

VENDOR HANDBOOK



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About the Program

What is WIC?

WIC is the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children. In South Carolina, the program is administered through the South Carolina Department of Public Health. WIC provides nutritious foods, nutrition counseling, and referrals to health care providers and social services agencies. WIC serves low-income pregnant, postpartum and breastfeeding women, infants and children up to age 5 who are at nutritional risk.

How to Apply

Applications for WIC are made at local health departments. Applicants must provide proof of residency (they must live within the state), and documentation of their household income. Applicants' income must fall at or below 185 percent of the U.S. Poverty Guidelines. In addition, applicants must have a nutritional risk factor defined as abnormal weight gain during pregnancy, history of high-risk pregnancies, growth problems, inadequate diet, iron-deficiency anemia or other similar problems.

Certification Periods

Eligible applicants are certified for a defined period:

- **Infants:** up to age 1
- **Children:** one year per certification
- **Pregnant women:** for the duration of pregnancy and up to six weeks after delivery
- **Postpartum women:** until six months after delivery
- **Breastfeeding women:** as long as they are breastfeeding, not to exceed one year after birth

Benefits for Participants

WIC participants receive WIC EBT cards to purchase specific foods each month that are designed to supplement their diets with specific nutrients. Participants obtain approved foods using eWIC cards at grocery stores authorized as WIC vendors.

Program Effectiveness

Studies show that the WIC Program is highly effective. The results of numerous federal, state, and local studies conducted both by government and citizens groups highlight its positive impact. Specific findings include increased early (first trimester) prenatal care, longer gestation, lower rates of pre-term delivery, significant increases in birth weight and reduced late fetal deaths. WIC participation is also associated with improved dietary intakes of protein and other nutrients that are often lacking in the diets of low-income pregnant women and children.

Role of Vendors

Vendors play an important role in the WIC Program and are critical to its success. When WIC EBT transactions are conducted according to procedures, participants can receive the full benefits from the program. South Carolina authorizes vendors on a continuous basis to ensure participants have access to the services they need. Currently, more than 600 authorized vendors are committed to providing excellent service to participants at the lowest cost.

Definitions for WIC Vendors

Above-50-percent vendors: vendors that derive more than 50 percent of their annual food sales revenue from WIC EBT purchases.

Authorized Product List (APL): the list of universal product codes (UPCs) and price look-up (PLU) codes for WIC supplemental foods, fruits and vegetables that are authorized for purchase by WIC customers. The APL should be uploaded daily.

Authorized Supplemental Foods: the supplemental foods authorized by the state or local agency to be obtained with WIC EBT cards.

Cardholder: The person authorized to use the eWIC card to shop for WIC food benefits at WIC authorized vendors. The cardholder is typically the participant or the parent/guardian/caregiver of the infant or child participant. The cardholder is responsible for the eWIC card, even if the cardholder provides the card and PIN to another person.

Cash Value Benefit (CVB): a fixed-dollar-amount electronic benefit transfer (eWIC) card used to buy eligible fruits and vegetables.

Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT): the electronic transfer of benefits to individuals through the use of card technology and point-of-sale terminals. The method that permits electronic access to WIC food benefits with the use of a card. EBT in South Carolina is referred to as eWIC.

EBT Capable: means the WIC vendor demonstrates their cash register system or payment device can accurately and securely obtain WIC food balances associated with an EBT card, maintain the necessary files such as the authorized product list, hot card file and claim file and successfully complete WIC EBT purchases.

eWIC: the term used to describe the issuance of food benefits to participants via Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT).

eWIC Card: magnetic stripe card used to purchase WIC authorized foods or formulas from a WIC family's eWIC account. Each card has a 16-digit Primary Account Number (PAN).

Home Food Delivery System: systems in which authorized supplemental foods are delivered to the participant's home (South Carolina does not allow).

Food Sales: sales of all Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) eligible foods intended for home preparation and consumption.

Incentives: anything made available as a complimentary gift that might be consumed or taken without charge, allowable only to WIC participants.

Integrated vendor: a WIC-authorized store that uses a multi-function point of sale system. Registers accept WIC in all lanes and require a single scan to verify the item's WIC eligibility and ring up the purchase. Integrated vendors support "mixed basket" transactions where WIC, SNAP, debit, etc. can be rung up together and tendered separately.

Inventory audit: the examination of food invoices or other proofs of purchase to determine whether a vendor has purchased enough supplemental foods to provide participants with the quantities specified on food instruments redeemed by the vendor during a given period of time.

Maximum Allowable Reimbursement Level (MARL): the maximum price points the state shall reimburse the vendor for food items sold to participants. The State Agency may collect all charges above the MARL by withholding future redemptions until the excess charges have been collected.

Not to Exceed (NTE): the maximum price established by the State WIC Program that the state will reimburse the vendor for an approved food item.

Participants: pregnant women, breastfeeding women, postpartum women, infants and children who are receiving electronic food benefits under the program.

Peer Group: a group of WIC vendors who have common characteristics, including, but not limited to, type of business, type of ownership, total sales volume, pricing of approved foods, and located in the same geographic area (See vendor agreement).

Personal Identification Number (PIN): a 4-digit number set by the cardholder to maintain secure access to the food benefits via the eWIC card. The PIN acts as an electronic signature at the point of purchase.

Point of Sale (POS) Terminal: an electronic device used by retailers to process credit and debit transactions.

Shopping List: a list issued and given to the family that includes all of their available foods. The shopping list can be obtained at the local WIC office, at an authorized grocery store/ pharmacy, or in the SC eWIC mobile app.

Stand-beside Vendor: a WIC-authorized grocery store that uses a point-of-sale device. Stand-beside equipment requires two scans of the items; one in the point-of-sale device to make sure the items are WIC-approved and another to ring up the purchase in the store's register. Shoppers must keep WIC transactions separate at stand-beside vendors. WIC might only be accepted in some lanes.

Statewide EBT: means the State agency has converted all WIC clinics to an EBT delivery method and all authorized vendors are capable of transacting EBT purchases.

Store Types: each vendor must comply with at least one of the established definitions for store type in order to be assigned to a peer group (See vendor peer groups).

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP): is the largest federal nutrition assistance program. SNAP provides benefits to eligible low-income individuals and families via an Electronic Benefits Transfer card.

Third Party Processor: a payment processor chosen by a retailer to handle various card transactions for merchants acquiring banks.

Vendor: a grocery store or stand-alone pharmacy authorized to accept WIC EBT cards and provide the approved foods allowed for their store type.

Vendor Overcharge: intentionally or unintentionally charging the state agency more for authorized WIC items than is permitted under the vendor agreement.

WIC Vendor Agreement: standard written agreement specifying the terms and conditions to be an authorized vendor with the SC WIC program.



Peer Group Assignment and Competitive Price Selection Criteria

Federal regulations require state WIC Programs to establish competitive pricing and price limitations during the process of vendor authorization. Competitive pricing considers the prices a vendor charges for supplemental foods as compared to the prices charged by other authorized vendors within the same store type and geographical area. Price limitations ensure that a vendor applicant has competitive prices and maintains competitive prices as an authorized vendor. Within six (6) months of participation in the program, the vendor must be reassessed to ensure that they have not reached above-50-percent status. After this assessment is completed, if the vendor's WIC redemptions exceed their SNAP, additional legal or certified tax documents will be required. If the vendor is determined to be above 50 percent after re-assessment, the vendor will be terminated. Prior to terminating or denying a vendor for participant access, the following participant access determinations are required:

1. Denying a vendor applicant, except for failure to maintain minimum stock or meet competitive price selection criteria (CPSC).
2. Terminating a vendor for vendor violations, except for failure to maintain minimum stock or meet competitive price selection criteria (CPSC).
3. Disqualifying a vendor as required by federal law, except for third or subsequent violations or permanent SNAP disqualifications.

