



## WIC Grocers Training Newsletter

As part of your store's agreement with the Vermont WIC Program, store staff must receive training every year. This helps cashiers and managers stay up to date on WIC requirements and changes, stay in compliance with program rules and be successful in your important role as a WIC Grocer.

**This issue covers the following training topics:** Purpose of the WIC Program, procedure for transactions, vendor sanction system, vendor complaint process, claims procedures, policy on incentive items, and any changes since the last training.

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### Spring Edition 2022

#### What is WIC?

WIC is a public health nutrition program of the US Department of Agriculture (USDA). WIC's goal is to improve the well being of eligible Vermont families with young children. **Women, Infants and Children.** In Vermont, WIC is operated by the Vermont Department of Health through the state office in Burlington and **12 local health offices.**



#### What Does WIC Provide?



- Healthy foods
- Nutrition & health counseling and education
- Breastfeeding support
- Referral to health care and other programs

*And a whole lot more*

#### To qualify you must:

- Be pregnant, breastfeeding, or

have a child under age 5

- Meet income eligibility guidelines
- Be a Vermont resident

**MORE CHOICES.**



[healthvermont.gov/wicshopping](http://healthvermont.gov/wicshopping)

## WIC Card Transactions

WIC transaction procedures can vary depending on the register system at your store. Please review your store's processing procedures for WIC purchases.

Vermont WIC cards use an electronic benefits transfer system (EBT) specific to Vermont WIC. The system identifies WIC approved items by UPC code. If an item is not accepted due to size or quantity, the participant may use another payment source (split tender) or choose not to purchase.

### At the Register

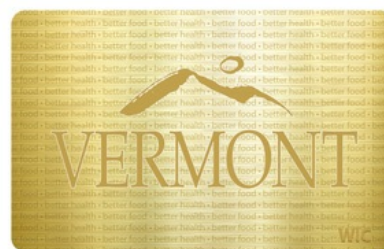
**Balance Inquiry:** A participant may ask to check their WIC card balance. This shows what is currently available for purchase. When a WIC card is swiped at the beginning of every transaction, a balance inquiry receipt will print.

**Mid-Purchase Receipt:** Always give this to the shopper in the middle of the transaction. This shows what WIC is paying for. If everything looks right, the shopper says **Yes** to approve the WIC payment. If not, they choose **No** to make changes.

**Reverse/Void Tender:** You can void a WIC transaction even after the payment has been approved. The voided items are put back on the WIC card immediately.

**Complete Transaction:** Give the customer their final receipt with ending balance information.

Review the Cashier Tip Card for common checkout issues.



### Troubleshooting Tips

What if an item doesn't scan as WIC approved?

- **Check the Vermont WIC Foods guide.** Is it a WIC approved item?
- **Check the beginning balance?** Is it in the shopper's balance?
- **Is it a fresh fruit or vegetable?** Produce items must be mapped/linked in store or by corporate.

### WIC Customer Complaints

We would like to know about any problems or concerns you have with WIC customers or processing WIC transactions. Please fill out the Vermont WIC Program Comment Form or reach out to the WIC Helpdesk.

E-mail: [WIC@vermont.gov](mailto:WIC@vermont.gov)

**Cashier Tip**

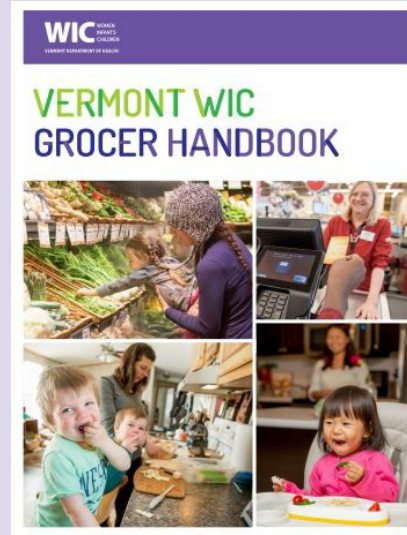


## Monitoring and Compliance

### Periodic Monitoring

WIC periodically monitors authorized retailers to ensure compliance with Federal law and the Vermont Grocer Agreement, including:

- Unannounced store visits and "compliance buys"
- Closer monitoring of new and high risk stores
- Secret shoppers
- Training and/or follow-up contacts
- Educational buys



### Violations and Sanctions Overview

The Vermont WIC Program uses a pattern-based sanction system to initiate administrative action, which could include assessing a civil money penalty (CMP), termination for cause, or disqualification for non-compliance on the basis of an incident or pattern of violations.

Violations of the Vermont Grocer Agreement are assigned points by degree of severity. Please reference your store's Grocer Agreement for more information.

Penalties affect both WIC and SNAP participation.

Stores have the right to appeal if a sanction is applied.

### Common Violations Examples:

- Failure to make staff available for training on program rules and procedures
- Allowing untrained personnel to accept and process WIC transactions
- Use of the quantity key in WIC transactions
- Allowing exchange of infant formula or any other food for another brand or kind of food
- Failure to offer WIC customers the same courtesies offered to others.

Refer to the [Vermont WIC Grocer Handbook](#) for detailed information.

## Claims



Grocers may submit a claim, or invoice, to the grocer manager for payment if they believe a transaction did not process correctly and further payment is due. Conversely, the State may invoice the grocer directly if a payment processes incorrectly. All claims must be submitted within 30 days of the transaction and paid within 30 days of submission.

## Incentive Policy



You must always treat a WIC customer the same as you would any other customer. Stores cannot offer incentive items, such as merchandise or other giveaways, that they do not offer to all other customers. You can offer buy-one-get-one and other types of promotions to WIC customers and you must accept valid manufacturer coupons if you allow these for all customers.

## Customer Service

### Tips for Staff

- **Be pleasant-** make sure your body language and tone of voice as well as your actual words are welcoming.
- **Be patient-** A WIC transaction can take longer as the system must direct connect to the EBT host.
- **Be respectful-** Don't break confidentiality rules by mentioning WIC during the transaction

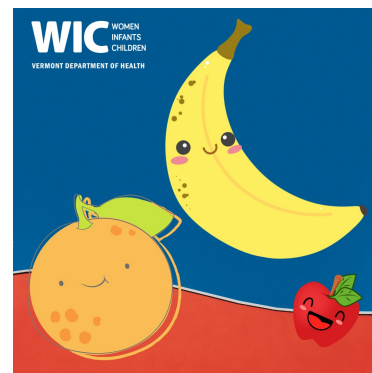
### Joke Corner

What do bananas do when they meet each other?

A banana shake!

How does a lemon ask for a hug?

Give me a squeeze!



**Grocers are important partners of the Vermont WIC Program**

**Thank you!**

**Visit the Vermont WIC Grocer web page for more information and resources.**

**Contact Us:**

**Andrea Miller, VT WIC Vendor Manager**

**[Andrea.miller@vermont.gov](mailto:Andrea.miller@vermont.gov)**

**WIC Help Desk: [WIC@vermont.gov](mailto:WIC@vermont.gov)**

**Phone: 802-338-0298 or 802-863-7333**

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Vermont WIC | 108 Cherry Street, P.O. Box 70, Burlington, VT 05402

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