

eWIC Frequently Asked Questions Table of Contents

General:

1. What is eWIC?
2. What are the benefits of eWIC for WIC participants?
3. What are the benefits of eWIC for WIC vendors?
4. In New York State, which locations will be the first to implement eWIC?
5. When is eWIC expected to be fully rolled out?
6. How many other states are currently using eWIC technology?
7. How can I find out more?

EBT Equipment & Technology:

8. What are the vendor's options for accepting eWIC?
9. What is the difference between an integrated and stand beside POS system?
10. How can vendors know if their equipment is capable of processing eWIC transactions?
11. How long does it take to have an electronic cash register (ECR) system certified?
12. Is there a contact we can refer our current point of sale (ECR and TPP) providers to?
13. What is the cost of eWIC stand beside POS terminals?
14. Can vendors with an integrated ECR system request an eWIC stand beside POS terminal?
15. For stores with eWIC stand beside POS terminals, will the participant still have to split up the order?
16. Does the stand beside terminal come with a scanner?
17. What are the benefits of integration?
18. Do we have an idea how much TPPs are planning to charge for transactions?
19. If eWIC has a system failure, will there be a process to notify vendors?
20. Will there be a manual process (e.g., paper checks) for transacting WIC if the store's system is down?
21. Will we be able to have a backup stand beside terminal if the integrated system goes down?
22. Who should vendors call if they have issues with using the eWIC system?

eWIC – Food Benefits & Shopping:

23. Is eWIC going to replace WIC checks?
24. How long will I continue to accept WIC paper checks?
25. What will the new eWIC card look like?
26. When NYS converts to eWIC, will participants need an ID card?
27. Will the eWIC card have a lump sum value on it, like a SNAP card?
28. Do the eWIC cards still have a 30-day window of validation?
29. Will participants be able to spread their purchases out over more than one shopping trip?
30. Will participants be restricted on where they can redeem their WIC benefits?
31. Since one eWIC card will be issued for the entire family, does that mean anyone in the family can use the card?
32. What if a participant loses their card?
33. If a participant knows their eWIC card number and PIN, but does not have the card itself with them, can the participant still make a purchase?
34. If a participant loses their receipt, how will they know which foods are left on their card?
35. Will participants need to separate WIC food items at the checkout counter?
36. Will the eWIC card be used for fruits and vegetables?
37. Will vendors manually enter PLUs when ringing up fresh fruits and vegetables?
38. Can purchases be refunded to the eWIC card?
39. How will I know if a transaction contains items that are not WIC foods?

APL (Approved Product List):

40. What is the Approved Product List?
41. Why are nightly downloads necessary?
42. How can a request be made to add a food item to the APL?

At the Checkout – Exceeding Maximum Allowable Reimbursement Level (MARL) and Scanning Non-Allowable Items:

43. If a participant selects a non-allowable food item, what would happen?
44. If someone chooses a WIC allowable item, but the UPC will not scan, what happens? Are vendors able to manually override the point of sale device?
45. If a transaction contains items that are not WIC foods, how will the eWIC system let me know?
46. What happens if the price for a WIC food item exceeds the Maximum Allowable Reimbursement Level (MARL)?
47. If the MARL is exceeded, does the system have a follow up statement or notification to let the vendor know why they were reimbursed less than the price of the item?
48. How will we be able to reconcile accounts, and as a vendor, know we're being paid correctly? How soon after the transaction can we see that information?

Training:

49. What type of training will vendors receive?

eWIC Frequently Asked Questions

General:

1. What is eWIC?

eWIC is an electronic benefits transfer (EBT) system for WIC. eWIC replaces paper checks with a card for issuance, redemption, reconciliation, and payment of WIC benefits at authorized WIC stores.

An eWIC card is loaded with a prescription for specific food items, just like a paper WIC check. As participants use their benefits, food items are deleted from the balance on the eWIC card. At the end of each transaction, the point of sale system will print a detailed list on the receipt, so participants can see which foods they have left and how much time remains until these foods expire.