Inadequate participant access to WIC foods or formula will be determined at South Carolina WIC's sole discretion when:

1. In that geographical area, there is no WIC-authorized vendor that provides food items located within 5 miles driving distance of the food vendor being assessed.

The competitive pricing structure for the South Carolina WIC Program establishes five store types within each of the four geographic areas of the state. Each vendor is assigned to one of the established store types and peer groups and is informed of their assignment and geographical area at the time of their authorization.

The list below are the definitions of each vendor store type.

<u>Store Type</u>	<u>Definition</u>
Store Type 1	Total food sales > \$10,000,000
Store Type 2	Total food sales of \$10,000,000 - \$5,000,000
Store Type 3	Total food sales < \$5,000,000
Store Type 4	Government owned facilities (Commissaries)
Store Type 5	Pharmacy – Primarily sells products such as medicine, health care items, etc. (Redeem only exempt and/or special infant formula) Pharmacies that are located within a retail establishment, such as a chain store, are not included in this category. Such pharmacies shall be authorized as part of the store and will not be authorized independently. <i>Pharmacies must make available, upon request, special formulas (Elecare, Neocate, Peptamen, Phenex, etc.)</i>

South Carolina may change a vendor's store type whenever it is determined that placement in an alternate store type is warranted. Vendors will be notified when their store type assignment changes.

Vendors that derive more than 50 percent of their annual food sales revenue from eWIC benefits are considered as "above-50-percent vendors".

South Carolina does not authorize above-50 percent vendors. Vendors found to be above-50-percent status after assessment will be terminated.

Competitive Pricing

Competitive pricing for the Maximum Allowable Reimbursement Levels (MARLs) shall be based on store prices submitted in one or two ways.

New applicant stores

- Shelf prices submitted with the application may be used.
- These prices may be compared with peer group redemption prices as of the end of the month immediately preceding the application date.
- Comparisons are made using a market basket of comparable food items.

Stores applying for reauthorization

- The store's redemptions may be compared to redemptions for the same store type during the application process.

Non-competitive pricing

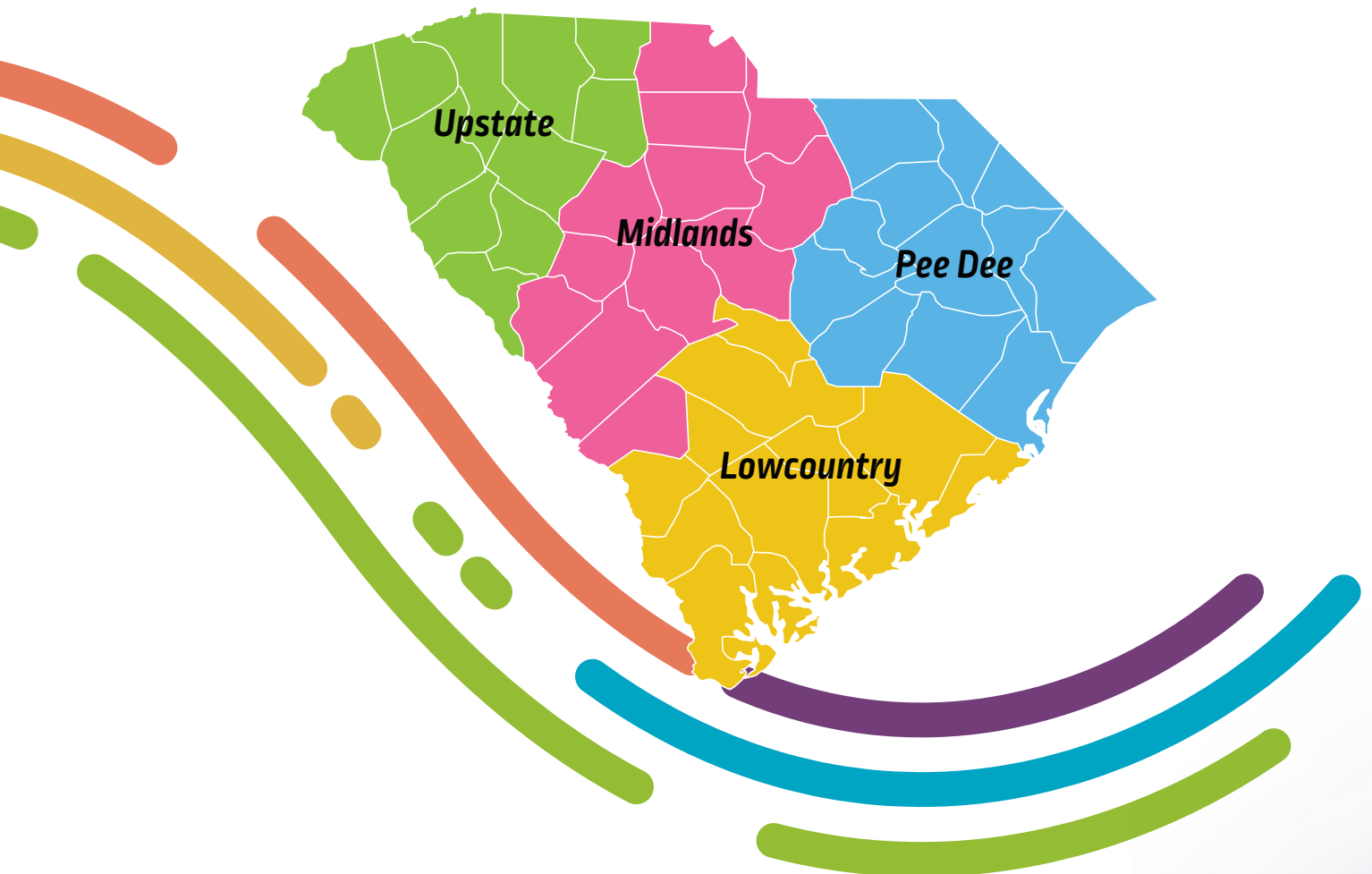
- Stores with one or more redemption records that exceed the store type average by two (2) standard deviations above the mean (the MARL) may be considered non-competitive.
- Non-competitive stores may be subject to termination or disqualification.

SOUTH CAROLINA VENDOR PEER GROUPS		
Peer Group	Store Type	Area
Vendor Peer Group 1	Total Food Sales > \$10,000,000	Upstate
Vendor Peer Group 2	Total Food Sales > \$10,000,000	Midlands
Vendor Peer Group 3	Total Food Sales > \$10,000,000	Pee Dee
Vendor Peer Group 4	Total Food Sales > \$10,000,000	Lowcountry
Vendor Peer Group 5	Total Food Sales \$10,000,000 -\$5,000,000	Upstate
Vendor Peer Group 6	Total Food Sales \$10,000,000 -\$5,000,000	Midlands
Vendor Peer Group 7	Total Food Sales \$10,000,000 -\$5,000,000	Pee Dee

Vendor Peer Group 8	Total Food Sales \$10,000,000 - \$5,000,000	Lowcountry
Vendor Peer Group 9	Total Food Sales < \$5,000,000	Upstate
Vendor Peer Group 10	Total Food Sales < \$5,000,000	Midlands
Vendor Peer Group 11	Total Food Sales < \$5,000,000	Pee Dee
Vendor Peer Group 12	Total Food Sales < \$5,000,000	Lowcountry
Vendor Peer Group 20	Farmers	ALL
Vendor Peer Group 21	Commissaries – Government owned	ALL
Vendor Peer Group 22	Pharmacies	ALL

DPH Areas

As a cost containment measure, vendor prices will be compared with vendors in the same peer group geographical area. Below is a map of DPH areas.



