

# VENDOR NEWS



WE'RE  
SO  
GLAD  
YOU'RE  
HERE!

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## Thank you!!!

The Mississippi WIC Program would like to thank you for being a valued WIC authorized Vendor.

Currently, we have 306 authorized vendors in Mississippi. This includes 213 grocery stores, 75 grocery stores with authorized pharmacies, 14 authorized pharmacies, and 4 commissaries.

Mississippi WIC thanks for renewing your partnership in accepting WIC benefits. This continues to make a significant difference in the lives of many families by creating a valuable and inclusive space for individuals and families to shop with ease. Your role as authorized WIC Vendors goes beyond just being a place to redeem benefits; it is a testament to your compassion and commitment to the well-being of the community.

Thank you again for your dedication to serving as authorized WIC Vendors. Together, we are making a difference in building healthier and stronger communities.

## POLICY UPDATES

### Food Package Changes - FINAL RULE: Revisions in the WIC Food Package (2024)

This final rule revises Federal regulations to align the WIC food packages with the current *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* and to reflect recommendations from the National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine while promoting nutrition security and equity and considering program administration.

The changes are intended to:

- provide WIC participants with a wider variety of foods that align with the latest nutritional science;
- provide WIC state agencies with greater flexibility to prescribe and tailor food packages that accommodate participants' special dietary needs and personal and cultural food preferences;
- and address key nutritional needs to support healthy dietary patterns.

The Mississippi WIC Program is implementing a phased approach and will make changes to one (1) food category at a time. Proposed completion date is September 2025

### Food Package - 1st Quarter Changes

| Change   | Estimated Timeline |
|--|--------------------|
| 75% of all breakfast cereal varieties must be whole grain          | January 2025       |
| Breakfast cereal must contain no more than 6 grams of added sugar  | January 2025       |
| Increased amount of infant formula for partially breastfed infants | February 2025      |
| Fresh herbs will be allowed for fresh fruits and vegetables        | March 2025         |
| White potatoes will be WIC eligible                                | March 2025         |

### Minimum Stock Changes

Minimum Stocking Requirements include at least 5 varieties of fresh fruits and 5 varieties of fresh vegetables.

| Category              | Type or Brand   | Minimum Quantity         |
|-----------------------|---|--------------------------|
| Fruits and vegetables | At least 5 varieties of fresh fruits and 5 varieties of fresh vegetables – WIC approved   | \$24 dollar retail value |
|                       | At least 5 varieties of canned fruits and 5 varieties of canned vegetables – WIC approved | 24 cans total            |

## POLICY UPDATES

### Civil Money Penalties Increase

- Trafficking in food instruments - \$18,760 for each violation, and maximum penalty for violations occurring during a single investigation is \$75,042.
- Vendor convicted of selling firearms, ammunition, explosive, or controlled substances in exchange for food instruments is \$18,299 for each violation, and maximum penalty for violations occurring during a single investigation is \$75,042.

## PROGRAM REMINDERS & UPDATES

### Use of WIC and SNAP

If a participant has a SNAP card, please advise them to swipe their WIC benefits card first. Lack of swiping WIC first may cause issues with redemption of available benefits during a transaction.

### Treatment of WIC Participants

- Remember to treat WIC participants with courtesy and respect
- WIC-only lanes are **not** allowed (unless you have a single function POS device)
- Vendors are required to surrender all purchased WIC approved items to participants

### Participant Complaints

- Vendors will be notified of all complaints
- Vendors with more than 9 complaints in a year will be determined to be **high risk**

### Vendor Complaints

- Use the online complaint form to submit all concerns to the MS WIC Vendor Management Unit
- Complaints can range from issues with a product, WIC staff member, WIC participant, etc.
- Please note no staff or participant information can be shared so you will not receive updates on actions taken

## PROGRAM REMINDERS & UPDATES

### Produce Mapping

Produce mapping is a functionality of your integrated point of sale (POS) software that allows you to link a UPC to a PLU listed in the MS WIC Approved Product List (APL). If produce mapping is not completed, eligible produce items cannot be purchased with eWIC. It is each vendor's responsibility to map all required fresh fruits and vegetables.

### Routine Monitoring Visits

Routine monitoring for Federal Fiscal Year 2025 is underway.

- A total of 133 authorized vendors will be monitored this year.
- Please be advised there will be Monitoring and Compliance team members visiting your stores.
- Routine monitoring may occur any time the authorized location is open.

### Compliance Investigations

- Covert visits are happening year-round.
- You will not be notified of this visit.
- Sanction points will be applied where applicable.

## FORMULA UPDATES

### Temporary Infant Formula Substitutions

Please be reminded the substitutions for infant formula expired 11/30/2024, and all grocery vendors are required as outlined in the vendor agreement to stock the minimum requirements of standard formula.



## FORMULA UPDATES

### New Formulas

**Enfamil Reguline, 12.4 oz. container** has been added to the standard formulas list. It is not required for minimum stock, but participants may request for purchase if it's available.

### Reporting Shortages

Please report any issues ordering or receiving infant formula to the State Office by sending an email to [vmu@msdh.ms.gov](mailto:vmu@msdh.ms.gov). If formula is unavailable due to shortages, please direct WIC participants to complete the participant complaint form or call their local health department.

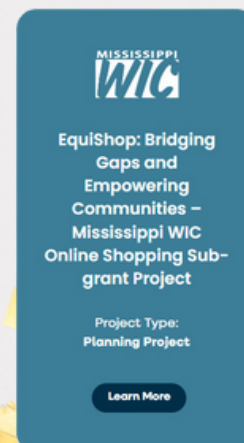
## CURRENT PROJECTS

### Vendor Application

- New electronic application process using REDCap
- Tentative launch date within first quarter of 2025
- Will be used for: authorizations, reauthorizations, change of ownership, add a store location to existing agreement

### WIC Online Shopping

- Planning project for new capability to allow WIC participants to order and pay online for WIC approved products at select retailers using their WIC benefits cards
- Tentative launch date 2026
- Currently conducting "Vendor Listening Sessions" for pertinent information and next steps.



Visit [www.freshnewwic.com](http://www.freshnewwic.com) for additional updates and information.



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Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
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Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
- (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or
- (3) email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).

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