Texas WIC Program

Store Manager's Guide

Nutrition Services Section

Department of State Health Services

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Texas Department of State Health Services
Nutrition Services Section

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The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) is a food and nutrition program benefiting infants, children under age 5 and pregnant, postpartum and breastfeeding women with low to moderate incomes. The National WIC Program was established on September 26, 1972, following a nutrition survey that found anemia (low levels of iron in the blood) and inadequate growth to be common among American children.

This guide is intended for use by grocery store personnel who have a current vendor agreement with the WIC Program using WIC EBT. The information is useful primarily for managers and owners as it deals with contracting procedures, payment systems, and monitoring of WIC operations.

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What is WIC?

WIC in Texas

- The Texas WIC Program was established in 1974
- Approximately 580 clinics throughout the State of Texas
- Approximately 1,000,000 participants served each month
- Over $45,000,000 paid to vendors each month for foods provided to participants

Eligibility

To be eligible, an applicant must:

- Be a pregnant, breastfeeding, postpartum woman, infant or child under age 5;
- Live in the State of Texas and the geographical area served by the WIC local agency;
- Meet the program income guidelines. The household's income cannot be more than 185% of the Federal Poverty Limit that is published annually in the Federal Register;
- Have one or more nutrition health problems. A nutritionist or health professional at the WIC clinic determines nutritional risk, using information that includes hemoglobin or hematocrit measurement, height and weight measurements, dietary assessment and medical/maternal/health history.

Role of WIC Vendors

WIC vendors are grocers and pharmacies that have an active vendor agreement with the Texas Department of State Health Services WIC program. They are critical partners in the delivery of WIC benefits. When the WIC participant uses the WIC Smart Card, the retail clerk helps fill the food "prescription" by making sure the participant receives exactly the food items and quantities that are prescribed.

Authorized vendors play an important role in helping to improve the health of women, infants and children in Texas. Vendors act as the final service step in the WIC process. Since the WIC foods are designed to promote the healthy growth and development of children, the vendor's role in the program is a vital one by actually delivering these nutritious foods to the WIC recipient.

The WIC vendor may also find that the WIC program makes a substantial contribution to food sales. Most WIC customers will shop for all their grocery needs, not just their WIC items, when they use their WIC Smart Cards.

WIC Benefits

What do WIC participants receive?

- Supplemental Foods
- Nutrition/Health Education
- Healthcare Service Referrals

WIC participants receive food prescriptions for nutritious foods. These food prescriptions are for specific types and quantities of foods. WIC participants also receive nutrition education, breastfeeding support, and referrals to other primary health care programs.

Participants have individual nutritional needs so you may see different food items and quantities authorized. The State Agency (SA) sends updates to each vendors point of contact every year a with a list of new WIC approved foods. Vendors can also order training materials (ex: Texas WIC Approved Foods brochure) through http://dshs.texas.gov/wichd/vo/request-materials.aspx. The brochure with pictures of the WIC foods is useful for both WIC participants and store.

The WIC EBT Smart Card

As pictured below, there are two designs for the Texas WIC Smart Card. The Smart Chip is the same on both cards and interacts the same with your point of sale terminals.

The WIC clinic loads the chip with the food benefits. Generally, a WIC family has 3 months of benefits on one card. In some cases, a customer may have more than one WIC Smart Card. For example, a foster parent will have a smart card for each foster child.

