

**WIC Vendor Advisory Council (WVAC) Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, January 29, 2008**

Location: Connecticut Department of Transportation Conference Room A

Start Time: 2:00 pm

End Time: 4:00 pm

Recorder: Harriet Dennis

IN ATTENDANCE: Brian Andrikis, Dennis Banks, Kimberly Boulette, Donna Brewer, Diane Buzzetti, Paul Coen, John Frassinelli, Mitch Klein, Kathy Minicucci, Renee Coleman-Mitchell, Kevin Krusz, Adam Osmond, Janet Rankin, Stan Sorkin

Kim Boulette WIC Vendor Specialist for the Connecticut WIC Program opened the meeting and welcomed everyone for attending. The day's agenda was distributed.

Introduction of New Member (s)

Kathy Minicucci, East Hartford WIC Program
Stan Sorkin, CT Food Association
Paul Coen, Nestle USA Inc.

Topics for discussion:

❖ *State WIC Program update –
New WIC Approved Food List*

Kim reported many changes were made to the new food list due to the need for cost containment. The new food list went into effect January 17, 2008. A supply of the new food lists were mailed out to all WIC authorized vendors and WIC Local Agencies. Janet Rankin (Big Y Foods) asked if WIC participants have received the new food list. Kim answered that each participant will receive one food list per family from their local agency and that some have already received theirs, which caused the urgency in making it effective immediately. Mitch Klein (Krasdale Foods) stated vendors should have been notified sooner of the changes in the new food list due to the computerized store registers having to be programmed to flag new WIC food items. Kevin apologized that the State WIC Office was not aware of the different computer register systems that vendors have installed. John asked how much notice is needed to allow vendors to fully stock and update store computer systems with WIC approved items. Mitch and Stan stated a 30-day window is a great amount time allowed.

❖ *USDA New Food Package –*

Kim distributed a copy of Food Package Changes and Talking Points for Interim WIC Food Package Rule. Food Package changes must be in place by August 5, 2009. Donna Brewer (DPH Hearing Office) asked about the current food list. Kim answered the WIC food packages are changing to better meet the nutritional needs of WIC participants. Mitch stated that store advertisements are set up 6 weeks ahead and that buyers are affected as well in the stocking of new foods. July and August is the best time to implement something new because business is generally slower in the summer. Kevin will conduct training once the new food package plan is in place. Kim asked for vendors to keep the State WIC Office informed on how much time is truly needed to have their store set-up for the WIC new food items.

❖ *Incomplete application packages –*

One of the selection criteria for stores applying or renewing their agreements is that the vendor application package must be complete and submitted to the State WIC Office by the due date. Once the application is submitted there will be no exceptions for incomplete applications. Vendors are always allowed to call the State WIC Office to ask questions when completing the vendor application.

Currently the State WIC Office is not accepting new vendor applications with the exception of vendors who are needed in specific areas. Stores may send a letter of interest in becoming a WIC vendor, but April 30th deadline to request is no longer in effect. The Federal Regulations state that we have to accept and process applications once every 3 years. The State WIC Office will assess if any additional vendors are necessary in the areas where applicant stores are located. Statements of interest will be kept on file and utilized when we identify a need.

❖ *Website Content –*

Renee reported that the Department is going through an extensive overhaul with the DPH website. We are hoping to post information regarding the food list and price change forms once it is in operation.

❖ *Price Changes –*

Kim reported price changes can be submitted as needed. All price changes are to be faxed or mailed to the State WIC Office. E-mail price changes are acceptable at CTWIC@ct.gov. It is important for the vendors to send price changes in writing on all WIC approved items because it affects the maximum prices allowed. There is not a specific form for price updates, so our price stock survey can be used as a template for submission of price changes, which already provides a listing products and the current prices on file. Dennis stated that you must submit price increases for WIC approved items before charging them to WIC customers.

❖ *Open Discussion/Suggestions for future agenda items- Membership –*

Kim stated more participation is needed on the council. Currently we are struggling to get all the right players to commit to participating. Brian Andrikis (North Branford IGA) suggested possibly getting some of the food distributors to join. Another suggestion was to have a milk manufacturer participate.

❖ *Open Discussion/Suggestions for future agenda items- Returned checks –*

Janet commented on many checks being returned as a legal copy. Dennis stated that a bulletin would go out regarding the stores needing to use black ink for the signature and black inkpads for the stamp. Because the stamp may not image well, vendors will be allowed to write in the vendor number with the stamp and this should cut down on rejected checks. Brian inquired about using self-inking stamps; Dennis has considered this and is getting some quotes. In some cases, the rejection stamps are numerous or dark, so the stores cannot tell what the items were on the checks to figure out what the correct price should be for the check. This is done at the Federal Reserve and we have no control over the banking system.

The meeting adjourned at 4:00p.m. The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, April 29, 2008 from 2-4 pm at the DOT Building in Newington. Meetings will continue to be held on the last Tuesday on a quarterly basis. Renee thanked everyone for attending.