

8.01 Frequently Asked Questions

This section provides frequently asked questions and solutions to problems that vendors may encounter when assisting WIC participants.

Q1. Complaints Against Participants:

How should you handle a WIC customer who becomes abusive to a cashier or other staff member for enforcing DC WIC policies and procedures?

- Contact the State Agency. Provide as much information about the WIC customer as you can, including the date and time that the situation occurred. The State Agency can view WIC banking data to approximate where and when WIC participants were shopping.
- Follow your store's policy regarding abusive customers to handle WIC participants who become irate and abusive.

State Agency phone: (202) 442-9397

State Agency email: info.vendor@dc.gov

How should you handle WIC customers who attempt to return WIC food items in exchange for money, buy unauthorized food items, or who are unwilling to follow WIC procedures?

- WIC Customers can only purchase WIC food items up to the maximum amount allowed on their benefits. The food items must be included on their benefits **and** in the Approved Product List.
- Vendors should file complaints by calling or emailing the State Agency using the contact methods listed above.

Q2. WIC Foods Out of Stock:

What should you do if your store is out of a WIC food item?

- DC WIC Authorized vendors are responsible for always stocking a sufficient quantity of WIC foods, according to the Minimum Stocking Requirements. See Chapter 2 of the Vendor Manual and Minimum Stocking Requirements forms on the DC WIC website, for more information on Minimum Stocking Requirements.
- If the store is out of a particular WIC food item, the store should:
 - Take immediate action to replenish the stock
 - Provide information to the participant about ordering issues or delay's and give an estimate of when the product will be available
 - Do **NOT** offer or allow a substitution of the item(s) on their benefits
 - Do **NOT** offer a rain check
- Staff may inform the WIC Customer of their options; the customer may:
 - 1) Purchase the items listed on their benefits that are available,
 - 2) Return to the store when the item(s) is available, or
 - 3) Shop at another authorized vendor to redeem any or all available food benefits

- Standard infant formulas are expected to be always stocked to WIC Minimum Stocking Requirements – see section Chapter 2 of the Vendor Manual, and Minimum Stocking Requirements Forms available on the DC WIC website, for more information on Minimum Stocking Requirements. (Not applicable to pharmacies)
- If the store is out of a standard infant formula, management should obtain the number of cans requested by the WIC Customer on the same day, if possible. (not applicable to pharmacies)
 - Stores have 24 hours to replenish out-of-stock standard infant formulas. (not applicable to pharmacies)
- Authorized pharmacies are required to obtain WIC-approved special formulas and nutritionals within 48-hours when requested by a participant. (Only applicable to pharmacies)
- Stores reported for not having a sufficient stock of WIC food items will be sanctioned. Insufficient stocking may be observed and reported by participants or by State Agency representatives performing monitoring visits, compliance buys, or technical assistance visits.

Q3. eWIC Transactions

Does a cashier need to see proof of identification from a WIC customer to allow them to use their eWIC card?

- No. The WIC customer will use their eWIC card with a Personal Identification Number (PIN) to access their WIC benefits – no additional identification is needed.

What happens if an item is not listed on the WIC customer's food benefits or is not on DC WIC's Approved Products List?

- The item will not scan. The cashier will advise the WIC customer that the item is not authorized and allow the participant to use a different method of payment of for the item.
- If a participant and/or vendor personnel would like to submit a food item for the State Agency to consider adding to the Approved Products List they may submit the following information about the product, including photos for verification, to info.vendor@dc.gov:
 1. UPC Code
 2. Manufacturer's name
 3. Product name and package size
 4. Nutrition Facts Label, to include ingredients list

What happens if an item is on the DC WIC's Approved Products List but does not scan as approved during the time of the transaction?

- Notify the store manager during the transaction.
- Override the product or follow store protocol to ensure the participant can purchase the DC WIC Approved product.
- Follow store protocol to flag item as WIC approved in store APL. Some stores have a form that goes to the corporate office.
- Submit information about the product that is not scanning to info.vendor@dc.gov. The State Agency will check to see if the product is active or available in the eWIC system.

What if a participant does not have the WIC Approved Product list during their shopping trip?

- Participants can access information about the WIC Approved Product list on www.dcwic.org/wic-foods and the EzWIC app.
- The EzWIC app allows participants to scan the Universal Product Code of foods in the store to see if they are approved.
- All stores should maintain extra copies of the printed DC WIC Food List at the information counter in case a participant does not have a smartphone. Extra copies of printed materials can be provided by the State Agency by calling 202-442-9397 or emailing info.vendor@dc.gov.

Mid-Transaction Receipt:

- The mid-transaction receipt prints after the WIC customer slides their card and enters their PIN. The receipt identifies which items that have been scanned will be covered by WIC benefits. The top of the receipt shows the Beginning Benefit Balance, which is the amount available before the purchase. The bottom of the receipt shows the WIC Benefit Purchase, which are the approved items that will be paid for with WIC benefits.

- The WIC customer **must** review the receipt to ensure that WIC food items are being paid for with WIC benefits.

- It is important that attendants and cashiers understand the receipt and how to assist the WIC customer if there are problems. Review the beginning balance and compare it to what is being purchased.

1. Check the items purchased to see if something didn't go through (i.e., check scanned items in the bagging area and match them to the bottom portion of the receipt)
2. Check to see if items being purchased are authorized on the client's benefits (e.g., they selected Silk Soy milk, but soy milk isn't listed on their benefits).
3. Compare the Quantities and Units of Measure to verify there are enough benefits to cover the item(s). (e.g., 7.51 \$\$\$ FRUIT & VEGETABLES, or 5 GAL WHOLE MILK)
4. For fruits and vegetables, if the amount purchased exceeds the benefit amount, the remaining amount will be left as a balance on the receipt (e.g., a customer with \$7.51 in benefits purchases \$8.00 worth - the remaining amount of \$0.49 will be a balance due on the receipt.)

