



# VENDOR VIEWS

LA WIC's Authorized Vendor Newsletter



## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Thank You - 1

WIC at Self-Checkout - 2

Upcoming Dates - 2

Policy Changes for FFY22 - 3

Food List and MSR Updates - 4

Routine Monitoring Updates - 6

List of Updated Documents - 9

Mailing List - 9

Contact Us - 9

Feedback - 9

## THANK YOU!

As we reach the end of 2021 and look forward to 2022, we would like to once again thank you for your participation in the Louisiana WIC Program (LA WIC). This past year has been challenging for many in our state, but thanks to the support and cooperation of our Authorized Vendors (Vendors) like yourself and your staff, WIC Participants were able to access the healthy and nutritious foods that they need.

A number of changes to LA WIC Vendor Rules and Regulations will take effect for Federal Fiscal Year 2022. In this issue we will highlight a number of those changes that you should pay close attention to. As always, full documentation of LA WIC Vendor Rules and Regulations can be found on the [LA WIC Authorized Vendor Hub](#).

Thank you again for helping to make LA WIC so successful in 2021. We look forward to even greater success in 2022!

## WIC TRANSACTIONS AT SELF-CHECKOUT TERMINALS

LA WIC is excited to announce that it is now able to certify Vendors to accept WIC Transactions at self-checkout terminals! The ability for WIC to be accepted at self-checkout terminals has long been a frequent request of both Participants and Vendors, and we are thrilled to now be able to offer it. Prior to accepting WIC Transactions at self-checkout terminals, Vendors must first meet the additional requirements below:

- Certified Terminals: Self-checkout terminals must be certified as WIC-EBT capable by LA WIC prior to use by WIC Participants. NOTE: Self-checkout terminals must be certified in addition to and separately from a Vendor's regular check-out terminals.
- Attendants must be Present: A self-checkout attendant must be present in the self-checkout area during the occurrence of a WIC Transaction.
- Recoupment based on Failure to Certify: LA WIC will recoup the costs of any WIC Transaction(s) conducted at self-checkout terminals if the terminal(s) were not certified by LA WIC prior to the occurrence of the Transaction(s).

If you would like to accept WIC at your store's self-checkout terminals, please reach out to your LA WIC Program Monitor or contact the LA WIC Vendor Operations Unit at (225) 342-0725 or LAWICVendor@la.gov.

### UPCOMING DATES:

**December 31** – State Offices Closed

**January 1** – Federal Fiscal Year 2022 Policies Become Effective

**January 17** – State Offices Closed

Please keep in mind that LA WIC Vendor Operations staff continue to work remotely during the pandemic. As such, email remains our most reliable form of communication.

# POLICY CHANGES FOR FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR 2022

LA WIC recently announced updates to its Policies for Federal Fiscal Year 2022, which became effective on December 18, 2021. These updates were designed to align LA WIC’s internal policies and procedures with state and federal regulations that govern the WIC program, specifically the Louisiana Administrative Code (LAC) and the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR). The goal of this alignment was to make LA WIC Vendor Rules and Regulations more transparent, more consistent, and easier to navigate, helping Vendors to better understand and ultimately meet program requirements.

In places where governing regulations do not prevent it, LA WIC has updated several policies to allow for greater discretion and limit punitive exposure for Vendors who fail to meet Rules and Regulations. For example, Civil Money Penalties for State Agency Vendor Sanction Violations are now capped at \$2,500 each, and the number of incidences required to establish a pattern of violations has now been updated to take into account the severity of the violation. Updates like these, and others, are designed to help Vendors more consistently and successfully meet program requirements.

All of LA WIC’s policies, including the newest updates, are captured in the newly created LA WIC Policy Manual (Policy Manual). The Policy Manual details the policies LA WIC follows when administering the LA WIC program. Please review the Policy Manual in its entirety, with special attention to the following LA WIC policies:

- Policy 7.15 – Routine Monitoring
- Policy 7.16 – Compliance Buys
- Policy 7.17 – Inventory Audits
- Policy 7.18 – Sanctions



Bureau of Nutrition Services Louisiana WIC Program (LA WIC)	
<b>Content:</b>	LA WIC Vendor Policies and Procedures
<b>Effective Date:</b>	12/18/2021
<b>Last Update:</b>	12/18/2021
<b>Additional Information:</b>	<a href="#">Louisiana Administrative Code (LAC)</a> - Subpart 15, Chapter 41 <a href="#">Code of Federal Regulations (CFR)</a>

**Policy Statement**

The policies found within this Manual follow the requirements of the CFR and the LAC and are intended to guide LA WIC Vendor Operations.

**Policy Purpose**

LA WIC shall follow the policies within this Manual when administering the LA WIC program. These policies apply to all LA WIC Authorized Vendors.

*continued on page 4*

*continued from page 3*

Please be advised that in accordance with the LA WIC Sanction Schedule, any violation identified through any means will count toward the establishment of a pattern for purposes of sanction (for those sanctions that require a pattern of violations) as long as the violation(s) occurs within a twenty-four (24) consecutive month period of another such violation.

