

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

Location: Connecticut Department of Transportation Conference Room A

Start Time: 2:00 pm

End Time: 4:00 pm

Recorder: Luis A. Maldonado

IN ATTENDANCE: George Casab, Cathy Lynch, Kristen Belveau, Stan Sorkin, Janet Rankin, Jannett Haughton, Brian Andrikis, Kathy Minicucci, Patricia Sullivan, George Hernandez, Dr. Norma Gyle, Joanne Yandow, Diane Buzzetti, John Harris, Jennifer Namour, Robert Clark, Donna Brewer, Wilberto Diaz, Luis Maldonado, Dennis Banks, Crescencio Custodio.

Dennis Banks, Food Delivery Coordinator, opened the meeting and welcomed everyone. The meeting agenda and the food package implementation sheet were distributed.

Topics for discussion:

❖ ***New Food Packages.***

- 1) Dennis mentioned the participants must receive the exact amount of the new food package quantities (36 oz. cereal, 128 oz. baby foods, etc) and not an “up to” amount per the Federal rule. The council members suggested the quantities should be more flexible to keep costs reasonable.

Dennis gave the council an update on the Food Package Committee recommendations. Also Dennis mentioned the milk alternatives that might be available to WIC participants.
- 2) Soy beverages will be offered if a brand is ever made that meets regulations. It has been said, “if the soy beverages are made within the ‘specs’, it will not be appealing to the taste.”
- 3) We will be giving tofu (1-2 items meet specs).
- 4) Bread
 - a. Whole wheat bread, whole grain bread, whole-wheat tortilla, brown rice, and barley will be given to the participants. Women will receive one-pound of any approved bread or bread substitute. Children will receive two pounds.
 - b. The size/ weight issue remains; it must be a one-pound loaf. Products are offered by Arnold, Weight Watchers, Freihoffers, and Pepperidge Farms.
- 5) Fruits and vegetables
 - c. Distributed in \$6, \$8, & \$10 cash-value vouchers (women, children). The \$8 and \$10 vouchers will be given out in two \$4 vouchers and two \$5 vouchers, respectively.
 - d. Farmers Market also provides \$15.00 per year to WIC participants.
 - e. Participants will be able to pay any amount over the cash-value amount.
- 6) Less juice will be given to women and children and no juice will be given to infants.
- 7) Milk:
 - f. Less milk will be given to all participants.
 - g. Milk fat information will be specified on WIC checks.
- 8) Cheese:
 - a. When we issue cheese for 3 quarts of milk, we must also issue 1 quart of milk with the cheese. This will increase overall costs.
- 9) Fish:
 - a. Canned salmon and sardines will be available to those now getting tuna fish. (Fully breastfeeding mothers).
- 10) Infant Formula
 - b. We will be giving different amounts of baby formula depending on the age of the infant.
 - c. Soy infant formula will not be required for minimum inventory.

- 11) Baby Food
 - a. Gerber is producing 5 fruits, 5 veggies in 4 oz. baby food form.
 - b. The packaging will be printed bilingually and it will be launched in January.
 - c. Baby food meats in Beef, Chicken, Veal, Turkey, and Lamb.
 - d. Pictures/Labels and nutrition information will be sent to WIC.
 - e. More than 1 check will be given to participants for the 32 jars that are allowed.
- 12) Canned Beans
 - a. May be offered in addition to dry legumes.
 - b. They are much more expensive than dry legumes.

❖ ***State WIC Program Update –
Cost Containment***

The council suggested WIC should contact USDA for clarification on the maximum amounts of the food packages and relay the information to the advisory council.

❖ ***Open Discussion***

- 1) George Hernandez said that it would be extremely expensive to have manufacturers adjust the size of products to fit the demands of the WIC Program, especially if the size of the products were larger than the existing items. Also the bodegas do not have the shelf space to carry all these items.
- 2) George Hernandez suggested using a smart card system instead of “WIC checks”. It was explained that will be used in the future, but costs are too high now.
- 3) The council asked if their input would influence the decisions of the new food package. WIC will consider all advice.
- 4) There may be an issue with cashiers having to keep track of container sizes and counting total ounces.
- 5) Plastic vs. Glass: Glass containers weigh more than plastic containers. ‘ Many participants do not have transportation and they must take the bus or walk to/from their homes with children by their side.’
- 6) Wilberto Diaz requested training for the vendors and participants on food measurements, especially with produce. Many participants do not know the conversion of ounces to pounds. Dennis said that there will be a conversion table of measurements that will be given to the vendors and participants and training will be provided.
- 7) Fulltime breastfeeding is being promoted statewide.
- 8) Dennis suggested the use of Malt-O-Meal for cereals for cost reasons. Other members concurred. Members of the council will research packaging, prices, and availability, and provide the information to Dennis and Kim.
- 9) Dennis said WIC might reduce the non-contract infant formula that is given out.
- 10) WIC will try and make all food item decisions by September 30, 2008.
- 11) Members want to know what brands of tofu that WIC is approving.
- 12) WIC will possibly use allow fruit and vegetable checks to be used at Farmers Markets.
- 13) Vendor confidentiality no longer includes telephone number, website address and e-mail address.
- 14) WIC will be providing food package change information to distributors.
- 15) New minimum inventory requirements will be determined, must have at least 1 whole grain cereal and two fruits and two vegetables.
- 16) WIC will develop a method to determine cost neutrality for the food package changes.