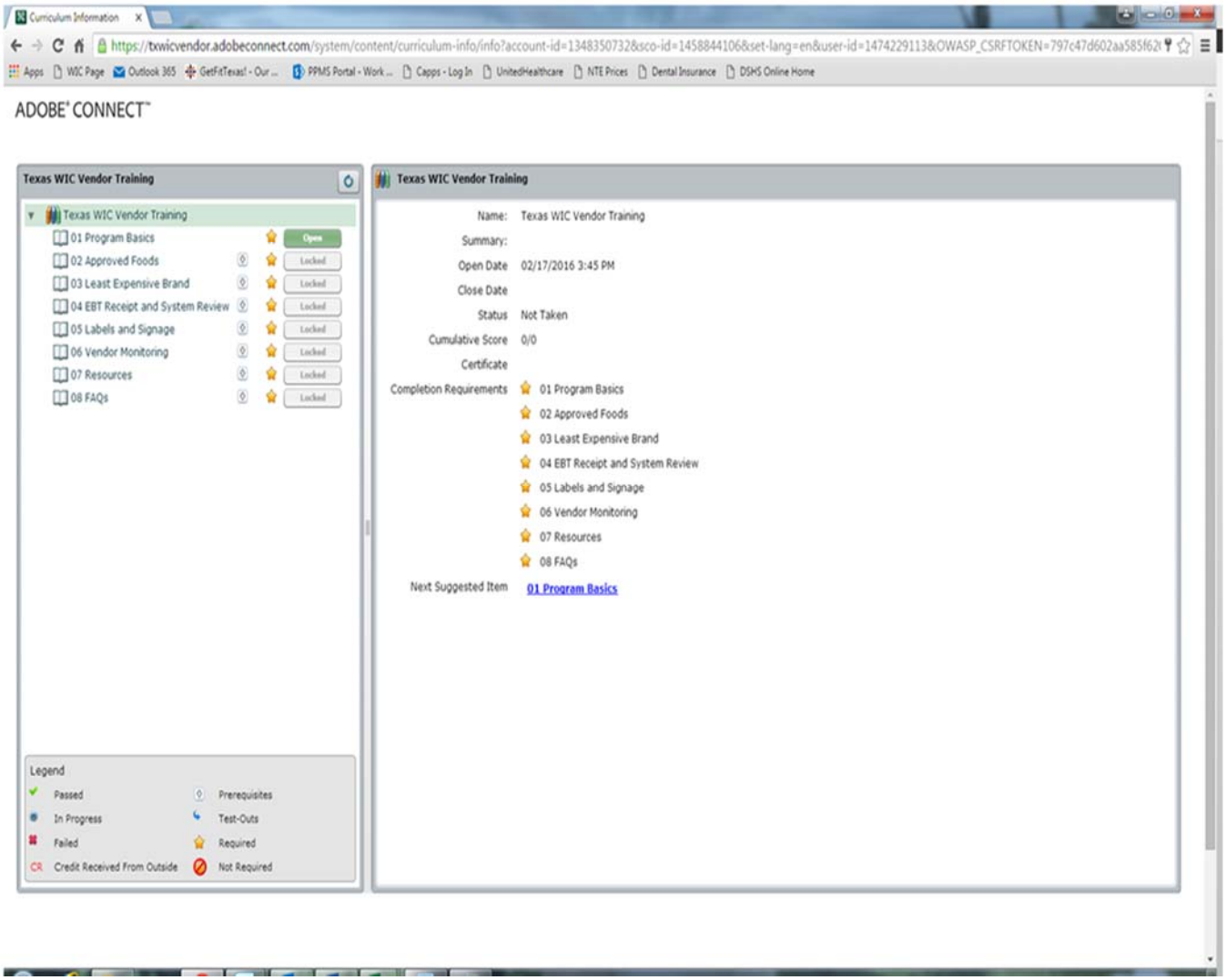
Vendor Training

<u>All</u> established WIC vendors are required to take our online training at least once every State Fiscal year. State fiscal year runs from October of the current year till September of the following year. (Example 10/01/16—09/30/17, State Fiscal Year)

New vendors must take the online training within 12 months of being authorized to accept WIC. The Texas WIC Program has made the training online to encourage as many people as possible to take the training. One best practice is to incorporate the Texas WIC training in your new hire onboarding process.

View the online vendor training at:

http://www.dshs.texas.gov/wichd/tng/on-site_vendor-cal.shtm



Allowable Foods

WIC approved food brochures with pictures of WIC authorized foods are available to grocers to help store personnel identify the allowable WIC foods. If your store needs WIC approved food brochures you can order them by going online http://dshs.texas.gov/wichd/vo/request-materials.aspx. These are supplied to your store at no cost to you.

WIC participants have individual nutritional needs so you may see different food items and quantities on the WIC EBT cards. WIC foods are carefully selected to meet nutritional requirements for WIC participants. This is why substituting unauthorized food items for WIC authorized food items is not allowed.

To view the most current Approved Foods list, visit our WIC Vendor Operations website at:
http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/wichd/vo/flist.shtm

WIC clients are issued cash value on their WIC EBT cards for fresh and frozen fruits & vegetables. The amount will vary according to the WIC customer's food prescription. WIC customers are allowed to purchase fruits & vegetables up to, BUT not over the dollar amount on the EBT smart card.

Infant Formula

The Texas WIC Program has competitive bid contracts with two manufacturers of infant formula. These formulas are the primary authorized formulas for the WIC Program. All other formulas require a doctor's prescription.

The WIC Program receives a rebate on every can of contract formula purchased with WIC EBT food instruments. The additional money received from this contract pays for the food provided to over 300,000 of the women and children WIC serves each month.

Similac Advance

Gerber Good Start-Soy

WIC Special Food Packages

In addition to the standard food packages issued, the following are additional size/types of foods issued by WIC. None of these foods are Traditionally Least Expensive Brands (LEB).

Do Not label these foods with the pink WIC Approved Item shelf tags. We also recommend that stores not label these with the Texas WIC Logo stickers. This only causes confusion in your store. Below are examples of some of our special food packages. These examples do not show all of

Kosher Special Food Package	No refrigeration or Cooking Facilities Special Food Package
Approximately 49 clients per month, statewide, receive this special package.	Approximately 12 clients per month, statewide, receive this special package.
• Kosher Whole Milk (brand specific)	• 8 oz. package of brand specific cheese
• Kosher Reduced Fat or Fat Free Milk (brand specific)	• 6 pack of 5.5 or 6.0 oz. cans of brand specific juices
• Kosher Cheese - 1 pound (brand specific)	• Non-fat dry powdered milk
• Kosher Cheese - 8 oz. (brand specific)	• 8 pack of 6.75 oz. boxes of 100% brand specific apple juice and grape juice
	• 3 pack of 3 oz. package of tuna or salmon

Exclusively Breastfeeding Multiple Infants from the Same Pregnancy Special Food Package	Gluten Free Cereal Special Food Package
Approximately 88 clients per month, statewide, receive this special package.	Approximately 200 clients per month, statewide, receive this special package.
• 8 oz. package of brand specific cheese	• 12.8 oz. Rice Chex
• 20 or 24 oz. loaf of brand specific whole wheat bread	• 14.0 oz. Corn Chex

Fillable Brochure

Canned Beans
15 to 16 oz. cans only
Brands carried are checked below
For children 2-5 years old & women

Allen's
- ☐ Blackeyed Peas (no snaps) – dry soaked
- ☐ Dark Red Kidney Beans
- ☐ Black Beans
- ☐ Great Northern Beans
- ☐ Pinto Beans

Casa Fiesta
- ☐ No Fat Refried Black Beans
- ☐ No Fat Refried Pinto Beans
- ☐ Pinto Beans

Casserole
- ☐ Fat-Free Refried Pinto Beans

Progresso
- ☐ Black Beans

Bush's Best
- ☐ Black Beans
- ☐ Blackeyed Peas (no snaps)
- ☐ Reduced-Sodium Black Beans
- ☐ Great Northern Beans
- ☐ Pinto Beans
- ☐ Reduced-Sodium Pinto Beans
- ☐ Fat-Free Refried Beans
- ☐ Cannellini Beans
- ☐ Dark Red Kidney Beans
- ☐ Reduced-Sodium Dark Red Kidney Beans

Ortega
- ☐ Original Flavor Black Beans

Trappey's
- ☐ Light Red Kidney Beans

Don't Buy: Chili beans, canned beans with snaps, jalapeño peppers, bacon, oils, Bush's Best "Seasoned Recipe" or soups

Dried Beans WIC
16 oz. (1 lb.) package
No added seasonings, bulk or mixed beans
- Pinto _____
- Black _____
- Navy _____
- Green Split Peas _____
- Lentils _____

Whole Grains WIC
16 oz. (1 lb.) only
- 100% Whole-Wheat Bread _____
- Brown Rice _____
- Wheat Tortillas _____
- Corn Tortillas: White _____ Yellow _____