Pharmacies

South Carolina has implemented a new Pharmacy Approved Product List (APL), Application (D-4331), and Agreement (D-4399) for all current and future pharmacies. Pharmacies are also in the same peer group (22). This helps the state better monitor cost-control measures. Pharmacies are businesses whose sole purpose is to provide medicine, health care items, etc. For WIC, pharmacies may redeem only exempt infant formula and/or special infant formula. Pharmacies located within a retail establishment, such as a chain store, are not included in this category. Pharmacies will be authorized as part of the store, not independently. *Pharmacies must provide special formulas upon request, including EleCare, Neocate, Peptamen, Phenex, and similar products.*

As a cost containment measure, vendor prices will be compared with vendors in the same geographical area and peer group. To become an authorized vendor as a stand-alone pharmacy, applicants must meet the selection criteria established by USDA and the South Carolina WIC Program. *(Please see section entitled “How to become a South Carolina eWIC Vendor” pages 11-13.)*

Vendors that derive more than 50 percent of their annual food sales revenue from eWIC benefits are considered as “above-50-percent vendors”. **South Carolina does not authorize above-50-percent vendors. Stand-alone pharmacies may self-declare as above-50-percent vendors based on sales of medical foods and/or special formula to WIC participants through eWIC transactions.**

The State Agency does not enforce minimum stocking requirements for pharmacies. Instead, their primary focus is on providing special metabolic and exempt formulas for WIC participants. The goal is to ensure that WIC participants have access to the specific formulas they need, rather than regulating stocking levels.



South Carolina WIC Program Stocking Requirements

The vendor must stock the varieties and minimum quantities of WIC-approved foods as listed in the current WIC-approved food list. Only approved foods within the manufacturer's product eligibility date will be counted as part of minimum stock. **Vendors cannot use another store's brand items as part of the minimum stocking requirements.** Minimum stocking requirements are listed below:

INFANT FORMULA		
Item:	Store Type	Minimum Quantity
Similac Advance Powder 12.4 oz. powder	1,2,4	30 containers
	3	24 containers
Similac Advance Liquid 13 oz. concentrated	ALL	18 containers
Similac Sensitive Powder 12.5 oz. powder	ALL	12 containers
Similac Soy Isomil 12.4 oz. powder	ALL	12 containers

INFANT CEREAL (Not allowed – added fruit or formula, canister cereals with DHA)		
Item:	Store Type	Minimum Quantity
Beech Nut, Gerber, or Comforts for Baby (Single or mixed grain, no fruit) 8 oz. box	1,2,4	3 varieties, 6 boxes of each
	3	2 varieties, 6 boxes of each

INFANT FRUITS & VEGETABLES (single or mixed ingredients)		
Item:	Store Type	Minimum Quantity
Beech Nut or Gerber 4 oz. jar	1,2,4	2 varieties of fruits 2 varieties of vegetables Total: 96 containers
	3	1 variety of fruit 1 variety of vegetables Total: 32 containers

INFANT MEATS (single ingredient)		
Item:	Store Type	Minimum Quantity
Beech Nut or Gerber 2.5 oz. jar	1,2,4	2 varieties, 31 containers
	3	1 variety, 16 containers

MILK		
Item:	Store Type	Minimum Quantity
Reduced Fat (2%) and Whole	1,2,4	4 half-gallon containers (each type) 4-gallon containers (each type)
	3	2 half-gallon containers (each type) 2-gallon containers (each type)
Low Fat (1%) and Fat Free (Skim)	1,2,4	6 half-gallon containers total with a minimum of two (2) half gallons of Skim or Fat Free 10-gallon containers total with a minimum of (4) gallons of Skim
	3	4 half-gallon containers (each type) 2-gallon containers (each type)

CHEESE (Not allowed: deli-specialty, cheese food, product, spread or cracker cuts)		
Item:	Store Type	Minimum Quantity
American, Cheddar, Colby, Monterey Jack, Mozzarella, Muenster, Provolone, Swiss, Blends of any of these cheeses <i>(block, shredded, or sliced)</i>	ALL	8 1lb. (16 oz.) sizes

CEREAL		
Item:	Store Type	Minimum Quantity
This includes 2 whole varieties of grain cereal <i>Up to 36 oz</i>	ALL	6 varieties, 4 boxes each

JUICE		
Item:	Store Type	Minimum Quantity
100% Unsweetened <i>64 oz. containers</i>	ALL	2 varieties, 6 containers each <i>*This includes 1 variety of WIC-approved apple juice in 64 oz. size.</i>

EGGS (Not allowed: specialty, brown, or organic)		
Item:	Store Type	Minimum Quantity
Large White Only <i>1 dozen</i>	ALL	8 dozens

PEANUT BUTTER (Not allowed: added food items, spreads, organic)		
Item:	Store Type	Minimum Quantity
Smooth, Crunchy or Chunky 16 - 18 oz. container	ALL	8 jars

DRIED PEAS/BEANS (Not allowed: organic, sweet peas)		
Item:	Store Type	Minimum Quantity
Unflavored single variety beans 1-lb (16 oz.)	ALL	2 types, 8 packages each

CANNED MATURE BEANS (Not allowed: organic, canned green beans, canned sweet peas)		
Item:	Store Type	Minimum Quantity
Unflavored single variety beans 15 - 16 oz.	ALL	24 cans

TUNA (Not allowed: albacore-white tuna)		
Item:	Store Type	Minimum Quantity
Any brand, water- or oil-packed Up to 20 oz	ALL	15 cans

BREAD		
Item:	Store Type	Minimum Quantity
Whole Grain or Whole Wheat Up to 24 oz	ALL	8 loaves

FRUITS AND VEGETABLES		
Item:	Store Type	Minimum Quantity
Fresh & Frozen	ALL	3 varieties of fruit (4 pounds total) 3 varieties of vegetables (4 pounds total)

*Stocking requirements for vendors are in accordance with the Federal Register (246.12 Retail Food Delivery).

Not-To-Exceed (NTE)

The State will collect prices through vendor redemptions. Prices charged by a vendor that are higher than the peer group average will be reduced to the not-to-exceed (NTE) amount during the WIC transaction. All vendor prices must meet the WIC Program's price limitations.

The State requires all applicants to verify and complete a WIC Price List as part of the Vendor Application Packet submission. The price list is used to evaluate and ensure that Applicant's food prices are competitive with currently authorized vendors.

IT IS VERY IMPORTANT THAT VENDORS CHARGE PRICES THAT ARE COMPETITIVE.

How to Become a South Carolina eWIC Vendor

To become an authorized Vendor, applicants must meet the selection criteria established by USDA and the South Carolina WIC Program. To meet the selection criteria, a vendor applicant must:

1. Enter into a financial agreement with South Carolina WIC to process WIC EBT Cards.
 - A. Vendors with integrated cash register (ICR) systems will process WIC EBT transactions via a third-party processor (TPP). Vendors using a TPP should ensure that the TPP is aware of South Carolina WIC procedures and has entered into a financial agreement with **CDE Services, Inc.**, South Carolina's contractor for WIC EBT processing.
 - B. Vendors who do not possess integrated cash register (ICR) systems must obtain a WIC Processing Service Agreement with CDE which provides stand-beside point-of-sale (POS) machine(s). South Carolina WIC will only provide new stand-beside POS vendors with state-funded POS equipment if the vendor is determined necessary for participant's access using the participant's access criteria described on page 4 in this Handbook.
2. Accept South Carolina WIC EBT cards and follow redemption procedures. The eWIC card redemption process is different for integrated cash registers (ICR) and stand-beside point-of-sale (POS) machines:

Integrated Cash Register (ICR) Vendors

- A. Scan the selected items and ask for a form of payment. Participants are encouraged to separate their WIC and non-WIC items in a transaction, but participants are not required to separate items.
- B. The participant will swipe their eWIC card first at the cash register.
- C. The cash register system will identify WIC approved items assigned to the participant.
- D. Provide a mid-transaction receipt to the participant to review. This allows the participant to identify if any items were not scanned as expected.
- E. The participant will accept charges to the eWIC card, and the benefits will be removed. The dollar amount of the WIC transaction will be charged to the South Carolina WIC Program. The participant can choose not to accept charges and ask the vendor to void items that the participant does not wish to purchase. The participant remains

responsible for any items that are not WIC approved or have not been assigned to the participant's eWIC card once the transaction is approved. The participant can use any other form of financial tender (e.g., SNAP, TANF, credit card, debit card, cash, etc.) to complete the transaction.

