

Appendix I

WIC Grocer Technical Requirements

Grocer Enablement

The Vermont WIC Nutrition Program issues food benefits through an Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) system. The system benefits both the Grocer and the WIC customer by delivering seamless WIC transactions at each cash register, making the transactions like other debit or credit card transactions, and removing any stigma for the WIC customer.

WIC Grocers must have the capability to operate either an integrated or non-integrated multi-function system to accept WIC benefits. In either system, when a WIC card is swiped, the device will obtain the benefit balance for the WIC customer and match the scanned food/formula items against the Vermont Approved Product List (APL) to accept the WIC customer's purchases. The two different types of systems that enable Grocers to accept WIC benefits are:

Integrated – the WIC software is part of the store's cash register system. Integrating WIC into the Point-of-Sale (POS) system and normal business processes is the preferred solution as it allows Grocers to manage inventory, payment, and settlement for WIC items within the same system that manages transactions for cash and other tenders. The integrated system also provides a more streamlined purchase experience for the WIC customer.

Non-Integrated Single-Function System - the WIC Card software is on a WIC only POS device and is capable of supporting WIC payments. Grocers will need to reconcile the WIC transactions to their Electronic Cash Register (ECR) system.

Integrated POS Options

1. Upgrade Current System

Grocers can choose to upgrade their current POS system with an integrated WIC EBT certified Electronic Cash Register (ECR) system. An integrated ECR system, upgraded to accept WIC Card transactions, allows the Grocer to maintain their current POS and business processes while integrating WIC redemptions with other payment types.

2. Replacement System

Grocers that currently have no WIC EBT capability available in their existing system may choose to replace their POS systems with an updated integrated ECR. A full system replacement with an integrated ECR:

- allows Grocers to upgrade out-of-date equipment and processes while achieving WIC Card enablement
- supports seamless WIC transaction at the POS

- eliminates the need for WIC customers to separate items at the checkout (mixed basket)
- integrates WIC into Grocers' existing inventory, redemption, and settlement processes

The Grocer is responsible for all the costs associated with updating their current POS system's hardware and/or software or replacing their current POS system with an integrated WIC EBT certified ECR system.

For more information about the Grocer Enablement and the development and implementation of EBT systems for WIC. Go to <https://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/wic-electronic-benefits-transfer-ebt-guidance>.

Certification Process for Integrated Systems

If a store is integrated, a certification process must be completed in order to conduct WIC transactions. There are three certification levels:

- Level I is a pre-certification process where the software provider runs a number of transaction scripts and verifies the results.
- Level II certification occurs at the software provider's location and is conducted by Conduent (Vermont WIC EBT contractor). The transaction scripts are run again, and the results are verified by Conduent and WIC staff. This certifies that the cash register software will correctly handle WIC transactions.
- Level III certification is a live in-store test by State WIC staff to verify the proper installation and set-up of the store's cash register system. Level III tests include various scenarios for WIC transactions.

Non-Integrated POS Option

1. Single-Function System

The non-integrated single-function system consists of a stand beside terminal and item scanner that operates independently of Grocers' ECR system. The non-integrated single-function POS communicates with the EBT system through a phone line or internet connection and is entirely separate from the store's overall inventory. A non-integrated single-function POS system:

- supports WIC EBT payment tender types
- requires a 'double scan' – first against the single-function POS device and second through the Grocer's ECR system
- does not support mixed basket transactions (WIC items are the only items that can be transacted)

2. Overview of Single-Function Stand-beside technology

Used only for WIC purchases (SNAP and other card devices are separate)

Hand-held bar code scanner, PIN pad, plus a terminal device that includes card reader, key pad, and receipt printer. The scanner and PIN pad are connected to the terminal with cords. The terminal must have an electrical connection.

- Requires connection to VT WIC EBT through either dedicated telephone line or internet connection.
- Is not connected to store cash register system. Requires separate scan with key entered price and discount amounts. Daily totals are reported separately from other credit/debit transactions.
- You will be responsible for the monthly fee for the stand-beside equipment.



Connectivity Requirements

Requires dedicated landline telephone or internet connectivity. The unit must be connected at all times to conduct transactions and automatically download updates to the WIC food list.

Wiring Requirements

Requires wiring for telephone or internet, and also electrical power to the terminal unit.

Placement

Will be additional POS unit and peripherals in the lane. Hand-held scanner must be accessible to cashier in lane; keypad/card reader device must be accessible to both cashier and WIC card holder. PIN pad (on coiled cord) must be accessible to participant. Cashier must scan and enter prices, and card holder must enter PIN and approve transaction.

Transactions

WIC foods will have to be separated from other foods in the checkout lane, to be run through the WIC device.

Cashiers will have to run WIC transactions twice (once using WIC scanner/key pad, once in your own cash register). The WIC system is not connected in any way to your store ECR/POS and records, requiring you to do a separate reconciliation at the end of the day.

The WIC terminal automatically forwards the charge to WIC's contractor, Conduent, for each purchase; payment to you is automatic.

All cashiers will need to be trained to conduct these transactions efficiently and cordially.

Conduent is the host/processor that will handle the non-integrated single function terminals for stores using this type of POS system.

Any Grocer using the non-integrated single-function terminal will have an agreement with Conduent (our EBT contractor) for payments. You will need to provide Conduent with the necessary ACH information for deposit of funds owed to you for WIC. (Payment is made daily.)

The Grocer may be responsible for costs associated with the non-integrated single-function system.

Decision Questionnaire

Requirement	Yes	No
<p>Can you provide either a dedicated land telephone line or internet connection for the stand-beside? If you don't already have a telephone line you can dedicate or a "live" internet connection in your store, you will incur costs to have this installed and to maintain it.</p>		
<p>Can you provide electrical power for the WIC terminal device in lane?</p>		
<p>Can you make space on your lane for the WIC terminal device, the PIN pad and the hand-held bar code scanner?</p>		
<p>Do you accept that WIC transactions will have to be scanned and prices entered into the WIC terminal as a separate transaction from your store's ECR/POS system? ("double scanning")</p>		
<p>Will you confirm that all employees doing WIC transactions will be trained properly?</p>		
<p>Can you provide Conduent with the appropriate ACH information for your WIC payments?</p>		

If you can answer "Yes" to all requirements, then you can apply to be authorized as a Vermont eWIC retailer at this time.