



**State of Louisiana**  
Louisiana Department of Health  
Office of Public Health

July 2, 2019

TO: WIC Vendors

FROM: Jennifer Nicklas,  
Interim WIC Director

SUBJECT: **Louisiana WIC EBT Rollout - Vendor Notification**

**PLEASE SHARE THIS NOTIFICATION WITH ALL STORE STAFF**

Louisiana WIC is transitioning from paper food instruments (FIs) to an Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) system in 2019. On January 14, 2019, WIC clinics in the Shreveport/Bossier City and surrounding areas (Region 7) began issuing the first WIC EBT cards in Louisiana.

We would like to thank the Region 7 stores for being the first stores in the state to accept WIC EBT cards. We are also pleased with the many other stores across the state that have made progress toward becoming ready for Louisiana WIC EBT.

It is important for your store to be ready to accept WIC EBT cards when they are issued in your area. Our WIC participants will be provided a list of stores that are WIC authorized but have not completed their preparations for Louisiana WIC EBT. Louisiana WIC maintains an updated list of WIC Authorized Vendors with EBT readiness status on the [Louisiana WIC Authorized Vendor Hub](#).

Please prepare any stores you have outside of the pilot region (Northwest) to accept the Louisiana WIC EBT card in advance of the transition schedule found below. A list of [Point-of-Sale \(POS\) devices](#) certified in Louisiana to accept WIC EBT cards can be found on the Louisiana WIC Authorized Vendor Hub. For questions, you may contact the WIC EBT Team at [LouisianaWICEBT@la.gov](mailto:LouisianaWICEBT@la.gov).

During this transition to WIC EBT, **WIC vendors must continue to accept both forms of payment, paper FIs and EBT**, through the end of the statewide roll-out in October 2019 and slightly into 2020 as paper FIs expire.

It is important to remember that all policies that govern the Louisiana WIC program are still in effect and sanctions may be imposed for failure to follow regulations. WIC vendors should have all staff, including cashiers and managers, review training materials related to both transaction types, paper FIs and EBT. You will continue to see paper FIs throughout the transition process and for several months thereafter as these benefits are issued in advance. The [Welcome to eWIC](#) and [Louisiana WIC](#) videos (with individual modules) provide EBT and shopping information to both participants and vendors.

Below is our currently planned schedule for the EBT transition for the rest of the state:

Region	Task Name	EBT Go Live
8	Region 8 – Northeast Region (Monroe)	Mon 7/15/2019
6	Region 6 – Central Region (Alexandria)	Mon 7/29/2019
5	Region 5 – South West Region (Lake Charles)	Mon 8/12/2019
4	Region 4 – Acadian Region (Lafayette)	Mon 8/26/2019
2 & 9	Regions 2 & 9 – Capitol (Baton Rouge) & Southeast (St. Tammany) Regions	Mon 9/16/2019
3	Region 3 – Teche Region (River Parishes)	Mon 9/30/2019
1	Region 1 – Metropolitan Region (New Orleans)	Mon 10/14/2019

On the first day of an EBT “Go-Live” event, EBT cards will be provided only to participants who are in need of new benefits at that time, and, even then, the benefits may not be redeemable until the first day of the following month. WIC clinics generally issue benefits for a three-month period. This means that on the first day, very few WIC participants will actually have EBT cards so you may not have a WIC EBT transaction until further into the issuance period, depending on how many WIC transactions you normally process. The transition to the EBT cards and away from the paper FIs takes around three months for each clinic.

Your store may be visited by Louisiana WIC representatives or others on their behalf to test a WIC EBT purchase. The purpose of this is to provide you with further notice that the EBT cards are on the way and to assure our WIC participants that WIC stores are ready for them to redeem their EBT benefits. These will be actual purchases for which you will be paid through the claim process. Please welcome these representatives and the experience they will provide in conducting a live WIC EBT transaction.

If you have any questions regarding this memo, please contact the WIC Vendor Team at [LAWICVendor@la.gov](mailto:LAWICVendor@la.gov) or 504-568-8229.

We are very excited about the transition to Smart Card WIC EBT in Louisiana and are certain it will improve your ability and ours to better serve our WIC participants.

cc: Beth Scalco  
WIC State Agency