

10A NCAC 43D .0708 AUTHORIZED VENDORS

By signing the WIC Vendor Agreement, the vendor agrees to:

- (1) Process WIC Program food benefits in accordance with the terms of the WIC Vendor Agreement and 42 U.S.C. 1786, 7 C.F.R. 246.1-246.28, and the rules of this Subchapter;
- (2) Accept eWIC benefits in exchange for WIC supplemental foods. Supplemental foods are those foods that satisfy the requirements of 10A NCAC 43D .0501;
- (3) Provide the WIC customer with only the approved supplemental foods, fruits, and vegetables contained in the authorized product list (APL) after it has been determined that the WIC customer has an available balance on the date of the transaction. The WIC customer is not required to get all of the supplemental foods listed on his or her food benefit balance. However, a WIC customer may obtain more fruits and vegetables than the full dollar value of his or her cash-value benefit if the WIC customer pays the difference, as set forth in 7 C.F.R. 246.12(h)(3) (xi);
- (4) Transmit only the current shelf price of all WIC-approved supplemental foods purchased in the correct sizes, quantities, and the total dollar amount of all WIC-approved supplemental foods purchased in the EBT system and shall not charge or collect sales taxes for the supplemental food provided;
- (5) Charge no more for supplemental food provided to a WIC customer than to a non-WIC customer or no more than the current shelf price, whichever is less;
- (6) Accept payment from the State WIC Program only up to the maximum price set by the State agency for each supplemental food within that vendor's peer group. The maximum price for each supplemental food shall be based on the maximum prices set by the State agency for each supplemental food, as described in Sub-item (4)(a) of Rule .0707 of this Section. A request for payment submitted over the maximum price allowed by the State agency will only be paid up to the maximum price for that supplemental food;
- (7) Accept payment from the State WIC Program only up to the full dollar value of the cash-value benefit;
- (8) Not charge the State WIC Program more than the maximum price set by the State agency under Item (4)(a) of Rule .0707 of this Section for each supplemental food within the vendor's peer group;
- (9) Provide to WIC customers infant formula, exempt infant formula, and WIC eligible nutritionals purchased only from the sources specified in Item (3) of Rule .0707 of this Section. Providing infant formula, exempt infant formula, or WIC eligible nutritionals that have not been purchased from the sources specified in Item (3) of Rule .0707 of this Section shall result in termination of the WIC Vendor Agreement;
- (10) For free-standing pharmacies, provide only exempt infant formula and WIC-eligible nutritionals;
- (11) Excluding free-standing pharmacies, redeem at least two thousand dollars (\$2,000) annually in WIC supplemental food sales. Failure to redeem at least two thousand dollars (\$2,000) annually in WIC supplemental food sales shall result in termination of the WIC Vendor Agreement. The store shall wait 180 days to reapply for authorization;
- (12) Ensure that a personal identification number (PIN) is used by the WIC customer to complete the EBT transaction in lieu of a signature;
- (13) Ensure that the WIC customer enters the PIN to initiate the EBT transaction. The vendor shall not enter the PIN for the WIC customer;
- (14) Not transact food benefits as a whole or in part for cash, credit, unauthorized foods, or non-food items;
- (15) Not provide refunds or permit exchanges for authorized supplemental foods obtained with food benefits, except for exchanges of an identical authorized supplemental food when the original authorized supplemental food is defective, spoiled, or has exceeded its "sell by," "best if used by," or other date limiting the sale or use of the food. An "identical authorized supplemental food" means the exact brand, type and size as the original authorized supplemental food obtained and returned by the WIC customer;

- (16) Notify the local WIC agency of misuse (attempted or actual) of WIC Program food benefits;
- (17) Maintain a minimum inventory of supplemental foods in the store for purchase. Supplemental foods that are outside of the manufacturer's expiration date do not count towards meeting the minimum inventory requirement. Free-standing pharmacies are not required to maintain a minimum inventory of supplemental foods. The following items and sizes constitute the minimum inventory of supplemental foods for vendors:

