

RIFDA WIC Committee Meeting | MINUTES

Thursday July 10th, 2014- 9:30 AM | Meeting location 450 Veterans Memorial Parkway, Bldg. 8- East Providence, RI

AGENDA TOPICS

Agenda topic **Final Food Rule Update** | Presenter **Ann Barone**

- As of March 2015, WIC will be offering new foods, which will change vendor minimum inventory requirements.
- 16 oz boxes of whole grain pasta will be available as a substitute for tortillas and brown rice (only size that meets nutritional guidelines dictated by FNS).
- Non-fat and low-fat yogurt (no greek) will be a substitute for 32 oz milk.
- There is expectation that manufacturers will begin to offer 16 oz boxes of whole grain pasta once change goes into effect (14 and 12 oz now most common).

Agenda topic **Vendor Unit Update** | Presenter **Preet Kaur**

- There was a change to the CVV for children from \$6 to \$8. Stores might see some \$6 checks out there.
- There will be a change in price evaluation for peer groups. Certain peer groups will be affected. A few food item prices would need adjustments. This change will most likely impact small stores. Individual vendors will be contacted and notified once items are determined.
- If there is a federal sanction against a vendor, WIC cannot negotiate the length of that suspension (it is usually 1-3 years). These changes are happening mostly due to Federal Government Management Evaluation this year.
- In the near future, WIC will be conducting inventory audits along with monitoring visits, in which WIC staff will count inventory on two separate occasions within a date range to ensure accuracy of check redemption. State is in the process of developing policies and procedures to conduct inventory audits.
- Effective July 1st, 2014, RI WIC has made some changes to the monitoring visit. These changes have been communicated to all the vendors. During routine monitoring visits, the inspectors will also be doing check edits. They will examine any WIC checks in the cash register to make sure all the policy and procedures were followed. They will be looking for date used, signature, posted prices, price correction and first date to use & last date to use. In case policies are not followed, those checks will be confiscated.
- The vendor reapplication period is from **July 15th-August 15th**. For stores who have forgotten their password, select forgot password and an email will be sent to store with new password. If vendor has forgotten username, call WIC state office. After application is sent, vendor will receive a confirmation email when it is received and another when it has been approved.

- Emails are being sent to vendor primary email contact. If this is your accountant, please ensure that the information is being relayed. Vendor should provide second email address in case they are not getting all the information.
- WIC is in the process of developing a Price Survey application to make price surveys automatic. Automatic price surveys should be working in September.
- Currently, in order to submit price survey, vendor must click “price survey” or open a survey previously filled out to edit. Do not attempt to edit in “view only.” To submit, attach the survey in an email to WIC vendor support.

Vendor Concerns

- WIC customers are not being trained properly regarding changes in cereal size. WIC support staff will be addressing this.

Agenda topic **SNAP Program Update** | Presenter **Kim Rauch**

New Contractor for EBT: JP Morgan decided to leave the business of EBT. Moving to Xerox with another company, FIS, operating and buying equipment from JP Morgan. Contract is still on hold.

- If you have an EBT only machine, you have until **September 21st**, 2014 to apply for a new machine. **If vendors do not apply by this date, they will not have EBT. New equipment can take up to 45 days to process, so if vendors do not complete application in August, they may run over the deadline.**
- **EBT only machines will be free to purchase but will no longer be free to operate. Vendors will have to pay a fee per month per transaction (Please see attached documents for details).**
- Manual vouchers are no longer acceptable for SNAP except in the case of a state disaster emergency.
- If there is a hold on processing EBT because both JP Morgan and FIS systems are down, vendors are only allowed to process \$40 in EBT.
- USDA is looking into blocking non-approved EBT SNAP items. As of now, EBT machines do not record UPC codes. When eWIC comes on board, the hope is that restrictions will be implemented.
- In state of RI, there are client sanctions for intentional violations. RI does not have non-intentional sanctions for clients.

Agenda topic **eWIC Update** | Presenter **Bonaventura Tavares**

- I. **Goal for RI WIC** - is to meet the Congressional mandate of 2020 to have Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) available statewide (also known as eWIC). **eWIC Implementation for RI is estimated to be 2017.**

- IAPD for eWIC has been approved.
- **Concerns with current MIS system:**
 - Current WIC Management Information System (MIS) RIWEBS does not meet the required functionality for Electronic Benefits Transfer (eWIC).
 - The system is written in Visual Basic (VB) 6 and is no longer being supported by Microsoft.
 - The development and implementation of these changes would take a minimum of 24 months.
 - Cost to modify the RIWEBS to have EBT (eWIC) readiness functions would not be financially justifiable and feasible.
- **Options for a new MIS system:**
 - State Agency Model (SAM) systems
 - SPIRIT – developed by CDP
 - Crossroads – developed by CSC
 - MPSC – developed by CIBER
 - Non-SAM systems
 - Michigan Web Based MI-WIC – developed by Three Sigma
 - Kentucky Web Based WIC Direct – developed by CDP
- **Preference for RI WIC** - transfer to a SAM system
- **Evaluating several SAM systems:**
 - SPIRIT (CDP) - Successful Partners In Reaching Innovative Technology - Chickasaw Nation is the lead State agency for this consortium. Members include the following State agencies from Oklahoma and New Mexico; along with several other tribal nations.
 - Crossroads (CSC) - North Carolina is the lead State agency for this consortium. Member state agencies include Alabama, Virginia and West Virginia.
 - MPSC (CIBER) - Mountain Plains States Consortium - Colorado is the lead State agency for this consortium. Member State agencies include Utah and Wyoming.
- **Concurrent implementation of both MIS and eWIC** - MIS system's IAPD will be joined with the commencement of the eWIC Implementation Phase.