

**eWIC Vendor Team Meeting
May 28, 2015 at 1:30 pm
Call-in Number: 1-877-336-1831 *Access Code: 8951404***

MINUTES

1. Introductions & Roll Call

a. Corporate/National Chains

Gene Wallace (Walmart); Jamie Slaton, Trent (Harps); Curtis Wiggins, Jason Cooper, Nancy Campbell (Brookshire); Shannon (Kroger Conway); Karen Walker, Arlene McGinnis (DECA/LRAFB Commissary); Madaline Hentges (Supervalu & Save-A-Lot)

b. Local Corporations (operating more than one store in AR)

David Hill (Cash Saver)

c. Independent AR retailers

Samantha (Marvin's Food Store); Vicky (Neighborhood Fresh Market); Jill Smith (Wright's Food Center); Perry Young (Young's Thriftway); Judy Foster (Two Rivers Market); Cheri Bellamy (Supervalu Foods); Jimmy Craven (Craven's Hillcrest Foods); Regina (Tim's Food Store); Kathy Scholl (Hardy Price Chopper); Maria (Moore's Apple Market)

d. Dealers/Resellers

Steve Barkley, Doug Arnzen (Commserv), Andy Dent (Springfield Buisness Systems); Gary Loftis, Charles Carter (Arkansas Cash Register Systems)

e. Retail Associations

Polly Martin (AGRMA); Stan Wibbenmeyer, Wanda Jordan (AWG)

f. Staff

i. Field Staff -- Food Delivery Liaisons

1. Karen Lee (NW Region/Van Buren County LHU)
2. Christine Watts (SE Region/Monroe County)
3. Melissa Gift (Central Region/Pulaski County)

- **Reauthorization Training – Several stores had asked before today if this call fulfills the reauthorization training requirement. It does NOT. A representative from each store must attend an in-person reauthorization training before the store may be reauthorized for the next three-year contract period in order to continue to accept WIC. The trainings begin June 8 and are offered in a variety of locations. You may call our Vendor Manager, Pamela Woodard George, or Angie Mack, Vendor Financial Information Management, at (501) 661-2508.**

- ii. Alison Whitten – eWIC Project Manager/MIS Section Chief
- iii. Cindy Fuller – Etegrity, Project Implementation Contractor
- iv. Pam Woodard George – Manager, Food Delivery Section Manager

- v. Angie Mack, Health Program Specialist, Vendor Financial Information Management
- vi. Brian Musick – MIS Coordinator
- vii. Kim Newsom – Data & Information Specialist (Special Projects)
- viii. Teresa Guerrero – MIS Section Specialist

2. Operations vs Technical Team Meetings

- a. Thank you for taking the time from your busy schedules to join us. We know that you've got a store to run, and we value your time.
- b. This team meets every three months. It's a great time to hear updates of where we are in the transition from paper checks to a WIC EBT system which we refer to as eWIC (because most people think of the SNAP/Food Stamp Program when they hear EBT). During these calls, we focus on informing our grocers of what eWIC is, how it works and how to plan for it.
- c. These are considered our **operational** calls – preparing you for how eWIC will operate from the moment that a WIC shopper walks into your store until the transaction is complete and the funds go into your bank account.
- d. We've just had our first eWIC Vendor **Technical** Team Meeting last week. These calls focus on the technical side of what's behind the scenes – such how your payment terminal verifies the eWIC card and sends messages back and forth to the cash register and how the point-of-sale software inside your cash register handles an eWIC transaction to include anything that can and will go wrong. Just to give you an idea.
- e. Attending these meetings are IT experts, dealers who maintain your POS system, the software developers of POS systems and retail associations. If you have an IT department or specialist, please email or call me, and I will be happy to speak with them about joining these technical calls.

3. RFP (Request for Proposals) Update – Alison

- a. **Banking Contract**
 - i. We are finalizing the claims processing contract with Solutran.
- b. **Offline Module Contractor**
 - i. Bids have closed on the Offline Module Contractor to develop the interface between our MIS system and EBT functionality. We are currently in negotiations.

