



VENDOR VIEWS

LA WIC's Authorized Vendor Newsletter



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VENDOR SUPPLEMENTAL TRAINING AVAILABLE

The Louisiana WIC Program (LA WIC) offers supplemental vendor training upon request to help you and your store employees better understand the ins and outs of being a successful Authorized WIC Vendor (Vendor). Supplemental training can be targeted to management, customer service staff, cashiers or anyone in between, and can be scheduled for individual stores or for a group of stores. We can work with you to tailor training to address topics or opportunities specific to your store. To request supplemental training, please submit the [Supplemental Training Request Form](#) found on the [LA WIC Authorized Vendor Hub](#), and someone from our staff will reach out to you with more information.

Please note: Supplemental vendor training does not fulfill the requirement to participate in mandatory Annual Vendor Training.

VENDOR SELF-ASSESSMENT FORM

LA WIC recently developed the Vendor Self-Assessment Form (Assessment Form), a resource that allows Vendors to self-assess their compliance with certain LA WIC Vendor Rules and Regulations. The Assessment Form can be downloaded from the LA WIC Authorized Vendor Hub. The WIC Approved Food List (WIC-23), which provides additional details regarding Minimum Stock Requirements, can be used in conjunction with the Assessment Form.

Please note that your store is required to comply with all provisions of the LA WIC Vendor Agreement and Vendor Guide at all times, only some of which are reflected on the Assessment Form. The Assessment Form is for informal Vendor use only, and does not replace nor supplement LA WIC's formal processes for monitoring and investigations. The LA WIC Authorized Vendor Hub provides full details on LA WIC's full program requirements.

NEW VENDOR OPS PHONE NUMBER

The LA WIC Vendor Operations Unit has a new phone number: (225) 342-0725. Please update your records accordingly. As always, you can also reach us via email at LAWICvendor@la.gov. Please don't hesitate to reach out to us if we can help in any way.



NEW WIC EBT CARD DESIGN

Later this fall, WIC clinics around the state will begin to distribute to Participants a newly designed WIC EBT card that features colorful fruits and vegetables on a white background. The gold EBT cards currently in use will be phased out over time, but both card designs will be acceptable for WIC Transactions. Please inform your staff that they may begin to notice the new cards in use soon.



Current EBT Card design



New EBT Card design released this fall

UPCOMING DATES:

July 31 – Reauthorization Applications Due for Vendors in Trade Area 2

Sep. 6 – State Offices Closed

Sep. 30 – Current Vendor Agreements Expire for Vendors in Trade Area 2

Please keep in mind that LA WIC Vendor Operations staff continue to work remotely during the pandemic. As such, email remains our most reliable form of communication.

UPDATED SHELF TALKER POLICY

LA WIC regularly hears from WIC Participants that they have trouble locating and/or identifying some WIC Approved Food Items in Vendor stores. More than 96% of respondents to a recent LA WIC Participants poll agreed that they “wish more stores would label WIC approved foods with stickers or tags.” Difficulty in locating WIC Approved Food Items contributes to WIC Participants leaving the store without redeeming all of their monthly WIC Benefits.

Vendors also have regularly expressed frustration that LA WIC’s Shelf Talker policy is difficult to comply with. Many have chosen to not use shelf talkers at all, rather than run the risk of using them incorrectly and potentially facing a sanction.

LA WIC incorporated this feedback into its recently updated Shelf Talker policy which states, “Vendors may use shelf talkers (i.e., labels, flags, channel strips, or clings) on shelves to indicate which food items are WIC Approved Food Items. If a Vendor elects to use shelf talkers, the Vendor must use only the shelf talker image(s) provided by LA WIC.” LA WIC’s shelf talkers can be downloaded from the LA WIC Authorized Vendor Hub and printed in color on Avery 5160 labels (1" x 2-5/8").

Please note that the updated policy removes the previous restrictions regarding the specific placement of shelf talkers. For example, LA WIC will no longer require that shelf talkers be placed by “all or none of the eligible items.”



We hope that this policy update will increase the use of shelf talkers by our Vendors. Increased use of shelf talkers helps WIC Participants locate and identify WIC Approved Food Items and redeem more of their WIC Benefits on a regular basis, resulting in better health outcomes for our WIC Participants and more WIC sales for our Vendors. LA WIC will begin to assess Vendor compliance with the new policy beginning October 1, 2021.

PRODUCE MAPPING REMINDER - FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

As we have previously noted, the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA) provided a temporary increase to the WIC Cash-Value Benefit for fruit and vegetable purchases (CVB), which became available to WIC Participants on June 1, 2021. We are happy to report that the increased CVB has led to an increased amount of fruit and vegetable purchases by WIC Participants, as was intended. Unfortunately, the increase in spending has not come without some frustration. LA WIC has seen an uptick in WIC Participant complaints about fruits and vegetables not scanning as WIC eligible at the register.

Please take the following steps to help ensure that WIC Approved fruits and vegetables properly scan as eligible at the register:

1. Ensure your store's fresh produce (including bagged and packaged fresh produce) is properly mapped to the appropriate Price Look Up Code (PLU).
 - Vendors must map fresh produce to the appropriate PLU.
 - LA WIC will NOT process UPC Request Forms for fresh, bagged, or packaged fresh fruit and vegetables.
2. Request updates to the Authorized Product List (APL) for frozen or canned fruits/vegetables, if needed.
 - Please review the current APL prior to making an update request.
 - Follow the process outlined in Procedure to add a UPC to the APL.
 - Complete and return the UPC Addition Request Form.



JOIN OUR MAILING LIST

This newsletter will automatically be sent to the official corporate email address your store has on file with LA WIC, but you can [click here](#) to register additional email addresses to receive this newsletter directly.

CONTACT US

Phone: (225) 342-0725

Fax: (225) 376-4674

Email: LAWICvendor@la.gov

LA WIC Authorized Vendor Hub:

<http://ldh.la.gov/wicvendor>

(Open the link and press CTRL+D to bookmark the page on your internet browser)

WE WANT YOUR FEEDBACK!

What did you like about this newsletter? What didn't you like? What topics would you like to see covered in future issues? Please [click here](#) to let us know how we're doing by filling out a short survey.



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