Breakfast Cereals
18 & 36 oz. packages only
Brands carried are checked below

- Cream of Wheat: ☐ 18 oz.
- Malt-O-Meal: ☐ 18 oz. ☐ 36 oz. Original only
- Quaker Grits: ☐ 18 oz. Original only
- Kellogg's Corn Flakes: ☐ 18 oz. ☐ 36 oz.
- grape-nuts flakes: ☐ 18 oz.
- Kellogg's Rice Krispies: ☐ 18 oz.
- Kellogg's Special K: ☐ 18 oz.
- Kellogg's All-Bran: ☐ 18 oz.
- Kellogg's Mini Wheats: ☐ 18 oz.
- Kellogg's Frosted Mini Wheats: ☐ 18 oz.
- Kellogg's Mini Spectacular: ☐ 18 oz. box & bag ☐ 36 oz. box & bag
- Kellogg's Mini Spectacular: ☐ 18 oz. box & bag ☐ 36 oz. box & bag
- Oat Blenders: ☐ 18 oz. box & bag ☐ 36 oz. bag
- Oat Blenders: ☐ 18 oz. box & bag ☐ 36 oz. bag
- General Mills Cheerios: ☐ 36 oz.
- Dora the Explorer: ☐ 18 oz.
- Cheerios: ☐ 18 oz. ☐ 36 oz.
- KiX: ☐ 18 oz.
- Life: ☐ 18 oz.
- Honey Bunches of Oats Fruit Burst: ☐ 18 oz. Peach Raspberry
- Honey Bunches of Oats: ☐ 18 oz. Vanilla Bunches
- Honey Bunches of Oats: ☐ 18 oz. Almonds
- Honey Bunches of Oats: ☐ 18 oz. Cinnamon Bunches
- Honey Bunches of Oats: ☐ 18 oz. Honey Roasted

TEXAS WIC
Smart Choices • Healthy Families

Texas WIC Approved Foods Available at

This brochure is intended to assist WIC customers in knowing which specific brands of WIC items can be purchased in this store.

For more information, contact:
WIC Program MC-4554
Texas Department of State Health Services
P.O. Box 149347
Austin, TX 78714-9347

WIC Participants: 1-800-942-3678
www.texaswic.org

WIC Vendors: 1-800-252-9629
www.dshs.state.tx.us/wichd/vo/vo1.shtm

EFFECTIVE DATE: 10-1-2013 through 9-30-2014
EF13-06-14006

This brochure may assist your customers locating some of the WIC approved foods. Cereal, canned beans, and declared LEB foods are included! Fillable Brochures are available in English and Spanish and can be downloaded at:

http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/wichd/vo/expens.shtm

What to do if an item will not scan?

- Check the participant's beginning balance receipt to be sure item is prescribed and there are sufficient benefits.
- Consult WIC brochure to verify the size & brand are approved.
- Check the ingredients, especially with mixed fresh and frozen fruits and vegetables. The package may contain an item not allowed on the WIC Program. i.e. White meat potatoes, croutons, sauces or seasonings.
- Is it your store's declared LEB? Some stores have their registers set up to not accept an item if it is not the store's Declared Least Expensive Brand.
- Check your store's back office WIC server. Even if the item is in the State Agency APL, you must ensure you have selected it as "WICable" in your system.
- Ensure your fresh produce PLU codes are mapped properly in your system

WIC EBT Mantra:
If it doesn't scan, you can't sell it for WIC.

Card Wipe

When **ALL** benefits have been removed from a WIC customer's EBT card due to a system glitch or early removal.

Refer customer back to Vs. *the clinic to have benefits*

Card Decrement

When an **Extra** food item has been removed from a WIC customer's EBT card due to double scanning or system glitch.

Customer must leave the store with ALL items decremented from the EBT card.

Traditionally Least Expensive Brands

In order to stretch the WIC food dollar, WIC requires vendors to declare, label and sell their traditionally least expensive brand (LEB) for each type and size of WIC authorized food items listed below. For more information on LEB, Refer to WIC Vendor policy WV: 02.0.

- Milk: Gallon, Half Gallon, and Quart. Buttermilk: Half Gallon only
- Juice: Fluid, Frozen & Refrigerated
- Cheese: One or Two pound, block, sliced and string
- Dried Beans: Pinto, Black, Navy, Green Split Peas & Lentils
- Grains: Whole Wheat Bread, Whole Wheat Tortillas, Brown Rice, Yellow and White Corn Tortillas.

Vendors complete the Least Expensive Brand Declaration form at the time of contracting. The form lists the product brand name, and the Universal Product Code (UPC) for each product declared. Stores are required to sell their declared LEB food items at least 85% of the time when redeeming WIC EBT.

Cashiers need to continue to enforce the LEB policy as your EBT system may allow all WIC authorized brands carried by the store to be purchased, instead of just the declared LEB. If the store does not enforce the LEB policy, it could result in a monitor finding and store disqualification. Remember these items must be sold at least 85% of the time.

If a store runs out of its declared "Traditionally Least Expensive" brands, the next approved LEB available on the shelf should be sold. The participant should not be denied a purchase because the store ran out of the declared LEB item.

It is highly recommended that a current list of the store's declared LEB items be kept at each register for cashier reference as well as the most current WIC Approved Foods Brochure.

Note: In the event a store needs to change an LEB item, it can submit a change request to the State Agency at anytime. Contact the Vendor Relations section or go to the LEB declaration form located at:

http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/wichd/vo/expens.shtm

Labeling Guidelines

LEB Labeling

WIC policy requires that vendors label the declared Least Expensive Brand (LEB) items on store shelves with pink “WIC Approved Item” shelf tags available from the State agency. If the store does not label these items properly, it could result in a monitoring finding. Stores may request approval to use the WIC Approved Item sticker which they design and produce.

Non-LEB Labeling

Although WIC policy requires stores to label their declared Traditionally LEB items, stores do not have to label cereals, oatmeal, canned beans, peanut butter, eggs, tofu, soy milk, lactose-free milk, infant formula, infant cereal, infant fruits & vegetable, infant meats, tuna, pink salmon and frozen or fresh fruits & vegetables.

