

## Understanding your EBT System

It is important for cashiers to know how to properly conduct a WIC Transaction using EBT. Each Vendor's POS system is different, so please review any and all training materials provided to you by your POS provider to best understand how your system operates. Once you understand your system, you'll be able to help WIC Participants have a smooth checkout and avoid delays at the register.

## Accountability for Employee Actions

LA WIC will hold the Vendor accountable for the actions of its employees in the processing of WIC Transactions, in the processing of EBT Cards, and in the provision of WIC Approved Food Items.

## Transaction Processing Procedures using an LA WIC EBT Card (EBT Card)

Vendors must comply with WIC Transaction Processing procedures as outlined in the LA WIC Transaction Procedures (WIC-33), the LA WIC Vendor Agreement, and the LA WIC Vendor Guide.

1. **Balance Inquiry.** Vendors must provide WIC Participants with a Benefit Balance (Benefit Inquiry) receipt prior to making a purchase if requested by the WIC Participant. Vendors cannot require a minimum purchase in order to process a balance inquiry and provide the Benefit Balance receipt.
2. **The WIC Participant must enter the EBT Card PIN.** The WIC Participant must enter their PIN to authorize the WIC Transaction. Vendors must accept WIC Transactions only from WIC Participants or proxies as indicated by entry of a valid PIN. If the WIC Participant or proxy does not remember their PIN, refer them to their WIC clinic for assistance. Cashiers may NOT enter the PIN for the WIC Participant.
3. **The Cashier must not request any additional form of ID.** The PIN authorizes the WIC Transaction. WIC Participants are not required to produce any additional form of identification to complete the WIC Transaction.
4. **The Cashier must scan all items in the Transaction.** Scan or manually enter the actual UPC codes affixed to all items selected by the WIC Participant for purchase.
  - a. Cashiers shall not scan any UPC code that is NOT affixed to the actual item being purchased by the WIC Participant (no UPC substitutes, replacements, or scanning of UPC codes not actually affixed to the actual item being purchased by the WIC Participant).
  - b. Cashiers shall not perform overrides for WIC Approved Food Items (except for fresh fruits and vegetables as needed).
5. **The Cashier must deduct coupons and in-store promotions.** Cashiers must deduct applicable coupons and in-store promotions in accordance with the requirements of the Handling of In-Store Promotions section of the Policy Manual.
6. **The WIC Participant must accept/update WIC Benefits to approve the WIC Transaction.** Cashiers must NOT accept or approve the WIC Transaction on behalf of the WIC Participant, unless directed to do so by the Participant.
7. **The Cashier must provide the WIC Participant copies of all receipts from the WIC Transaction.** Cashiers must provide WIC Participants with receipts in accordance with the receipt requirements listed in the [USDA, FNS, WIC EBT Technical Implementation Guide](#) and the [WIC-EBT Operating Rules](#). Receipts may be printed, emailed, and/or texted to the WIC Participant. If a WIC Participant requests an

update as to the status and/or benefits available on their EBT Card, Authorized WIC Vendor staff must assist the WIC Participant with obtaining the requested information. The types of receipts that must be provided to WIC Participants include but are not limited to:

- **Balance Inquiry Receipt** – An opening or ending benefit balance receipt that includes, but is not limited to
    - the last four (4) digits of the PAN only
    - the store’s name, physical address, city, state, and zip code
    - local date and time of the balance inquiry
    - benefit expiration date (or benefit effective and benefit ending dates)
    - benefits available (even if zero balances) including the benefit description, quantity, and unit of measure
      - If provided at the beginning of the Transaction, data reflects the opening benefit balance
      - If provided at the end of the Transaction, data reflects the ending benefit balance
    - unique transaction identifier or systems trace audit number
  - **WIC Purchase Receipt** – May be separate or included the Vendor’s sales receipt that includes but is not limited to:
    - the last four (4) digits of the PAN only
    - the store’s name, physical address, city, state, and zip code
    - the date and time of purchase
    - store lane number, if available
    - WIC food item identifier (if a separate WIC purchase receipt is not provided)
    - benefit expiration date and time
    - purchased food items including the food item quantity, description, and unit of measure
    - unit cost
    - total purchase amount
    - benefits remaining, including the benefit description, quantity, and unit of measure
    - unique transaction identifier or systems trace audit number
  - **Void Receipt** – If the Cashier or the WIC Participant voids the WIC Transaction, a WIC Purchase Receipt or a sales receipt reflecting the voided WIC Transaction must be provided.
- 8. The Cashier must provide all items deducted from the WIC Participant’s WIC Benefits (EBT card) to the WIC Participant.** Cashiers may not deny a WIC Participant a WIC Approved Food Item decremented from the WIC Participant’s EBT Card.
- 9. The Cashier must allow other forms of payment.** WIC Participants may use another payment method (SNAP, cash, debit or credit card, etc.) to pay for WIC Approved Food Items that exceed their available WIC Benefits (such as paying the difference for fruits and vegetables) or for any non-WIC items purchased.

