

Summary of WIC Participant Focus Groups

Main themes:

- **Labeling**
 - **Participants would like better labeling throughout the store for WIC approved foods.**
 - *“It’s hard to know what is allowed and what isn’t, (especially in the produce department) because things aren’t always labeled.”*
 - *“It is easier to choose foods for WIC when they have labels on the shelves, not all are labeled, this would make the checkout process much easier so nobody has to go back and get different foods.”*
- **Training**
 - **Participants don’t feel that cashiers are comfortable with WIC transactions.**
 - Many agreed with this statement from one participant: *“I don’t have confidence in the clerks. I don’t know if they are even doing it right.”*
 - **There is inconsistency with whether or not participants are allowed to go over the fruit and vegetable voucher dollar amount and pay the difference.**
 - *“I am allowed to pay the difference if I go over at some stores and not others. Even at the same store sometimes I am allowed to go over the amount and sometimes not depending on the cashier.”*
 - **There are also some negative reactions from cashiers that possibly are being misunderstood. Many participants stated they feel cashiers attitudes are negative towards them because they are on the WIC program. However, based on other comments this could be related in part to the cashier not feeling comfortable with doing WIC transactions accurately and quickly to keep lines moving.**
- **Training/UPC Code updates**
 - **Participants reported inconsistency with which foods are allowed when scanned at the register.**
 - *“I am allowed to get a certain item at one store, but when I try to get it at another it isn’t allowed. I know some items are being rejected that should be allowed.”*
 - *“Sometimes a cashier will allow an item, but other times another cashier at the same store doesn’t allow it.”*

Other Participant Suggestions for Vendors

- Have some bananas and apples, or WIC allowed canned fruit (if you’re worried about spoilage) at the checkout counter to suggest if the participant didn’t go over their voucher amount.
- Some thought it would be a good idea to have pre-packaged bags for participants to choose from, like \$6 or \$10 packages. Others did not think this would be beneficial (they like to choose their own).
- Have an up to date WIC Shopping Guide at all cashier stations, or other helpful guide for cashiers.
- Some thought a WIC checkout lane would be beneficial – so that person would be an “expert” on WIC purchases.
- Some suggested that they would like the customer food scales calibrated regularly.
- Most liked the idea that the state should make the fruit and vegetable voucher sound/look more like a coupon (i.e. \$6 off or \$10 off coupon) so cashiers would be less confused.