November 2013

Health and Social Services

Alaska WIC Vendor Newsletter

ALASKA WIC

Volume 12, Issue 6

Fall 2013 Price Sheet Reminders

- Fall Price Sheets must be submitted electronically by the deadline of **November 18** to wic@alaska.gov
- If you have less than the minimum stock of any items, please provide the ordering information on the last page of the Price Sheet.
- If you are unable to submit the Price Sheet electronically, please mail yours to the WIC Vendor Unit at the address on the back of this newsletter. Faxed price sheets can no longer be processed.

SPIRIT System Implementation

The Alaska WIC Program will phase in the use of the new management information system, SPIRIT, according to the following schedule. You will begin to receive the new **green** WIC checks (see the example image on the next page) and fewer of the old blue-gray checks as clinics begin to issue checks out of the new system.

Remember, both the old gray-blue checks and the new mint green ones may be used at any authorized WIC vendor in Alaska!

October 7, 2013	November 25, 2013	December 2, 2013
Municipality of Anchorage	Mat-Su Valley	Fairbanks
Seward Peninsula	Kenai Peninsula	Interior (Tanana Chiefs Region)
	Southeast Alaska	Bethel & Wade Hampton Areas
	Bristol Bay Region	Northwest Arctic Borough
	North Slope Borough	Aleutians-Valdez-Cordova
	Kodiak Island	

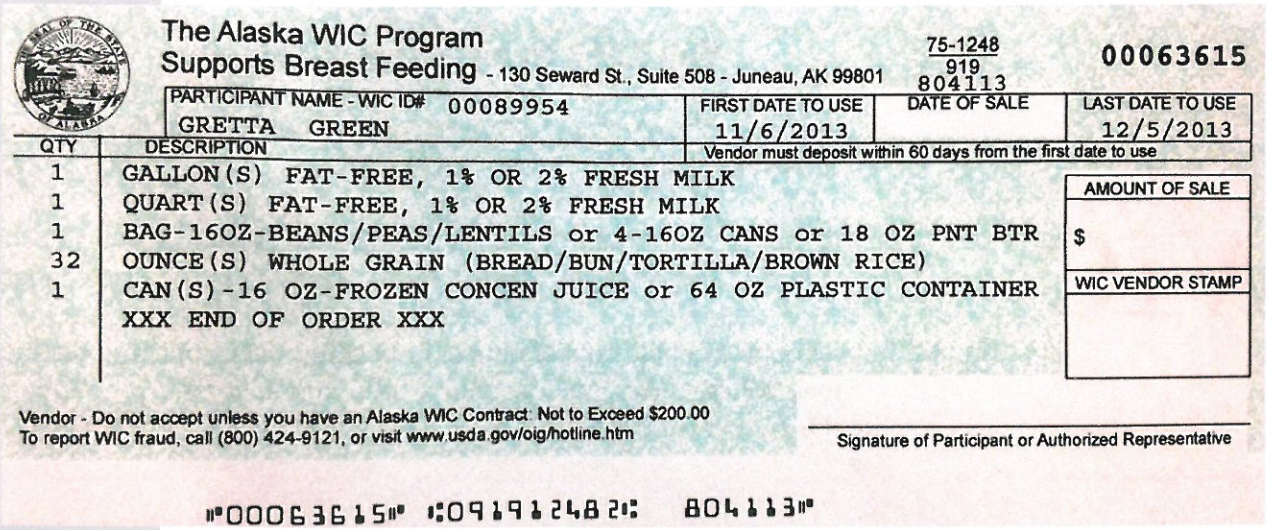
Inside this issue:

Fall Price Sheet Reminder	1
SPIRIT Schedule	1
SPIRIT Check & Reminders	2
Food Notes	3
Customer Service	3
Email Alert	3
Cashier Training	3
WIC Vendor Unit Update	4

Questions? Call the WIC Vendor Unit at 907/465-3100.

New WIC Check Image

The new WIC checks that are issued out of the SPIRIT System are slightly changed from the previous system. Both SPIRIT and AKWIC checks will be in circulation through the Spring of 2014 and valid at every WIC store in the State. By late Spring all checks will look like the image below.



The Alaska WIC Program
Supports Breast Feeding - 130 Seward St., Suite 508 - Juneau, AK 99801

75-1248
919
804113

00063615

PARTICIPANT NAME - WIC ID#	FIRST DATE TO USE	DATE OF SALE	LAST DATE TO USE
GRETTA GREEN 00089954	11/6/2013		12/5/2013

Vendor must deposit within 60 days from the first date to use

QTY	DESCRIPTION
1	GALLON(S) FAT-FREE, 1% OR 2% FRESH MILK
1	QUART(S) FAT-FREE, 1% OR 2% FRESH MILK
1	BAG-16OZ-BEANS/PEAS/LENTILS or 4-16OZ CANS or 18 OZ PNT BTR
32	OUNCE(S) WHOLE GRAIN (BREAD/BUN/TORTILLA/BROWN RICE)
1	CAN(S)-16 OZ-FROZEN CONCEN JUICE or 64 OZ PLASTIC CONTAINER
	XXX END OF ORDER XXX