- F. Provide a receipt to the participant that includes the participant's remaining monthly WIC balance and benefits expiration date.

Point-of-Sale (POS) Vendors

- A. Ask the participant to separate WIC items from non-WIC items.
 - B. Ask the participant to swipe their eWIC card in the POS machine.
 - C. Scan the WIC items in the POS machine and verify that the WIC items are correct.
 - D. Once all of the WIC items are scanned in the POS, total the transaction and print the participant's remaining WIC balance receipt.
 - E. Continue the transaction with the participant's remaining non-WIC items.
3. Not charge South Carolina WIC for any processing fees, interchange fees, or ongoing maintenance and operational costs for WIC EBT transaction processing, with the exception of vendors needed for participant access who require WIC-specific point-of-sale (POS) machines, accessories, and replacements or repairs associated with such devices.
 4. Not accept an eWIC card for any purpose other than the redemption of WIC benefits and benefit balance inquiries.
 5. Void items in a mixed-basket transaction that the participant does not wish to purchase.
 6. Allow participants to pay the difference when a fruit and vegetable purchase exceeds the maximum amount of the cash value benefits or when purchasing non-WIC food items in the same transaction (also known as split tender).
 7. Update their cash registers with the most current South Carolina WIC Approved Product List (APL) on a daily basis.
 8. Submit the UPC's of new or modified WIC eligible items to the South Carolina WIC APL prior to introduction of these items onto store shelves.
 9. Utilize Price Look-Up (PLU) codes for fresh produce items with UPCs.
 10. Maintain prices of WIC authorized food within 2 standard deviations above the mean within their peer group on each WIC item.
 11. Charge the WIC Program only for the cost of the WIC foods received at the time of redemption.
 12. Not provide refunds, store credit or permit exchanges for foods purchased with the eWIC card except for exchanges for an identical authorized food item when the original food item is defective, spoiled, has exceeded its "sell by," "best if used by," or other date limiting the sale or use of the item at the time of purchase.
 13. Comply with nondiscrimination statutes on **page 31** of this Handbook.

14. Not request additional identification beyond a Personal Identification Number (PIN) from participants, parents, or caretakers during a WIC purchase.
15. Extend WIC customers the same service, courtesies, promotional offers, and same general treatment as non-WIC customers, with the exception of return policies and buy-one, get- one (BOGO).
16. Attend annual training on WIC procedures offered by the state WIC office.
17. Be responsible for training store personnel on program requirements and is accountable for the actions of owners, officers, managers, agents, and employees who commit vendor violations.
18. Pass a monitoring review to determine whether the store has the minimum inventory of Supplemental foods and agree to periodic inspections/monitoring by WIC staff.
19. Must have a fixed location and be open a minimum of eight hours per day, six days per week. Home delivery of WIC purchases is not allowed.
20. Must maintain a minimum stock of WIC-approved foods and formula within date. *(Pharmacies are exempt from this requirement.)*
21. Retain inventory records for a minimum of three years for state and federal purposes and other records as noted in the Vendor Agreement. All infant formula and WIC-eligible nutritionals must be purchased from an approved source. A list of approved Formula Wholesalers and Retailer are listed on **page 20** of this Handbook.
22. Must clearly show the price of all WIC-approved foods on shelves or signage.
23. Must not designate special checkout lanes restricted to use by participants.
24. Must provide banking information to South Carolina WIC and the third-party WIC EBT financial processor (CDE).
25. Must notify South Carolina WIC about any permanent or temporary store closures, changes in ownership, or changes in location at least 15 days in advance.
26. Alert the South Carolina WIC Program in writing about any WIC EBT payment adjustment requests within 30 calendar days of the original transaction date.
27. Be an authorized Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) vendor. *(Pharmacies are exempt from this requirement.)*
28. Have no convictions or civil judgments within the last six years that indicate a lack of business integrity on the part of the current owners, officers or managers. Such activities include, but are not limited to, fraud, antitrust violations, embezzlement, theft, forgery, bribery, falsification of records, making false statements, receiving stolen property, making false claims and obstruction of justice.
29. Not be employed by or have a spouse, child, or parent employed by the WIC Program serving the county in which the vendor applicant conducts business. An applicant also shall not have an employee who handles/transacts eWIC who is employed by – or has a spouse, child, or parent who is employed by the WIC Program serving the county in which the vendor applicant conducts business.
30. Complete the required WIC Vendor Application, WIC Price List, Vendor Agreement, Request for Taxpayer Identification and Certification form (IRS W-9) and register as a vendor through the South Carolina State Government Procurement System Vendor Registration. <https://www.procurement.sc.gov/doing-biz/registration>.

31. Not provide transportation for participants to and from a vendor's premises, not deliver supplemental foods to participants, offer promotional incentives directed solely to WIC participants.
32. Not apply to the WIC Program if the store has been disqualified from participation in the WIC Program and the disqualification period has not expired.
33. Display the "We Accept eWIC" decal so WIC participants can easily see that the vendor accepts eWIC benefits.

Did Your Information Change?

All vendors must provide SC WIC with at least a 30-day advance written notice if the following changes occur:

- Ownership
- Operation
- Corporate structure
- Store management
- Business Closure
- Remodel/Store Renovations

If business changes involve the addition of new owners, corporate officers, partners, and/or affiliates, the vendor must include the following for each individual in its notice to SC WIC Central Office:

- Full name,
- Date of birth, and
- Social security number

NOTE: A vendor will be removed from the program if they fail to provide advance written notice of such changes to our office to ensure business integrity.

Vendor Authorization and Application Process

Vendor Eligibility Requirements

An applicant must be an authorized SNAP vendor prior to applying for WIC Program vendor authorization. To be eligible to accept eWIC benefits, food retailers and pharmacies must be authorized by the state WIC Program.

Required Application Forms and Registration

All applicants must complete the following forms: WIC Vendor Application, WIC Price List, Vendor Agreement, and an IRS W-9 (Request for Taxpayer Identification and Certification form). Applicants also must register as a vendor through the South Carolina State Government Procurement System Vendor Registration.

Price Review and Application Denial

If a vendor applicant's prices exceed the maximum allowable price for its assigned peer group, the WIC Vendor Management Unit will notify the vendor applicant in writing. The applicant has 30 days to submit a revised WIC Vendor Price List. Failure to submit revised prices within 30 days, or resubmission with prices that still exceed the maximum allowed, will result in written denial. Applicants must wait 180 days from the date of denial to reapply.

Pre-Approval Visit and Minimum Stocking Requirements

The WIC Vendor Management Unit conducts a pre-approval visit to the store to determine whether the store meets WIC vendor selection requirements, including minimum inventory of WIC foods. **Vendors/applicants cannot use another store's brand items to meet minimum stocking requirements.**

Follow-Up Visit and Reapplication Timeline

The vendor applicant selects the date and time of the first pre-approval visit. **If applicant fails the first visit, an unannounced follow-up visit is conducted within 30 days from the first visit.** Applicants who fail the second visit may not reapply for **180 days** from the date of the second visit.

