

ONLINE EBT OPERATIONS:

The Future of Retail POS Recertification – Who, What, When,
Why, and How

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PANEL

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HISTORY



WHAT IS A RETAIL SYSTEM CERTIFICATION?

- Testing is performed to ensure a retail system operates in accordance with WIC regulations, operating rules, and technical specifications
- Three levels of certification
 - **Level 1** – Typically handled remotely, certification between the Electronic Cash Register (ECR) System and the Third Party Processor (TPP)
 - **Level 2** – Conducted in the retailers testing lab, certification between the ECR and the EBT Processor
 - **Level 3** – Conducted live in the lane (at a storefront)

TESTING

RETAIL CERTIFICATION HISTORY

- **Smart card** states (NM, TX, and WY) were first to perform certifications
 - All smart card states used the same card technology
 - Smart card states typically worked together certify systems
 - Generally used common scripts with state specific scenarios
 - Testing performed onsite in developer lab



RETAIL CERTIFICATION HISTORY

- **Online** states followed the smart card model but...
 - Initially processors interpreted the X9.93 specs differently
 - Separate certifications were done by each processor (3 different processors)
 - Multi-state certifications were performed under one processor
 - No common set of test scripts used across processors



ONLINE CERTIFICATION BEGINNINGS

- In 2008, work began to align the online processors to a single implementation of the X9.93 resulting in:
 - WIC EBT Technical Implementation Guidance (TIG) Document
 - WIC EBT Operating Rules
- In 2011, FNS initiated a project through the State of Kentucky to develop a standard set of certification test scripts
 - Scripts were obtained from the three processors and the smart card states
 - Consolidated scripts were developed by MAXIMUS

ONLINE CERTIFICATION HISTORY (CONTINUED)

- In 2013, a workgroup convened to discuss retail certifications
 - Limited progress was made
 - One output was the consolidated online certification scripts



ONLINE CERTIFICATION HISTORY (CONTINUED)

- Since the end of the original certification work group and publishing of the test scripts
 - One processor exited the market, another entered.
 - Integrated system interface standards and operating rules have become further solidified.
 - Certifications continue to be processor specific.
 - The FNS test scripts are now used by all three processors, but only for the last 2 years. New Scenarios have been added.
 - States using the same processor have (in most cases) agreed to accept certifications performed by their processor on behalf of another state.
 - Some states using a different processor have in some cases agree to accept a certification done by another processor with additional test environment and production environment testing.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES



ONLINE CERTIFICATIONS CHALLENGES

- Still processor specific – no easy way to support certifications for multiple processors.
- No central repository of information about past certification.
- No governing body.
- No clear criteria for when a recertification is needed.
- Scripts require updating to be current.
- With over 50 states operating eWIC systems, the burden for stakeholders is increasing.
- However, issues are still being found in production.

CURRENT EFFORTS

- ✓ Consolidated list of completed certifications .
- ✓ Engaging stakeholders in discussions of how best to address challenges.
- ✓ Reviewing test scripts and obtaining stakeholder feedback.





OPPORTUNITIES TO ENGAGE





WIC EBT TECHNICAL DOCUMENTS GROUP

- Monthly Call hosted by FNS/Erin McBride
- First Wednesday of the month 1-3 pm EST



PARTNERWEB.USDA.GOV

- Operating Rules
- TIG – Technical Implementation Guide
- WUMEI – WIC Universal MIS-EBT Interface
- Change Requests
- Bulletins



ONLINE USERS GROUP

- Kickoff Meeting July 23, 2019
- Hosted by Melanie (MJ) Roberts from Colorado WIC



eGOVERNMENT PAYMENT COUNCIL (eGPC)

- Online Retailer Recertification Workgroup
- Membership required



PROBLEM SOLVING DISCUSSION





CENTRAL REPOSITORY

- Who is responsible?
- Where is this housed?
- How is this funded?
- What is the process for updating?



CERTIFYING ENTITY

- Who could serve in this role?
- How would it be funded?
- How to ensure compliance?

RECERTIFICATION TIMING AND SCOPE

- What system changes trigger recertification?
- Should recertification be performed on regular basis (i.e. annually?)
- When are onsite certifications required? When is remote certification considered sufficient?
- Should certifications always use the full test scripts or allow pared down versions in some situations?



COMMUNICATIONS

- What can be done to improve communication about completed or pending certifications/recertifications?
- Should there be a committee of stakeholders (similar to technical documents group)?



OTHER

- What needs to be considered for future technology (i.e. self checkout, mobile payments, and online shopping)?
- Would a certification summit be useful to address the challenges and determine a standard process?

QUESTIONS?

THANK YOU!



CATEGORY- SUBCATEGORY DISCUSSION

A STRONG APL STARTS WITH A SOLID UNDERSTANDING OF CATEGORIES, SUBCATEGORIES, AND BROADBAND DESIGNATION.

