

Spring 2020

# WIC Messenger

for Farmers



Maine WIC Nutrition Program  
Department of Health & Human Services  
Center for Disease Control & Prevention  
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## The Purpose of WIC

The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) is a nutrition program that provides nutrition and health education, breastfeeding support, healthy food and referrals to other services for Maine families that qualify. WIC supports women and children with nutritious foods during critical times of growth and development.

The WIC Program is federally-funded by USDA's Food and Nutrition Service.

## The Purpose of the Farmers' Market Nutrition Program

The Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP), like WIC, is a program of USDA's Food and Nutrition Service. 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.

## eWIC Coming this Summer

This summer, the Maine WIC Program will transition from providing benefits in a paper check format to providing benefits on an ebt card.

What does this mean for you? This means that as we transition from paper check to eWIC (ebt) cards, you may see a decline in customers using the green checks (cash value vouchers) (CVV) at your farm stand or farmers' market. If you do have customers that come with the green checks this year, you should continue to accept those following the same procedures as you have been using.

The WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program will continue to provide paper check benefits (the purple checks) this growing season .

## Redemption Procedures

**Payment:** WIC will make payment to the farmer upon receipt of validly transacted FMNP and WIC fruit and vegetable checks (WIC checks) for food costs incurred in providing WIC approved foods to WIC customers. WIC:

- Will deny payment, either partially or fully, to a farmer for improperly transacted or redeemed FMNP/WIC checks.
- May establish a claim for payments already made on improperly transacted FMNP/WIC checks.
- May offset future payments for the claim. WIC will deny payment to the farmer for more than the price limitations of the WIC checks. For WIC fruit and vegetable checks, WIC has the right to demand refunds 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 checks must be deposited within thirty (30) days from the "LAST-DAY-TO-USE". WIC will not pay for any WIC checks 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.Maine.gov/WIC](http://www.Maine.gov/WIC).

## Always:

- Have the customer sign the FMNP/WIC check in black or blue ink on the front and compare it to 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.
- Store your FMNP and WIC checks in a secure location until you deposit them.
- Regularly clean your WIC stamp with warm, soapy water and re-ink your stamp when it gets too light. Store your WIC stamp in a secure location. If you lose or break your WIC stamp call us.
- Cancel WIC and FMNP checks by rubber stamping or punching holes in them.
- Display a "WIC Accepted Here" sticker in your window and display your "WIC Accepted Here" poster or banner. Call us at 1-800-437-9300 if you need a new sticker or poster.
- Provide WIC customers with their receipt, if requested.

## Never:

- Accept FMNP/WIC checks at a self-serve farm stand.
- Accept a customer's FMNP/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.
- Give cash-back or credit in a WIC transaction.

## Maine WIC Farmers Must:

- Grow at least 50% of the produce for sale to WIC customers
- Label any produce they are selling that was grown by someone else with the name and location of the farm it came from.

## 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.

## Allowed Foods—Farmers’ Market Checks

FMNP checks can be used to purchase fresh, unprocessed Maine-grown fruits and vegetables from a WIC authorized farmer. These are **examples** of foods that can be purchased using the **purple FMNP checks**:

|                         |                  |             |                           |
|-------------------------|------------------|-------------|---------------------------|
| Apples                  | Celery           | Onions      | Scallions                 |
| Artichokes              | Corn             | Parsnips    | Shallots                  |
| Asparagus               | Cucumbers        | Pears       | Spinach                   |
| Beans — Green or Yellow | Eggplant         | Peas        | Strawberries              |
| Beets and beet greens   | Grapes           | Peppers     | Squash — summer or winter |
| 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 that **cannot** 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   |

## Transacting Checks

### Purple Farmers’ Market Nutrition Program Check:

1. Confirm today is between dates to use.
2. Sell only fresh fruits and vegetables grown in Maine to a WIC customer who is using a purple Farmers’ Market check.
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 the customer 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. Provide a receipt if requested.

### Green WIC Fruit and Vegetable 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 \$9.00 and the customer’s purchase totals \$10.25, ask the customer to write \$9.00 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. Provide a receipt if requested

**REMEMBER: You must stamp FMNP/WIC 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.**

Remember: A WIC customer **can** buy fruits and vegetables **not** grown in Maine, such as bananas, **if they are using a green Maine WIC fruit and vegetable check.**

**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.Maine.gov/WIC](http://www.Maine.gov/WIC) . 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:

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English. To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the [USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html), (AD-3027) found online at: [http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_cust.html](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html), and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

(1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;

(2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or

(3) email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).

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The Department of Health and Human Services (“DHHS”) does not discriminate on the basis of disability, race, color, sex, gender, sexual orientation, age, national origin, religious or political belief, ancestry, familial or marital status, genetic information, association, previous assertion of a claim or right, or whistleblower activity, in admission or access to, or the operation of its policies, programs, services, or activities, or in hiring or employment practices. This notice is provided as required by and in accordance with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (“ADA”); Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended; Age Discrimination Act of 1975; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; Section 1557 of the Affordable Care Act; the Maine Human Rights Act; Executive Order Regarding State of Maine Contracts for Services; and all other laws and regulations prohibiting such discrimination. Questions, concerns, complaints or requests for additional information regarding the ADA and hiring or employment practices may be forwarded to the DHHS ADA/EEO Coordinators at 11 State House Station, Augusta, Maine 04333-0011; 207-287-4289 (V); 207-287-1871(V); or Maine Relay 711 (TTY). Questions, concerns, complaints or requests for additional information regarding the ADA and programs, services, or activities may be forwarded to the DHHS ADA/Civil Rights Coordinator, at 11 State House Station, Augusta, Maine 04333-0011; 207-287-5014 (V); Maine Relay 711 (TTY); or [ADA-CivilRights.DHHS@maine.gov](mailto:ADA-CivilRights.DHHS@maine.gov). Civil rights complaints may also be filed with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Civil Rights, by phone at 800-368-1019 or 800-537-7697 (TDD); by mail to 200 Independence Avenue, SW, Room 509, HHS Building, Washington, D.C. 20201; or electronically at <https://ocrportal.hhs.gov/ocr/portal/lobby.jsf>. 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/Civil Rights Coordinator. This notice is available in alternate formats, upon request.

Questions? Need supplies? Contact Us.  
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