UPDATED Georgia WIC Program Vendor Handbook & Addendum No. 16-01

Presentation to: Georgia WIC Authorized Vendors
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Date: December 8, 2015
Critical elements of the Georgia WIC Program Vendor Handbook have been updated effective November 15, 2015
All vendors were **required** to sign and submit Verification Checklist no later than November 13, 2015.
Major Highlights

- Assessment of Market Saturation
- Selection Criteria
- Open application period
- Use of black ink only
- Conflicts of Interest
- Complaint Process
- Sanction System
- Non-Discrimination Statement/Civil Rights
- Limited English Proficiency
Assessment of Market Saturation

Securing a sufficient number and distribution of vendors
  - Assure adequate for participants

Establish criteria to limit the number of authorized store based on vendor-to-participant ratio
Selection Criteria

• **Exception to WIC Limiting and Selection Criteria**
  • Limiting selection criteria may be waived to address inadequate participant access

• **Inadequate Participant Access (IPA)**
  • When lack of access could cause hardship to participants
  • Despite IPA designations applicants must fully comply with program terms

• **Authorization Training**
  • Participation in training cannot occur until an application has been submitted and training registration completed
  • Attendees must pass post evaluation with a minimum score of 80% or better
  • Language assistance or special accommodations are available upon request

• **Suitable Store Location**
  • 3,000 square feet of continuous retail food space open to public (not including administrative and storage space)
  • Ineligible space **will not** be considered as part of minimum square footage
Open Application Period

Old
October 1\textsuperscript{st} to December 31\textsuperscript{st} & March 1\textsuperscript{st} to June 30\textsuperscript{th}

New
October 1\textsuperscript{st} to December 31\textsuperscript{st} & March 1\textsuperscript{st} to May 31\textsuperscript{st}
Use **black** ink only when writing value in ‘pay exactly’ box and obtaining participant signature
Conflicts of Interest

**STRICLTY PROHIBITED!!!**

- Exists when there are pecuniary (pertaining to money) relationships between a vendor and the Program

- Relatives serving WIC participants are classified as a conflicts of interest

- Employees of the Office of Vendor Management and the Department of Public Health Office of Inspector General must assure no undeclared or appearance of conflicts of interest

*If conflicts of interest are identified, vendor agreement(s) will be terminated*
Complaint Process

PARTICIPANT AND VENDOR

Participants are not allowed to verbally abuse vendors nor are vendors allowed to mistreat participants

- **Georgia WIC must account for all complaints**
  - Applicants, participants, parents or caretaker(s) of infants and children, proxies, retailer/vendors, staff and general public

- **Authorized vendors are encouraged to report all participant complaints to the Georgia WIC State Office**
  - Adverse treatment, use of altered WIC food instruments, purchases or attempted purchase of unauthorized foods with food instrument, transaction of WIC food instruments by a person not listed on the Georgia WIC ID card

- **Vendor complaints are filed by the WIC participant against the vendor**
  - Adverse treatment, charging more to WIC participants than other customers, providing outdated food items

- **Civil Rights complaints are resolved in accordance with Federal Law and USDA Policy**
Sanction System

State Agency Sanctions—Category I
New Program Violation (Item #1) Stocking or selling out of date and/or inconsumable WIC food commodities to WIC participants.

New Program Violation (Item #6) Claiming reimbursement for a food item for which there has been no submitted shelf price.

State Agency Sanctions—Category III
New Program Violation (Item #17) Tampering with the manufacturer dates on any food item.

Civil Money Penalty (CMP)
Issuance of a CMP does not relieve a vendor of financial liability for timely payment of claims assessed.

CMP Methodology for Mandatory Sanctions
For State Agency Sanctions, the first CMP can be reduce by 50% if the vendor presents documented proof that they have a sustainable training program
  ➢ Training must meet criteria of being based on cashier operation
Non-Discrimination/Civil Rights

Discrimination is **STRICTLY prohibited**

- Authorized Retail Stores must offer WIC Participants the same courtesies as other customers.

- Avoid practices that may isolate the participate
  - Maintaining list of participants
  - Having participants sign cash register receipts
  - Designating WIC only register lines

- Civil Rights complaints of discrimination must be files with the USDA on a Program Discrimination Complaint Form
Limited English Proficiency

Any individual who applies to or participates in the WIC program who is not proficient in English must be provided with an interpreter.

- Limited English Proficiency (LEP) resources are available to assure effective access to WIC participants
- Services are available to both applicants and vendors
QUESTIONS?