Application File Retention

Applications remain on file for six (6) months. After that period, applicants must complete a new application.

What Happens During the Pre-Approval Visit?

During a pre-approval visit, Vendor Management staff will:

- Meet with the store manager/owner to discuss all items listed on the Pre-approval Visit Form.
- Review the stock to ensure that minimum stocking requirements are met.
- Review invoices to ensure that formula was purchased from an approved wholesaler, distributor, and/or manufacturer. Invoices must be made within 30 days.
- Review milk invoices to ensure that milk was purchased from an approved wholesaler, distributor and/or manufacturer. Invoices must be made within 30 days.
- Check prices to see if vendor prices are consistent with the approved vendor price survey.
- Verify that WIC items are not the majority of the vendor's inventory.
- Allow the vendor to ask any questions concerning the program.
- Obtains vendor's signature on the Vendor Agreement, Pre-approval Visit Form and Price List.
 - An acceptable signature is considered as either a dated, wet signature OR a digital signature with a time stamp.
- Perform an eWIC Level Three Certification Test or an Educational Buy, if allowable.
- Verify that the store's cash registers can successfully process WIC EBT.
- Provide the vendor a Vendor Resource Packet (*Vendor Handbook, WIC Food Guide, WIC shelf tags, and SC eWIC window clings*).

If the store is a POS stand-beside vendor, store ownership will also sign a financial processing agreement with CDE for WIC EBT transactions. CDE will provide the POS stand-beside device(s) and will install the equipment and train store staff on how to use the device(s).

A vendor applicant cannot accept eWIC cards prior to authorization.

Guidelines for Transacting eWIC Benefits

The South Carolina WIC Program issues WIC EBT cards (eWIC).



Sample WIC EBT (eWIC) Card Images

eWIC System Requirements

The South Carolina Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) System is called eWIC. All authorized vendors must maintain a certified system to accept and process eWIC. The system may be either integrated or a stand-alone.

An eWIC transaction is the process by which a WIC participant presents an eWIC card to a vendor to exchange for supplemental foods authorized by the WIC Program.

Following Proper eWIC Procedures

The key to proper eWIC transactions is to ensure that all store personnel strictly follow established procedures when accepting eWIC cards. If a vendor cannot process the transaction because the eWIC card is damaged, the vendor may not manually enter the eWIC card number.

Providing Equal Service to WIC Customers

Authorized WIC vendors must offer WIC customers the same courtesies provided to other customers. Examples include accepting discounts and manufacturer's coupons, and "valued customer" cards, and not creating separate checkout lines for WIC customers.

Vendor System Requirements for eWIC

1. The vendor system must be able to:
 - Use the authorized products list (APL) to identify WIC products based on a UPC or PLU during a purchase.
 - Use the account balance in determining items that can be purchased in the eWIC transaction.
 - Electronically submit eWIC transactions.
2. The vendor system must be certified.
3. Vendors must maintain a bank account for the deposit of eWIC settlement payments.

Vendor System Alternatives

1. Integrated Cash Register

- Typically used by chain stores and multi-lane vendors, or vendors with cash registers that are eWIC-ready; encouraged for all vendors.
- Operate like all other tender types.
- Typically does not require separate equipment.
- Provides a streamlined approach to eWIC.

2. Stand-Beside Point-of-Sale System

- Operates separately from the store's cash register system.
- Daily totals are reported separately, and payments are processed separately from credit and debit transactions.
- Can work via dial-up, or high-speed internet connection.

The Approved Product List (APL)

Approved Product List Overview

To properly configure eWIC systems to identify WIC-approved foods for purchase, vendors will be provided with the Approved Product List (APL) to upload into their system.

APL Updates and Collection

The WIC Program will continue collecting UPCs and updating the APL as needed.

Non-integrated (Stand-Beside) POS Devices

Non-integrated vendors with stand-beside point-of-sale devices will automatically have the APL programmed into the device when they receive it from the eWIC processor and will receive updates to the APL through automated downloads.

POS System Requirements

Vendors must connect the vendor's POS system to the State's eWIC processor's system at least once each 24-hour period to transfer reconciliation files and the WIC APL file. It is imperative that the APL is downloaded to each eWIC device/outlet in the store at least once every 24 hours.

Vendors will adhere to the International Federation for Produce Standards (IFPS) for Price Look Up (PLU) Codes for fresh produce. Any store that generated fresh fruit/vegetable PLU must be mapped (linked) back to an IFPS International Standard PLU for the same produce item in the APL. The vendors' Third-Party Processor (TPP) can be contacted if additional assistance is needed.

Requesting Updates to the APL

Vendors, manufacturers, and wholesale suppliers can request updates or additions to the Approved Product List (APL) by emailing submissions to wicfoodrequest@dph.sc.gov. The following details should

be included in the email for each item's submission:

- 12-Digit UPC code
- Manufacturer Name
- Brand Name
- Product Name
- Container and/or Package Size
- Picture(s) of the product label displaying nutrition facts, ingredients, packaging information, and UPC barcode.

Sample of information needed when submitting UPCs



*South Carolina WIC Approved Food List Submission Process can be accessed at dph.sc.gov.

Accepting eWIC Benefits

The following steps must be followed when accepting eWIC benefits:

Note: The WIC customer **MUST** use their eWIC card as their first form of payment. Any balance left can be paid with another payment type. If the eWIC card does not scan through the PIN pad, the cashier and the participant are prohibited from manually entering the eWIC card number. The participants should return to their local health department to have a new eWIC card reissued.

It is not necessary to separate items for purchase with an Integrated System.

1. The cashier scans all of the items in the WIC customer's basket.
 - Retailers are prohibited from scanning any UPC as a substitute or replacement for an item. The UPC must be affixed to the item the WIC customer is purchasing.
2. The eWIC Card is swiped or inserted and the cardholder enters their PIN.
3. The system validates the eWIC card and PIN.
4. The WIC customer then receives a "balance inquiry receipt" printed at the register that shows current benefits and the benefits to be used for the transaction.

- Each food item that has been scanned is:
 - Compared to the locally maintained APL to determine whether it is an allowable WIC item.
 - Compared to cardholder balance to determine if there is enough balance to purchase.
5. Retail system captures data including item prices and discounts to send to eWIC system.
 6. The household's benefit balance is reduced by the quantities of items being purchased.
 7. If an item price exceeds the MARL amount, the item is paid up to the MARL and total payment amount is adjusted.
 8. The e-WIC system provides the retail system with the approved paid amount.
 9. The participant will "accept" the transaction, and if there are other items purchased, the participant can pay the balance first with their SNAP card (if applicable), or cash, debit or credit card.
 10. A final receipt is printed that shows purchase details, customer's remaining balance, and last date to spend remaining benefits. Participants are encouraged to the receipt to track their remaining balance and to know when they expire.

If the vendor uses a **Stand-Beside (single function) Device** provided by the eWIC processor, follow the procedures below:

1. The WIC items must be separated from all other foods.
2. The WIC customer swipes the card through the device and enters their PIN to authorize the transaction.
3. The cashier scans the UPC or Price Lookup Code (PLU) into the stand-beside device or the WIC-approved food, fresh fruit or vegetable presented for purchase. If the scanning device is not working, the vendor can manually enter the correct UPC/PLU code. Foods that are not WIC approved will be rejected by the system and will not be deducted from the WIC customer's benefit balance.
4. Once the UPC or PLU code is scanned or manually entered (Step 3), the cashier must enter the item price into the standbeside device.