### **Self-Checkout Terminals**

WIC Participants may use self-checkout terminals provided the Vendor meets 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 may 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).

### **LA WIC Transaction Purchase and Exchange Requirements**

- **Allow WIC Approved Food Items on EBT Card** - If the item is a WIC Approved Food Item and the WIC Benefits for that specific food item are decremented from the WIC Participants' EBT Card, the cashier must allow the sale of the WIC Approved Food Item.
- **No Credit Allowed** - Vendors are not permitted to give WIC Participants cash, change, rain checks, or store credit. Vendors cannot give WIC Participants:
  - Cash back as a result of discounts or coupons used in a WIC Transaction;
  - Money or store credit in exchange for EBT Cards; or
  - Money or change back or store credit for purchases using EBT Cards.
- **Strict Limits on Refunds/Exchanges** - Vendors cannot provide WIC Participants with refunds or exchanges for WIC Approved Food Items purchased with EBT Cards, except for exchanges of an identical WIC Approved Food Item when the purchased WIC Approved Food Item is defective, spoiled, or has exceeded its "Sell by", "Best if Used by", or other date limiting the sale or use of the food item.
- **No Restitution** - The Vendor must never seek restitution from WIC Participants, parents, caregivers, or proxies for claims not paid or only partially paid by LA WIC.

### **LA WIC Transaction Reminders**

- **An item may not scan as a WIC Approved Food Item if:**
  - The item is not a WIC Approved Food Item. See the [LA WIC Vendor Minimum Stock Requirements \(WIC-23\)](#) and the [LA WIC Program Guide](#), available on the [LA WIC Authorized Vendor Hub](#).
  - The item is a WIC Approved Food Item, but the WIC Participant does not have sufficient WIC Benefits for that specific food item available on their EBT Card (check the WIC Participant's Beginning Balance Receipt to determine whether or not the EBT Card has the necessary WIC Benefits available for the purchase).
  - If the item does not scan as a WIC Approved Food Item and it is a WIC Approved Food Item that the WIC Participant has sufficient WIC Benefits to purchase, contact the manager and the UPC/POS team to have the item added to the store's Approved Product List (APL).
  - Note: Vendors shall not perform overrides for WIC Approved Food Items (except for fresh fruits and vegetables as needed). Vendors shall NOT scan any UPC code that is NOT affixed to the actual item being purchased by the WIC Participant (no UPC substitutes, replacements, or scanning of UPC codes not actually affixed to the actual item being purchased by the WIC Participant).
- **EBT Chip Cards** - The EBT Card is a Chip Card and must be inserted into the card reader (not swiped) by the WIC Participant.
- **Card Wipe Errors** - Cashiers should avoid possible Card Wipe Errors by reminding the WIC Participant to leave WIC EBT Card in the card reader until they are prompted to remove it. If the EBT Card is removed

too soon, an error known as a “card wipe” may occur. A card wipe removes all WIC Benefits from the EBT card. If this happens, reach out to your manager to confirm the card wipe and direct the WIC Participant to their local WIC clinic to have their WIC Benefits restored.

- **Practice Discretion** - Vendor Staff must practice discretion and not announce that the WIC Transaction involves WIC Benefits.
- **Same Courtesies** - Vendor Staff must provide the same courtesies to WIC Participants as to all other customers.
  - **Equitable Treatment** - Vendors may not treat WIC Participants differently from other customers by excluding them from in-store promotions—this includes disallowing the use of coupons or other Vendor discounts in WIC Transactions that are allowed in non-WIC Transactions. Similarly, Vendors may not treat WIC Participants differently by offering them incentive items, Vendor discounts, coupons or other promotions that are not offered to other customers.
  - **Same Courtesies** - Vendors must offer WIC Participants the same treatment as other customers such as, but not limited to helping the customer to obtain an item from a shelf or from behind a counter, bagging food for the customer, and assisting the customer with loading the food into a vehicle. Vendors must treat WIC Participants with the same courtesies as other customers with respect to both WIC Approved Food prices and services. Vendors may not treat WIC Participants differently from other customers by conducting the WIC Transaction indiscreetly or commenting negatively or offering opinions relative to the WIC Participant’s use of WIC Benefits, or engaging in verbal abuse of any kind (i.e., yelling or loudly announcing “WIC”).
- **Return any lost EBT Card(s)** - Vendors must return any lost EBT Card(s) found in the store and unclaimed for 24 hours to LA WIC.