



Vermont WIC Retailer Authorization Standards

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1 Vendor Selection Criteria

In order to be authorized as a WIC retail vendor in Vermont, retailers must satisfy these selection criteria:

- Retailer currently participates in, and is not disqualified from, Vermont SNAP/ 3SquaresVT program.*
- A need exists for a WIC authorized retailer in the area where the store is located to assure participant access to the WIC food benefit.
- There is no conflict of interest between store ownership and management, and WIC state or local agency staff.
- The store must be in a permanent location, and be open a minimum of 8 hours per day, 6 days per week.
- The retailer carries a full line or “market basket” of standard grocery items such as: dairy, dry staples (dry cereal, bread, brown rice, beans) and at least two varieties of fresh, frozen, or canned meat and/or fish. (Smaller “convenience” stores, with limited variety and inventory, and free-standing retail pharmacies, may be authorized only if they meet all other criteria and State determines authorization is necessary to ensure participant access in the specific geographic area in which the store is located.)
- The retailer has the ability to maintain adequate stock of WIC approved food items year around. Specifically, the retailer must stock at least the minimum variety and quantity of foods included in [Appendix A](#). (Free-standing retail pharmacies are exempt from this criterion.)
- Retailer has no serious SNAP violations.
- Retailer has no serious WIC vendor violations in Vermont or any other state.
- None of the current owners, officers, or managers have been convicted of or have had a civil judgment during the last 6 years for the following:
 - fraud, antitrust violations, embezzlement, or theft
 - forgery, bribery, falsification, or destruction of records
 - making false statements, receiving stolen property
 - making false claims, or obstruction of justice
- The retailer successfully completes on-site inspection requirements.

* Vermont WIC will require the FS/SNAP authorization number on the WIC application form to ensure the vendor is SNAP eligible, and will use the FNS “STARS” database to verify participation.

2 Vendor Limiting Criteria

- VT will not authorize any “Over 50% store,” defined as a store where over 50% of food sales are/would be WIC-reimbursed purchases.
- VT will limit authorization of “free standing” pharmacies to those areas of the state where a need exists in geographic area where pharmacy is located, in order to provide access for WIC participants.

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- VT will authorize enough vendors to provide participant access and that WIC staff can effectively manage. If access is already achieved, a specific need for a particular store must be established in order to authorize that additional store.

3 Vendor Selection Criteria - Competitive Price

3.1 Peer Group Methodology

Vermont methodology for establishment of peer groups includes:

- Ownership type
- Number of stores in Vermont
- Annual revenues

Vermont received a waiver from FNS (August 2014) from the requirement for geographical variation as a criterion for peer grouping.

3.2 Peer Groups

Vermont WIC uses the following peer group assignments to establish allowable reimbursement levels (“Not to Exceed” limits) for WIC eligible foods :

- Small Independent = <\$7 million sales/annually
- Large Independent = >\$7million sales/annually
- Small Chain = <5 stores in Vermont
- Large Chain = >5 stores in Vermont
- Superstore
- Farmers’ Market
- Pharmacy (free standing)
- 50%+ WIC (This peer group is established due to requirements of the Vermont WIC MIS (Ceres), but will not be authorized. See Sections 2 and 3.3.

3.3 Vendors that meet the above-50-percent criterion

Vermont will not authorize “Over 50% WIC” stores.

3.4 Implementation of Effective Peer Groups

- Vermont will conduct a price survey as part of the site visit performed for authorization. Stores exceeding 125% of the peer group average for pricing will be denied authorization.
- Once a store is authorized, the limitation on reimbursement is automatically enforced by the Not-to-Exceed pricing established by peer group within the WIC MIS (Ceres), and which is based upon historical prices charged by authorized stores through the eWIC system.
- Vermont’s MIS/eWIC system is automatically and continually gathering pricing information to monitor subsequent prices charged by the vendor. Shelf prices are monitored during site visits.

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- Effectiveness of the peer groupings and competitive price criteria will be assessed at least every three years. If changes are warranted, the State Plan amendment process will be used to propose revisions to the peer group definitions. Any change would take effect with the next cycle of Retailer agreements.
- Vermont WIC may change a vendor's peer group whenever the state determines that placement in an alternative peer group is warranted.

3.5 Possible exceptions to competitive price criteria

In-store (chain) pharmacies will be subject to NTE limits for exempt formula and medical foods within the Large Chain peer group. Free standing pharmacies will be subject to NTE limits on those products within their peer group, unless it is necessary to exempt a pharmacy in order to maintain participant access to those products within the region where the pharmacy is located.

3.6 Exceptions from vendor peer group system requirement

Vermont does not seek exemption from the vendor peer group system requirement.

4 Additional Retailer Authorization Standards and Policies

4.1 WIC EBT costs

Vermont will provide, at no cost, an eWIC-only stand-beside point-of-sale device to those retailers not choosing to develop a WIC-integrated electronic cash register/point-of-sale system.