How the price is collected may vary depending on the vendor's cash register system.

- The price can be obtained from a sticker on the food item.
- Or it may be obtained from the store's cash register system display.

Complete steps 3 and 4 for Cash Value Benefits (CVB)

5. The vendor then enters any discounts and/or coupons for which the WIC customer is eligible. Discount coupons must be entered into both the stand beside device and the store's cash register system.
6. The vendor calculates a total and then submits the transaction using the stand-beside device.
7. The vendor provides the WIC customer with a receipt printed from the stand-beside device which shows the items purchased, the remaining balance, and the benefits expiration date. The transaction is completed in the store system.

Vendor eWIC Settlement Payments

South Carolina’s Electronic Benefits Transfer program, eWIC, will benefit vendors by providing faster settlement/reimbursements. Vendors must maintain a bank account for the ACH transactions for eWIC settlement payments. Payments are made to the vendor daily during the end of day process of the eWIC system. Vendors will receive their settlement/reimbursements for eWIC transactions within two business days. The eWIC benefits will be paid up to the maximum amount allowed based on the vendor’s peer group for each individual food UPC.

List of Infant Formula Manufacturers, Wholesalers, Distributors, and Retailers

Each State WIC Program is required to maintain a list of infant formula wholesalers, distributors or retailers licensed in the State in accordance with State law, as well as, infant formula manufacturers registered with the FDA that provide infant formula.

INFANT MANUFACTURERS		
<p>AmerisourceBergen 1300 Morris Drive Chesterbrook, PA 19087</p>	<p>Abbott Laboratories Abbott Nutrition 3300 Stelzer Road Columbus, Ohio 43219-7677</p>	<p>McKesson Corporation 1 Post St. San Francisco, CA 94101</p>
<p>Mead Johnson Mead Johnson Nutritional 2400 West Lloyd Expressway Evansville, IN 4 772 1 -00 01</p>	<p>*Prolacta Bioscience* 757 Baldwin Park Blvd City of Industry, CA 91746</p>	<p>Nutricia North America Nutricia North America 9900 Belward Campus Drive Suite 100 Rockville, MD 20 850</p>
<p>PBM Nutritionals PBM Nutritionals, LLC 652 Peter Jefferson Pkwy Suite 300 Charlottesville, VA 22911</p>		

WHOLESALE AND DISTRIBUTORS		
<p>W. Lee Flowers (Floco) P.O. Box 1629 Lake City, SC 29560 127 East W. Lee Flowers Road Scranton, SC 29591</p>	<p>Cash & Carry Wholesale 1421 Five Chop Road Orangeburg, SC 29115 2440 Broad Street Sumter, SC 29150 100 Old Beach Place Rd Walterboro, SC 29488</p>	<p>H.T. Hackney Company 502 S. Gay Street Knoxville, TN 37902 209 Flintlake Road Columbia, SC 29223 333 Dreher Road Columbia, SC 29169 109 Sulphur Springs Road Greenville, SC 29617 368 Millennium Drive Orangeburg, SC 29115 2112 West Jody Road Florence, SC 29501 148 Industrial Drive Greenwood, SC 29646 1299 Flint Sheet Ext. Rock Hill, SC 29730</p>
<p>Costco Wholesale (Corporate office) P.O. Box 34331 Seattle, WA 98124</p>	<p>Nash Finch Company 121 Cold Storage Road P.O. Box 1709 Lumberton, NC 28358 12319 Hwy 301 South Statesboro, GA 30458 P.O. Box 490 Statesboro, GA 3049</p>	
<p>J.T. Davenport & Sons, Inc. 1144 Broadway Road Sanford, NC 27332 P.O. Box 1105 Sanford, NC 27331</p>	<p>Atlantic Dominion Distributors 3641 Legion Road Hope Mills, NC 28348</p>	<p>Dean Foods 3436 Torrington Way Suite 200 Charlotte, NC 28277</p>
<p>Supervalu, Inc. 605 Selig Drive Anniston, AL 36201</p>	<p>Cardinal Health, LLC 4 Girbaud Court Greensboro, NC 27407</p>	<p>Merchants Distributor (MDI) 5005 Alex Lee Blvd PO Box 2148 Hickory, NC 28603</p>
<p>C & S Wholesale Services, Inc. 208 Bi-lo Blvd Greenville, SC 29607</p>	<p>Harris Teeter Warehouse 6001 Hwy. 74 Monroe, NC 28110</p>	<p>Ingles Markets Incorporated PO Box 6676 Asheville, NC 28816</p>
<p>Food Lion Distribution Center 6800 Snider Street Elloree, SC 29047</p>	<p>Publix Atlanta Distribution Warehouse 445 Hurricane Trail Dacula, GA 30019</p>	<p>Spartan Nash 360 Hoffman Court St. Cloud, MN 56303</p>
<p>Wal-Mart Distribution Center 702 S. W. 8th Street Bentonville, AR 72716</p>	<p>Sam's Club Corporate Office 2101 S.E. Simple Savings Drive Bentonville, AR 72716-0745</p>	

*Per USDA, Prolacta human milk product are not WIC-eligible formulas and therefore should not be purchased by vendors for sale to WIC participants.

Vendor Monitoring

Under Federal WIC Regulations, State WIC Programs are required to conduct monitoring of all vendors approved for participation in the WIC Program with the exception of military commissaries. The monitoring includes routine visits, follow-up visits, compliance buys and inventory audits.

FNS has a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Department of Defense regarding military commissaries that are WIC Program vendors. Under the MOU, the State agency:

- *May not conduct on-site monitoring reviews, compliance investigations and routine monitoring of commissaries unless “**upon invitation by the constituted military authority.**”*

All WIC vendor responsibilities are administered at the State WIC office.

Routine Monitoring – The Program monitors WIC vendors every 18-24 months to ensure compliance with program requirements.

The following information explains the process for vendor monitoring. During a routine visit, a WIC staff member will:

1. Enter the store and identify himself/herself to a member of management at the time of the visit.
2. Check stock of WIC foods and formula for quantity, quality, and price.
3. Review invoices to ensure that formula was purchased from an approved wholesaler, distributor and or manufacturer.
4. Observe a WIC participant using an eWIC card, if possible, ask a cashier to explain the procedures for eWIC transactions or perform a Level III certification test or educational buy.
5. Ensure that the equipment used to transact eWIC is accessible to the WIC customer.
6. Assessment of compliance with eWIC minimum lane coverage requirements.
7. Determine if violations have occurred. If violations are found, the WIC staff will:
 - A. Discuss the violations with the person in charge;
 - B. Apply the appropriate number of violation points;
 - C. Explain what needs to be done to correct problem areas/violations;
 - D. Explain how long the store has to correct problems;
 - E. Explain what actions will be taken against the store if the needed corrective actions are not taken within the required time period.
8. Send a letter following the review restating the results of the monitoring visit. The letter should be accompanied by a copy of the Vendor Summary Review that lists the violation, corrective action, and the time frame for the follow-up visit, if needed.

Follow-Up Visits – If problems are identified during the routine visit, a follow-up visit will be scheduled within two (2) to four (4) weeks. This visit allows the program to:

1. Determine if the problems cited have been corrected;

2. Assist the vendor with more information or training;
3. Review the vendor requirements according to the WIC Agreement.

Compliance Buy Visits – Each year a random sample of all active vendors are selected for routine compliance buys. If there is a strong indication that a store is in violation of program regulations, a compliance buy may be conducted.

During a compliance buy:

- A WIC staff member visits the store posing as a WIC participant.
- The staff member completes one or more eWIC transactions.
- The actions taken by store employees during the transaction are documented.
- After the visit:
 - The WIC Vendor Management Unit notifies the vendor in writing of the results of the initial compliance buy violation.
 - A pattern of violations must be established before documenting subsequent violations, unless notifying the vendor would compromise an investigation. (A pattern is considered as two or more of the same violation.)