AMOUNT OF SALE
$

WIC VENDOR STAMP

Vendor - Do not accept unless you have an Alaska WIC Contract. Not to Exceed $200.00
To report WIC fraud, call (800) 424-9121, or visit www.usda.gov/oig/hotline.htm

Signature of Participant or Authorized Representative

⑈00063615⑈ ⑆091912482⑆ 804113⑈

WIC SPIRIT System – IMPORTANT REMINDERS

The Alaska WIC Program began implementation of the new SPIRIT management information system on October 7. The system will be in operation statewide by December 31. Please train your managers and cashiers on the following:

⇒ The new WIC checks (pictured above) have been issued to WIC participants in Anchorage and the Nome/Seward Peninsula area. The new checks may be used at any authorized WIC vendor statewide.

⇒ Your store is set up in both the Key Bank and Solutran banking systems, and the WIC checks will be routed to the correct bank according to the routing number on the check.

⇒ The new green WIC checks and the familiar blue-gray ones will both be in circulation until late March 2014.

⇒ We will notify you of the date when the AKWIC checks may no longer be accepted by vendors. However, it is critical that your cashiers are trained to make sure all WIC checks are within their valid dates to use before accepting them.

⇒ The new WIC checks have only one name printed on them – the name of the participant receiving the food items that appear on the check. Mom or Dad's name will not be on a check for Baby or Child's food items. The person(s) authorized to shop for the named participant must be listed on the Food List / Participant ID booklet, and each authorized shopper must sign the booklet.

⇒ Every WIC shopper – the participant or proxy – must bring the participant's Food List / Participant ID booklet to the store. Anyone who is listed on the booklet may shop for the participant, so long as they have also signed the booklet.

Food Notes

- Nearly all peanut butter brands are downsizing their containers to 15.5 oz. or 16 oz. The federal regulations for WIC foods require 18 oz. peanut butter. We have requested guidance from USDA about the eligibility of smaller peanut butter sizes. In the meantime, we will allow participants to purchase 15.5 oz. and 16 oz. peanut butter.

- Participants are required to purchase the lowest cost peanut butter among eligible brands. If a name brand peanut butter is on sale and costs less than a store brand, the participant must buy the lower cost brand. Organic peanut butter is allowed only if it is the lowest cost peanut butter in the store.

- Substitutions are not allowed! During the past year, several vendors allowed participants to substitute powdered infant formula for concentrate formula. This resulted in a substantial loss when the vendors were reimbursed only for the value of the concentrate.

Customer Service Reminders

- Always offer the same courtesies to WIC customers as you do to non-WIC customers.
- Exercise patience, WIC transactions can take a little extra time.
- Don't draw extra attention to a WIC transaction, it could make the WIC shopper feel uncomfortable.

CASHIER TRAINING SAVES YOU MONEY!

Training your cashiers to avoid common errors will help you avoid returned check fees:

⇒ Look at the valid dates on the check; make sure that today's date is on or after the first valid date to use and before or on the last date to use.

⇒ Write in the date of the transaction in the "date of use" box on the check.

⇒ Write in the amount of the transaction before asking the WIC shopper to sign the check.

⇒ Compare the signature on the check to the signature on the participant's Food List / ID Folder.

⇒ Make sure the vendor number is stamped in the appropriate box before depositing the check.

⇒ Fruit & Vegetable Vouchers (FVVs): make sure that FVVs are never written for more than the face value of the check. Any amount over the $6, $10, or $15 value of the check will not be paid.

We see a high rate of these errors on WIC checks, particularly accepting out of date checks, failure to date or stamp checks, and pricing FVVs over

Email Alert!

The WIC Vendor Staff is trying to perform more vendor support through email.

If you have a store or manager email address we would love to send you any needed materials and answer your questions using email. Also if your email address changes, please let us know so we can update our records.

The Vendor Unit can always be reached at:

wic@ alaska.gov

Alaska WIC Vendor Unit

Health and Social Services

Alaska WIC Program
Div. of Public Assistance
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Juneau, AK 99811

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Erin Khmelev Joins WIC Vendor Unit Staff

Erin Khmelev joined the WIC Vendor Unit staff on October 14, replacing Alice Albrecht, who retired in July. Erin has a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration, with an emphasis in Marketing. She came to the WIC Program from the Alaska Division of Retirement & Benefits. Early in her career, she worked for two years in a small independent grocery store. On a personal level, Erin and her husband are avid international travelers and are expecting their first child in April 2014.

In the Vendor Unit, Erin will be the lead staff person for banking issues, the Mail-Out Vendor Program, and the Farmers' Market Nutrition Program, as well as assisting with compliance oversight, price sheets, complaint resolution, and other tasks. Please join us in welcoming Erin to WIC!

Vendors!

Please post this newsletter for your staff to read

Contacting the WIC Vendor Unit

The Vendor Unit will provide assistance to vendors at any time. For questions or complaints, please contact us and we will do our best to meet your needs.

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