Food Item	Type of Inventory	Quantities Required
Milk	Whole fluid: gallon	2 gallons
	-and- Skim/low fat fluid: gallon	6 gallons
Cheese	1 pound package	2 packages
Cereals	2 types: whole grain (minimum package size 12 ounce)	6 packages total
Eggs	Grade A, large, white: 1 dozen size carton	2 dozen
Juice	Single strength: 64 ounce: 2 varieties	6 containers
Legumes	1 pound package or 4 15-16 ounce cans: 2 varieties	2 packages or 8 cans OR 1 package and 4 cans
Peanut Butter	16 to 18 ounce container	2 containers
Tuna	5 to 6 ounce can	6 cans
Bread/Tortillas	16 to 24 ounce loaf of whole wheat/whole grain bread or package of tortillas	2 loaves or 2 packages OR 1 loaf and 1 package
Rice	14 to 24 ounce package, whole grain	2 packages
Infant Cereal	8 ounce box	6 boxes
Infant Fruits and Vegetables	3.5 to 4 ounce container 1 type of fruit and 1 type of vegetable	64 ounces
Infant Formula	milk-based powder; 11.0 to 14.0 ounce -and-	8 cans
	soy-based powder; 11.0 to 14.0 ounce Brands must be the primary contract infant formulas	4 cans
Fruits	14 to 16 ounce can: 2 varieties	10 cans total
Vegetables (Excludes foods in Legumes category)	14 to 16 ounce can: 3 varieties	10 cans total

All vendors, except free-standing pharmacies, shall supply milk or soy-based infant formula in 32 ounce ready-to-feed or powder within 48 hours of request by the State or local WIC agency. Free-standing pharmacies shall only supply exempt infant formula or WIC-eligible nutritionals. Free-standing pharmacies shall supply exempt infant formula or WIC-eligible nutritionals within 48 hours of a request;

- (18) Ensure that all supplemental foods in the store for purchase are within the manufacturer's expiration date;
- (19) Permit the purchase of supplemental food without requiring other purchases;
- (20) Comply with the following EBT provisions:
- (a) Sign the WIC Vendor Agreement of the EBT Processor selected by the State WIC Program or a third-party processor that has been certified according to criteria established by the EBT Processor selected by the State WIC Program. Failure by a vendor to sign and retain a WIC Vendor Agreement with the State WIC Program's EBT Processor or a third-party processor that has been certified by the State WIC

Program's EBT Processor shall result in termination of the WIC Vendor Agreement. Vendors shall notify the WIC Program within 24 hours of any periods of time during which they do not maintain an Agreement with the State WIC Program's EBT Processor or a third-party processor that has been certified by the State WIC Program's EBT Processor;

- (b) Process EBT transactions in accordance with the terms of the North Carolina WIC Vendor Agreement, WIC Program State Rules, federal regulations, and statutes;
 - (c) Maintain Point of Sale (POS) terminals used to support the WIC Program in accordance with the minimum lane provisions of 7 C.F.R. 246.12(z)(2);
 - (d) Maintain a North Carolina EBT Processor certified in-store EBT system that is available for WIC redemption processing during all hours the store is open;
 - (e) Request the North Carolina EBT Processor re-certify its in-store system if the vendor alters or revises the system in any manner that impacts the EBT redemption or claims processing system after initial certification is completed;
 - (f) For vendors with integrated systems, obtain EBT card readers to support EBT transactions within their store(s). The vendor shall ensure that the EBT card readers they obtain meet all EBT and North Carolina EBT Processor requirements;
 - (g) Require an owner, manager, or other authorized store representative to complete training on WIC EBT procedures. The vendor shall ensure that all cashiers and staff are trained on WIC EBT requirements, including training in the acceptance and processing of WIC EBT transactions;
 - (h) Require the WIC customer to approve the WIC transaction. Vendors shall ensure that the vendor's staff does not approve the WIC transactions for WIC customers under any circumstances;
 - (i) Release supplemental food to WIC customers when the transaction has been completed to include receipt of transaction approval by the EBT processing system, printing of the receipt, and updated balance of the WIC customer's account;
 - (j) Scan or manually enter Universal Product Codes (UPC) only from approved supplemental foods being purchased by the WIC customer in the types, sizes, and quantities available on the WIC customer's EBT account. The vendor shall not scan codes from UPC codebooks or reference sheets;
 - (k) Return any EBT card found on the vendor's property and unclaimed for 24 hours to the WIC Program. The vendor shall not hold or use a WIC customer's EBT card and PIN for any purpose whatsoever;
 - (l) Connect the vendor's in-store system for each outlet covered by the WIC Vendor agreement to the State's WIC EBT system at least once each 24-hour period to download reconciliation files and the WIC Authorized Product UPC/Product Look-Up (PLU) list.
- (21) Attend or cause a manager or other authorized store representative to attend, annual vendor training upon notification by the local WIC agency. Failure to attend annual vendor training by September 30 of each year shall result in termination of the WIC Vendor Agreement;
 - (22) Inform and train vendor's cashiers and other staff on WIC Program requirements;
 - (23) Be accountable for the actions of its owners, officers, managers, agents, and employees who commit vendor violations;
 - (24) Allow monitoring and inspection by State and local WIC Program staff of the store premises and procedures to ensure compliance with the agreement and State, and federal WIC Program rules, regulations, and applicable law. This includes providing access to all program-related records, including access to all WIC food instruments and cash-value vouchers at the store; vendor records pertinent to the purchase and sale of WIC supplemental foods, including invoices, receipts, copies of purchase orders, and any other proofs of purchase; federal and state corporate and individual income tax and sales and use tax returns and all records pertinent to these returns; and books and records of all financial and business transactions. These records shall be retained by the vendor for a period of three years or until any audit pertaining to these records is resolved, whichever is later. Notwithstanding any other provision of this Rule and