When a completed investigation determines that a pattern of violations was not established, a warning letter may be issued to the vendor.

Inventory Audits – If it is determined that notifying the vendor would compromise an investigation, our office will conduct an inventory audit.

During an inventory audit:

- A review is conducted of specific WIC-approved foods over a selected time period (**three months**).
- A member of store management and two WIC staff members verify and sign the initial inventory count.
- The vendor is required to submit invoices for specific WIC-approved items upon request.
- At the end of the selected time period, WIC staff request the store's sales receipts and stock invoices.



Vendor Training

A series of vendor training sessions are conducted annually by the Vendor staff and held in multiple locations across the state (including two centralized sessions) OR held on a preferred virtual platform. These training sessions cover all policies and procedures and provide an opportunity for questions/ answers and discussion of problems. Each authorized vendor must have at least one representative to attend the annual training. It is the vendor’s responsibility to ensure cashiers and other staff are trained on WIC Program policies and guidelines.

All attendees are expected to be on time for training sessions. **Any person(s) who arrives 15 minutes or more after the start time of any training session will not be allowed to enter the session.** Each vendor representative will be expected to sign an attendance sheet at the beginning of the training and will be provided with a training acknowledgement form or receive a virtual link which must be turned in as proof of attendance after training.

Program Violations

Each violation of a program regulation has a set point value and a specific time period during which the points will remain on a vendor’s record. If a vendor accumulates fifteen (15) or more violation points, the store will be disqualified from the SC WIC Program. The period of disqualification is determined by the nature of the violation(s), the number of violations and past disqualifications. Disqualification periods range from a minimum of one (1) year to permanent.

When a store accumulates fifteen (15) or more violation points, the vendor receives a disqualification letter giving a minimum of fifteen (15) days’ advance notice of the beginning date of the disqualification. With this notice, the vendor also receives information concerning the procedures for requesting a fair hearing. During the disqualification period, the vendor is not to redeem WIC EBT cards. Disqualification from the SC WIC Program may result in disqualification as a retailer in SNAP. Such disqualifications may not be subject to administrative or judicial review under SNAP.

The chart on the following page lists possible WIC Program violations, including their point values and retention periods.

VIOLATIONS	POINT VALUE	POINTS RETAINED FOR
Failure to properly redeem WIC EBT, including, but not limited to, not ensuring store personnel does not accept/approve any eWIC transaction for WIC participants under any circumstances.	5.0	1 year
Not marking WIC items with price labels or shelf tags.	5.0	1 year
Stocking WIC-approved foods outside of the manufacturers’ expiration date. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More than 3 containers of a particular food item (Ex: 3 cans formula, 3 boxes of the same cereal, etc.)	5.0	1 year

Charging the WIC customer any fee, either directly or indirectly, arising out of or associated with operant, maintaining, or processing WIC transactions.	5.0	1 year
Asking for additional identification or the WIC participant's pin.	5.0	1 year
Failure to stock required quantity and/or variety of foods as listed in Agreement. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1-3 items • 4-8 items • More than 8 items 	5.0 8.0 10.0	1 year 18 months 18 months
Where no specific brand is prescribed, requiring a participant to purchase a specific brand of WIC approved foods when more than one brand is available.	5.0	1 year
Allowing manual entry of the eWIC card number	5.0	1 year
Providing (sell/give) incentive items to WIC participants.	5.0	1 year
Not providing infant formula invoices from an approved wholesaler, distributor or retailer.	5.0	1 year
Not allowing split tender transactions on CVBs.	5.0	1 year
Failure to allow the return of any WIC purchases for identical items that are damaged, spoiled, or has exceeded it "sell by", "best if used by", "manufacturer suggested", or other date limiting the sale or use of the food.	8.0	18 months
Not providing promotional specials or not accepting cents-off coupons or store discount cards to reduce WIC price.	8.0	18 months
Issuing rain checks, store credits or IOU's in exchange for items not taken at the time of purchase.	8.0	18 months
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requiring WIC participants to use special check-out lanes. • Not showing WIC participants the same courtesies as other customers. • Committing acts of discrimination. 	8.0	18 months
Use of a "scan book" or similar device in which a UPC label(s) in such book or other device are used in place of scanning the product UPC directly from the product being sold.	8.0	18 months
Requiring cash purchase to redeem eWIC benefits.	8.0	18 months
Requiring participants to pay for a rejected WIC EBT transaction.	8.0	18 months

Administrative Review Procedures

Mandatory Vendor Sanctions

The State WIC Program may disqualify a vendor for Program abuse, failure to meet the requirements of the WIC Vendor Agreement, or other just causes.

Permanent Disqualification

The State agency must permanently disqualify a vendor for the following:

- (1) A conviction of trafficking WIC EBT cards or selling firearms, ammunition, explosives or controlled substances (defined in Sec 102 of the Controlled Substances Act (21 U.S.C. 802) in exchange for WIC EBT cards. A vendor is not entitled to receive any compensation for revenue lost because of such violation.

Six-year Disqualification

The WIC Program must disqualify a vendor for six (6) years for:

1. One incident of buying or selling one or more WIC EBT cards (trafficking).
2. One incidence of selling firearms, ammunition, explosives or controlled substances as defined in 21 U.S.C. 802, in exchange for one or more WIC EBT cards.

Three-year Disqualification

The WIC Program must disqualify a vendor for three (3) years for:

1. One incidence of the sale of alcohol or alcoholic beverages or tobacco products in exchange for one or more WIC EBT cards.
2. A pattern of claiming reimbursement for the sale of an amount of a specific supplemental food item that exceeds the store's documented inventory of that supplemental food item for a specific period;
3. A pattern of vendor overcharges;
4. A pattern of receiving, transacting and/or redeeming WIC EBT cards outside of authorized channels (laundering), including the use of an unauthorized vendor and/or an unauthorized person;
5. A pattern of charging for supplemental food not received by the participant;
6. A pattern of providing credit or non-food items, other than alcohol, alcoholic beverages, tobacco products, cash, firearms, ammunition, explosives or controlled substances as defined in 21 U.S.C. 802, in exchange for WIC EBT cards.

One-year Disqualification

The WIC Program must disqualify a vendor for one (1) year for:

1. A pattern of providing unauthorized food items by type, size, or quantity in exchange for WIC EBT, including charging for supplemental foods provided in excess of those listed on the WIC EBT account.

2. A pattern of charging prices for WIC items above the maximum allowable price for the stores within the same peer group and geographical area.
3. A pattern of not providing a receipt at the end of the transaction shows the date of the transaction, product(s) purchased, and the remaining balance of available benefits.
4. Intentionally providing incorrect quantity or type of infant formula specified on a WIC EBT account.
5. Intentionally providing false information on the WIC Vendor Application.
6. Intentionally providing false information on the Vendor Price Survey.
7. Failure to provide an itemized receipt with each WIC EBT transaction.
8. Failure to allow monitoring of the store by a Program Coordinator or threatening or abusing, either verbally or physically, WIC participant or WIC personnel in the conduct of official WIC business.
9. Entering the PIN for the WIC participant.
10. A pattern of an above-50-percent vendor providing prohibited incentive items to WIC participants in accordance with the State agency's policies and procedures.
11. Failure to attend WIC Annual Vendor Training.

Effective Date of Disqualification of Vendors

The WIC Program must make permanent disqualifications effective on the date of receipt of the notice of the adverse action. The WIC Program must make all other disqualifications effective no earlier than 15 days after the date of the notice of the adverse action and no later than 90 days after the date of the notice of adverse action.

