



TRAINING EDITION ★ SEPTEMBER 2022

# VENDOR INFORMATION PUBLICATION



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[www.alabamapublichealth.gov/WIC/eWIC-vendors](http://www.alabamapublichealth.gov/WIC/eWIC-vendors)



# A Message from the Vendor Management Branch

Dear Authorized WIC Vendors,

In addition to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, we have experienced an unexpected infant formula recall resulting in a nationwide infant formula shortage. We truly appreciate your efforts and concerns in accommodating our Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) participants. We have addressed many questions and concerns received from you. This has helped us better understand your needs while assisting you in meeting the needs of our participants.

We are pleased to note that since the last VIP Training Newsletter, we have implemented eWIC at self-checkout for our WIC families. All WIC approved vendors interested in eWIC at self-checkout should contact the State WIC Office for more information to complete testing and approval at your store(s). The eWIC at self-checkout option has proven to be a convenient alternative to manned registers for our participants and you as a WIC Vendor.

We are here to assure your success as a WIC vendor. In turn, we hope you will provide a wonderful customer-centric shopping experience to your WIC customers.

Thank you for being a valued part of the WIC Program.

Your WIC Partner,

Alabama's WIC Vendor Management Team

## The WIC Program

WIC is a special Supplemental Nutrition Program funded by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). The mission of the WIC Program is to improve the health and nutritional status of women, infants, and children during critical times of growth and development. Authorized WIC vendors provide participants access to WIC approved foods to promote good nutrition as prescribed by a health professional.

## Alabama WIC Approved Foods

Foods offered through the WIC Program provide a good source of nutrients to women, infants, and children participating in the program. These foods include milk, yogurt, eggs, cheese, fruit juice, fortified cereals, peanut butter, canned and dried beans/peas, whole grain bread/pasta, and brown rice, as well as fresh and **FROZEN** fruits and vegetables.

For a complete detailed list of the Alabama WIC approved foods, please refer to the WIC Approved Foods Brochure and the [Alabama WIC Program Vendor Procedure Handbook](#). These resources can also be found on our website at [www.alabamapublichealth.gov](http://www.alabamapublichealth.gov).

It is recommended that a WIC Approved Foods Brochure be placed at each register as a helpful tool in assisting cashiers with WIC transactions. These brochures are available free of charge by contacting the State WIC Office.

# Important Alabama WIC Approved Food Updates

New WIC approved foods take effect October 1, 2022. The State WIC Office will be mailing out change sheets on the food package updates for each register in your store.

Please see the detailed list of changes to WIC approved cereals.

## CEREAL:

- Adding Kashi Honey Toasted and Warm Cinnamon, Rice Chex, Frosted Mini Wheats Little Bites (Original and Chocolate), and Frosted Mini Wheats (Strawberry and Blueberry).
- Adding (8.9 – 11 oz.) approved cereal boxes sizes.

## WHOLE GRAINS:

- Adding the Bunny, Kroger, and Lewis Whole Wheat 16 oz. breads. Remove Bimbo bread (no longer available).
- Adding Best Choice whole grain tortillas.

## MILK/YOGURT:

- Adding 96 oz. Lactose Free Milk containers and Great Value Soymilk half gallons containers.
- Adding Stoneyfield Organic whole milk yogurt (all flavors) 32 oz. tub. Greek not allowed.
- Adding any brand low fat Greek yogurt in 32 oz. tubs.
- Adding low fat or Greek yogurt in 8 count, 2 oz. tubes.

## EGGS:

- Adding any size white eggs (small, medium, large, extra-large, and jumbo) in 6 count, 12 count, and 18 count cartons.

## FISH:

- Adding tuna and pink salmon pouches (2 – 3oz. pouches – flavor varieties).

## JUICES:

- Adding new flavors of Ocean Spray and Welch's 64 oz. containers.
- Adding 96 oz. and 128 oz. juice containers: equivalent to 2 – 48 oz. or 2 – 64 oz. juices.



## INFANT FOODS:

- Adding Gerber and Beech-Nut Naturals 4 oz. jars in stage 1st and 2nd stage.
- Adding 1st stage: Gerber 2 oz. – 2 packs and Beech-Nut 64 oz. variety packs.

## FRUITS and VEGETABLES:

- Adding **FROZEN** Fruits and Vegetables with cash value benefits (CVB).



