

## WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THE WIC PROGRAM?

WIC stands for Women, Infants and Children. The WIC program is a Federal grant program that is funded by Congress each year. The Food and Nutrition Service, an agency of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), administers these funds to WIC state agencies to pay for WIC foods, nutrition education, breastfeeding promotion and support, and administrative costs. The program is administered in Rhode Island by the Department of Health through local WIC agencies.

The mission of the WIC program is to safeguard the health of low-income, pregnant, postpartum, and breastfeeding women, as well as infants and children up to age five, who are at risk for poor nutrition.

The Rhode Island WIC program recognizes that being pregnant, breastfeeding a baby, or being a parent is an important job. WIC helps families by providing:

- » Foods that are specifically recommended to improve each participant's diet. WIC helps stretch the food budget for working families.
- » Nutrition education to help participants learn the importance of good nutrition for good health.
- » Guidance to assist participants in receiving regular medical care. Staff members work with participants to ensure that pregnant women receive prenatal care, and that infants and children receive routine checkups.



For questions or additional information about how you can become a WIC vendor, please email a WIC representative at: [wicvendorsupport@health.ri.gov](mailto:wicvendorsupport@health.ri.gov)

For more information about family health services and programs, call the HEALTH Information Line at 401-222-5960 / RI Relay 711. Our staff speaks English and Spanish.

WIC is an equal opportunity provider. [www.health.ri.gov/wic](http://www.health.ri.gov/wic)



Retailers are an important part of the WIC program ensuring that participants buy the right kinds and amounts of authorized foods.

## Becoming a WIC Vendor



## Who is a WIC vendor?

Rhode Island has approximately 300 authorized WIC retailers statewide. WIC retailers include pharmacies, large chain stores, medium independent stores, small neighborhood grocery/convenience stores, and several commissaries.

Retailers are an important part of the Rhode Island WIC program ensuring that participants purchase WIC approved foods.

The Rhode Island WIC Vendor Unit is here to help retailers administer our program correctly.

## How do we support our vendors?

We have developed training aids to include a vendor training manual, an informative CD, a cashier reference guide, training packets, food lists, and shelf stickers.

WIC program representatives keep vendors informed by providing them with updated bulletins featuring vendor reminders and “how-tos”.

Training sessions are scheduled on a monthly basis, year-round, to educate and update staff working in WIC authorized stores.

And finally, we are available to visit your store and help with training. Just call the Health Information Line at 401-222-5960 / RI Relay 711, and ask for the WIC Vendor Unit.

The Rhode Island WIC program appreciates the efforts of our authorized retailers. By working together we are able to provide quality services to Rhode Island families.

## How do you become a WIC vendor?

Vendors must meet all eligibility criteria to become an authorized WIC vendor. Vendors must be Rhode Island licensed retailers and must be approved by the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). The number of vendors in the program is limited by WIC guidelines.

### **SUBMIT A LETTER OF INTENT**

The letter of intent initiates the application process. After the WIC Vendor Unit receives the letter, the applicant will be mailed a New Vendor Application packet, and a formal letter to attend a mandatory training session.

### **ATTEND A TRAINING SESSION**

The mandatory training sessions explain the WIC program goals, policies, and procedures. You will learn about WIC checks, the vendor agreement, and program violations. The session leader will help you complete the vendor application. New applicants are required to attend a training session.

## Training

### **NEW VENDORS**

#### **MANDATORY GROUP TRAINING**

A one-day, three-hour, group training session is mandatory for vendors applying for the first time. Trainings will be scheduled every other month. Times and locations vary. Pre-registration is required by phone or email. Vendors may send as many employees to the training as they wish. Vendors are responsible for ensuring that training attendees share the information received with the rest of the staff and administer the program in compliance with the WIC Vendor Agreement.

### **ACTIVE VENDORS**

#### **MANDATORY UPDATE TRAINING**

Mandatory training sessions will be held as needed when there are significant policy or procedure changes in the WIC program. Vendors will be notified of any changes before they go into effect. It is important to the program and your store's participation to attend training sessions.