LAUREN DALTON - MAXIMUS

September 2019

Background

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- Categories/Subcategories were first established for the Wyoming project and have evolved from there.
- FNS began publishing a “National” list around 2007 and requiring state agencies to use the “National” list around 2010.
- Some states still make minor modifications, to address state-specific situations or needs.

WIC EBT Food Categorization

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- Foods are represented by:
 - ▣ Category
 - ▣ Subcategory
 - ▣ Quantity
 - ▣ Unit of measure

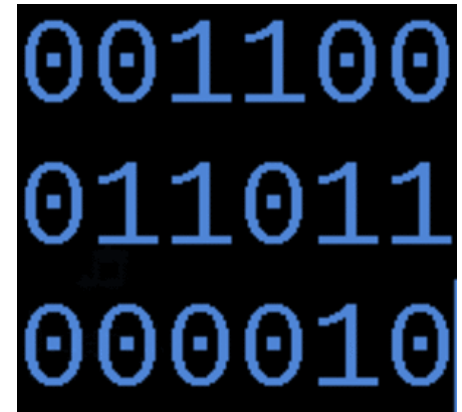
- In an EBT account, each individual food (Cat/Subcat) has its own balance



Categories and Subcategories

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- Cat is the high level food group, examples:
 - ▣ Low Fat/Fat Free Milk - Category 52
 - ▣ Legumes (Beans) - Category 6



- Subcat is the specific food within a the Cat group, examples:
 - ▣ Skim milk; powdered milk; lactose free milk
 - ▣ Peanut butter; dry beans/peas; canned beans

Unit of Measure

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- In addition, each subcat is associated with a Unit of Measure (UOM):
 - ▣ Gallon (GAL)
 - ▣ Container (CTR)
 - ▣ Ounce (OZ)
 - ▣ Pound (LB)
 - ▣ Dozen (DOZ)
 - ▣ Can/Bottle (CBL)

Category/Subcategory Snapshot

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<u>Food Item</u>	<u>Cat</u>	<u>Subcat</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Unit of Measure</u>
Cheese	02	000	Cheese all types	Pound
		001	Cheese	Pound
		002	Reduced Fat Cheese	Pound
		003	Low Sodium Cheese	Pound
		004	Tofu	Pound
Eggs	03	000	Eggs all types	Dozen
		001	Fresh eggs in Dozen Cartons	Dozen
Cereal	05	000	Cereal all types	Ounce
		001	Cereal - hot and cold	Ounce
Legumes/ Beans	06	000	Legumes/Beans all types	Cont
		001	Peanut Butter 18 oz	Cont
		002	Dry or Can Beans/Peas 16 oz	Cont
		003	Canned Beans (4 cans = 1 Container)	Cont

Specific vs. 000 Subcategory

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- Specific Subcategories: Any subcategory except 000
 - ▣ Enforces redemption of specific foods, eliminates choice

Specific vs. 000 Subcategory

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- 000 Subcategory: “Broadband,” “Wild Card,” or “Any”
 - ▣ Allows cardholders to chose between items in multiple subcategories at the grocery store
 - ▣ 000 is used in issuance only, UPCs are never assigned to 000, they are assigned to a specific subcat and may be flagged as purchasable with 000

Legumes Example

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- Category 06 – Legumes
 - [001] Peanut Butter
 - [002] Dry Beans/Peas
 - [003] Canned Beans

Each subcategory can be flagged for
Broadband/000.

Cat/Subcat/UOM Rules

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- A UPC/PLU only can reside in one Category, e.g., bananas can only be in Category 19 (CVB), they cannot be in both Category 12 (infant fruits and vegetables) & Category 19.
- UPCs must be associated with only one specific subcategory.
- UPCs within a subcategory must have the same UOM.

Cat/Subcat/UOM Rules (Cont.)

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- UOM for specific subcategories associated with the broadband subcategory **must be the same**, for example in legumes the UOM for peanut butter, dry beans/peas and canned beans is usually ‘Container’ if all can be purchased with broadband.

Considerations

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- How well Participants will understand UOM and size conversions (.25 = 1 quart)
- How benefits will be issued
 - Choice at issuance
 - less items in broadband, set up potentially less complicated
 - Choice in-lane
 - more items in broadband, set up potentially more complicated

Considerations

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- Typically this is a discussion that needs to occur across the program.
- Broadband designation (or not) will have ramifications for clinic staff education, participant training materials, food costs, etc.

UPC Collection

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- Selecting a UPC collection tool
 - Use a tool that was used by another SA using the same MIS my alleviate data formatting and importing issues.
 - Important to consider your program's IT support (both internally and externally).



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Questions?

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Category / Subcategory - NTE Discussion