



MARYLAND

BETTER NUTRITION, BRIGHTER FUTURE

VENDOR NEWSLETTER



ANNUAL VENDOR TRAINING

Preparations are under-way for 2021 Annual Vendor training. Training will continue to be done virtually. All authorized stores are required to register and attend a training session.

Attendance is monitored and stores are required to stay online for the entire class. Stores that sign-off prior to the end of class will not receive credit for attending. The training schedule and links to register will be emailed to vendors in July.

TEMPORARY INCREASE TO CASH VALUE BENEFITS

Under the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, the USDA has authorized the temporary increase of the cash value benefit (CVB) used for the purchase of fruits and vegetables.

"To more effectively promote healthier eating patterns, we need to promote nutrition security alongside food security to ensure all people at all times have access to nutritious foods and beverages that meet their nutritional needs for an active and healthy life," said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. "Nowhere is nutrition security more important than in our WIC program to support mothers and young children."

The current monthly CVB benefit is \$9 per child and \$11 for pregnant, postpartum, and breastfeeding women. The American Rescue Plan allows us to temporarily increase the dollar amount to \$35 per child and adult, per month, for a four month period. These extra dollars will increase the purchasing power of WIC participants so they can buy and consume more healthy fruits and vegetables. The Maryland WIC Program will temporarily increase the CVB benefit for the months of June, July, August, and September.

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TEMPORARY INCREASE TO CASH VALUE BENEFITS (CONT'D)

Stores may see an increased demand in fresh, frozen, and canned fruits and vegetables. Any fruits and vegetables cut and packaged in-store must be mapped to the appropriate PLU. Fresh produce changes frequently and produce not mapped properly will be denied at the register. We encourage stores to ensure that all fresh produce items are mapped correctly to prevent confusion and transaction issues. Please ensure that all store personnel are familiar with the mapping of fresh produce and know who to contact in your organization if an eligible fresh produce item is not scanning as WIC approved.

It is with hope that, "This temporary increase in benefits will further ensure that individuals at nutritional risk and those who are disproportionately affected by hunger have greater purchasing power for the healthy and nutritious foods they need," said Stacy Dean, deputy undersecretary of food, nutrition, and consumer services.

PEER GROUP RESTRUCTURING

Have you ever wondered how WIC determines how much your store will be paid for a food item? Ever wonder what a peer group is? A peer group is defined as a grouping of stores with like characteristics that may include geographical location, square footage, number of cash registers, etc. Regulations require that WIC group "like" stores together to determine the maximum price payable for each food item within each peer group. This is the amount your store will be paid for WIC foods.

Regulations also require that we evaluate the effectiveness of the peer groupings every few years. The evaluation of our peer groups is currently underway, and a restructure is eminent. We will inform you once the restructure is complete and provide you with additional details. The Vendor Unit may need to contact your store for additional information. If a member of our team reaches out for information, please respond in a timely manner so we can ensure that your store is in the correct peer group and that you are receiving the proper payment for WIC foods purchased at your store.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Visit our website MDWIC.org

Follow us @MDH.WIC



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:
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