

California WIC Any Authorized Vendor Program

Your StoreNext Dealer has the answers you need to comply with the new California WIC requirements — and automated ScanMaster solutions



Federal mandates to broaden options for WIC recipients mean changes for all grocers in California. But don't panic — your StoreNext ScanMaster Dealer has answers and solutions!

When WIC recipients in the past would pick up their Food Instruments at California WIC Clinics, they were required to declare in advance where they would be spent. With the voucher pre-associated with a vendor, the California State Treasurer's Office knew which grocer to reimburse.

But new federal laws require the State of California to provide WIC recipients more flexibility to shop at stores that may be more convenient or that stock foods to the recipient's preference or enable shopping when traveling or relocating. This means:

- A WIC food instrument will no longer have a vendor associated with it when issued
- Clerks won't have to verify the store name on the food instrument anymore
- The State Treasurer's Office will have no idea which grocer to pay — unless the store tells the State which food instrument serial numbers were cashed at their stores.

Since California currently handles 6.8 million vouchers per month, manual handling is out of the question. So new electronic systems are being completed that enable grocers to log their WIC voucher numbers. California grocers will have several options — you can choose the one most appropriate depending upon your volume of WIC vouchers.

What do I have to submit? The State of California just needs to know your Vendor ID and the serial numbers of the WIC instruments. Once this is done, these serial numbers are checked and authorized for payment.

Do I still need to send in the instruments? Yes, these will be sent to your bank as before.

What if I don't submit the serial numbers in advance? The instruments will be rejected and the grocer will not get paid. There will

also be a fee assessed for rejected instruments.

How will I know if a WIC instrument has been approved by the State before I send it to my bank? You will be able to check the status of your submissions either on the State's AAV Web site or by telephone to the California WIC Customer Support help desk.

Can I enter WIC serial number by phone?

Yes. This option will be useful if your store doesn't have Internet or file transfer access, or if you have just a few WIC checks per day.

Is there an Internet option? Yes again. Typically the bookkeeper will log into the State's AAV Web site, type in the 10-digit numbers and click "submit." This is a good option if you take a small-to-medium number of WIC food instruments in a day.

What if I take a lot — even 50, 100 or more — WIC instruments every day? Is there an automated system I can use with my POS system? Absolutely! Your ScanMaster dealer has a low-cost system that automates your WIC submission using the Magnetic Ink Character Recognition serial numbers printed on the WIC instruments. These "MICR" numbers will be automatically extracted, logged into your database for future lookup, and sent via file transfer protocol (FTP) directly to the State upon your command.

But I don't want to put in a whole new POS system or pay for a big software upgrade!

Good news — you won't have to do either one.

So how can I get this installed? Call your StoreNext dealer, who will be happy to consult with you on the best option for your operation.

When will I need to have this ready to go? California has established a "pilot" period in summer 2006 giving time for you to confirm that your IDs, Internet logons and/or file transfers are working just right ... and in time for the go-live date planned for mid-October.

Does California WIC have a Web site where I can get more information and updates about the new Any Authorized Vendor program? They sure do. Up-to-the-minute information — including the phone numbers and emails of supporting StoreNext-certified dealers for ScanMaster — can be found at <http://www.wicworks.ca.gov>.



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