## Produce Mapping (Linking)

The Alabama WIC Program requires retailers to map (link) produce to an Alabama WIC-approved Price Look-Up (PLU) code. All fresh fruits and vegetables are WIC-approved. However, only correctly mapped produce will be recognized and approved during WIC transactions. This means that any fresh fruit or vegetable without an International Federation of Produce Standards (IFPS)-approved PLU code will not be recognized and approved.

Participants continue to experience barriers redeeming CVBs due to incorrect mapping of fresh fruits and/or vegetables. Mixed bags of different produce items are frequently affected (e.g., bag of apples and oranges). Bulk bags of the same produce item have also been affected (e.g., bag of apples). This results in WIC participants not being able to redeem CVBs and lost sales to your store. Please ensure all produce is correctly mapped to the exact or most closely related PLU code. Alabama WIC is in favor of utilizing the **generic 44699 PLU** to ensure WIC participants are able to purchase fresh produce that is incorrectly mapped.

### Store Responsibility:

- Map/link all fresh fruits and vegetables to an IFPS-approved PLU code.
- Contact your Electronic Cash Register (ECR) Provider for specific instructions as every ECR is different.
- Ensure store personnel are trained to address issues that may occur.

Additional mapping information can be found on the IFPS website at <https://www.ifpsglobal.com/> or the Alabama eWIC for Vendors page at <http://alabamapublichealth.gov/wic/vendors.html>.

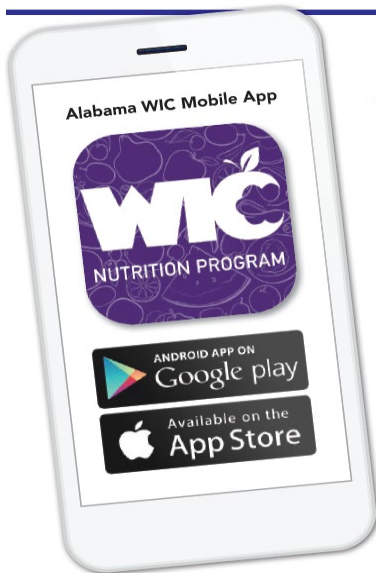


# You can Submit UPC Codes on the Alabama WIC App

Follow these simple instructions:

Download the WIC App from your smart phone's App Store.

From the home page you can search to see if an item is Alabama WIC approved by using the Search Bar. From the Search Bar you can scan the UPC or search by product name or category to see if the item is in Alabama's Approved Product List.



## CHECK OUT THE ALABAMA WIC APP!

Access the WIC Approved Foods Brochure and stay connected with social media posts and current WIC news.

1



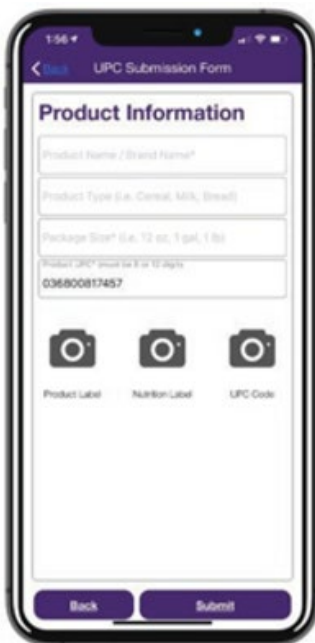
#1. Click in the Box to Scan

2



#2. Scan the item

3



#3. X item not in the APL – Simply select the "Submit for Review" button and follow the instructions if you believe it's a WIC approved item.

4



#4. Enter your vendor information on the vendor information screen, including your 5-digit Alabama WIC vendor number. NOTE: Enable "Remember Me" to skip this step next time.

5



#5. Complete the UPC submission Form by entering product information and submitting photos. Submit images of the front label, the nutrition label, and the UPC.



# Alabama WIC Program UPC Submission Process

If you have items that are not scanning and you believe they are WIC eligible based on the current Alabama WIC Foods Brochure, submit these items for consideration. Complete the Alabama UPC Submission Form and email to: [alwicupc@adph.state.al.us](mailto:alwicupc@adph.state.al.us). The form must be completed in its entirety for the submission to be considered. Remember, you can also submit using the Alabama WIC app demonstrated on the previous page.

Note: Submissions are not a guarantee of placement on the Alabama APL.

## Alabama UPC Submission Form

For UPC submission complete the following form. For each submission a separate form is required. Fields denoted by \* are required.