If a store chooses to use the pink “WIC Approved Item” label on WIC-allowable items other than the declared LEB items, then **all** WIC-allowable items in the category must be labeled; not just the store brands. For example, if a store uses the pink label on the house brand of peanut butter, then the store must also label all authorized brands of peanut butter that are within the WIC “Not to Exceed Amount” in the Authorized Product List (APL).

The only exception to this is the labeling of infant formula. If a vendor chooses to label the formula, only label the current contract brands of formula in powder and concentrate: Similac Advance 12.4 oz. powder and 13 oz. concentrate; Gerber Good Start Soy 12.9 oz. powder and 12.1 oz. concentrate.

Texas WIC logo for non-LEB items

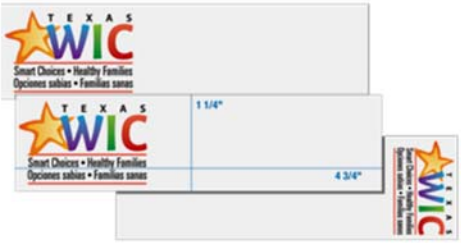
The official Texas WIC logo graphic can be used to label non-LEB items. This allows the vendor to identify other WIC items (excluding LEB) without the penalty associated with LEB labeling. If a vendor chooses to use the Texas WIC logo, they are responsible for printing their own. The Texas WIC Logo label cannot be used in place of the pink label on LEB items or on a food item which has not been approved by the WIC Program.

Fillable Labels

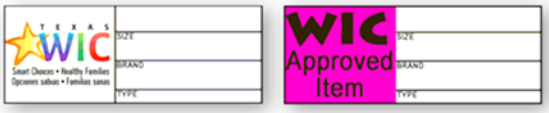
Another option is the new fillable "WIC Approved Item" and “Texas WIC Smart Choices Healthy Families” labels which include spaces for entering the size, brand and type of items being labeled.

The logo and fillable labels should be printed in color and are available for download on WIC’s webpage at:

http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/wichd/vo/expens.shtm



Example of Texas WIC logo tag



Example of State Approved Fillable TX WIC Logo and WIC Approved Item Pink Shelf tags

Example of State Issued Pink Stickers

Signage

Store Signage
The State Agency provides signs for use on the store's door or in the window. The signs include the phrase, "*WIC Smart Card Accepted Here*". These signs are available in a 5" by 7" size and are available in English or Spanish.
Note: Vendors must not use these signs in the checkout lanes or alter them without prior WIC Program approval.

State Issued Door Sign

Lane Signage
If all lanes are equipped to accept WIC Smart Cards, with the exception of self-serve, the "Tex" Lane Signage is not required.

If not all of a store's front end lanes are equipped to accept Texas WIC Smart Cards (excluding self-serve lanes), the lanes that are equipped need to be identified with the State provided self-adhesive sticker. This lets your WIC customers know which lane can perform WIC EBT transactions. These stickers may be placed anywhere in the lane as long as they are visible to your WIC customers that are ready to check out. The actual size of the lane sticker is 4.5" by 2.5".

State Issued Lane Sticker

Scenario: *A store has 10 lanes (front end) and only 4 are EBT equipped; lane stickers are required to be placed in the 4 equipped lanes.*

Note: *There is no writing on the lane sticker – only a picture of "Tex," the symbol of Texas WIC Smart Cards. Vendors must not add "WIC Smart Cards Accepted Here" to this sticker, or label any other sign in the lane with these words. This creates a potentially discriminatory situation against WIC clients.*

If for some reason a register is not accepting WIC, a vendor may display a sign which states *"Currently not accepting EBT" or "Cash or Check Only."* **Under no circumstance may a vendor display a sign which states "No WIC"; "WIC Not Accepted" or any other use of the WIC acronym.**

Use of WIC Acronym
According to Food Nutrition Services (FNS) instruction, a WIC food vendor is not permitted, without specific State agency authorization, to use either the acronym 'WIC' or the WIC logo, including close facsimiles there-of, in total or in part, either in the official name in which the vendor is registered, or in the name under which it does business, if different.

The purpose of this restriction is to avoid giving the impression to participants that the business is owned and operated by the WIC State agency and/or that the business is officially endorsed and preferred by the State.

WIC EBT System

1. The WIC client receives a WIC Smart Card loaded with up to 3 months of food benefits from the WIC clinic. The “smart” electronic chip on the card stores the food benefits in its memory.

2. The WIC customer shops with the WIC Smart Card to redeem their benefits. The store’s Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) system accesses only the current month’s benefits on the card and processes the transaction.

3. The store’s EBT system then sends an electronic claim of all transactions redeemed that day to the State for claims processing and downloads from the State the latest Authorized Product List (APL), Hot Card List (HCL) and Auto Reconciliation File (ARF) containing processed claim information.

4. The State processes the claim, posts the “processed” claim, and submits payment via direct deposit to the vendor’s bank account.

WIC EBT Receipts

WIC requires that grocers provide the WIC customers with a three-part receipt of each WIC transaction:

Part 1: *Beginning WIC Food Balance receipt*. This receipt shows the benefit balance the customer currently has on the card.

1

WELCOME TO
EASY BUY GROCERIES
HOURS: M-SAT 7:30a-9:00p
SUN: 8:00a-8:00p
****
BEGINNING BENEFITS BALANCE PAN:5476 StTX

Qty	UOM	Description
7.00	gal	MILK SKIM 1/2% 1% 2%
2.00	qt	MILK SKIM 1/2% 1% 2% QT
3.00	lb	CHEESE
2.00	dozen	EGGS-A OR AA LARGE/MED/SMALL
4.00	cntr	JUICE 64 FL OZ &/OR 16 OZ FRZ
2.00	cntr	JUICE 48 FL OZ &/OR 12 OZ FRZ
108.00	ounce	CEREAL
2.00	item	DRY OR CAN BEANS/PEANUT BUTTER
1.00	item	DRY BEANS 1 LB PKG
5.00	lb	BREAD/TORTILLAS/RICE/OATMEAL
16.00	value	FRUITS &/OR VEGETABLES
3.00	gal	WHOLE MILK ONLY
1.00	qt	WHOLE MILK ONLY

****
Benefits Expire Midnight on 11/30/20XX
****
CASHIER NAME: MYRNA CABELLO
C0003 #0019 12:04:33 19NOV20XX
S00001 R001

THANK YOU FOR
SHOPPING WITH US!

