



Memorandum

#14-092

TO: WIC Regional Directors
WIC Local Agency Directors

FROM: Linda Brumble, Unit Manager
Nutrition Education/Clinic Services Unit
Nutrition Services Section

DATE: July 24, 2014

SUBJECT: Change in Process for Performing On-site Vendor Applicant Reviews

As some of you may be already aware, effective August 1, 2014 the WIC Program is lifting the contracting vendor moratorium on the authorization of new stores. This moratorium, in place since April 2011, provided the WIC Program time to determine the best process for handling the many non-traditional vendor applications it has been receiving.

With the concurrence of Department of State Health Services executive management and the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the program modified WIC Vendor Policy, WV:10.0, in conjunction with lifting the contracting vendor moratorium. The revised policy states that effective August 1, 2014, the Texas WIC Program will award contracts only for new sites that are full-line grocery stores or pharmacies. However, to meet the federal mandate for an on-site review of an applicant vendor site prior to the award of a contract, while simultaneously meeting the request from the Texas grocery industry that chain stores not be required to have on their shelves at the time of preliminary review all of the expanded food items necessary to qualify as a full line grocery store, some applicant stores will now require two on-site visits. This process is necessary since most chain store applicants do not stock their shelves, especially with meat products and other perishable items, until a day or so before their grand opening date.

Vendors that the WIC Program already has a contractual relationship with and whose outlets are known to the program to be full line grocery stores will require two on-site reviews. The first visit will be a quick visit to meet the federal mandate and will primarily consist of the Local Agency reviewer verifying that the store:

- Exists at the address listed in the application,
- Has a store structure that appears to be 1,000 square feet or more, and
- Has a walk-in entrance accessible directly from the street or parking lot.

This review will be documented on a form supplied by the WIC State Office and returned to WIC for completion of other pre-contracting information.

#14-092 Change in Process for Performing
On-site Vendor Applicant Reviews
July 28, 2014
Page 2

A follow-up visit to each of the stores described above will be required within two weeks of the store becoming fully operational. At that time, an evaluation form provided by the State Office will be completed in its entirety and returned to the WIC Program.

In contrast, an applicant vendor that has no current contractual relationship with the WIC Program or has a contract for one or more sites that are not full-line grocery stores, will require only one on-site visit. The form provided by the state is similar to the form used in the past with one exception. On the new form the type and number of food items will be expanded to demonstrate that the applicant store outlet meets the definition of a full-line grocery store. To accommodate this expanded inventory, the form is configured for the reviewer to check a yes/no box that the type of food(s) is present with an observation that the minimum number of units required are in stock.

Training on the new vendor evaluation forms will be conducted by the program's Vendor Trainers through a series of webinars, or similar format, before the end of this month and beyond if necessary.

Any questions you may have about this topic will likely be answered during the training sessions referenced above. In the interim, if you have questions or require additional information, please contact the WIC Food Issuance and Redemption Services Unit by phone at 512-341-4400 and select phone option #4.