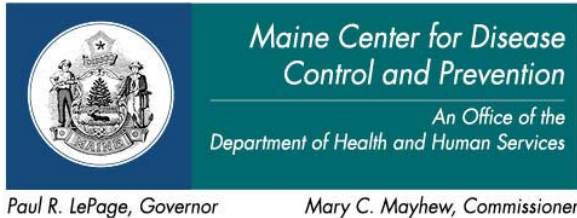


February 2017 *for Farmers*

WIC Messenger



Maine WIC Nutrition Program
Department of Health & Human Services
Center for Disease Control & Prevention
286 Water Street
Augusta, ME 04330
287-3991 1-800-437-9300
TTY: Maine Relay 711
Website: www.wicforme.com



The Purpose of the WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program

The Farmers' Market Nutrition Program, like WIC, is a program of USDA's Food and Nutrition Services. Combined with Maine's WIC Nutrition Program, its focus is to increase the use of fresh, unprocessed, locally grown fruits and vegetables by WIC participants. The second purpose of the program is to increase WIC participants' awareness of Farmers Markets and local foods.

Maine WIC Supports Maine Farmers

To be an authorized Maine WIC Farmer, 100% of your produce must be grown in Maine. An authorized Farmer must grow *at least* 75% of the produce they sell and may purchase any additional produce directly from another Maine farmer. As an added incentive, authorized Maine WIC Farmers can redeem both FMNP Checks (purple checks) and WIC standard Cash Value Vouchers (CVVs— green checks).

The Purpose of the WIC Nutrition Program

The WIC (Women, Infants and Children) Nutrition Program provides supplemental healthy food to eligible Maine residents. Pregnant, breastfeeding and non-breastfeeding women, infants and children up to the age of five are eligible for the program meet program income requirements and have been assessed for nutrition and growth by WIC Program staff.

The WIC Program is a federally-funded program established to provide supplemental foods during critical times of growth and development. Program staff provide nutrition education, breastfeeding support and referrals to other health services.

IMPORTANT! Update Information with Us

We have included a Farmer Update form with this newsletter. Complete the form and return it in the envelope we have provided. We use the information to help guide participants to your locations. Farmers must submit this form annually. If you have any questions, call Ana Scovil at 287-5366.

******Only the owner of your farm or another authorized person can make changes to important information (such as banking information, hours of operation or locations of farmers' markets you plan to attend, etc.) in your file. We must have the name of the person making the request on file. If your spouse or other staff have authority to make these kinds of changes, we need to have that information on record before we can make any changes that may be requested by that person. ******

Transacting A CVV or Farmers' Market Checks

Purple Farmers' Market Nutrition Program Check:

1. Confirm today is between dates to use.
2. Compare foods with WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program approved foods (see page 3).
3. The value of the check is already printed on the check. If the customer purchases more produce than the value of the check, they must pay the difference another way.
4. Ask buyer to sign the check on the front.
5. Compare the signature to the WIC folder. Do not accept the check if they do not have their WIC folder.
6. Offer receipt.

Green Fruit and Vegetable (WIC CVVs) Check:

1. Confirm today is between dates to use.
2. Compare foods with WIC approved foods list.
3. If the total of the sale is less than the value of the CVV, ask the customer to enter the total purchase of the WIC authorized foods they are buying on the check. If the total price is more than the value of the check, they must enter an amount up to the value of the CVV and must pay the difference another way. For example, if the check's value is \$8.00 and the customer's purchase totals \$9.25, ask the customer to write \$8.00 on the check and pay you \$1.25.
4. Ask the customer to sign WIC CVV.
5. Compare the signature to the WIC folder. Do not accept the check if they do not have their WIC folder.
6. Offer receipt.

REMEMBER: You must stamp WIC CVVs and FMNP checks with your WIC Farmer Stamp before depositing. If a check is not stamped, the check will reject at the bank and your bank could charge you a fee.

Annual Farmer Training Topics

Each year, WIC is required by federal regulation to train all authorized farmers in certain topics, which are all contained in this newsletter. These topics are:

- Eligible food choices;
- Redemption procedures, including deadlines for depositing checks;
- Equitable treatment of FMNP recipients, including availability of produce of the same quality and cost as is sold to all other customers;
- Civil Rights compliance and guidelines;
- Guidelines for storing FMNP checks safely;
- Guidelines for cancelling FMNP checks.

Always:

- Offer the WIC customer their receipt.
- Have the customer sign their WIC check in black or blue ink and compare the signature of the WIC customer on the check to one of the signatures on their WIC folder.
- Treat WIC customers the same as you would any other customer, providing them the same quality produce at the same price.
- Deposit your green Cash Value Voucher within 30 days from the last day to use printed on the check. Deposit your purple Farmers' Market checks before November 30th.
- Store your WIC checks in a secure location until you deposit them. Store your WIC stamp in a secure location, too.
- Cancel WIC checks not deposited on time by shredding them.
- Display a "WIC Accepted Here" sticker in your window and display your "WIC Accepted Here" poster. Call us at 1-800-437-9300 if you need a newsicker or poster.

Never:

- Accept WIC checks at a self-serve farm stand.
- Accept a customer's WIC check if they do not have their WIC folder.
- Charge a WIC customer more than you would any other customer for the same item.

When is Your Farm Stand Open?

WIC customers need to know when your farm stand is open. It is important to keep us informed of your hours of operation by completing the update form we send you every year, even if there have been no changes since last year. We compile farmers' days and hours of operation and place that information on our website for WIC participants. Also, WIC staff make unannounced visits to several farmers each year; we need to know when you're going to be at your farm stand or at the farmer's markets so we can visit when you're open for business.