2

WELCOME TO
EASY BUY GROCERIES
HOURS: M-SAT 7:30a-9:00p
SUN: 8:00a-8:00p
CONFIRMATION RECEIPT PAN:5476 StTX
****
These items will be paid by WIC

Qty	UOM	Description
1.00	GAL	FOOD CLUB 2% MILK
1.00	CTNR	PARADE ORANGE 48 OZ
1.00	CTNR	PARADE ORANGE 64 OZ
1.00	ITEM	REESES PNT BUTTR 18OZ
0.50	GAL	FOOD CLUB WHOLE MILK
$0.79	VALU	APPLES - GALA
$2.95	VALU	FOOD CLUB FRZ BROC

****
Benefits Expire Midnight on 11/30/20XX
****
CASHIER NAME: MYRNA CABELLO
C0003 #0019 12:05:20 19NOV20XX
S00001 R001

THANK YOU FOR
SHOPPING WITH US!

3

WELCOME TO
EASY BUY GROCERIES
HOURS: M-SAT 7:30a-9:00p
SUN: 8:00a-8:00p
****
REMAINING BENEFITS BALANCE PAN:5476 StTX

Qty	UOM	Description
6.00	gal	MILK SKIM 1/2% 1% 2%
2.00	qt	MILK SKIM 1/2% 1% 2% QT
3.00	lb	CHEESE
2.00	dozen	EGGS-A OR AA LARGE/MED/SMALL
3.00	cntr	JUICE 64 FL OZ &/OR 16 OZ FRZ
1.00	cntr	JUICE 48 FL OZ &/OR 12 OZ FRZ
108.00	ounce	CEREAL
1.00	item	DRY OR CAN BEANS/PEANUT BUTTER
1.00	item	DRY BEANS 1 LB PKG
5.00	lb	BREAD/TORTILLAS/RICE/OATMEAL
12.26	value	FRUITS &/OR VEGETABLES
2.50	gal	WHOLE MILK ONLY
1.00	qt	WHOLE MILK ONLY

****
Benefits Expire Midnight on 11/30/20XX
****
CASHIER NAME: MYRNA CABELLO
C0003 #0019 12:05:47 19NOV20XX
S00001 R001

THANK YOU FOR
SHOPPING WITH US!

Part 2: *WIC Foods Purchased* Receipt. This receipt shows the allowable items just received during this *transaction.* ***Note: Cashiers must have WIC customers review paper receipt or checkout display screen before the customer accepts the transaction. Once the customer presses the “accept” or yes button, no changes can be made. However, prior to pressing the “accept” or yes button, changes can be made.***

Part 3: *Ending Balance Receipt*. This receipt shows the final balance after the purchase is deducted.
The system your store uses may produce receipts that look different; however, they must contain the same information described above.

Submit a new UPC

What does the vendor do if an item is not listed on the APL?

If your store has a food item that is not currently in the APL, please submit a request to the State to add the food item to the WIC Authorized Product List (APL). This enables the State Agency to approve this food item so it can be sold during a WIC transaction.

For more information on adding UPC's to the Authorized Product List, visit our website at:
http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/wichd/vo/upc.shtm

Overview of the Hot Card List

The Hot Card List is an electronic file that lists WIC Smart Cards that have been reported lost or stolen. **The State requires that the store download an updated HCL every 48 hours.** However, the State recommends vendors check the HCL file date every day to ensure that it is not older than 48 hours.

What Happens if a Customer Tries to Use a Hot Card?

If a customer tries to use a WIC Smart Card found on the current HCL, he/she will receive the system message "**Card Error– Return to Clinic**". The system also locks the card if it is on the HCL and the customer will not be able to use it anywhere else.

Please refer the customer to the local WIC clinic. The same message appears if the card is damaged; the cashier will not know the reason for the card problem and should avoid any confrontation in the lane with the customer.

What Happens if the Store Accepts a Hot Card?

As long as the store has downloaded the HCL within the last 48 hours, the WIC State Office will honor and pay hot card transactions. *However, if a store's Hot Card List is over 48 hours old, the store is liable for any hot card transactions accepted. The WIC State Office will **not** pay for these transactions and there is no appeal process for this issue.*

WIC Smart Cards Found in the Store (Returning Lost Cards)

If a customer leaves their WIC EBT Smart card in your store:

1. Hold the lost card for 24 hours. If the customer does not return within 24 hours, drop the card in any U.S. mailbox for return to the State. You do not need a stamp or envelope. **Please hold the cards for at least 24 hours and do not return them to the WIC clinics.**

2. If the customer returns to claim the lost card, insert the card into the terminal, have the customer enter their PIN number. If the system accepts the PIN number and generates a beginning balance receipt, you may return the card to the customer.

Payment of WIC EBT

Overview of the EBT Claims Process
A WIC EBT claim consists of one or more transactions. A transaction consists of one or more purchased food items. During the course of the day, several transactions may occur at several lanes in the store. At least every 24 hours, your store's EBT system should group these transactions together, give them a claim file name and send the claim to the State Agency.

What Happens to Submitted Claims
The State Agency system accepts Claims that have no errors. The State Agency performs claim edits, such as reducing any food items with claim prices over the "Not to Exceed Amount."

After the edits are made, the State Agency system sends the electronic claim files to the agency's Fiscal Office for approval. From there, the Fiscal Office sends the file to the Texas Comptroller's Office for payment to the vendor's bank via direct deposit or directly to the vendor via a State Warrant (check).

What Happens to Rejected Claims
The State Agency system rejects claims with errors. Errors may occur if there is something physically wrong with the file and/or if the information in the file is incorrect. For example, the vendor used an incorrect EBT identification code in preparing the claim.

If a claim is rejected due to an error, the State Agency system will place a claim error memo message in the vendor's Auto Reconciliation File (ARF). The vendor may use the system's software to review the message to determine the type of error and whether the vendor needs to correct it.

If there is a technical problem with the claim file, the vendor should contact the system provider.

Some reasons why EBT claims cannot be paid are:

- Alteration to the claim file
- File error
- Transmission error
- Connection error

Time Frames for Submission

When to Submit Claims
Vendors may submit Claims for EBT transactions as often as every 12 hours, but must submit all Claims for a month no later than the 15th of the following month.