2. What are the benefits of eWIC for WIC participants?

eWIC will benefit participants by providing:

- Unrestricted number of shopping trips
- Convenient, easy, and quick transactions for all items purchased
- Secure, discreet, and confidential transactions
- Accurate listing of remaining food items prior to and after shopping

3. What are the benefits of eWIC for WIC vendors?

eWIC will benefit vendors by providing:

- Faster settlement, usually within 24 hours
- Increased efficiency and fewer errors; cashiers require less training for eWIC transactions
- Convenience; eWIC eliminates manual recording, vendor stamping, and returned checks

4. In New York State, which locations will be the first to implement eWIC?

eWIC will pilot in Albany, Rensselaer and Schenectady counties in Spring 2018.

5. When is eWIC expected to be fully rolled out?

The pilot will occur in April of 2018 in the Capital District area. Once USDA confirms and approves a successful pilot, roll out will continue toward the western part of the state. Once upstate is complete, roll out will move through the Lower Hudson Valley, Long Island, and finally the 5 boroughs of NYC. Statewide implementation of eWIC is expected to be completed mid-2019.

6. How many other states are currently using eWIC technology?

Currently, eWIC is fully operational in 20 states: Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Kentucky, Indiana, Iowa, Massachusetts, Michigan, Nevada, New Mexico, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Texas, Vermont, Virginia, West Virginia, Wisconsin, Wyoming, and four Native American Tribal Organizations. Several other States, including New York, are in the process of implementing eWIC technology. The USDA has mandated that all states transition to eWIC technology by the year 2020.

7. How can I find out more?

Visit the WIC Vendors in NYS website (<https://nyswicvendors.com/>), the New York State Department of Health website (<https://www.health.ny.gov/prevention/nutrition/wic/>), or contact your Vendor Management Agency.

EBT Equipment & Technology:

8. What are the vendor's options for accepting eWIC?

Depending on an authorized WIC vendor's current computer system, vendors will use either an eWIC stand beside point of sale (POS) terminal or an integrated electronic cash register (ECR) system.

9. What is the difference between an integrated and stand beside POS system?

Integrated (ECR) system - can accept multiple payment types, including eWIC, and can ring up WIC and non-WIC items simultaneously.

eWIC Stand Beside (POS) Terminal - supports eWIC transactions only. Vendors using eWIC stand beside point of sale (POS) terminals must continue to ring up WIC items separately from non-WIC items. In addition, if a vendor's cash register tracks inventory, WIC food items will need to be scanned twice – once through the eWIC stand beside POS terminal and once through the register. WIC items will have to be scanned twice, once at the stand beside point of sale (POS) terminal and once at the register.

10. How can vendors know if their equipment is capable of processing eWIC transactions?

Vendors must complete the eWIC readiness survey. The eWIC project contractor, Conduent, will review each vendor's survey and determine equipment or software needs. They will review a vendor's current cash register system to determine if they have an integrated electronic cash register (ECR) system or if an eWIC stand beside point of sale (POS) terminal is required. For vendors with integrated ECR systems, Conduent will assess whether their ECR and third-party processor (TPP) is currently certified.

11. How long does it take to have an electronic cash register (ECR) system certified?

This is approximately a 45-day process.

12. Is there a contact we can refer our current point of sale (ECR and TPP) providers to?

Yes. Conduent staff, Boyd Neal and Valarie Simms. Contact information is as follows:

Valarie.Simms@Conduent.com

Boyd.Neal@Conduent.com

13. What is the cost of eWIC stand beside POS terminals?

Based on an equipment needs assessment, stores not operating an integrated electronic cash register system will be provided with eWIC stand beside POS terminals at no cost. Terminals will be provided based on the vendor's sales volume up to a maximum of four lanes but not to exceed the number of lanes in a WIC location.

14. Can vendors with an integrated ECR system request an eWIC stand beside POS terminal?

No. Only vendors who are determined to require an eWIC stand beside POS terminal will receive them at no cost during the statewide implementation period. There will be a limit on the number of eWIC stand beside POS terminals distributed. New vendors that are authorized after eWIC implementation has ended are responsible for purchasing their eWIC stand beside POS terminals.

