



Maine WIC Nutrition Program
Department of Health & Human Services
Center for Disease Control & Prevention
286 Water Street
Augusta, ME 04330
Tel. 207-287-3991
Website: www.maine.gov/wic

Maine eWIC Vendor Kickoff

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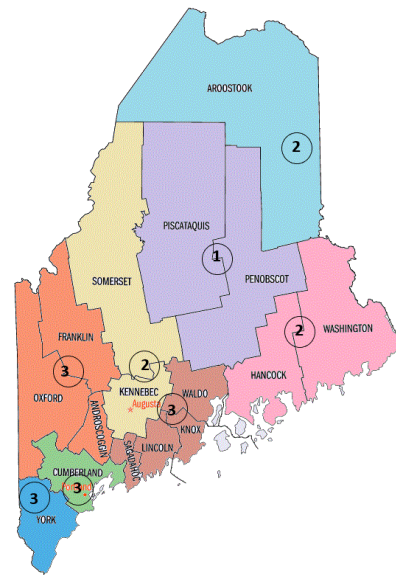


The Purpose of the WIC Program

The WIC (Women, Infants and Children) Nutrition Program is a federally-funded program established to provide supplemental healthy food to eligible Maine residents during critical times of growth and development. Pregnant, postpartum, breastfeeding and non-breastfeeding women, and infants and children up to the age of five are eligible for the program if their income is at or below 185% of the federal poverty level and have a medical or nutritional risk. Program staff also provide WIC participants nutrition education, breastfeeding support and referrals to other health services.

eWIC Pilot and Roll-Out Schedule

Currently the State WIC staff are vigorously working with our e-WIC vendors to make ready for the eWIC Pilot! We anticipate the pilot beginning in mid-May for vendors in Penobscot and Piscataquis counties; then north to the surrounding areas. This Maine eWIC roll out map is a tentative schedule and local agencies will be kept informed regarding the eWIC roll-out progress every month.



Rollout	Tentative Timeframe	County
1 Pilot	Mid—May to Mid—June	Piscataquis/Penobscot
2 Pilot	Mid—June to Mid—July	Aroostook
2 Pilot	Mid—June to Mid—July	Hancock/Washington
2 Pilot	Mid—June to Mid—July	Kennebec/Somerset
3 Statewide	Mid—July to Mid—August	Knox/Lincoln/Waldo/Sagadahoc
3 Statewide	Mid—July to Mid—August	Cumberland
3 Statewide	Mid—July to Mid—August	Oxford/Franklin/Androscoggin
3 Statewide	Mid—July to Mid—August	York

Maine eWIC Vendor Call

This will be a reoccurring meeting the second Tuesday of every month until further notice.

Next Call:

Tue Mar. 10th at 10am (1hr.)

Toll-Free Dial-In Number: 877-455-0244

Conference code: 2072875366

Agendas will be sent out prior to the meeting



Pause on New Store Authorizations

The Maine WIC Program will begin our eWIC pilot this Summer.

During the transition from WIC checks to eWIC card, the State WIC office will not accept applications from new Vendors and Farmers.

What this means for WIC Vendor and Farmer applicants:

Maine WIC will stop accepting new applications on May 1, 2020.

The pause includes brand new stores, new corporate chain locations, WIC authorized stores that close and re-open and new Farmers.

Exceptions to this policy will occur if there is a new store in a participant access area.

Maine WIC will resume accepting new applications on January 1, 2021.

New WIC authorizations will begin February 1, 2021.

Grant Opportunity for Integrated Electronic Cash Register (IECR)

- Maine WIC stores are required to transition from paper WIC checks & CVV to an Integrated Electronic Cash Register system by August 31, 2020.
- The Maine WIC Nutrition Program (WIC) is offering current WIC Authorized Vendors an opportunity to apply for funding in order to transition your cash registers to meet eWIC compliance. Download the [MEWIC IECR Funding Opportunity Application \(PDF\)](#) .
- **Make sure you have a text enabled contact phone number.**
- Check with your Point of Sale (POS) provider to confirm that your integrated cash register system is ready to accept integrated eWIC payments! Below is a list of POS providers which are eWIC ready as confirmed by Solutran, our eWIC vendor. Resellers other than those listed may be utilized if they have been certified by Solutran.
- Maine WIC stores are required to transition from paper WIC checks & CVV to an Integrate Electronic Cash Register systems by August 31, 2020.

Reseller Name	Reseller Contact Information
Electronic Cash Register Software (ECRS)	www.ecrs.com
EJ Telematic Svcs	www.ejts.us/2001.html
FTS Solutions	www.ftssol.com
Interstate Cash Register	www.interstatecashregister.com
Interstate Total Retail Solutions (ITRS)	www.interstatetrs.com
JPOS	www.jpossoftware.com
North Country Business Products (NCBP)	www.ncbpinc.com
Novo Dia Group	www.novodiagroup.com
Postec	www.postec.com
Retail Data Systems (RDS)	www.rdspos.com
Retail Systems Inc. (RSI)	www.retailsystemsinc.com
Simpleware Inc. (Reseller of IT Retail Software)	www.itretail.com
Tecnica Systems	www.tecnicasystems.com
UpFront Software	www.upfrontsoftware.com

Approved Product List Requirements

Vendors must connect their POS system for each outlet to the state's eWIC processor's system at least once each

24-hour period to transfer reconciliation files and the WIC APL file.

It is imperative that the APL is downloaded to each eWIC device/outlet in the store at least once every 24 hours.