> **Example:**
>
> **Submit all claims for the month of June no later than July 15th.**
>
> **Any claim with June transactions submitted after July 15th will not be paid.**

Adjustments
The State Agency may adjust EBT payments on three levels:
- Claim Level,
- Transaction Level, and/or
- Item Level

Claim Level Adjustments
The State Agency may adjust payments on a current EBT claim when there is an outstanding balance or credit on a prior claim. These are called Claim Level Adjustments.

Transaction Level Adjustments
The State Agency considers individual EBT transactions within a Claim invalid and does not pay them when:

1. The vendor sells unauthorized foods or quantities of foods as determined by a Compliance Buy.

2. A WIC Smart Card reported lost or stolen was used for a transaction and the vendor did not connect with the State Agency host for over 48 hours to download a current Hot Card List.

Item Level Adjustments
The State Agency reduces an item within a transaction if the store's prices are higher than the "Not to Exceed Amount" the State Agency allows.

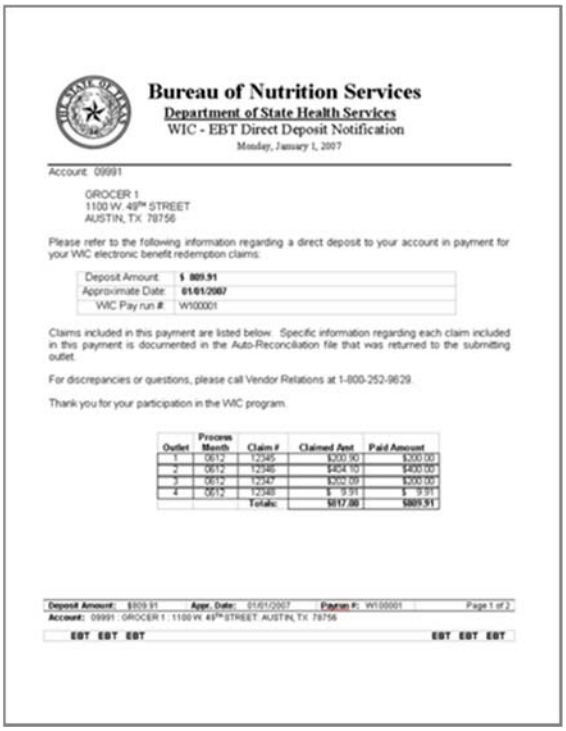
> **Exmple: Exceeding the "Not to exceed Amount".**
>
> **Vendor submits a claim with a transaction that includes one 18-oz. jar of peanut butter with a claim price of $3.40. The "Not to Exceed Amount" the State Agency allows for one 18-oz. jar of peanut butter is $3.30. The State Agency will reduce the payment for that item within the transaction automatically by $0.10.**

Where to Find Information about Adjustments

Claim, Transaction and Item Level Adjustments are shown and explained on the **Auto Reconciliation File (ARF)** detail that is downloaded with the store's APL and HCL files.

Another way a vendor is notified of adjustments, the State Agency sends a WIC- **EBT Direct Deposit Notification** for each claim that it processes. The notification shows the claimed amount and the paid amount.

Note: Vendors cannot bill or attempt to collect any charges from customers for food benefits that the State Agency does not pay.



Bureau of Nutrition Services
Department of State Health Services
WIC - EBT Direct Deposit Notification
Monday, January 1, 2007

Account: 09991

GROCER 1
1100 W. 49TH STREET
AUSTIN, TX 78756

Please refer to the following information regarding a direct deposit to your account in payment for your WIC electronic benefit redemption claims.

Deposit Amount:	$ 809.91
Approximate Date:	01/01/2007
WIC Pay run #	W100001

Claims included in this payment are listed below. Specific information regarding each claim included in this payment is documented in the Auto-Reconciliation file that was returned to the submitting outlet.

For discrepancies or questions, please call Vendor Relations at 1-800-252-9629.

Thank you for your participation in the WIC program.

Outlet	Process Month	Claim #	Claimed Amt	Paid Amount
1	0612	12345	$200.90	$200.00
2	0612	12346	$404.10	$400.00
3	0612	12347	$200.00	$200.00
4	0612	12348	$ 9.91	$ 9.91
		Totals:	$817.00	$809.91

Deposit Amount: $809.91 Appr. Date: 01/01/2007 Pay run #: W100001 Page 1 of 2
Account: 09991 GROCER 1 1100 W. 49TH STREET AUSTIN, TX 78756
EBT EBT EBT EBT EBT EBT

When to Expect Payment

The State generally pays WIC EBT claims within five (5) business days of receipt. The State Agency strongly recommends that you contact your system provider if you have a claim file that has not been paid within seven (7) business days. The State of Texas has sixty (60) days after receiving the claim to pay the vendor.

Vendor Inquiries on Claim Reductions

Vendors may call the State Agency to inquire about a claim adjustment or payment. State Agency staff respond to vendor inquiries on claim reductions in the order received.

The following conditions apply to vendor claim reduction inquiries:

1. The State must receive inquiries on claim reductions within 30 days of notification of the reduction via the Auto-Reconciliation File (ARF).
2. For a food item adjustment or reduction to be researched or reviewed, it must be a minimum of $5.
3. Once the review is complete, the State will notify the vendor of the outcome.

Late Submission and/or Malformed Transaction Disputes

If the State Agency reduces a vendor's claim for late submission of WIC EBT transactions, the vendor may dispute the reduction. To submit a dispute for late submission, the following conditions must be met:

1. The State Agency must receive the late submission and/or malformed transaction dispute request within 30 days of the notification of reduction. The store's system software should provide notification of reduction on a report that the store can print using its own software.

2. The vendor must provide an explanation or event that prevented the timely submission of the EBT transactions or an explanation describing the cause of the malformed transaction.

Disputes that are in excess of $500 require approval from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) before the State can authorize payment. Approval from USDA increases the time frame for payment.

If the State denies the outlet's dispute, the store will receive written notification explaining the reason for the denial.

- Refer to Policy WV: 05:0 - Dispute Procedure for Late Submission and/or Malformed Transactions.

Full Disclosure Report

Full Disclosure Report—New revised format!