In conjunction with these updates, LA WIC has also made changes to the LA WIC Vendor Guide (Guide), the most recent version of which takes effect on January 1, 2022. Please review the Guide in its entirety, including recent changes to the following sections:

- When to Notify LA WIC (pg. 5)
- Vendor Records and Monitoring (pg.6)
- LA WIC Transaction Procedures (pg.15)
- Compliance Investigations and Routine Monitoring (pg.22)
- Sanction Schedule (pg. 24)
- Complaints (pg. 36)
- Definitions (pg. 36)

As always, a full listing of LA WIC's current Vendor Rules and Regulations can be found on the LA WIC Authorized Vendor Hub.



## UPDATES TO APPROVED FOOD LIST AND MSR

LA WIC recently announced updates to the LA WIC Food List Brochure (Program Guide), which takes effect January 1, 2022. These changes were made in response to Vendor and Participant feedback, and in an effort to make it easier for Participants to navigate the WIC shopping experience and for Vendors to continually comply with Vendor Rules and Regulations.

*continued on page 5*

*continued from page 4*

Taking effect January 1 are changes to a number of approved food item brands and flavors, as well as several updates to Minimum Stock Requirements (MSR) that you should also take note of:

- Least Expensive Brand (LEB): WIC Participants will no longer have to choose the Least Expensive Brand for milk, cheese and eggs. WIC Participants may choose from any brands listed in the LA WIC Food List Brochure (Program Guide).
- Milk Sizes: WIC Participants will be able to purchase the milk listed on their food package in gallon, half-gallon and/or quart sizes. Correspondingly, Minimum Stock Requirements (MSR) for milk will be as follows:
  - Whole Milk: 5 gallons total, in any combination of approved gallons, half-gallons, and/or quarts
  - Low Fat Milk: 10 gallons total, in any combination of approved 1% and/or skim milk, in any combination of gallons, half-gallons, and/or quarts
- Infant Formula: Minimum Stock Requirements for infant formula, regardless of vendor peer group, will be 12 cans of each of the five required contract brand formulas.

LA WIC has updated the LA WIC Food List Brochure (Program Guide) (2022 supplemental information begins on page 14) and the LA WIC Approved Food List (WIC-23) to capture the new options and requirements. Vendors should use these two documents in conjunction with the LA WIC Authorized Product List (APL) (updated monthly) to identify WIC Approved Food Items and maintain Minimum Stock Requirements.



# ROUTINE MONITORING UPDATES

Routine Monitoring is an overt, on-site monitoring during which LA WIC representatives identify themselves to Vendor personnel. LA WIC conducts Routine Monitoring visits on 5% - 8% of Vendors each federal fiscal year in order to survey and assess Vendor compliance with LA WIC Vendor Rules and Regulations. LA WIC will begin Routine Monitoring reviews for Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2022 in January 2022. Below is a chart listing the most common violations cited during FFY 2021 Routine Monitoring visits and the actions Vendors must take to prevent them:

## Percentage of Violations Found in FFY 2021 Routine Monitoring Visits

Violation	%	Preventative Action
Failure to Meet Minimum Stock Requirements (MSR)*	66%	Maintain Minimum Stock Requirements found on the <a href="#">LA WIC Approved Foods List (WIC-23)</a> at all times
*See the FFY 2021 Routine Monitoring MSR Violations by Food Item Item graph below for additional information		
Missing or Inaccurate Shelf Prices	16%	Ensure correct prices for WIC Approved Food Items are displayed on the foods or on the shelves/display area in immediate proximity to the foods
Missing LA WIC Transaction Procedures (WIC-33)	11%	Maintain a copy of the most recent <a href="#">WIC-33</a> in the store
Missing LA WIC Approved Food List (WIC-23)	5%	Maintain a copy of the most recent <a href="#">WIC-23</a> in the store
Missing LA WIC Window Cling	3%	Ensure the "LA WIC Authorized Vendor" window cling is prominently displayed in the front window of the store

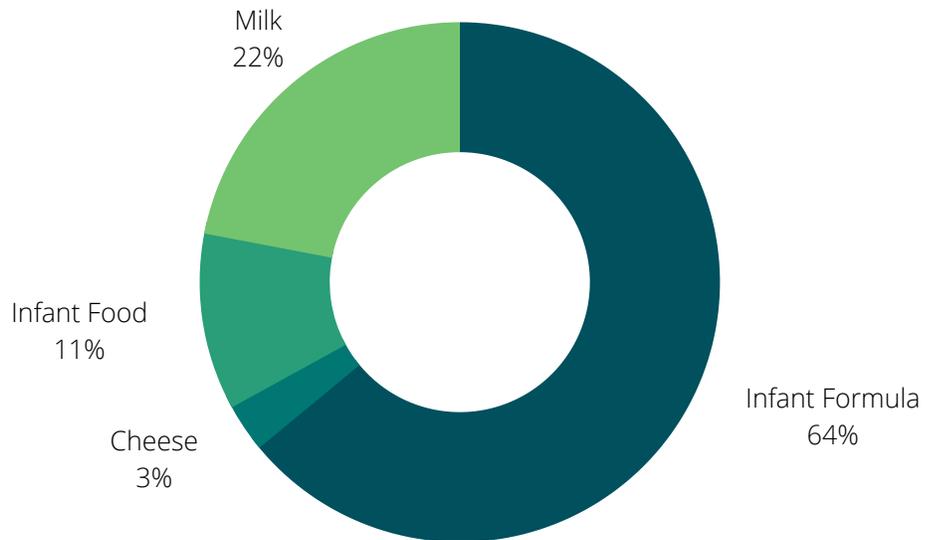
The [LA WIC Approved Food List \(WIC-23\)](#) and [LA WIC Transaction Procedures \(WIC-33\)](#) can always be accessed and printed directly from the [LA WIC Authorized Vendor Hub](#). Vendors can request replacement window clings by emailing [LAWICVendor@la.gov](mailto:LAWICVendor@la.gov). LA WIC will mail new window clings to Vendors who request them, but please note that there may be a slight delay, as LA WIC Vendor Operations staff continue to work remotely during the pandemic.

