeting one of the following conditions:

- No other authorized or potential vendor within a reasonable distance (5 driving miles) of the clinic or clients' physical address.
- Physical barriers or conditions which would make travel to another authorized WIC Vendor impossible or difficult (for example, an un-bridged river, an expressway, an airport, frequent road closings due to flooding/bad weather)
- A client/authorized representative has a disability that cannot be accommodated by other Vendors.

Vendor Appeals and Administrative Reviews

The ITCA WIC program must impose sanctions on vendors for non-compliance with program rules, regulations, policies, and procedures. Vendors may appeal decisions that result in adverse action to be applied to the vendor by requesting an administrative review.

WHAT'S NEW?

The administrative review procedures have been updated with an effective date of October 1, 2020. See the ITCA WIC Vendor Manual for more information about how to request an administrative review.

Summer EBT for Children Program

THANK YOU!

Inter Tribal Council of Arizona is pleased to announce that our Summer EBT for Children (SEBTC) program successfully completed its first year! We would like to thank all of our Vendors for your hard work and dedication to improving the lives of our SEBTC families. Your support and efforts, especially when faced with a myriad of challenges during COVID-19, was vital to our success. We look forward to working with you all and expanding our program for the 2021 summer!



INTER TRIBAL COUNCIL OF ARIZONA, INC.

INTER TRIBAL COUNCIL OF ARIZONA INC. WIC PROGRAM

2214 N. Central Avenue, Suite 100, Phoenix, AZ 85004
Phone: 602.258.4822, Fax: 602.258.4825

www.itcaonline.com/wic

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