Texas WIC is providing through FTP (File Transfer Protocol) the ability for each vendor to access a monthly Full Disclosure Report for their store(s) WIC EBT transaction redemptions. The report now details by UPC all food items redeemed by a store for a process month, noting whether or not the food item was adjusted for Cost Containment purposes.

This is a password protected site, each vendor must obtain a password through the Cost Containment Section.

Retrieving Full Disclosure Cost Containment Report Data

Retrieving the data may be done manually for each store or as part of the routine data exchange that each store does for its nightly file transfers of Claim files, Authorized Product List (APL), Hot Card List (HCL), Auto Reconciliation, or Error files (ARF).

To obtain access to this report contact the Cost Containment Section at 1-800-252-9629 (press option 6) or 512-341-4400, ext. 2308.

CATEGORY	SUB CATEGORY	CAT DESC	UPCCD	UPC Description	UOM	Total Qty Paid	Total Amt Paid	Items Above MAR	Amt Paid Above MAR	Avg Per Item	MAR Avg	MAR	Recoupment	LA	BAND
001	002	MILK 2% OR LESS	0000003 6800976245	FOOD CLUB 2% MILK	gal	65	$291.85	0	$0.00	0	0	$0.00	$0.00	008	002
002	012	CHEESE	0000003 6800062757	FOOD CLUB MEDIUM CHEDDAR CHEESE	lb	10	$43.90	0	$0.00	0	0	$0.00	$0.00	008	002
004	004	JUICE 64 OZ &/OR 16 OZ FRZ	0000003 6800149403	FOOD CLUB APPLE JUICE 64 OZ	ctnr	13	$28.47	0	$0.00	0	0	$0.00	$0.00	008	002
006	002	PEANUT BUTTER 18 OZ	0000005 1500241288	JIF CREAMY PEANUT BUTTER	item	8	$26.40	0	$0.00	0	0	$0.00	$0.00	008	002
011	394	SIMILAC SENSITIVE PWD 12.6OZ	0000007 0074575414	SIMILAC SENSITIVE PWD 12.6OZ	can	34	$526.66	0	$0.00	0	0	$0.00	$0.00	008	002
019	001	FRESH FRUITS	1000000000040112	BANANAS - YELLOW (INCLUDING CAVENDISH)	value	24.57	$24.57	0	$0.00	0	0	$0.00	$0.00	008	002

Vendor Monitoring

Competitive Pricing and Maximum Allowable Reimbursement

The State Agency (SA) will compare the prices charged by Predominantly WIC vendors against the prices paid to Traditional WIC vendors. For more information refer to the WIC Vendor Monitoring Guide and Policy Number WV:10.0, Section II.

On-Site Store Review

During the on-site store review, the SA representative shall identify him/herself to store personnel and assess the store. For more information refer to the WIC Vendor Monitoring Guide and Policy Number WV:01.0, Section II.

On-Site Inspections by a Health Authority

The vendor may receive an on-site inspection by a public health authority for compliance with the Health and Safety Code. For more information refer to the WIC Vendor Monitoring Guide and Policy Number WV:01.0, Section III.

Invoice Audit

The SA or State Agency Representative may request up to 12 months purchase invoices from a vendor for analysis to determine that all claims submitted by the vendor are supported by invoices. For more information refer to the WIC Vendor Monitoring Guide and Policy Number WV:01.0, Section IV.

Compliance Buy

A covert in-store investigation by one or more SA representatives posing as WIC participants or the parent/guardian/proxy of WIC participants using WIC EBT food benefits to test the vendor's compliance with the Vendor Agreement, program policies, and/or rules. The SA representative does not reveal to store personnel that he/she is a SA representative during the visit. For more information refer to the WIC Vendor Monitoring Guide and Policy Number WV:01.0, Section V.

Least Expensive Brand Analysis

At the time of authorization, all vendors shall declare the traditionally least expensive brand (LEB) for each type and size of WIC authorized milk, fluid and frozen juice, dried peas/beans/lentils, cheese, whole wheat bread, whole grain bread, wheat tortillas, corn tortillas, and brown rice. At least 85% of an outlet's WIC monthly redemptions within these food types must be the vendor's declared traditionally least expensive brands. For more information refer to the WIC Vendor Monitoring Guide and Policy Number WV:02.0.

Vendor Monitoring Results

Following any type of monitoring activities, the vendor account contact person will be notified in writing of the results. A vendor's disqualification from the WIC Program may result in withdrawal of the vendor's food stamp authorization. Vendor monitoring sanctions and procedures are explained in more detail in Policy Number WV: 01.0.

Appeals/Fair Hearing

WIC Policy WV: 13.0 gives an applicant vendor the right to appeal when the State Agency denies an application for authorization and/or when the State takes any other adverse action affecting participation.

The expiration of the WIC Vendor Agreement is specifically excluded from the definition of "adverse action." This action **cannot** be appealed.

If the vendor wants to appeal an adverse action or denial to participate, they must submit a written request for a hearing within twenty (20) calendar days from the date they receive notification of the adverse action. Submit requests to:

Manager
Nutrition Services Section MC 4554
Texas Department of State Health Services
PO Box 149347
Austin, Texas 78714-9347

The State conducts the hearing according to the Fair Hearing Procedures of the Texas Department of State Health Services.

To view these procedures, go to the WIC Vendor Operations website:
http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/wichd/vo/disqual.shtm

To view policies, go to the WIC Vendor Operations website:
http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/wichd/vo/policy.shtm

Expiration of the Vendor Agreement is not subject to appeal.

Vendor Agreement

Changes to Vendor Account and Outlet Information

When a Vendor Account or Outlet needs to change profile information (ie: phone numbers, contact persons, etc), the change needs to be in writing and signed by an owner or manager and can be faxed to 512-341-4422 or you can submit your change through https://www.dshs.texas.gov/wichd/vo/vendor-contact-update.aspx.

When a Vendor needs to change Bank account, sales tax number, vendor status (ie: vendor decides to terminate WIC agreement), store address, store name, the request needs to be in writing and faxed to our office. The request will be assigned to one of the Vendor Relations personnel to process.

- Please include a phone number and a contact person in case WIC needs clarification.