PAN: *****3402

100 OZ	INFANT FRUITS & VEGS	
20 OZ	INFANT MEATS	
80 OZ	WHOLE GRAINS	
7.51 \$\$\$	FRUITS & VEGETABLES	
128 OZ	LOW AND NONFAT YOGURT	
5 GAL	WHOLE COWS MILK	
5 GAL	SKIM/1% COWS MILK GALLON	
5 BTL	BOTTLED JUICE 64 OUNCE	
128 OZ	WHOLE MILK YOGURT	
5 LB	CHEESE	
5 DOZ	EGGS	
162 OZ	CEREAL (HOT OR COLD)	
5 CTR	PB, BEANS, PEAS, LENTILS	
60 OZ	TUNA, SALMON, SARDINES	
32 OZ	INFANT CEREAL	

Benefits Expire MIDNIGHT on 09/13/2020

**** End of Beginning Benefit Balance ****

*** eWIC Benefit Redemption/Purchase***

16 OZ	WHOLE GRAINS	
1 SIG	PASTA PENNE	1.49
64 OZ	LOW AND NONFAT YOGURT	
1 DANNON	OIKOZ TRIPL	5.99
SC	1 SALE DANNON OIKOS	1.00-
1 MTN	HIGH YGRT PLM	3.49
SC	1 SALE MOUNTAIN HIGH	0.50-
1 GAL	WHOLE COWS MILK	
1 SHAMROCK	FARMS	3.99
1 BTL	BOTTLED JUICE 64 OUNCE	
1 CMPBL	TOMATO JCE	4.49

*** End of Benefit Redemption/Purchase ***

+++ Remaining eWIC Benefits +++

Q4. Coupons and Store Specials

Can WIC participants use cents-off coupons or customer discount cards for WIC approved foods purchases?

- Yes, the same courtesies given to other customers must be extended to WIC participants
- Any cost savings should be deducted from the total purchase price for the WIC transaction
- WIC participants should not receive any cash in exchange for the use of the cents-off coupons or the customer discount card
- Participants are allowed to participate in “Buy One and Get One Free” type promotions without charging the WIC Program for the free item(s)

Q5. WIC Participants as Employees

What should you do if an employee at your store is also a DC WIC participant wanting to use their eWIC benefits?

- Inform employees that they may not process their own eWIC benefits
- Ensure that another cashier processes the employee’s eWIC benefits
- Ensure that all employees are notified of this policy requirement
- Ensure store management monitors employee activities to verify compliance in this area

Q6. Servicing Non-English Speaking WIC Participants:

What should you do if a WIC customer experiences a problem in the store and is unable to express their concerns to store management due to a language barrier?

- Identify the language spoken and, if possible, utilize a store employee who can interpret for the WIC participant.
- If the store has access to **Language Line** services, the employee interacting with the WIC customer should use the store’s Language Line information to call an interpreter. Language Line interpreters are available 24-hours a day, 7 days a week for language interpreting services by phone.

Q7. Other Frequently Asked Questions

What if the WIC participant tried to purchase the wrong WIC food items?

- The Point of Sale (POS) system will not accept any foods that are not listed on the customer’s Food Benefits.

What should I do if I suspect the WIC customer of fraud or abuse of the WIC Program?

- Contact the DC WIC State Agency (See page 8-1 for contact information)
- Include the following information:
 - Date and time of the WIC customer’s transaction
 - Name of WIC customer, if information is available
 - A detailed description of why you suspect the WIC customer may be committing, or attempting to commit, fraud or abuse against the WIC Program

Can I allow substitutions for the WIC foods listed as available on their eWIC benefits?

- No, the WIC participant can only purchase the WIC foods, in the quantities and package sizes, listed on their Food Benefits.

Can I give a WIC participant a rain check for WIC foods that are out of stock?

- No.

Can a WIC participant exchange WIC food for cash?

- No, you can not knowingly allow any exchange of WIC food items for cash.

What is a cash-value-benefit (CVB)?

- A set dollar amount that can be redeemed by the WIC Customer for the purchase of fresh fruits and vegetables. If more than one customer is enrolled in the same household, all of the household's CVB will be consolidated onto the household's eWIC card.

What if a WIC customer purchases more than what is available on their eWIC card?

- The eWIC card will not allow the participant to purchase more than the benefits loaded on it during the current benefit period. Benefits may only be purchased between the first date to use and the last date to use.
- Vendors with integrated POS systems must allow for split tender transactions when participants redeem eWIC benefits.
- Vendors with single function WIC-only POS equipment must offer the participant a chance to complete the rest of their transaction on their standard POS system with another form of payment.
- Example: If a WIC customer comes to the register with two boxes of cereal and \$12.50 worth of fresh fruits and vegetables and the eWIC card only transacts one box of cereal and \$9.00 in CVB, the cashier would accept another form of payment for the remaining balance, such as SNAP benefits, cash, credit or debit card.

Can WIC customers buy bagged fruits and vegetables?

- Yes. WIC customers may purchase all fresh fruits and vegetables as long as the items do not come with dips or dressings.

Why can't I call the WIC clinic nearest to my store and ask them questions?

- WIC staff do not have any authority to deal with vendor service issues.

Who do I call if I have a question or problem?

- Contact the DC WIC State Agency with any questions or problems.
- The phone number is 202-442-9397 Or the email is info.vendor@dc.gov