15. For stores with eWIC stand beside POS terminals, will the participant still have to split up the order?

Yes. Participants will still need to split up their order between WIC and non-WIC items.

16. Does the stand beside terminal come with a scanner?

Yes. The eWIC stand beside point of sale (POS) terminal comes with a scanner, pin pad, and point of sale (POS) device.

17. What are the benefits of integration?

Integrated systems streamline the WIC transaction process, because they do not require WIC items to be separated, scanned twice, and finalized in a separate transaction from other items.

18. Do we have an idea how much TPPs are planning to charge for transactions?

No. That is a discussion that vendors should have with their contracted TPP.

19. If eWIC has a system failure, will there be a process to notify vendors?

Yes. If this were to occur, Conduent would be aware of this immediately and notify the NYS WIC Program who would then inform all WIC vendors.

20. Will there be a manual process (e.g., paper checks) for transacting WIC if the store's system is down?

No. If the point of sale system is down, the store cannot transact WIC.

21. Will we be able to have a backup stand beside terminal if the integrated system goes down?

No. eWIC Stand beside point of sale (POS) terminals will only be available to vendors that do not have an integrated ECR system.

22. Who should vendors call if they have issues with using the eWIC system?

Integrated Electronic Cash Register (ECR) System - vendors should contact their third-party processor (TPP) or electronic cash register system provider for issues related to the eWIC systems and transactions.

eWIC Stand Beside Pointe of Sale (POS) Terminals - Vendors with eWIC stand beside point of sale (POS) terminals will have access to an interactive voice response (IVR) hotline for maintenance and troubleshooting support.

eWIC – Food Benefits & Shopping:

23. Is eWIC going to replace WIC checks?

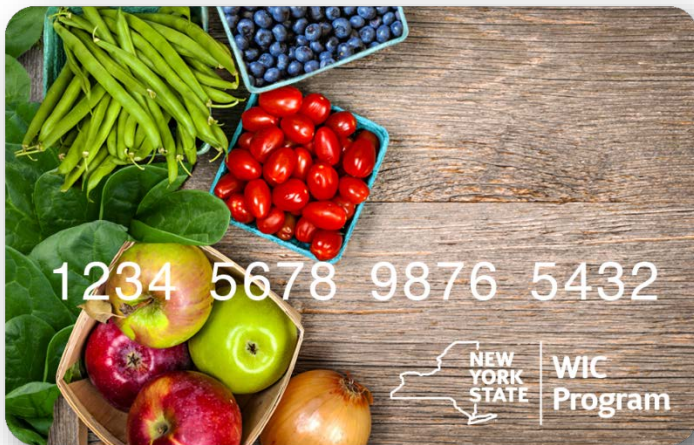
Yes. eWIC will fully replace paper checks and function similarly to other EBT transactions.

24. How long will I continue to accept WIC paper checks?

All NYS WIC authorized vendors must continue to accept paper checks throughout statewide implementation of eWIC and approximately 3 months after the final WIC agency has implemented eWIC. NYS will let vendors know when NYS issued WIC checks are no longer in circulation, which is anticipated to be September 2019.

25. What will the new eWIC card look like?

The following picture is a sample of the card WIC participants will be using to redeem their benefits at WIC authorized stores.



26. When NYS converts to eWIC, will participants need an ID card?

Participants will no longer have a WIC ID card. They will use their eWIC card and a personal identification number (PIN) at the checkout.

27. Will the eWIC card have a lump sum value on it, like a SNAP card?

No. eWIC cards are different from SNAP benefit cards in that they are loaded with specific WIC allowed food items. Each family will have one card that contains their monthly benefits. As items are purchased, they are deleted from the card balance. Participants will be able to spread their purchases out throughout the month. At the end of each transaction, the store's point of sale (POS) system will provide a receipt that displays an itemized list of the family's remaining foods and the last day to redeem them.

