

Virginia WIC Program
Retailer Advisory Committee (RAC)

January 24, 2008

Sheila Brewer, Vendor Manager and Meeting Facilitator
June Thompson, Greg Chappell, Ephraim Ewing and Freda Bolling, Site Facilitators:
Donna Seward, Division Director, guest presenter;
Monica Elliott, Farm Fresh Corporate Office, Chairperson/minutes recorder

Meeting Objectives

- Update retailers on policy and procedural changes affecting WIC authorized retail stores
- Facilitate two-way communications between retailers and the Virginia WIC Program

I. Agenda Review and Rules of the Road - Sheila Brewer

No new agenda items were added

- II. ***Introductions.*** The following retailers were represented in-person or via phone: Wal-Mart, Super K-Mart, DECA (Oceana, NAS), Farm Fresh, Food Lion, Reid Supermarket, K-V-A-T, Martins Foods, Giant Foods, Shoppers, Farmers Food, Fort Lee Commissary, Fine Food Supermarket, Wades Supermarket #42, Triplett's Grocery, Grants Supermarket, Community Market #2

III. Attendees' Expectations

- SAM and EBT updates (from Donna)
- "What's New?"
- Re-authorization schedule
- Price Survey Due Dates
- Update on the retailer selection and authorization evaluation
- Training requirements for 2008
- Identify procedural changes affecting authorized stores
- Returned FI's –reasons and how to prevent

IV. Review of Next Steps from 10/25/2007 RAC Meeting

- Open issue to look at infant formulas on weekly basis to assist in pricing accuracy. WIC is updating information on a monthly basis
- Re-certification training has been rolled out and completed successfully
- Still open is the issue of advertising WIC proposed schedules, etc.
- Send any open issues to Sheila, preferably before next RAC meeting

V. SAM and EBT Update

- Donna Seward gave a very informative overview of SAM and EBT, it's history, current status and what stores can expect in the near future.
- Initial concerns from retailers included the compatibility of the systems across state lines
- We could easily be looking at this program (in place) by December 2010, or slightly sooner

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- Stores interested in working with the development of this program need to contact Sheila Brewer within the next 30 days (2/29/08). Requests need to be in writing. Group will be geographically diverse; also considerations for the size of the store and other demographics need to be considered.
- The question was raised about a “chip” program for EBT? Answer, no idea at this time; it has its benefits as well as drawbacks
- In looking at what has transpired so far nationwide, VA has one of the best systems.
- Ms. Seward reiterated that a lot of work is still involved in this process and stores are encouraged to participate in this effort.

VI. *Marketing Plans for 2008*

- Donna Seward presented this topic on behalf of Carol Bell, Consumer Liaison for VA’s WIC Program
- VA WIC marketing goals include implementing a statewide advertising plan for WIC which includes community involvement, radio, TV, newspaper PSA spots and increased web exposure. Spots will include Hispanic radio.
- Several stores indicated that they had already seen some of the TV spots on cable channels.
- Goal is also to emphasize reaching potential pregnant eligible women in the lower income bracket.
- Increase market funding. As of 9/27/07, no funding for marketing.
- Discussed concept of advertising over store PA/music systems. Several retailers expressed interest in this and will be contacted by Carol Bell.
- Target areas currently include major metropolitan areas such as Richmond, Norfolk, Northern VA, Roanoke, Charlottesville and Harrisonburg. Other areas are also targeted for various advertising venues.

VII. *Retailer Selection and Authorization Update*

- Policy 14.0 approved by USDA January 2008
- Policy will be available on the website after 1/28/08
- Continue using a Retailer Limiting Criteria
- Competitive Pricing is 100% of score
- Previously terminated or denied authorization for low volume stores will not be authorized unless it qualifies as an authorization exception.
- Complete additional WICNET changes to support BEA reauthorization process to be released JAN 08
- BEA reauthorization selection and evaluation process statewide to be completed by 6/1/08.
- Sheila discussed proposed rollout schedule which will impact stores across the state.
- Other reauthorization requirements discussed such as the mandatory training classes which must be completed by 3/31/08 for corporate stores (face-to-face

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training); State agency sponsored training will be held in April 2008 for various locations statewide-independent and small stores that are authorized under the new contract.

- Any stores that will be denied reauthorization will know by June 2008
- Prices will be collected from all stores April 1, 2008
- Get back to Sheila by 2/8 with any questions or comments
- April 2008 is goal to have updated replacement pages for distribution to authorized retailers (will be sent to corporate offices for direct distribution)

VIII. Sanction Classification System Policy

- Sheila provided an overview of the changes in the updated policy.
- Use of wrong vendor stamp (4 digit vs. 5) – first offense will be a warning but no rejected FIs. Second documented violations will lead to disqualification or civil monetary penalty fine. Proposed policy changes will take effect March 1, 2008 (if approved by USDA).
- Contact Sheila by 2/15/08 with comments or concerns.
- Pattern of non-compliance will be raised to 4 documented incidents
- Discussed the issue of allowing participants to purchase less formula than the amount specified on FI

IX. Miscellaneous Issues

- RSMS - how can one know if slots are available BEFORE submitting an application? Contact your vendor liaison.
- RSMS concern- how up to date is the Market Basket? Lots of prices were being rejected during January price submission. VA WIC generally recommends submitting prices monthly as that is when the averages are updated. Prices may be submitted as often as necessary, however, the updates take place monthly. Recommends bringing specific issues related to pricing or RSMS to Sheila's attention.
- Recertification of trainer workshop was discussed. Last session will be in Henrico on 1/31/08.
- The question was raised about the use of ink other than blue or black by cashiers. One problem is that different color inks may not transmit or be readable on the IRD's.
- Get with Freda if you'd like a vendor stamp for each of your stores (corporate).
- New design is being submitted to Covansys by Freda to eliminate many of the image problems
- Staffing changes and other issues- prevention specialist position will be filled
- Dennis has retired (and missed!)

X. Benefits Concerns & Next Steps

- Benefits - EBT/SAM update, reauthorization training, schedule for retailer authorization, RSMS & vendor stamp changes, proposed sanction classification

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policy, gained a lot of knowledge, got answers to a lot of questions I had, looking forward to EBT.

- Concerns - Federal rules and new food packages, cash back (vote not to this!), reauthorization schedule and training of stores, annual training vs. reauthorization training (timeframes), possible e-notification of sanction violation letters, implementation of new food package ruling, timely notification of changes in new food package, how to handle over the \$ amount, food instruments that are being returned for stamp errors.

Next Steps- April 10, 2008 RAC meeting