

This section provides frequently asked questions and solutions to problems that vendors may encounter when assisting WIC participants.

1001. No WIC Identification Folder:

What should you do if a participant does not have her/his WIC ID Folder, but has other types of identification?

- To redeem CVCs and WIC checks, the WIC participant **must** present a DC WIC ID Folder corresponding to the checks they redeem. Vendors must **refuse** to accept all checks if the customer does not have a WIC ID Folder or if their name is not in the WIC ID Folder.

1002. Altered Checks:

Should you accept CVCs and WIC checks that have items crossed out and something else written over them?

- Do **not** accept CVCs or WIC checks with altered or removed food items.
- Immediately contact the WIC State Agency and provide the participant's name, WIC ID number, the check number(s), and local agency number. This information can be obtained from the top of the check.

1003. Complaints Against Participants:

a. How should you handle a WIC participant who becomes abusive to a cashier or other staff member because he or she will not allow the DC WIC guidelines to be compromised?

- Contact the State Agency. Provide the participant's name, ID number, and WIC local agency assigned. This information can be obtained from the top of the check.
- Follow your store's policy regarding abusive customers to handle WIC participants who become irate and abusive.

State Agency phone: **(202) 442-9397**
State Agency email: info.vendor@dc.gov

b. How should you handle WIC participants who attempt to return WIC food items in exchange for money, buy unauthorized food items, incorrectly redeem their WIC checks, or who are unwilling to follow WIC procedures?

- Vendors should file complaints using the Vendor Complaint Form (Form 7)
- Complete the Vendor Complaint Form and email to info.vendor@dc.gov
 1. All vendor complaints are handled by the State Agency and the participant's local agency

2. The State Agency will follow up with the store and the participant to resolve the complaint within ten (10) business days
 3. The State Agency will contact the appropriate local agency clinic for follow-up, if necessary
 4. The State Agency will determine whether the vendor or participant should receive a warning and/or sanction
 5. Complaints are documented and resolved using the Vendor Complaint Form
-

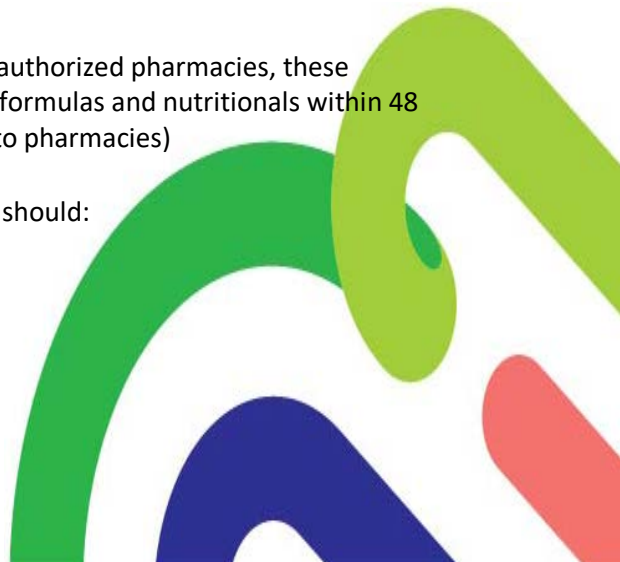
1004. Participants Who Cannot Write:

What should you do if you encounter a WIC participant who cannot write their name? How will you know the correct WIC participant is redeeming the WIC checks?

- Since participants must sign the WIC certification form and ID Folder at the clinic, this problem would have been detected before the participant reaches the store
 - Allow participants who cannot write to make their signature "mark" on the WIC check - this "mark" is recognized as the participant's signature
 - Use the WIC ID Folder to verify the participant's "mark" on the checks
-

1005. WIC Foods Out of Stock:

What should you do if your store is out of a WIC food item?

- DC WIC Authorized vendors are responsible for stocking a sufficient quantity of WIC foods at all times, according to the WIC Minimum Stocking Requirements. See section 600 of the Vendor Manual and forms 4a_Minimum Stocking Requirements for Medium and Large Vendors, or 4b_Minimum Stocking Requirements for Small Vendors, as applicable, for more information on Minimum Stocking Requirements.
 - Standard contract infant formulas are expected to be stocked to WIC Minimum Stocking Requirements at all times – see section 600 of the Vendor Manual and forms 4a_Minimum Stocking Requirements for Medium and Large Vendors, or 4b_Minimum Stocking Requirements for Small Vendors, as applicable, for more information on Minimum Stocking Requirements. (Not applicable to pharmacies)
 - While special formulas are not required to be in-stock at authorized pharmacies, these pharmacies are required to obtain WIC-approved special formulas and nutritionals within 48 hours when requested by a participant. (Only applicable to pharmacies)
 - If the store is out of a particular WIC food item, the store should:
 - Take immediate action to replenish the stock
- 

- If the store is out of a standard contract infant formula, store management should obtain the number of cans specified on the participant's WIC check on the same day, if possible (not applicable to pharmacies)
 - Stores have 24 hours to replenish out-of-stock standard contract infant formulas (not applicable to pharmacies)
 - Stores reported for not having a sufficient stock of WIC approved food items will be sanctioned. Insufficient stocking may be observed and reported by participants, or by State Agency representatives performing monitoring visits, compliance buys, educational buys or technical assistance visits. (see section 700 of the Vendor Manual for more information).
-

1006. Cents-Off Coupons and Customer Discount Cards:

Can WIC participants use cents-off coupons or customer discount cards for WIC approved foods purchases?

