



Iowa WIC Vendor Newsletter

Iowa Department of Public Health

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EBT Mandated 2020

The Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (the Act), Public Law (P.L.) 111-296, includes several provisions related to Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) in the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (42 U.S.C. 1786 et.seq.) (**WIC**). The Act was signed into law by President Obama on December 13, 2010. The EBT provisions of the Act include:

1. A definition of EBT
2. A mandate that all State agencies implement EBT systems by October 1, 2020
3. A requirement for State agencies to submit annual EBT Status Reports on their progress toward EBT implementation
4. A requirement for the Secretary of Agriculture to establish minimum lane equipment standards
5. A requirement for the Secretary of Agriculture to establish technical standards and operating rules and
6. A requirement that State agencies use the National Universal Product Code (NUPC) database

WIC EBT Improving the Delivery of Benefits

WIC EBT has been successfully implemented in several states, with many other states in the process of migrating to EBT. EBT implementation has brought several improvements to the WIC program.

- Elimination of paper vouchers has improved the shopping experience for WIC participants and improved speed of the transaction.
 - Electronic approval of WIC items has improved the check-out experience for store associates and WIC participants.
 - Electronic payment processing has improved the reconciliation process for retail vendors.
 - EBT issuance of benefits has streamlined the process in the WIC clinic.
 - EBT has improved the shopping image of WIC.
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WIC EBT for Iowa

Choosing an EBT system that is right for Iowa begins with a close analysis of the current system and processes in use by IDPH, Iowa WIC clinics, Iowa retail vendors, and Iowa WIC participants. This analysis will guide planning for EBT, with the end result being an EBT solution that is right for Iowa. Implementation will begin in “pilot” areas first, with state-wide expansion to follow.

Iowa WIC Planning for EBT

The Iowa WIC program is beginning the process of exploring EBT implementation. Analysis and planning activities will be ongoing through 2011 and much of 2012. A comprehensive EBT planning and feasibility study is being conducted to determine the feasibility of a WIC EBT system for Iowa. Based on the information gathered from the feasibility study, a two to five year plan will be developed outlining steps to be taken to pursue WIC EBT for Iowa.

EBT Regional Meeting Notes



Current Iowa Check Format

A series of informational meetings were conducted during the summer of 2011 beginning with an initial kick-off meeting on June 22, 2011.

Questions and Concerns discussed at regional EBT meetings

- What electronic benefit formats are available to be used by the WIC Program?



Texas, Smart Card Format

Off-line: Smart card format, information is stored on a chip located on the EBT card (Lone Star)

On-line: Magnetic stripe card format, information is stored on a host (Bridge Card)

Hybrid: Combination of off-line and on-line technology that may be developed

- What format is Iowa considering?

Iowa will be reviewing all electronic formats: On-line, Off-line and Hybrid formats that may be developed. Members of the Iowa WIC team have visited Texas (off-line), Michigan (on-line) and Kentucky (on-line) to review the existing formats.

- When will Iowa decide which format will be used?



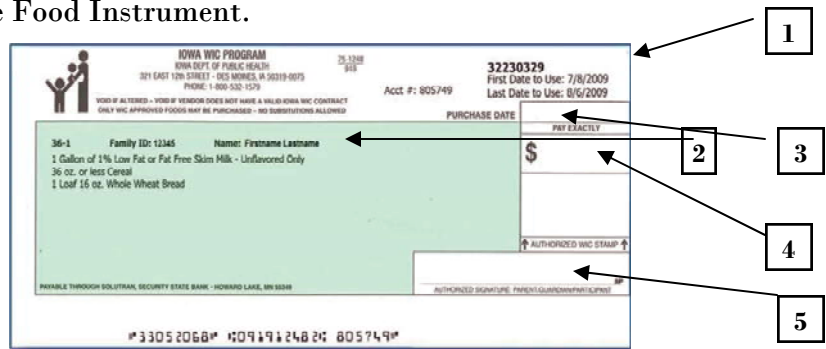
Michigan, Magnetic stripe Card Format

Burger, Carroll, and Associates (BCA) is currently conducting a feasibility and planning study. BCA will present a recommendation to the Iowa WIC Program in the spring of 2012.

WIC Transaction — Currently 5 Basic Steps

1. Confirm date of the transaction is within the 30-day timeframe printed on the Food Instrument.
2. Confirm the product(s) being purchased are the items listed on the Food Instrument.
3. Confirm the purchase date is entered in the appropriate box on the Food Instrument.
4. Confirm the purchase value is entered in the appropriate box on the Food Instrument.
5. Confirm the participant has signed the Food Instrument.

Apply 5-digit WIC stamp and deposit WIC Food Instrument within 15 days of the date of the transaction.



Frequently asked questions



What size refrigerated orange juice containers are WIC Authorized?

- **ONLY 64-ounce containers are authorized**
 - 59-ounce containers are “NOT” authorized
 - Refrigerated blended juices are “NOT” authorized
- **Any brand 100% refrigerated orange juice is authorized including:**
 - Calcium added
 - Pulp-free
 - Country-style

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