Second Mandatory Sanction

When a vendor previously has been assessed a sanction for any of the violations listed in this section, receives another sanction for any of these violations, the WIC Program must double the second sanction.

Third or Subsequent Mandatory Sanction

When a vendor who previously has been assessed two or more sanctions for any of the violations listed in this section receives another such sanction, the WIC Program must double the third and all subsequent sanctions.

SNAP Disqualification

Disqualification from the WIC Program may result in disqualification as a retailer in SNAP. Such disqualification may not be subject to administrative or judicial review under SNAP.

The WIC Program must disqualify a vendor who has been disqualified from SNAP. The disqualification must be for the same length of time as the SNAP disqualification, may begin later than the SNAP disqualification, and is not subject to administrative or judicial review under the WIC Program.

The State agency may not accept voluntary withdrawal of the vendor from the Program as an alternative to disqualification for the violations listed. In addition, the State Agency may not use nonrenewal of the vendor agreement as an alternate to disqualification.

Vendor Claims

Vendor Overcharges and Claims

When the state agency determines the vendor has committed a vendor violation that affects the payment to the vendor (overcharge), the WIC Program will establish a claim. The claim amount will exceed the maximum allowable price of each WIC EBT transaction that contained the vendor overcharge or other error. The vendor must pay any claim assessed by the WIC Program.

Definition of a Vendor Overcharge

A **vendor overcharge** is intentionally or unintentionally charging the WIC Program more for authorized supplemental foods than is permitted.

Transaction Review and Adjustment Process

All eWIC transactions redeemed above the average cost in accordance to the redemption by peer group or received by the State agency for validation will be screened. If the disputed amount is greater than the maximum estimated cost, the total amount will be adjusted based on the vendor's last price survey.

Vendor Notification and Reimbursement Requirements

If the vendor has been paid, the State Agency will mail a letter to the vendor requesting a reimbursement for the overcharge or a justification of the cause of the overcharge if appropriate. A copy of the transaction that was cited for overage will be enclosed with the notification. If justification cannot be established, the vendor is asked to reimburse the South Carolina WIC Program the difference between the amount the WIC check was cashed for and the actual price of the supplemental foods provided. Stores must adhere to the following protocol when disputing a payment:

- Integrated systems – Call your Third-Party Processor (TPP).
- Stand-beside – Contact the help desk at 1-844-545-8704 and a customer representative will assist.

Funding Contingency and Agreement Termination

Every payment obligation of the State under this Agreement is conditioned upon the availability of federal funds appropriated or allocated for the payment of such obligation. If funds are not allocated and available for the continuance of this Agreement, this Agreement may be terminated by the State at the end of the period for which funds are available. No liability shall be accrued to the Agency or the State of South Carolina in the event this provision is exercised, and neither the Agency nor State shall be obligated or liable for any future payments or for any damage as a result of termination under this paragraph.

USDA Debt Management Final Rule

USDA has issued the Debt Management Final Rule which updates the size of civil monetary penalties (CMPs) to reflect inflationary adjustments. The adjustments as required by the Federal Civil Penalties Inflation codified at [42 U.S.C. 1786](#).

WIC Logo Usage

WIC vendors are not permitted to use the acronym “WIC” or the WIC logo, including close facsimiles, in total or part, either in the official name in which the business is registered or in the name under which it does business, if different. WIC vendors are also not permitted to use either the acronym “WIC” or the WIC logo in advertising or promotional literature; nor are vendors allowed to apply stickers, tags or labels having the WIC acronym or logo on WIC-approved foods. Both the acronym and logo are registered with the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office.

The State Office will allow shelf stickers and shelf talkers if proper approval is granted. If a vendor would like to request state-issued shelf stickers, contact the Vendor Management Unit.

Vendor Appeals (Fair Hearing Information)

Vendors or vendor applicants can appeal for certain actions taken by the State agency. For those actions that may be taken, the State agency will notify the vendor or vendor applicant of the appropriate procedures and requirements to file an appeal.

If the State agency has taken adverse action against your store, you may request a fair hearing. IT IS YOUR RIGHT TO APPEAL A DECISION OF THIS STATE AGENCY WHEN:

1. Your application for participation as a WIC vendor has been denied;
2. You are disqualified from participation as a WIC vendor;
3. Your agreement with the WIC Program is not renewed;
4. Adverse action is taken that affects your participation in the WIC Program.

Below are the steps to request an appeal:

Step 1

1. The vendor must provide the State agency (WIC Vendor Management Unit) with a written request for a fair hearing within fifteen (15) days of receipt of the notice of the adverse action.
2. The written request must list the actions with which the vendor disagrees as well as reasons the vendor disagrees with these actions.
3. If the vendor does not request a hearing within the 15-day notification period, the State agency’s decision becomes final.

Step 2

1. The State agency will contact the vendor within fourteen (14) days of receipt of the fair hearing request to conduct a preliminary conference.
2. The conference will be used in an attempt to resolve the complaint and to explain WIC policies and procedures.
3. If resolved, the matter is documented by a follow-up letter to the vendor.

4. If the matter cannot be resolved and the vendor wishes to continue with the request for a hearing, the State agency will continue with the fair hearing process.
5. Appealing in an action does not relieve the vendor from the responsibility of continued compliance with the terms of any written agreement with the State agency.

Step 3

1. If the vendor is not satisfied with the outcome of the preliminary conference, the vendor may appeal the agency's final decision to the Administrative Law Court (ALC) within 30 days after the conference.
2. The WIC Program will provide additional information regarding the appeals procedures following the preliminary conference.

Complaint Process

The South Carolina Department of Public Health and USDA take all complaints seriously and encourage the immediate reporting of any alleged WIC Program abuse, violation or fraud.

All complaints made against a vendor must be documented using a WIC Complaint/Follow-up Form "DPH-1898" or reported verbally to the WIC Vendor Unit at (1-800-922-4406). If WIC Program violations are noted, at a minimum, the WIC vendor will be contacted and notified of the details of the complaints, regulations or policies violated and the sanction (if applicable) that could be assessed. Individuals making complaints may choose not to give their names. All documentation concerning complaints against vendors will be retained in the South Carolina WIC Vendor Unit for three (3) years.



In accordance with federal civil rights law and USDA civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its agencies, offices, employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the state or local agency that administers the program or contact USDA through the Telecommunications Relay Service at 711 (voice and TTY). Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, [AD-3027](#), found online at [How to File a Program Discrimination Complaint](#) and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

mail:
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW,
Mail Stop 9410,
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or
fax: (202) 690-7442; or
email: program.intake@usda.gov

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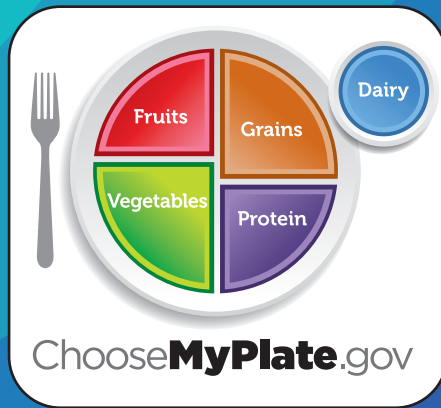
This **South Carolina WIC Vendor Handbook** is considered part of the current SC WIC Vendor Agreement.

If you have any questions concerning this Handbook, the vendor agreement or any other part of the SCWIC Program, please write to:

**WIC-Vendor Management Unit
Section of WIC Services**

SC Department of Public Health
PO BOX 2046
West Columbia, SC 29171

or call Toll-free:
1-800-922-4406



dph.sc.gov/wic

WIC Vendor Hotline: 800-922-4406