4.2 On-Site Pre-Authorization Visit

Retailers not previously authorized will be subject to onsite visit prior to authorization. Stores seeking reauthorization that have been subject to an onsite visit during the prior three-year authorization period will receive an onsite visit within three years of the prior onsite visit. Notwithstanding the above, when the state is imposing new requirements on vendors in conjunction with the authorization cycle, all stores will be subject to site visits as necessary to confirm compliance.

4.3 Application periods

Vermont authorizes vendors for a three-year cycle, but does not currently limit the period when new applications will be accepted and processed. However, during the period of eWIC pilot and rollout (January 2015 through March 2016), new applications will not be accepted.

4.4 Vendor Agreements

Vendors will execute a standard agreement with a term of three years. All vendors will be assigned the same three-year cycle. New vendors will be assigned an agreement term that is pro-rated, so that all vendors will be on the same agreement term cycle.

Appendix A: Minimum Inventory of WIC Approved Foods

CATEGORY	QUANTITY	SIZE/CONTAINER	TYPE	COMMENTS
JUICE				
	6, min 2 varieties	64 oz fluid	Any WIC approved, shelf stable or refrigerated	Total 12 items
	AND 6, min 2 varieties	11.5/12 oz frozen or 11.5 oz concentrate	Any WIC approved	
CEREAL				
	4 X 2 varieties whole grain	12 oz boxes, min weight	Any WIC approved	Total 14 items
	AND 3 X 2 varieties non-whole grain	12 oz boxes, min weight	Any WIC approved	
MILK				
	6	Gallons	WIC-approved lowfat (1%), or skim (fat free) fluid milk	Total 15 items
	AND 2	Gallons	WIC-approved whole fluid milk	
	AND 3	Half Gallons	WIC-approved lowfat (1%), or skim (fat free) fluid milk	
	AND 3	Quarts	WIC-approved lowfat (1%), or skim (fat Free) fluid milk	
	AND 1	Quart	WIC-approved whole fluid milk	
CHEESE				
	6 lbs, min 2 varieties	8 oz and/or 16 oz blocks/bricks	Any WIC approved	Total 6 pounds
EGGS				
	3	dozen	Any WIC approved	Total 3 dozen

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CATEGORY	QUANTITY	SIZE/CONTAINER	TYPE	COMMENTS
BEANS, PEAS, LENTILS				
	4 X 2 varieties	15-16 oz cans	WIC approved canned	Total 8 cans OR 4 bags
	OR 2 X 2 varieties	1 pound bags	WIC approved dried	
PEANUT BUTTER				
	3	16-18 ounce jars	Any WIC approved	Total 3 jars
TUNA OR SALMON				
	6	5 oz cans	Any WIC approved	Total 6 cans
BREAD				
	6	16 oz loaves	Any WIC approved	Total 6 loaves
BROWN RICE				
	2	1 lb box/bag	Any WIC approved	Total 2 packages
FRUITS				
Peer groups Large and Small Chains and Large	8 varieties	fresh	Any WIC approved	Total: any number of 8 varieties

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CATEGORY	QUANTITY	SIZE/CONTAINER	TYPE	COMMENTS
Independents				
	8 varieties	canned or frozen	Any WIC approved	Total: any number of 8 varieties
Peer group Small Independents	4 varieties	fresh	Any WIC approved	Total: any quantity of 4 varieties
	4 varieties	canned or frozen	Any WIC approved	Total: any quantity of 4 varieties
VEGETABLES				
Peer groups Large and Small Chains and Large Independents	8 varieties	fresh	Any WIC approved	Total: any number of 8 varieties
	8 varieties	canned or frozen	Any WIC approved	Total: any number of 8 varieties
Peer group Small Independents	4 varieties	fresh	Any WIC approved	Total: any quantity of 4 varieties
	4 varieties	canned or frozen	Any WIC approved	Total: any quantity of 4 varieties

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CATEGORY	QUANTITY	SIZE/CONTAINER	TYPE	COMMENTS
INFANT FORMULA				
	12	cans	VT contract standard milk-based formula, powdered. (Please consult the WIC Vendor webpage for allowed brands of contract formulas. Http://healthvermont.org/wic/vendors.aspx)	Total 12 cans
INFANT FRUITS				
	24, min 2 varieties	4 Oz jars	2 WIC approved varieties of infant fruits	Total 24 jars
INFANT VEGETABLES				
	24, min 2 varieties	4 Oz jars	2 WIC approved varieties of infant vegetables	Total 24 jars
INFANT MEATS				
	24, min 2 varieties	2.5 oz jars	2 WIC approved varieties of infant meats	Total 24 jars
INFANT CEREAL				
	2	8 oz boxes	Any WIC Approved	Total 2 boxes