



# MARYLAND

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## VENDOR NEWSLETTER

### 2021 ANNUAL VENDOR TRAINING

Annual Vendor Training is held during the month of August. This year, due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, we offered a hybrid method for annual training. Most stores attended virtually by GoToMeeting with a few attending in-person. A separate training was held in September for our pharmacy-only vendors.

We gained a wealth of knowledge from responses to the quiz and evaluation. The quiz responses showed us the areas that need more focus during future trainings. The evaluations told us that most vendors liked the option of virtual training; therefore, we plan to continue offering virtual trainings in the future.

All 535 authorized food vendors participated in the annual training with many having multiple staff members attend. The training was a great success, and we appreciate the effort you made to attend. Thank you.



### NEW AUTHORIZED FOODS LIST

The Maryland WIC Program released a new Authorized Foods List effective October 1, 2021. The new foods list includes more variety through added types of foods. All food categories will also allow organic versions except for organic infant formula. In addition, some of the food choices that were added at the beginning of the pandemic have been removed.

In preparation, we trained stores, staff, and participants on the upcoming changes prior to the release of the new list. We sent a reference sheet that outlines the changes to all authorized vendors last month. You can find this reference sheet on our website by going to the Vendor section of [www.mdwic.org](http://www.mdwic.org) and clicking on the Vendor Resource Library. Please review and share with your cashiers and staff.

As with any big change, there is a learning curve. Please be patient with participants and encourage them to use the scanning feature in the Maryland WIC App for Participants. The WIC Participant App and the APL Checker App (for vendors) are great tools and allow vendors and participants to scan a food item to see if it is WIC approved.

Printed copies of the new Authorized Foods List have been delayed but a printable version is available on our website.

## DOWNLOADING THE AUTHORIZED PRODUCT LIST (APL)

Gone are the days when cashiers had to determine what foods were WIC approved. Your store's point-of-sale (POS) device is now the keeper of this information. With the new Authorized Foods List, it is more important than ever to have the most recent APL downloaded to the POS. If your store starts experiencing a lot of rejected items or transactions, reach out to your help desk to ensure that your POS system is ingesting the APL with the most recent updates.

## NEW VENDOR STAFF

We are pleased to introduce our new team members, Jessica Jenkins and Ngozi Nwajei. Both joined the Maryland WIC team in August, so you may have already seen them in the field. We look forward to having a complete team dedicated to help support our vendors. Here is a little more information on these professionals:

Jessica Jenkins is one of the newest members of the Vendor Unit. Jessica started her state service in 2014 with the Comptroller's Office of Maryland. She has over seven years of auditing and investigative experience. She attended Morgan State University and received a Bachelor of Science in Communications. Fall and football has arrived, and Jessica loves watching her favorite Baltimore Ravens play! She is a huge fan of traveling and enjoys spending time outdoors during the fall visiting pumpkin patches and going apple picking with her family.

Ngozi Nwajei has worked with multiple Maryland state agencies spanning 26 years. She holds a double-Master's degree in Business Administration Management and Healthcare Administration and a bachelor's degree in Human Resources Management from the University of Maryland. Ngozi enjoys visiting museums which she believes are designed to inform and teach the public academic information that leads to higher critical thinking skills. She is a mother of five beautiful children and loves traveling to new places as part of her education.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

Visit our website [MDWIC.org](http://MDWIC.org)

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## HOW TO CONTACT US

The State Office is still closed due to COVID and we are teleworking. Please use the following email address to contact the Vendor Operations Unit: [mdh.wicvendor@maryland.gov](mailto:mdh.wicvendor@maryland.gov).

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