

Massachusetts WIC Program Overview

As of August 2013:

- Caseload of 128,000
- 35 local agencies
- 1,014 authorized vendors
 - 448 Small Independent stores
 - 357 Chain Stores
 - 209 Pharmacies

MA WIC State Agency delegates routine monitoring and annual vendor training to the local agency directors.

Routine Vendor Monitoring:

- Routine monitoring is conducted on 50% of vendors (instead of the required 5%).
- Vendors are assigned to local agencies based on location.
- Number of vendors contracted with each local agency ranges from 4 to 60 vendors

Annual Vendor Training:

- “Face to Face” training is conducted annually with all retailers.
- The local agency signs Vendor Agreements on behalf of the State Agency for their service area.

Pros of delegating to Local Agency staff:

- Helps local agency directors build positive and consistent relationships with retailers, which in turn, help WIC customers have a successful shopping experience.
- Increased number of stores can be visited and travel costs are less. Approximately 500 stores received monitoring visits in FY'13.
- Since vendor monitoring visits are conducted throughout the year, issues or problems occurring at the store level can be dealt with promptly.
- In addition to checking for the required minimum inventory items, additional observations can be made that assist the State agency with policy and training requirements.
- Vendor training can be tailored to deal with issues specific to WIC customers in the local agency's service area. In addition, time can be set aside to meet with vendors individually, if necessary.

Examples from FY'14 local agency monitoring form:

21. TRAINING – store has agreed to train all staff using WIC approved training materials.

Does store use the WIC Cashier Training Video to train cashiers? YES NO

If yes, is the video is part of the store's computer training module

If no, how is the store training cashiers? (see the vendor materials if store needs a copy) _____

22. OTHER REQUIREMENTS:

Shelf labels *

Does the store display WIC shelf labels to identify WIC approved food items?

YES NO If NO, why _____

Is the store aware that shelf labels are mandatory? YES NO

If no, see the vendor materials section to request labels for the store.

Infant Formula

Where is the formula kept in the store? On Shelf Customer Service Desk

If at customer service desk, is there a sign on the shelf to indicate that formula is kept at a difference location? YES NO.

If no, did you instruct the store personnel to put a sign? YES NO

Other requirements (con't):

Review of WIC checks on hand *

Did the store have any WIC checks on hand? YES NO

If yes, did you review the checks for WIC compliance? YES NO

C None available for review

Did you take any checks from the store? YES NO

Vendor Materials

Does vendor need any training materials? YES NO

___ Shelf labels ___ Video ___ WIC Approved Food Guide ___ WIC Posters

*New requirements for FY'14. In addition, local agency staff will be checking shelf prices for a sample of high volume WIC items.

Cons of delegating to Local Agency staff:

- Possible inconsistent information given to retailers.
- State agency has to monitor the schedule to ensure routine monitoring occurs year-round.

Federal Regulations state:

“State agencies that intend to delegate any aspect of vendor monitoring responsibilities to a local agency or contractor must describe the State agency supervision and instruction that will be provided to ensure the uniformity and quality of vendor monitoring”.

MA WIC provides the following supervision and instruction to local agencies to meet this Federal Requirement:

Vendor Monitoring:

- The state agency provides training to the local agency staff annually with regard to routine monitoring visits. This training is required for all local agency directors.
- Written instructions and standardized reports are provided for the visits.
- Instructions include specific timeframes to conduct monitoring visits.
For example:
 - Tri-period (1) October, November & December – 34% completed.
 - Tri-period (2) January, February & March – 33% completed.
 - Tri-period (3) April, May & June – 33% completed.

Local agency supervision and instruction (con't):

- Each local agency is provided with a vendor monitoring report that lists which stores were monitored and which stores need to be monitored.
- MA WIC has a Management Evaluation standard that requires state staff to observe a local agency monitoring visit.

Local agency supervision and instruction (con't):

Annual Vendor Training:

- The state agency provides training to the local agency staff annually with regard to annual vendor training. This training is required for all local agency directors.
- Local Agency Directors are provided with the following:
 - Power Point training presentation, to ensure consistent information is given.
 - All applicable cashier training materials.

Note: All new vendors are trained by the State staff.