*continued on page 7*

continued from page 6

### FFY 2021 Routine Monitoring MSR Violations by Food Item

This graph represents the most common WIC Approved Food Items that were found insufficient in meeting Minimum Stock Requirements during FFY 2021 Routine Monitoring visits. Minimum Stock Requirements can always be found on the [WIC-23](#).



Please note the following changes to LA WIC’s Routine Monitoring requirements that will be assessed beginning in FFY 2022:

- **WIC-23 and WIC-33**: An updated copy (effective January 1, 2022) of both the [LA WIC Approved Food List \(WIC-23\)](#) and the [LA WIC Transaction Procedures \(WIC-33\)](#) must be maintained in the store at all times, although it is no longer required that copies be kept at every register. A single copy of each document may be kept in a central location in the store (at the customer service desk, for example).
- **Program Guide**: An updated copy (effective January 1, 2022) of the [LA WIC Food List Brochure \(Program Guide\)](#) must be maintained in the store at all times. A single copy may be kept in a central location in the store (at the customer service desk, for example). Vendors have not previously been required to maintain the Program Guide in the store.
- **Minimum Stock Requirements**: Vendors will be required to meet the updated Minimum Stock Requirements (MSR), as described on the [LA WIC Approved Food List \(WIC-23\)](#).

continued on page 8

*continued from page 7*

- Shelf Talkers: Vendors who choose to use shelf talkers must use only the shelf talker image(s) provided by LA WIC. For more information, see page 2 of Vendor Views Newsletter Issue 6, from September 2021. All approved shelf talker images can be found on the LA WIC Authorized Vendor Hub under the LA WIC Authorized Vendor Essential Documents and Links section.
- Transactions Procedures Training Log (WIC-33L): All new Vendor employees are required to read the LA WIC Transactions Procedures (WIC-33) and then sign the LA WIC Transaction Procedures Training Log (WIC-33L). All new employees trained on or after January 1, 2022 will be required to sign the updated version of the WIC-33L (Eff. 01.2022).

The LA WIC Vendor Self Assessment Form (Assessment Form, effective 01.2022) is a resource to self-assess your store's compliance with certain LA WIC Vendor Rules and Regulations, and can be downloaded from the LA WIC Authorized Vendor Hub.

Please note that your store is required to comply with all provisions of the LA WIC Vendor Agreement and Vendor Guide at all times, only some of which are reflected on the Assessment Form. The Assessment Form is for informal Vendor use only and does not replace nor supplement LA WIC's formal processes for monitoring and investigations.



## List of LA WIC Documents Updated for FFY 2022

Updated FFY 2022 Document	Effective Date
<u><a href="#">LA WIC Policy Manual</a></u>	12/18/2021
<u><a href="#">LA WIC Vendor Guide</a></u>	01/01/2022
<u><a href="#">LA WIC Approved Food List (WIC-23)</a></u>	01/01/2022
<u><a href="#">LA WIC Food List Brochure (Program Guide)</a></u>	01/01/2022
<u><a href="#">LA WIC Transaction Procedures (WIC-33)</a></u>	01/01/2022
<u><a href="#">LA WIC Transaction Procedures Training Log (WIC-33L)</a></u>	01/01/2022
<u><a href="#">LA WIC Vendor Self Assessment Form</a></u>	01/01/2022

## JOIN OUR MAILING LIST

This newsletter will automatically be sent to the official corporate email address your store has on file with LA WIC, but you can [click here](#) to register additional email addresses to receive this newsletter directly.

## CONTACT US

Phone: (225) 342-0725

Fax: (225) 376-4674

Email: [LAWICvendor@la.gov](mailto:LAWICvendor@la.gov)

LA WIC Authorized Vendor Hub:

<http://ldh.la.gov/wicvendor>

(Open the link and press CTRL+D to bookmark the page on your internet browser)

## WE WANT YOUR FEEDBACK!

What did you like about this newsletter? What didn't you like? What topics would you like to see covered in future issues? Please [click here](#) to let us know how we're doing by filling out a short survey.

---

[This institution is an equal opportunity provider.](#)