If you have a sign in front of your farm stand, you help us by posting your hours of operation on your sign.

Allowed Foods—Farmers' Market Checks

Any fresh, unprocessed fruit or vegetable grown in Maine can be purchased from an authorized farmer using FMNP checks. These are **examples** of foods that can be purchased using the purple FMNP checks:

Apples	Celery	Onions	Scallions
Artichokes	Corn	Parsnips	Shallots
Asparagus	Cucumbers	Peas	Spinach
Beans Green or Yellow	Eggplant	Pears	Strawberries
Beets and beet greens	Grapes	Peppers	Squash – summer or
Blackberries	Greens	Plums	Tomatoes
Blueberries	Herbs- fresh only	Potatoes	Turnips
Broccoli	Kohlrabi	Pumpkins	Zucchini
Brussels Sprouts	Leeks	Radishes	Cranberries
Cabbage	Lettuce	Raspberries	Garlic
Carrots	Melons	Rhubarb	Bok Choy
Cauliflower	Mushrooms	Rutabaga	

The following are examples of foods **not** allowed to be purchased with the purple FMNP Checks:

Foods Not Allowed

Baked Goods	Cider	Jams/Jellies	Oranges
Bananas	Dried Beans	Lemons/Limes	Pickles
Bedding Plants	Dried Herbs	Maple Syrup	Plants of any type
Canned goods	Eggs	Meats	Seafood
Cheese	Honey	Nuts	Sweets / Candies

Redemption Procedures

Payment: WIC will make payment to the farmer upon receipt of validly transacted and redeemed FMNP Checks/ WIC CVVs for food costs incurred in providing WIC approved foods to WIC customers. WIC:

- shall deny payment, either partially or fully, to a farmer for improperly transacted or redeemed FMNP Checks/ WIC CVVs.
- may establish a claim for payments already made on improperly transacted FMNP Checks/ WIC CVVs.
- may offset future payments for the claim. WIC shall deny payment to the farmer for more than the price limitations of the FMNP Check/ WIC CVV. For WIC CVVs, WIC has the right to demand re-funds for charges of more than the farmer's actual selling price.

Deposit Timeframes: Purple FMNP Checks must be deposited with your bank before November 30th. Green WIC CVVs must be deposited within thirty (30) days from the "LAST-DAY-TO-USE". WIC will not pay any FMNP Checks/ WIC CVVs deposited outside of these timeframes.

Appeals for Denied Checks: For farmers who believe a payment denial has been made incorrectly, or believe there is a justifiable reason why payment should be made, the Department may consider payment approval with valid justification. A farmer must submit a written payment reconsideration request to the Department within sixty (60) days of the "LAST-DAY-TO-USE" printed on the check. Remember to always keep a photocopy of all items being mailed, including the front and back of the check. The check appeal form can be found on our website, www.wicforme.com.

Lost or Broken WIC Stamp? Call us.

If you lose or break your WIC stamp, call us. We will replace the stamp at no cost to you. We will ask you to return the broken stamp to us when you receive your new stamp.

Regularly clean your WIC stamp with warm, soapy water and re-ink your stamp when it gets too light. The bank's equipment must be able to read the stamp in order to properly process payment to you. Please remember that you must order WIC stamps from the WIC Program—you cannot buy one yourself.

Help Us Detect Fraud

Nationally, fraud costs the WIC Program, stores, and farmers a lot of money every year. If you suspect fraud, please contact us at 1-800-437-9300 or contact us on our website at www.wicforme.com. You can also report suspected fraud for both WIC and SNAP (Food Stamps) on the website of the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) at <http://www.oig.dot.gov/Hotline>.

Civil Rights:

WIC Farmers must abide by both the federal and state non-discrimination laws. The federal law states that:

The US Department of Agriculture prohibits discrimination against its customers, employees and applicants for employment on the bases of race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, gender identity, religion, reprisal, and where applicable, political beliefs, marital status, familial or parental status, sexual orientation, or all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program or protected genetic information in employment or in any program or activity conducted or funded by the Department. (Not all prohibited bases will apply to all programs and/or employment activities.)

If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form found online at: http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html or at any USDA office, or call (866)-632-9992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter to us by mail at US Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, DC 20250-9410, by fax (202) 690-7442 or email at program.intake@usda.gov.

Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339; or (800) 845-6136 (Spanish).

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

DHHS Non-Discrimination Notice

The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) does not discriminate on the basis of disability, race, color, creed, gender, sexual orientation, age, or national origin, in admission to, access to, or operations of its programs, services, or activities, or its hiring or employment practices. This notice is provided as required by Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and in accordance with the Civil Rights Act of 1964 as amended, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and the Maine Human Rights Act and Executive Order Regarding State of Maine Contracts for Services. Questions, concerns, complaints or requests for additional information regarding the ADA may be forwarded to DHHS' ADA Compliance/EEO Coordinators, 11 State House Station – 221 State Street, Augusta, Maine 04333, 207-287-4289 (V), 207-287-3488 (V), TTY users call Maine relay 711. Individuals who need auxiliary aids for effective communication in program and services of DHHS are invited to make their needs and preferences known to the ADA Compliance/EEO Coordinators. This notice is available in alternate formats, upon request.

Questions? Need supplies? Contact Us.
Tina Bernier, Vendor & Data Manager
Ana Scovil, Vendor & Data Specialist

Maine WIC Program: 1-800-437-9300

TTY: Maine Relay 711
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