- Yes, the same courtesies given to other customers must be extended to WIC participants
 - Any cost savings should be deducted from the total purchase price entered on the CVC or WIC checks
 - WIC participants should not receive any cash in exchange for the use of the cents-off coupons or the customer discount card
 - Participants are allowed to participate in "Buy One and Get One Free" type promotions without charging the WIC Program for the free item(s).
-

1007. WIC Participants as Employees

What should you do if an employee at your store is also a DC WIC participant wanting to redeem their WIC checks?

- Inform employees that they may not process their own WIC checks during check-out
 - Ensure that another cashier processes the employee's WIC checks
 - Ensure that all employees are notified of this policy requirement
 - Ensure store management monitors employee activities to verify compliance in this area
-

1008. Servicing Non-English Speaking WIC Participants:

What should you do if a WIC participant experiences a problem in the store and is unable to express their concerns to store management?

- Identify the language spoken and, if possible, utilize a store employee who can interpret for the WIC participant.
 - If the store has access to **Language Line** services, the employee interacting with the WIC participant should use the store's Language Line information to call an interpreter. Language Line interpreters are available 24-hours a day, 7 days a week for language interpreting services by phone.
-

1009. Other Frequently Asked Questions**1. Do WIC Participants identify themselves?**

- WIC participants are instructed to identify themselves. Sometimes they forget! It's a good idea to ask customers if they have any coupons, SNAP benefits (EBT card), or WIC vouchers before you start to ring up the sale.

2. Where can I find the information to review on the WIC ID folder?

- The first page contains the WIC participant ID number, name(s), and the signature(s) of the participant, parent/guardian, and/or assigned proxy.

3. What is a proxy?

- A person who is authorized to act for the WIC participant. They may redeem WIC checks when indicated.

4. What if a WIC participant or proxy doesn't have their WIC ID folder?

- Do not accept any WIC checks. You may not accept any other form of ID from the person.

5. What if a WIC participant signs the WIC check before they come into the store?

- Do not accept a pre-signed WIC check. The WIC participant or proxy must sign checks in your presence.

6. What if the WIC check has food items crossed off and other items written on it?

- Do not accept the voucher. There should be no handwriting on the voucher before the WIC Transaction.

7. What if the signature on the WIC check is not listed in the WIC ID folder?

- Do not accept the WIC checks. Only a person whose signature is listed in the WIC ID folder is authorized to redeem the checks.

8. What if the name and ID number on the WIC checks are not listed in the WIC ID folder?

- Do not accept the WIC checks. You have no way of knowing if the person with the WIC checks is authorized to redeem them. Direct WIC customers to their local WIC clinic to have their folder corrected.

9. What do I do if the transaction date is not within the First Day and Last Day to Use dates?

- Do not accept any checks before the First Day to Use, or after the Last Day to Use indicated on the check.

10. How many WIC checks can a WIC participant cash at one time?

- The WIC participant can cash any number of valid WIC checks at one time. Handle each check separately.

11. What if the WIC participant tried to purchase the wrong WIC food items?

- Do not accept any foods that are not listed on the voucher.

12. Can I allow substitutions for the WIC foods listed on the check?

- No, the WIC participant can only purchase the WIC foods, in the quantities and package sizes, listed on the WIC check.

- 13. Can I give a WIC participant a rain check for WIC foods that are out of stock?**
No. If a WIC participant cashes the check with out of stock WIC foods, they lose those items.
- 14. What do I do when our store is out of stock of WIC foods?**
- The only thing that you can do is inform the WIC participant of their options:
 - 1) purchase the items listed on the check that are available
 - 2) return to the store when the item(s) is available
 - 3) use the WIC check(s) at another authorized WIC store
- 15. What if my store has a special offer, i.e. Buy 1 Get 1 Free or Buy 2 Get 3 Free?**
- If the special offer involves a WIC food, the WIC participant may participate in the offer.
- 16. Can a WIC participant use coupons and/or club cards with the vouchers?**
- Yes, a WIC participant can use coupons and club cards.
- 17. Can a WIC participant exchange WIC food for cash?**
- No, you can not knowingly allow any exchange of WIC food items for cash.
- 18. What is a cash-value-check (CVC)?**
- A check for a set dollar amount that can be redeemed by the Participant for the purchase of fresh fruits and vegetables.
- 19. What if a WIC participant is cashing more than one CVC at a time?**
- Handle each CVC separately. There should be no exchange of cash between vendors and participants redeeming CVCs.
- 20. What if a WIC participant's purchase goes over the dollar amount listed on the CVC?**
- Vendors must allow for split tender transactions when participants redeem CVCs.
 - Example: If a WIC customer comes to the register with \$12.50 worth of fresh fruits and vegetables and presents an \$9.00 CVC, the cashier would write \$9.00 on the CVC and collect the remaining \$3.50 balance in another form of payment.
- 21. What if a WIC participant does not use the full dollar amount on the CVC?**
- Participants may choose not to use the full dollar amount listed on the CVC; the cashier may encourage the participant to purchase a few more fresh fruits and vegetables.
- 22. Can I combine a WIC families CVCs together?**
- No. Each cash value voucher is to be handled separately.
- 23. Can a participant buy bagged fruit/vegetables with the CVC?**
- Yes. Participants may purchase all fresh fruits and vegetables as long as the items do not come with dips or dressings.
- 24. Why can't I call the WIC clinic nearest to my store and ask them questions?**
- WIC staff do not have any authority to deal with vendor service issues.
- 25. Who do I call if I have a question or problem?**
- Contact the DC WIC State Agency with any questions or problems.
 - The phone number is 202-442-9397 Or the email is info.vendor@dc.gov