

WIC Vendor e-Bulletin

October 2021

Welcome to the October 2021 Washington State Department of Health WIC Vendor e-Bulletin. Please share this with all staff involved in WIC. *READ, INITIAL, and place in WIC Training binder.* You can find a copy of this document and back issues of e-Bulletins on our DOH WIC website: <http://www.doh.wa.gov/YouandYourFamily/WIC/WICVendors>.

Contact us at WICRetailManagement@doh.wa.gov or 1-800-841-1410 Ext. 2 if you have questions or need assistance.

VIRTUAL INTERACTIVE TRAINING SCHEDULE

Stores that have not met their training requirement must attend an interactive training by the end of the current contract period of September 30, 2023. We are offering on-line interactive trainings to help you accomplish this goal. If your store has met this requirement, this is a great opportunity for a refresher.

Your store can sign up for an online training by registering at [WIC Vendor Training Information :: Washington State Department of Health](#) for one of the following dates/times:

- October 13, 2021: 2:00pm – 3:30pm
- November 10, 2021: 9:00am – 10:30am
- December 8, 2021: 2:00pm – 3:30pm
- January 12, 2022: 2:00pm – 3:30pm
- February 16, 2022: 9:00am – 10:30am
- March 16, 2022: 2:00pm – 3:30pm
- April 13, 2022: 9:00am – 10:30am
- May 11, 2022: 2:00am – 3:30pm
- June 15, 2022: 9:00am – 10:30am

If you're unsure that your store has met this requirement, please contact us.

WA STATE LAW – BAG FEES

A new law (RCW 70A.530.020) comes into effect October 1, 2021 that prohibits single-use plastic carryout bags in all retail and grocery stores, restaurants, takeout establishments, festivals, and markets. It also requires an \$0.08 charge for all recycled content paper carryout bags and reusable carryout bags made of film plastic. WIC participants are being reminded to bring their own reusable bags when shopping.

However, it is a violation to collect this charge from a WIC participant. Per the new law:

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It is a violation of RCW 70A.530.020 for any retail establishment to pay or otherwise reimburse a customer for any portion of the pass-through charge; provided that retail establishments may not collect a pass-through charge from anyone using a voucher or electronic benefits card issued under the women, infants, and children (WIC) or temporary assistance for needy families (TANF) support programs, or the federal supplemental nutrition assistance program (SNAP, also known as basic food), or the Washington state food assistance program (FAP).

Please do not charge WIC participants the \$0.08 pass-through charge for carryout bags.

CASH VALUE BENEFIT (CVB) TEMPORARY INCREASE EXTENSION

The American Rescue Plan, a \$1.9 trillion COVID-relief package passed by Congress this past March, included \$490 million to enhance the WIC Cash Value Benefit (CVB), used to purchase fresh and frozen fruits and vegetables, for four months (June-September 2021).

On September 30th, Congress passed a continuing budget resolution, which includes an extension to WIC CVB amount increases increase through December 2021. Unlike the American Rescue Plan Act's increase – which set all CVB levels at \$35 – this extension will further align WIC benefit levels with expert recommendations from the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. The National WIC Association (NWA) estimates that the new benefit levels will be \$24/month for children, \$43/month for pregnant and postpartum participants, and \$47/month for breastfeeding participants.

This is a significant benefit increase for all eligible participants and will help to promote healthy food choices. We are asking our WIC vendors to help promote this additional benefit by reminding participants of this increase whenever possible. ***Please note that due to required computer programming it will take us some time for the benefit increase to show up on WIC participants eWIC card, so vendors may not see participants showing up with the new increase until later in October.***

With an increased CVB extension, the importance of produce mapping must be mentioned.

Importance of Produce Mapping: Fresh Fruits and Vegetables with or without a UPC are not included in the WIC Approved Product List. These items must be mapped to an approved Product Lookup Code (PLU) identifying these food items available for purchase. A fresh fruit or vegetable which isn't allowed for purchase by WIC customers at your point of sale (POS) system may not be properly mapped in the POS system. Once properly mapped the product can be allowed as a WIC purchase. Notify your store's front-end manager or POS provider to update the produce mapping for these items. We have a list of approved PLUs on our website. Produce mapping requirements are posted on our website at [WIC Produce Mapping Requirements \(wa.gov\)](https://www.wa.gov/wic/produce-mapping-requirements) .