What to Expect in the Coming Weeks and Months

Vendor Education

Maine WIC and members of its Quality Assurance provider, Maximus, will be visiting each of the WIC vendors in the State of Maine to certify eWIC readiness .

Vendor Agreements

Updated Vendor Agreements will need to be signed.

Food Instruments

You can expect to see Food Instruments (Vouchers/Checks) up to 90 days after roll out. The State of Maine will instruct retailers when to stop accepting FI's.

Solutran Operations

A member from the Solutran Operations group will be reaching out to you .

Text Enabled Phone Numbers

Please be sure to email us your text enabled phone numbers to WICVendor.DHHSMECDC@maine.gov

Pause on New Vendors

During the transition period, State WIC offices will not accept applications from new stores, new corporate chain locations, WIC authorized stores that closed and re-opened or change owners and new Farmers. This pause will start May 1, 2020 and end January 1, 2021.

Retailer Cashier Tip Sheets:

Maine eWIC will be providing Retailer Cashier Tip Sheets specific to eWIC processing.

Maine eWIC Program: Produce Mapping (Linking) Information

The Maine WIC Program is requiring retailers to map/link produce to a Maine WIC-approved Price Look-Up (PLU) code. This means that any WIC approved fresh fruit or vegetable without an International Federation of Produce Standards (IFPS)-approved PLU must be mapped/linked to an IFPS approved PLU **prior to** your store's rollout.

Examples Include:



- Produce with a UPC bar code (e.g. prepackaged loose fruits such as blueberries or strawberries)
- A store-assigned non-IFPS PLU (e.g. cut pineapple or cantaloupe processed and packaged at your store)
- Generic IFPS approved PLU (i.e. using a generic “any fruit” or “any vegetable” PLU instead of the specific IFPS PLU assigned such as 4011 for bananas)

The Maine Approved Product List (APL) contains only Maine IFPS-approved PLUs. If store-generated UPCs for produce which start with a 2, 4 or 9 or non-approved PLU's are scanned without having been mapped/linked, the APL will not identify those products as WIC-approved food items and the WIC customer will not be able to make a produce purchase using their eWIC card.

Produce already using an IFPS PLU will continue to use that PLU. There is no need to map/link since the APL will recognize it. However, if the produce in question is using a generic “any fruit” or “any vegetable” IFPS PLU, you will need to map it to the closest specific IFPS PLU. **Do not map other foods or non-food items to PLUs.**

Items containing more than a single type of produce may be mapped to an IFPS-approved PLU of one of the produce items in the mix. For example, a container of cut-up melons (contains a mixture of watermelon, cantaloupe, and honeydew) can be mapped to 4049 for cantaloupe.

Store Responsibility:

- Map/link all required fresh fruits and vegetables
- Contact your Electronic Cash Register (ECR) Provider for specific instructions on how to map/link produce as every ECR is different
- Ensure store personnel are trained to address issues that might occur

Question about eWIC?

The Maine WIC Program is looking forward to partnering with its vendors to make the transition to eWIC as easy as possible. Should you have any questions about eWIC, please send them to the following email address:

WICVendor.DHHSMECDC@maine.gov .

eWIC Updates

Please visit us at www.maine.gov/WIC for the latest updates and additional information on the progress of the eWIC roll-out.

Link to IFPS website: <http://www.ifpsglobal.com/Identification/PLU-Codes>



FAQ's



What is eWIC?

eWIC is a benefit delivery method that allows WIC participants to access their benefits electronically. The system allows for the use of an eWIC card and Personal Identification Number (PIN) to redeem WIC approved foods.

When will eWIC be implemented in Maine?

ME eWIC will be piloted beginning June 22, 2020 when eWIC benefits will be issued at the clinics. Vendors must be ready at least one month prior to that date in order for Maximus and state staff to complete testing of the ECR system for eWIC processing. The pilot region includes the following counties: Penobscot, Piscataquis, Kennebec, Aroostook, Hancock, Somerset, and Washington. After the pilot period, the remaining counties of Cumberland, York, Androscoggin, Oxford, Knox, Waldo, Sagadahoc, Lincoln, Franklin and affected New Hampshire stores will be converted as well.

What are the benefits of eWIC for WIC vendors?

The benefits of eWIC are invaluable to the Maine WIC Program. Vendors will enjoy advantages that include, but are not limited to the following:

- Vendors experience time savings at the checkout because transactions require customers to swipe a card, and no longer require the counting and processing of food instruments (FIs) and cash value vouchers (CVVs).
- Checkout process is more efficient because completion of FIs/CVVs is not required.
- Vendors are paid faster as payments are directly deposited into their bank account through an automated clearing house (ACH).
- Less error prone, because approved foods, effective dates and benefit amounts are validated by the system, and not cashiers, at the time of the transaction.
- Many issues related to printed FIs and CVVs are eliminated.

How will the eWIC card work at checkout?

- The eWIC card is swiped by the customer
- Account is checked for adequate benefit balance
- Foods are scanned and approved for purchase
- Account is debited the appropriate quantity of WIC approved foods from the family's eWIC card.

When will vendors receive the Authorized Product List (APL)?

The APL will be available in early March, 2020.

If I currently accept SNAP EBT, can I automatically accept the eWIC card, too?

No. If you are currently an authorized WIC vendor in good standing, you will be eligible to accept eWIC cards. You may need to upgrade your existing Point of Sale (POS) equipment or get new equipment to process eWIC transactions.

Are SNAP and eWIC benefits on the same card?

No. SNAP and eWIC cards will be separate