28. Do the eWIC cards still have a 30-day window of validation?

Yes. Benefits will be loaded for a 30-day period based on the participant's certification. Benefits will not carry over to the next 30-day period. Valid benefits and the expiration date will be displayed on the receipt.

29. Will participants be able to spread their purchases out over more than one shopping trip?

Yes. Participants will be able to shop as many times as they want during the month to purchase their WIC foods. This will be especially beneficial for participants who walk or use public transportation. Splitting purchases up will benefit those with limited food storage space and reduce food waste.

30. Will participants be restricted on where they can redeem their WIC benefits?

No. Once eWIC is fully rolled out in New York State, participants may shop at any authorized WIC vendor.

31. Since one eWIC card will be issued for the entire family, does that mean anyone in the family can use the card?

Once WIC participants receive their eWIC card, they will need to set a personal identification number (PIN). WIC participants should only share their eWIC card and PIN with people they trust. WIC staff will provide participant training materials to all WIC agencies to assist in teaching participants how to set a PIN, use their eWIC card, and keep it secure.

32. What if a participant loses their card?

The participant can deactivate the card by calling their WIC local agency. The participant will need to return to the local agency to get a new card. Any remaining benefits will be transferred to the new card.

33. If a participant knows their eWIC card number and PIN, but does not have the card itself with them, can the participant still make a purchase?

No. A participant must have the eWIC card with them at the store.

34. If a participant loses their receipt, how will they know which foods are left on their card?

Participants will be able to call the customer service number (1-844-540-3013) located on the back of their eWIC card, return to the agency for an updated list, ask the store to print a remaining balance list, access the Cardholder website at www.WICconnect.com, or check the balance on the WIC2Go Participant Mobile App, which will be downloadable from the Apple Store or Android App Store. In the WIC2Go app, participants can also set a notification (alert) when benefits are about to expire.

35. Will participants need to separate WIC food items at the checkout counter?

Best practice is to always place WIC foods first on the counter at checkout.

Integrated Electronic Cash Register (ECR) System - food items can be mixed together during checkout.

eWIC stand beside point of sale (POS) Terminal - will require separating WIC items and completing separate transactions.

36. Will the eWIC card be used for fruits and vegetables?

Yes - the eWIC card will include the cash value benefit for fruits and vegetables. This will appear as a dollar amount in the balance.

37. Will vendors manually enter PLUs when ringing up fresh fruits and vegetables?

Integrated Electronic Cash Register (ECR) System - UPCs for fresh produce must be mapped to the closest matching IFPS PLU code to be recognized by the Approved Product List (APL). The generic code 4469 should not be used.

eWIC Stand Beside Point of Sale (POS) Terminal - will need to manually enter the specific International Federation for Produce Standards (IFPS) PLU for each fresh fruit or vegetable item, even if the item has a UPC already printed on the packaging.

38. Can purchases be refunded to the eWIC card?

No. Participants can exchange damaged or spoiled items if they provide a receipt but **nothing can be refunded or credited to the eWIC card.**

39. How will I know if a transaction contains items that are not WIC foods?

Integrated Electronic Cash Register (ECR) System - At the time of purchase, when participants swipe their eWIC card, any WIC approved items that are covered by their WIC benefits will be paid from the participant's WIC balance. The participant will be asked to review the WIC foods purchased to finalize the transaction. Participants can then use another form of payment (such as their SNAP benefit card, cash, or a credit card) to pay for the remaining non-WIC items.

eWIC Stand Beside Point of Sale (POS) Terminal - At the time of purchase, participants will swipe their eWIC card first and then as food items are scanned it will reject any items that are not WIC authorized. Non-WIC items will have to be processed separately through the cash register.

APL (Approved Product List):

40. What is the Approved Product List?

The WIC Approved Product List (APL) is an electronic database of all WIC allowed foods. For WIC participants to purchase a product using the new eWIC system, the Universal Product Code (UPC) or Price Look Up (PLU) code for that product must be included in this database. Products will be added to the APL on a regular basis as manufacturers introduce new items, or if an existing product was missed during UPC field collection. WIC vendors will need to download the most recent version of the APL every night to make sure WIC transactions can be processed successfully.

