

Virginia WIC Retailer Advisory Meeting

March 19, 2009 (10:00 am – 12:30 pm)

Attendees on site or via telephone: Camellia Foods, DECA, Deltaville Market, Fine Foods Superette, Food Lion corporate, Fresh Pride, Genes Supermarket, Giant of Maryland, Giant of PA (Martins), Grants Supermarket, Farm Fresh, Hall's Market, Kroger Food Store Corporation, K-VA-T Corporation, Lowe's Corporation, Matthew's Market, Miller's Market, Reid's Supermarket, Safeway Corporation, Save-A-Lot Corporation, Save-A-Lot (Roanoke), Slaughter's Supermarket, Sunnyside Market, Super K-Mart, T&M Grocery and Deli, Triplett's Grocery, Wades Supermarket, , Virginia Petroleum Convenience Grocery Association, Virginia Retail Federation, Virginia Retailer Merchants Association, Wal-Mart Corporation, and State Agency WIC staff.

Reviewed Next Steps from January's Retailer Advisory Meeting (no changes)

Reviewed the issues discussed during the February 26, 2009 conference call

“How to communicate “store designated brands” – participants (shelf-labels, flyers, posters?). The ability of the stores to provide point-of-sale educational material varies greatly. Many stores suggested that shelf-tags be provided by WIC Program, while most others, particularly large corporations that operate across state lines, tend to prefer to generate their own tags and materials.

Any materials generated must be pre-approved by the VA WIC Program, prior to finalization and use. A sample pictorial of WIC eligible cereals was presented by the Kroger Company. Other stores may elect to produce a flyer or poster (this is optional). This is still an area of concern that has not been totally resolved as indicated in the benefits/concerns section.

Meghan Garrett, Nutrition Liaison, gave a brief overview of the participant education strategy being implemented at the local WIC Offices and participant level. An area of concern to the stores is the amount of education that participants will receive as these new changes will present many challenges for all.

Donna Seward, state WIC Director, gave an update on the Minimum Stocking Requirement (MSR). This requirement is of great interest to all. The proposed changes seem to bode well with most store representatives present. Some concerns were raised by independent and small store operators. A good amount of time was dedicated to this topic and we learned that MSR has been reduced or changed on many food items. Mrs. Seward also gave an EWIC update. The West Virginia and Virginia WIC Programs plans to implement a new computer system, including using EBT in 2011.

The Retailer Advisory meeting began running out of time, in part because of another scheduled conference. Thus, Donna suggested that we review the handouts provided on the other topics. The handouts should be attached to these notes.

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Benefits:

- Updates on the MSR, particularly the reduction in quantities
- Ending the meeting early
- Learning about the WIC program
- Updates on the new food list
- More independent stores attending the meeting
- Update/status on EWIC

Concerns:

- Unresolved issue for communicating to participants on store-designated brands
- Retailers having sufficient time for training of staff on new food requirements
- To clarify the amount written on the CVV is the amount purchased up to the value of the CVV. For example, with a \$6 CVV, the highest value written on the CVV is \$6. If the amount is less, then the lower number is written. But if it is higher than \$6, only write \$6.
- I wish I knew if using shelf labels to designate “store brands” is an acceptable option? Stores should be able to choose if they want to place shelf labels or have a poster to describe WIC approved food items at each store. Mandatory requirement for shelf labels.
- Training cashiers and store personnel on CVV (providing training to cashiers).
- Changes in October, (if) out of store designated brand, what options will exist, (i.e. short term outage, disaster)?

Next Steps:

- Confirm the next meeting date: either May 14th or 28th
- WIC will follow up with Wal-Mart representative on using shelf labels for designating store brands.
- Identify what options will exist for stores if there is an outage of “store designated brand: due to various types of availability issues, i.e., supplier/distributor shortage, inclement weather, etc.
- Discuss changes made to the Sanction Schedule at the next Retailer Advisory meeting.
- Follow up with the commissary and what items will be defined as “store designated brands”.
- Interested in an update at the next meeting on what information shared with participants related to “store designated brands”.
- Review training opportunity section of the handout and get back to Sheila Brewer with any comments and/or questions (before the next Advisory meeting).
- Once available, provide a list of Virginia WIC approved corn tortillas and whole wheat breads to stores, so stores can look into if these products can be acquired from their suppliers/distributors.