Store Name / Manufacturer\*

Alabama WIC Vendor Number

Contact Name \*

Contact Phone Number\*

Contact E-mail Address\*

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### Item Description

Only one item per form

Product Name / Brand Name\*

Product Type ( i.e. Cereal, Milk, Bread)

Package Size\* (i.e. 12 oz, 1 gal, 1 lb)

Product UPC\* ( must be 8 or 12 digits)

### Required attachments include images of :

1. Product label (front of package)
2. Nutrition label (must include nutrition facts and ingredients)
3. UPC Code

E-mail the completed form and the required attachments to: [alwicupc@adph.state.al.us](mailto:alwicupc@adph.state.al.us)

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For State Use Only

Date

Approved Denied

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Denied Reason

Authorized WIC Staff

To access this form: Visit <https://www.alabamapublichealth.gov/wic/ewic-vendors.html> and click on the [Alabama UPC Submission Form](#) under Alabama WIC Program UPC Submission Process.

# New Infant Formula Minimum Stock Requirements!

Alabama WIC is updating our infant formula minimum stock requirements to better align with the needs of our WIC participants. Rather than requiring 20 cans of Enfamil Prosobee for vendors in Peer Groups 1-3, we have adjusted the required minimum stock to reflect what is most frequently issued to, and redeemed by, the majority of formula fed infants receiving WIC benefits. Similar adjustments have been made for vendors in Peer Group 4. We have also taken your shelf space into consideration to avoid a large change. In addition, we considered the minimum quantity you can order with most formulas received in cases of 6. The minimum stock requirements are now divisible by 6 to align with the quantity you receive in each case.

Minimum Stock for Infant Formula, Effective October 1, 2022			
Formula	Peer Group 1-3	Peer Group 4	WIC Infant Use
Enfamil Infant	18	12	1 <sup>st</sup> Highest
Enfamil Gentlease	12	6	2 <sup>nd</sup> Highest
Enfamil AR	6	6	3 <sup>rd</sup> Highest
Enfamil Prosobee	6	Available upon request	4 <sup>th</sup> Highest
Total Cans*	42	24	
*Shelf space for vendors in Peer Groups 1 – 3 increases by 2 cans, from 40 cans (previously 20 cans Enfamil Infant and 20 cans Enfamil Prosobee) to 42 cans inclusive of the top 4 most frequently used WIC formulas.			
*Shelf space for vendors in Peer Group 4 increases by 4 cans, from 20 cans of Enfamil Infant to 24 cans total of the top 3 most frequently used WIC formulas.			

The minimum stock requirements have been updated to reflect the new infant formula amounts in the [Alabama WIC Program Vendor Handbook](#) and will take effect on October 1, 2022. Alabama WIC will not be applying penalties due to failure to meet infant formula minimum stock requirements during the nationwide infant formula shortage. We will continue allowing proof of unfulfilled orders to serve as an alternative to meeting minimum stock for infant formulas.

Once the nationwide formula shortage is resolved and these formula products are readily available to order, we believe you will find the new minimum stock requirements a benefit to both authorized WIC vendors and WIC participants as they are more in line with supply and demand. Please note that the waiver to meeting minimum stock requirements applies to infant formula only, for the duration of the nationwide infant formula shortage. All other minimum stock items must be available.

As a part of the authorization process to become a vendor in the Alabama WIC Program, a vendor must meet the criteria for participation which includes having the minimum stock. The waiver available to authorized WIC vendors will be extended to vendor applicants. Vendor applicants may show proof of unfulfilled infant formula orders as proxy to available infant formula on the shelf. All other minimum stock requirements will be strictly adhered to.

Once authorized, your store must continue to maintain the minimum stock. This permits multiple participants to come into your store on the same day and purchase all items available on their eWIC card without depleting your stock. The minimum stock requirements are based on your store's assigned peer group of your store. Vendors are placed in peer groups based on store type and number of cash registers. For a complete list of peer groups with descriptions and a detailed listing of the Alabama WIC Program minimum stock requirements, refer to the [Alabama WIC Program Vendor Procedure Handbook](#) pages 19 and 37–40.