4. Timeline

- a. **Pilot Date**
 - i. Once all contracting assistance is on board, we expect to pilot within one year to one and a half years. Depending of course on development time and User Acceptance Testing (UAT), we estimate pilot to begin late 2016 or early 2017. Pilot will last for three months. Afterwards, USDA/FNS may take up to 60 days to approve rollout.
- b. **Rollout (EBT Roll Out Phases Map)**

- i. When we begin rolling out eWIC statewide phase by phase, each phase will last approx. 3 weeks before moving to the next phase.
 - ii. The EBT Rollout Phases Map has been emailed out but is on website also. Please keep in mind that this is still **tentative**.
- 5. **Vendor Reimbursement** – We’ve talked a good bit about this already, but I realize that I’ve been remised in pointing out something very important: For reimbursement of either an integrated or nonintegrated system – the grocer is responsible for obtaining approval before ordering any equipment for which you expect reimbursement and you must pay the costs up front, submit paperwork (including an invoice and receipt), and then get reimbursed. An official written policy will be issued soon.
 - a. **Timeframe**
 - i. Federal guidance is 9 months out/ lead time before roll out.
 - b. **Reimbursement**
 - i. The grocer must receive approval, order equipment, pay for equipment, equipment installed with at least an one year maintenance and warranty contract, store system must be certified by WIC staff, grocer then sends in Request for Reimbursement form along with proof of payment (invoice and receipt).
 - c. **Integrated**
 - i. The equipment and system used for an eWIC transaction works with the store’s existing electronic cash register/point-of-sale system. The cashier will not be required to separate WIC items from the shopper’s cart.
 - 1. Federal guidance is \$50 toward payment terminal replacement if not smart card capable per lane plus one for the service desk. **You will be looking at an initial investment until reimbursed.**
 - 2. It’s unfortunate that our timelines are not in accord with the EMV mandate of October 2015. A clarification was requested by FNS and it was determined that the order does not apply to WIC EBT cards.
 - a. As I understand it, the new EMV standards will likely require upgrades to hardware to accommodate the software upgrade. It isn’t that retailers (not only grocers) would necessarily be paying for the software upgrade but that additional software or hardware will need to be purchased to run the upgraded software would be the additional cost. It’s similar to how the older and slower computers aren’t capable of running newer versions like Windows 8 etc.
 - b. The timing for AR eWIC may make it seem that you are having to pay or do these upgrades for WIC but it really has nothing to do with WIC ... all industries that accept Mastercard or Visa are going through this software upgrade.

d. Nonintegrated

- i. The alternative to integration is a stand-beside device for eWIC transactions only. It is maintained separately from your overall store management system
 - 1. The State will provide this device at no charge with 3 year maintenance and warranty. **However, you will be looking at an initial investment of about \$4,000 until reimbursed.**
 - 2. The number of units will depend on amount of WIC redemptions.
- ii. **Any corporation operating 10 or more stores in Arkansas are considered Integrated (delineate corporations from independent/"mom & pop" stores).**

6. eWIC Vendor Equipment Survey

- a. If you haven't returned your survey yet, please do so as soon as possible. It's important for us to know what equipment that you have and what your needs are.

7. Store eWIC Educational Materials (*draft* attached for your review)

- a. We touched on this briefly on our last call, but ran out of time.
- b. Our goal is to educate WIC participants (your shoppers) and our grocers and your associates. We don't want to take anyone by surprise. In our clinics, we'll have banners and signs preparing the participants. However, many participants are on a three-month issuance and at times may send a proxy in their place. But, they are in your stores on a regular basis.
- c. With your permission, we'd like to design an eWIC educational material letting WIC shoppers know that eWIC is coming. Down the road, but sooner for our pilot area. We want them to know also that your store is aware of the change and will be ready. We don't want them changing their shopping habits.
- d. We were thinking about something at each lane near the PIN pad/payment terminal. What are your thoughts? And those of you who have already implemented in other states, what worked best for you?
 - i. Jason Copper advised that Brookshire did allow signage before implementation in other states.
 - ii. Perry Young suggested that the vendors are allowed to print materials provided by the WIC State Office and place throughout the store.

8. Open Discussion – *asked after agenda went out to discuss bookkeeping issues*

- a. One of the benefits to eWIC is that shoppers will enter a PIN instead of presenting a yellow ID folder.
- b. No more returned checks for missing signatures or taken outside of validation dates.
- c. No more vendor stamping on checks.
 - i. Claim files submitted electronically.
 - ii. Connect to secure FTP site within at least every 48 hours.

9. Next Meeting

- a. Every quarter on the 4th Thursday of the month.
- b. However, that would place the next meeting on the same day as the AWG Food Show in Memphis.
 - i. The group agreed to move the next meeting up by one week.
 - ii. **Next Meeting will be Thursday, August 20, 2015 at 1:30-2:30.**
 - iii. **Toll Free Call-in Number: 1-877-336-1831**
 - iv. **Access Code: 8951404**