41. Why are nightly downloads necessary?

Manufacturing and packaging changes can happen often so vendors must download the Approved Product List (APL) every night. eWIC Stand beside point of sale (POS) terminals must remain plugged in overnight so that the APL can be downloaded.

42. How can a request be made to add a food item to the APL?

To request that a food item be added to the APL, please go to the WIC Vendors in New York State website (<http://nyswicvendors.com>). Complete and submit the 'NYS WIC UPC Submissions' form under 'UPC Information'. The UPC code and 2 pictures of the label are required. Please review the website for instructions.

At the Checkout – Exceeding Maximum Allowable Reimbursement Level (MARL) and Scanning Non-Allowable Items:

43. If a participant selects a non-allowable food item, what would happen?

In an integrated system, a non-allowable WIC item will remain on the balance of items after the WIC benefits have been deducted. The participant can choose to pay for the item using another form of payment. On a stand beside terminal, when scanning the UPC of a food item that is not allowed, the UPC code will not be found and the item will not be allowed to be purchased through the eWIC stand beside point of sale (POS) terminal.

44. If someone chooses a WIC allowable item, but the UPC will not scan, what happens? Are vendors able to manually override the point of sale device?

No - there will be no manual override capability. The participant will not be able to obtain that item with their eWIC card. To notify NYS WIC about a WIC food item that does not scan for purchase with eWIC, please go to the WIC Vendors in New York State website (<http://nyswicvendors.com>). Complete and submit the 'NYS WIC UPC Submissions' form under 'UPC Information'. The UPC code and 2 pictures of the label are required. Please review the website for instructions.

45. If a transaction contains items that are not WIC foods, how will the eWIC system let me know?

Integrated Electronic Cash Register (ECR) System - At the time of purchase, when participants swipe their eWIC card, any WIC approved items that are covered by their WIC benefits will be paid from the participant's WIC balance. The participant will be asked to review the WIC foods purchased to finalize the transaction. Participants can then use another form of payment (such as their SNAP benefit card, cash, or a credit card) to pay for the remaining non-WIC items.

eWIC Stand Beside Point of Sale (POS) Terminal - At the time of purchase, participants will swipe their eWIC card first and then as food items are scanned it will reject any items that are not WIC approved. Non-WIC items will have to be processed separately through the cash register.

46. What happens if the price for a WIC food item exceeds the Maximum Allowable Reimbursement Level (MARL)?

If an item exceeds the MARL, the vendor will be reimbursed at the maximum allowable amount for their peer group for the item.

47. If the MARL is exceeded, does the system have a follow up statement or notification to let the vendor know why they were reimbursed less than the price of the item?

All vendors will have access to an online portal to view transaction information immediately. This information can be seen by selecting the transaction history tab on the online portal and entering the date. A vendor with an integrated system will also be able to retrieve this information from the third-party processor (TPP). Integrated vendors should contact their TPP with any questions regarding payments and stand beside vendors should contact the Conduent Vendor Help Desk at 855-897-5898.

48. How will we be able to reconcile accounts, and as a vendor, know we're being paid correctly? How soon after the transaction can we see that information?

All vendors will have access to an online portal to view transaction information immediately. This information can be seen by selecting the transaction history tab on the online portal and entering the date. A vendor with an integrated system will also be able to retrieve this information from the third-party processor (TPP). Integrated vendors should contact their TPP with any questions regarding payments and stand beside vendors should contact the Conduent Vendor Help Desk at 855-897-5898.

Training:

49. What type of training will vendors receive?

Integrated Electronic Cash Register (ECR) Systems - Stores with an integrated ECR system will be responsible for training cashiers on how to perform eWIC transactions based on their specific cash register software functions.

eWIC Stand Beside Point of Sale (POS) Terminals - Stores receiving eWIC stand beside point of sale (POS) terminals will be trained by Conduent over the phone, using a ship and train method. For stores having trouble installing stand beside terminals, NYS staff and vendor management agencies will also be available to provide support.