Rules .0707 and .0710 of this Section, failure or inability to provide these records for an inventory audit or providing false records for an inventory audit shall be deemed a violation of 7 C.F.R. 246.12(l)(1)(iii)(B) and Subparagraph (a)(1) of Rule .0710 of this Section. Invoices, receipts, purchase orders, and any other proofs of purchase for WIC supplemental foods shall include:

- (a) the name of the seller and be prepared entirely by the seller without alteration by the vendor or on the seller's business letterhead;
 - (b) the date of purchase and the date the authorized vendor received the WIC supplemental food at the store if different from the date of purchase; and
 - (c) a description of each WIC supplemental food item purchased, including brand name, unit size, type or form, and quantity;
- (25) Maintain a record of all SNAP-eligible food sales and provide to the State agency upon request a statement of the total amount of revenue derived from SNAP-eligible food sales and written documentation to support the amount of sales claimed by the vendor, such as sales records, financial statements, reports, tax documents, or other verifiable documentation;
 - (26) Submit a current completed WIC Price List when signing this agreement, and within two weeks of any written request by the State or local WIC agency;
 - (27) Reimburse the State agency in full or agree to a repayment schedule with the State agency within 30 days of written notification of a claim assessed due to a vendor violation that affects payment to the vendor. Failure to reimburse the State agency in full or agree to a repayment schedule within 30 days of written notification of a claim shall result in termination of the WIC Vendor Agreement. Payment of a claim by the vendor for a vendor violation(s) shall not absolve the vendor of the violation(s). The vendor shall also be subject to any vendor sanctions authorized under Rule .0710 of this Section for the vendor violation(s);
 - (28) Not seek restitution from the WIC customer for reimbursement paid by the vendor to the State agency or for WIC food benefits not paid or partially paid by the State agency. Additionally, the vendor shall not charge the WIC customer for authorized supplemental foods obtained with food benefits;
 - (29) Not contact a WIC customer outside the store regarding the transaction or redemption of WIC food benefits;
 - (30) Notify the local WIC agency in writing at least 30 days prior to a change of ownership, change in store location, cessation of operations, or withdrawal from the WIC Program. Change of ownership, change in store location of more than three miles from the store's previous location, cessation of operations, withdrawal from the WIC Program, or disqualification from the WIC Program shall result in termination of the WIC Vendor Agreement by the State agency. Change of ownership, change in store location, ceasing operations, withdrawal from the WIC Program, or nonrenewal of the WIC Vendor Agreement shall not stop a disqualification period applicable to the store;
 - (31) Not discriminate on the basis of WIC participation, such as failing to offer WIC customers the same courtesies, as set forth in 7 C.F.R. 246.12(h)(3)(iii), offered to other customers or requiring separate WIC lines;
 - (32) Reapply to continue to be authorized beyond the period of its current WIC Vendor Agreement. Additionally, a store shall reapply to become authorized following the expiration of a disqualification period or termination of the Agreement. In all cases, the vendor applicant is subject to the vendor peer group criteria set forth in 7 CFR 246.12(g)(4), 7 CFR 246.12(h)(3), and the vendor selection criteria of Rule .0707 of this Section; and
 - (33) Comply with all the requirements for vendor applicants of Items (3), (4), and (7) through (17), and (19) of Rule .0707 of this Section throughout the term of authorization. The State agency may reassess a vendor at any time during the vendor's period of authorization to determine compliance with these requirements. The State agency shall terminate the WIC Vendor Agreement of any vendor that fails to comply with Items (3), (4), (8), (9), (10), (11), (12), (13), (14), (16), (17), or (19) of Rule .0707 of this Section during the vendor's period of authorization and terminate the agreement of or sanction or both any vendor that fails to comply with Items (7), (15), (17), or (19) of Rule .0707 of this Section during the vendor's period of authorization.

- (34) Permit the State agency to reassess the peer group designation at any time during the vendor's agreement period and place the vendor in a different peer group if upon reassessment the State agency determines that the vendor is no longer in the appropriate peer group.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 130A-361; 7 C.F.R. 246.12; 42 U.S.C. 1786;
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