Changes to Store Ownership

When there is a change of ownership, the previous owner needs to submit a signed notification of the change of ownership to Vendor Relations. The notice needs to include:

1. The official date of sale.
2. The seller's forwarding address and phone number in case WIC needs to process a payment or contact the seller for any reason to close the existing store record.

Additional Information

Formula Exchanges
If a participant requests a different formula other than the brand loaded on the card, please refer them to the local WIC clinic. The clinic will take the old formula off the card and load the new one.

Returns and Exchanges
Vendors may not provide refunds or permit exchanges for authorized WIC foods except for exchanges of an identical WIC food when the original WIC food is defective, spoiled, or has exceeded its "sell by" or "best if used by", or other date limiting the sale or use of the food item. An identical authorized WIC food means the exact brand and size as the original WIC food obtained and returned by the participants.

Accepting Coupons, Store Specials and Loyalty Card Discounts
If your store offers such services, the store's WIC EBT system must be able to:

- Accept coupons on WIC-allowable items.
- Allow store specials on WIC-allowable items.
- Provide loyalty card discounts on WIC-allowable items, if applicable.

Prices charged to WIC participants must be equal to or less than the prices charged to all other customers.

Reporting Complaints/Issues
Should there be any problems with customers behaving badly, you may call **1-800-WIC 4 U, if possible, have the transaction information available**.

Vendor News Flashes
During the year, Vendor News Flashes (newsletters) will be sent to your store. This information is important and should be reviewed with appropriate store personnel who deal with the WIC Program. You will also be able to print the Vendor News Flashes from our website.

Material Request
To request any of the items or other materials, go to https://www.dshs.texas.gov/wichd/vo/request-materials.aspx.

- Texas WIC Approved Foods Brochures
- Texas WIC Approved Foods List
- Texas WIC Approved Foods Poster
- Texas WIC EBT Door Signs
- Texas WIC EBT Lane Stickers
- Texas WIC Approved Item Pink Shelf Stickers

WIC Terms

Competitive pricing – comparing the overall cost of WIC food at an outlet to the average food cost of other WIC grocers.

Maximum Allowable Reimbursement (MAR)– A price limit derived monthly by the WIC Program's automated end-of-process month computer analysis of WIC vendor claims paid. 1) Traditional WIC Stores Maximum Allowable Reimbursement = 125% of the average prices paid to Traditional WIC vendors in each price region and vendor band for the various WIC food types. 2) Predominantly WIC Stores Maximum Allowable Reimbursement = 100% of the statewide average prices charged by Traditional WIC Stores.

Not To Exceed (NTE) Amount – The price limit the state will pay for a food type (e.g. milk, juice, cereal, eggs, etc.) meant as a reasonableness amount set high enough so the food type can be purchased anywhere in the state. The NTE amount is included in the Authorized Product List (APL) sent electronically to EBT enabled vendors. The NTE amount, which is enforced by the state as a pre-payment edit, is NOT the end-of-process-month Maximum Allowable Reimbursement (MAR) limitation defined elsewhere.

Predominantly-WIC vendor (PWIC) – A vendor outlet that has or is expected to have WIC food sales that exceed 50% of the outlet's total food sales.

Price region– A geographic area comprised of designated zip codes or one or more counties. Such areas may or may not be contiguous.

State Agency (SA)– The Texas Department of State Health Services in its role as administrator of the WIC Program.

Statewide Average Price Paid– The average price paid to TWIC stores for an EBT food category/subcategory.

Traditional WIC Vendor (TWIC)– A vendor that has, or is expected to have, WIC food sales that constitute 50 percent or less of the outlet's total food sales.

Traditionally Least Expensive Brands (LEB)– those brands that are an outlet's least expensive brands for the authorized types and sizes of milk, juice, cheese, dried beans/peas/lentils, whole wheat bread, brown rice, wheat and corn tortillas, 27 weeks out of the year.

Vendor – A sole proprietorship, partnership, cooperative association, corporation, or other business entity operating one or more stores authorized by the state agency to provide authorized supplemental foods to participants under a retail food delivery system.

Vendor account – A vendor approved by the state agency with one or more vendor outlets.

Vendor Band (also known as Sales Volume Band)– Based on monthly WIC sales volume, a comparison group of Traditional WIC Vendor outlets.

Vendor agreement– The formal and legally binding agreement between the Department of State Health Services and a vendor authorized to redeem WIC Program EBT food instruments. One or more authorized store locations may be included under the same agreement.

Vendor outlet– An individual store which operates and transacts WIC food instruments at a fixed location, has an electric utility hook-up, is a store structure situated on a cement or pier-and-beam foundation that is not used simultaneously as a residence, has a minimum business area of 500 square feet, has clearly identifying signage that closely matches the vendor outlet name (abbreviated version acceptable) listed on the WIC Vendor Profile Application, and is walk-in accessible directly from the street or parking lot.

WIC Contact and Website Information

The WIC State Agency encourages vendors to contact us with any questions or concerns, and to visit the WIC Vendor Operations website at:

http://www.dshs.texas.gov/wichd/vo/vo1.shtm

Type of Inquiry	Number
General/All Other Questions	WICVendorInfo@DSHS.texas.state.us
Fax Number	1-512-341-4422
Information Packet Change of Ownership	WICVendorRelations@DSHS.texas.state.us
Authorization Status Contract Termination	WICVendorRelations@DSHS.texas.state.us
Supplies –Brochures, Pamphlets, Posters and Pink WIC Approved Item Stickers, EBT Lane Stickers	http://dshs.texas.gov/wichd/vo/request-materials.aspx
Competitive Pricing Status	WICVendorRelations@DSHS.texas.state.us
Claim Payment Inquiries	WICEBTSupport@DSHS.texas.gov
Claim Reduction Inquiries	WICVendorRelations@DSHS.texas.state.us
Late Submission Appeals	FIRSDisputes@DSHS.texas.gov
Claim Submission Problems	WICEBTSupport@DSHS.texas.gov
Training	WICVendorInfo@DSHS.texas.state.us
General EBT Support	WICEBTSupport@DSHS.texas.gov
Contract Status/Amendment Status	WICVendorRelations@DSHS.texas.state.us

TEXAS
WIC
Smart Choices • Healthy Families
Opciones sabias • Familias sanas