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SUPPLY CHAIN ISSUES

We have been notified by stores having challenges with the fulfillment of their wholesale grocery orders. Reports indicate orders are not being fulfilled completely, resulting in the stores receiving less products than originally ordered.

Currently, we are not aware of any widespread supply chain issues regarding WIC foods. If you are struggling to receive any WIC items, please let us know at WICRetailManagement@doh.wa.gov or 1-800-841-1410 Ext. 2.

SIMILAC TOTAL COMFORT - Medical Documentation No Longer Required



Similac Total Comfort formula is now being prescribed to WIC participants without the previously required medical documentation. With this change, there is the potential more participant's benefits will include this formula type resulting in increased demand for this formula type. While WIC vendors are not required to carry this type of formula, you may have more WIC participants asking for this formula due to this change. Similac Advance is the only formula stores are required to carry.

NOT TO EXCEED (NTE) AMOUNT

The Not to Exceed (NTE) amount is the maximum dollar amount which can be charged for a specific WIC food item. If a vendor's food prices are too high for a specific item (compared to other vendors of a similar size and geographic location), this vendor may be paid less than the presented amount for this item. This may result in an eWIC variance report showing the difference between the amount charged and the amount reimbursed by the WIC program. In some cases, adjustments can be made allowing

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the vendor to request reimbursements for the variance amount. The WIC redemption system automatically adjusts NTE amounts based on time and sales volume of each food item. A WIC food item's historical redemption, or purchase price, are used to calculate the NTE for this item. If the vendor feels they were entitled to the full presentment amount, they can request reimbursement by emailing WICRetailManagement@doh.wa.gov supporting documentation such as receipts and the eWIC Variance Report showing the underpayment.

The state WIC office will review each request and may process an adjustment for the variance. The state WIC office is evaluating how to handle NTE adjustments going forward, as this is used to support cost containment measures within the WIC program.

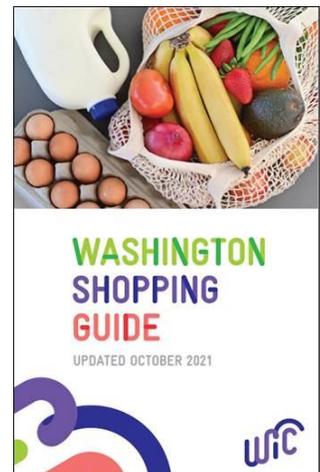
Please don't include variance amounts that are less than \$1 for each transaction. The WIC banking provider (FIS) processes and pays adjustments around the 5th of each month.

2021 SHOPPING GUIDE UPDATE

Good news! The Shopping Guide has been finalized and is being translated into a total of 15 languages. Once the translations have been completed, the Shopping guide will be printed. Your store will be notified when new copies are available and will be drop shipped to you. We suggest keeping a copy at each register that accepts WIC Cards.

Highlighted changes:

- Updated shopping tips eWIC
- New foods added since the last update
- Removed any foods that are no longer allowed



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WIC SHOPPER APP – COOL TOOL FOR VENDORS



Did you know that you don't have to be a WIC participant to use the WIC Shopper app? The Scan Barcode tool is useful for stores to confirm whether a food is WIC approved or not. It is updated daily with new foods that may be added.

It's available for free from the app store. Select the WIC Shopper icon in your app store, download the app, then select **Washington**.

WIC clients can also upload and WIC Card benefit balance.



WIC VENDOR ADVISORY COMMITTEE - OPEN INVITE

Have you heard of the WIC Vendor Advisory Committee? The WIC Vendor Advisory Committee serves as a forum for the Washington State WIC Nutrition Program to solicit input from the vendor community on items important to WIC and our vendor partners alike. We value and appreciate ideas and suggestions from the vendor community.

The committee meets one to two times per year virtually and in-person when possible. We may ask input to help guide decisions and shape outcomes for vendors across Washington State. The next meeting is planned for Thursday November 4, 2021.

If you are interested in joining the upcoming meeting or becoming part of the committee, please contact us at wicretailmanagement@doh.wa.gov.

Need reports, technical assistance or have a question?
Call us or email us at 1-800-841-1410 or WICRetailManagement@doh.wa.gov.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider. **Washington State WIC Nutrition Program does not discriminate.** For persons with disabilities, this document is available on request in other formats. To submit a request, please call 1-800-525-0127 (TDD/TTY call 711). DOH 963-117 October 2021

