



TEXAS WIC PROGRAM
Department of State Health Services
Food Issuance and Redemption Services Unit - MC 4554
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Vendor Contracting Moratorium

Effective April 1, 2011, the WIC Program is implementing a moratorium on the authorization of **new** WIC vendor/grocers until further notice. The moratorium is necessary for several reasons:

- The 2010 Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 includes State requirements related to the operation of WIC electronic benefits transfer (EBT) systems and the proper treatment of on-going costs related to those systems. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) will issue implementation rules and regulations sometime this fall;
- WIC Program funding and spending authority is currently under review at both the State and Federal levels. The Texas WIC Program is currently reviewing its EBT ECR reimbursement policy in consideration of the on-going budget issues and the pending release of USDA rules mentioned above; and
- The Texas WIC Program is re-evaluating the levels of vendor ECR system costs in consideration of newly available systems, technology, and pricing. The current reimbursement levels have not changed since 2005.

The vendor moratorium applies **only to new vendors**. During the moratorium period, vendors currently on the WIC program can still open/add additional outlets/locations, move the location of an existing outlet to a new address within the same city/county, and/or sell an outlet to a new owner with the State providing assurance that the new owner will be able to obtain a WIC contract (assuming the store complies with minimum stocking requirements and meets on-going eligibility requirements).

The vendor moratorium allows the WIC Program to continue full WIC services to all current participants. All eligible WIC participants will continue to receive full WIC food benefits throughout the moratorium period.

The moratorium on new WIC vendors will be lifted when USDA rules and regulations implementing the changes to WIC EBT system responsibilities are released and the assessment of new ECR/technology options for new grocers is completed.

If you have any questions or need further information, please call toll free 1-800-252-9629.