

**Washington State Women, Infants and Children Nutrition Program**

**Retailer Advisory Committee**

**Meeting Notes**

**October 8, 2008**

**10:00 AM**

Location:	Phone Meeting – Genesys Conference Services
Physical Location:	111 Israel Rd SW, Tumwater, Washington – Town Center 2, Room 124
Attendees:	WIC Retailer Advisory Committee Members and Interested Persons
Facilitator:	Janice K. Boden, Food Delivery/Retailer Management Team Manager (360) 236-3610    janice.boden@doh.wa.gov

**Agenda Topics**

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Comment</b>	<b>WIC Response</b>
<b>Draft WIC Selection Criteria</b>	Jan Gee, President of the Washington Food Industry commented that WIC had offered two public meetings on the draft criteria, but neither meeting was adequately attended by retailers. She encouraged every WIC retailer to be involved with the Retailer Advisory Committee and to participate in opportunities made available to provide information and guidance to the Department of Health. Ms. Gee indicated that WFI had expressed concerns at each meeting – especially about the definition of “Program Need”. She expressed concerns about defining “Program Need” to include the ability for the department to deny a retailer application based upon numbers of stores. Doing so would place independent grocers at risk. At the same time, Ms. Gee acknowledged the need for the department to control costs. She indicated current draft criteria reflect changes requested by the WFI.	
	How many retailers will drop off as a result of these new rules?	An estimated four or five may not meet the Selection Criteria; however, there may be a program need for the store to ensure adequate WIC client access. In that case an exception to the Selection Criteria may be granted.

Issue	Comment	WIC Response
	Julie Davenport (representing the Fred Meyer stores) stated that not authorizing all stores in a chain is confusing for WIC clients. Other retailers on the call agreed. Jan Gee (WFI) said some states do authorize all stores in a chain and that it's a good idea. She asked everyone to think about how retailers can help WIC keep costs down.	Federal requirements prohibit states from automatically authorizing stores without applying Selection Criteria. In addition, store owners may not seek WIC authorization for every store location. We will make an extra effort to communicate with WIC clinics and clients on this issue.
	Phil Blackburn (Martin's Marketplace) expressed concern about increasing the number of WIC checks to an average of 60 checks redeemed in a six month time period. He said it may disqualify some small stores.	There may be a program need for the store to ensure adequate WIC client access. In that case, an exception to the Selection Criteria may be granted.
Draft WIC Minimum Stock Levels	No concerns expressed. Proposal seemed reasonable.	
Requiring email addresses	Joan Rice (Haggen, Inc.) asked if the email address provided could be from the corporate office.	Yes. The corporate office would be responsible for disseminating the emailed information to its stores.
Purchasing WIC foods from wholesalers	There was agreement that this was reasonable.	
WIC EBT	Joseph Bran (Wal-Mart) asked what the status was for implementing an electronic benefits transfer (EBT) payment system for WIC.	Janice Boden indicated that it would be a number of years before Washington could adopt this system. However, there may be a feasibility study conducted in the near future.
<b>Collecting Prices On WIC Foods</b> We are considering revisions to our price collection form that will allow us to collect prices for more brands of WIC eligible foods.	Alternatives for manually collecting shelf prices were discussed.	WIC staff will follow-up on several items suggested. More discussion to follow.
<p>Jan Gee expressed her appreciation to the WIC Program staff. She said they have done a great job in reaching out to retailers - trying to involve them in this process and in being responsive to WFI input. She also appreciated the work that they've done on the WIC Web page.</p> <p>The group said they appreciated holding the meeting by telephone, but would like to be able to dial in instead of having an operator dial them. Janice Boden appreciated the feedback and would arrange for that to occur at future meetings.</p> <p>The meeting adjourned at approximately 11:30 AM.</p>		