

Washington State WIC Nutrition Program Retailer Selection Criteria

Effective for the contract period beginning April 1, 2009

The Women, Infants and Children Nutrition Program's (WIC) mission is to improve the lifelong health and nutrition of women, infants, and children in Washington State. Meeting this mission, by ensuring clients have reasonable access to the nutrition provided by WIC foods, is the foundation for selecting authorized retailers.

Retailers must meet all the selection criteria to be considered for WIC authorization. It is important to note that not every applicant will be offered a WIC retailer contract. However; it is in the best interest of WIC customers to authorize each retail location when an owner has more than one store.

Retailers must continue to meet all the criteria, and any changes to them, in order to remain authorized. WIC may review a retailer's compliance with the Retailer Selection Criteria any time during the contract period. Failure to meet any of the criteria is cause for denial or ending the contract. WIC bases the selection of each retailer on the following criteria:

Program Need

Program need is the number of stores that can be effectively administered and provide reasonable access to WIC families. Factors for determining program need may include the WIC client population near a store's location, accessibility via public transportation, and barriers to pedestrian access (such as nearby construction). In addition, the WIC Nutrition Program also recognizes the value of competition and may authorize more than one store in a community.

Prices of WIC Approved Foods

Competitive food prices are more important than ever so that all eligible WIC clients can be served. A retailer's reported shelf prices for WIC foods must be at, or less than, the Maximum Allowable Reimbursement Levels (MARL) for their assigned peer group.

Check Volume

WIC retailers must have taken an average of at least sixty (60) WIC checks per month for the last six months.

First time applicants will be on probation for one year, or to the end of the contract period, whichever comes first. The WIC Program will evaluate the retailer's check volume at the end of the probation period. The WIC Program may take action to end the contract if the minimum number of checks has not been redeemed.

WIC Approved Foods

Retailers must:

- Have on their shelves, at all times, at least the minimum quantities and varieties of WIC approved foods as specified in the document "WIC Approved Foods – Minimum Stock Levels". Food prices must be clearly identified and visible to customers, and all WIC approved foods must have current shelf lives.
- Purchase infant formula wholesale only from a WIC approved supplier.
- Purchase all other WIC foods wholesale.

Business Operations

Retailers must:

- Have a valid Washington state tax registration (UBI) number. Oregon and Idaho retailers must have all valid licenses required by their respective state.
- Be a full line/full service retailer that stocks a variety of staple foods on a continuous basis in addition to WIC approved foods. Staple foods include dairy products, whole grain products (such as bread, rice, or tortillas), baby food, at least five (5) varieties of fresh or frozen unbreaded meat, fish or poultry, and at least ten (10) varieties (total) of fresh fruits and/or fresh vegetables.
- Actively participate in the USDA Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, previously known as the Food Stamp Program). Pharmacies are exempt from this requirement.
- Operate from a fixed, permanent location.
- Be open for business at least eight hours per day, six days per week.
- Use electronic cash registers capable of printing a customer receipt.
- Accept cash and SNAP (Food Stamp) EBT.
- Provide and maintain a valid e-mail address.
- Receive, or be expected to receive, no more than fifty percent (50%) of their total annual food sales from WIC transactions.
- Provide sales data requested by the WIC Program, including gross sales and exempt food sales (as reported to the Washington State Department of Revenue) and SNAP (Food Stamp) sales.
- Maintain inventory records including, but not limited to, books of account, wholesale supplier invoices, receipts, purchase orders and/or bills of sale for WIC approved foods, including infant formula. To meet this requirement, purchase documents must include the wholesale supplier name, order or purchase date, name of food items purchased, quantity purchased by item and unit price by item.

Business Integrity

A retailer will not be authorized if, in the last six years, it has been disqualified from WIC or SNAP (Food Stamp Program), or has been assessed a monetary penalty instead of a SNAP disqualification.

An owner, officer, or partner of a retailer must not have bought or sold a store in order to avoid a WIC sanction.

WIC will deny or terminate a retailer's WIC authorization if any of the owners, officers, partners, or managers have been convicted of, or had a civil judgment for fraud, antitrust violations, embezzlement, theft, forgery, bribery, falsification or destruction of records, making false statements, receiving stolen property, making false claims, or obstruction of justice in the last six years.

Compliance with the WIC Contract

Retailers reapplying to continue their WIC authorization for the next contract period must have complied with all contract and program requirements during the current contract period, including having attended training on WIC requirements.

In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability.

To file a complaint, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 or (202) 720-6382 (TTY). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Washington WIC does not discriminate