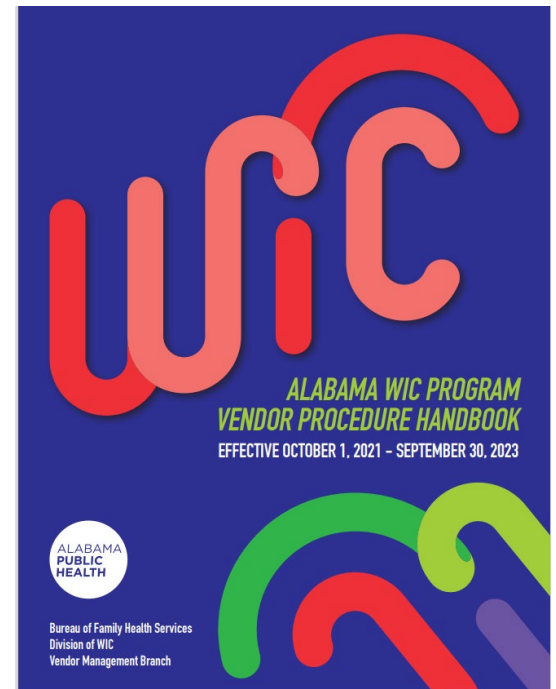


# Know the Minimum Stock Requirements!

As part of the authorization process to become a vendor in the Alabama WIC Program, a vendor must meet the criteria for participation which includes having the minimum stock.

Once authorized, your store must continue to maintain the minimum stock. This permits multiple participants to come into your store on the same day and purchase all items available on their eWIC card without depleting your stock. The minimum stock requirements are based on your store's assigned peer group of your store. Vendors are placed in peer groups based on store type and number of cash registers.

For a complete list of peer groups with descriptions and a detailed listing of the Alabama WIC Program minimum stock requirements, refer to the [Alabama WIC Program Vendor Procedure Handbook](#) pages 19 and 37–40.



## eWIC Application Process

1. The Vendor application is received and reviewed for accuracy and completion.
2. The information from the completed application will be entered into our Management Information System.
3. The application file is then given to a Special Investigator to schedule a pre-authorization site visit.
4. The pre-authorization visit is scheduled contingent on the Special Investigators schedules.  
NOTE: Vendors will **not** be notified of date of visit.
5. If the vendor passes the pre-authorization site visit, non-corporate vendors will be sent a pre-approval letter with two blank vendor contracts and a request for an E-Verify Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). Corporate vendors will only be requested to provide an updated E-Verify MOU adding the new store. The vendor contract for the corporation should already be on file.
6. Non-corporate vendors should mail back both contracts signed, along with the MOU.
7. Corporate vendors should send an updated MOU.
8. Once all documents are received, training will be scheduled.
9. After the completion of training, the vendor will be assigned and notified of their vendor number.
10. If the vendor's POS system is not already certified with the Alabama eWIC service provider prior to becoming an authorized Alabama WIC vendor, a Level III Certification is required before accepting eWIC transactions.

## Do You Purchase Your Infant Formula from an Approved Source?

All Alabama authorized WIC vendors and those applying to be an Alabama authorized WIC vendor must purchase infant formula from approved sources. You can access the Alabama WIC approved formula supplier list electronically on our website <https://www.alabamapublichealth.gov/WIC/>. Select “Vendor Management” from the menu on the left, then “Authorized WIC Vendor Information” which is under the “Already an Authorized Alabama WIC Vendor” heading. The list is located under the heading “Alabama WIC Vendor Publications.”

## Do You Know if Your Store is Violating the Vendor Sanction Schedule?

It is very important to be familiar with the vendor sanction schedule to ensure your store is in compliance. Program violations are separated into categories by the seriousness of the violation. Refer to the [Alabama WIC Program Vendor Procedure Handbook](#) pages 33-36 or your WIC vendor contract for a complete list of violations.

## Providing Incentive Items is Strictly Prohibited

The Alabama WIC Program prohibits the use of incentives to entice WIC participants to shop at a particular store. Vendors who use advertisements to solicit the business of WIC participants, and/or offer incentives or delivery services will be subject to contract termination.

Incentives are defined as any item, service or gimmick used to solicit the patronage of a WIC participant. Incentives include free or complimentary gifts such as but not limited to diapers, free deli meals, other services, etc. offered exclusively to WIC participants.

## WIC Program Fraud or Abuse... What Should You Do?

If you suspect a WIC customer or another vendor is abusing the Alabama WIC Program, contact the State WIC Office toll free at 1-888-942-4673. We take all complaints about program abuse seriously. Investigations are conducted on all complaints received.

## The Chronicles of Lactose-Free/Reduced Milk

Lactose-free or lactose reduced milk is allowed even though it is not specified on the participant’s food list. The WIC customer must get lactose-free or lactose-reduced milk specific to the milk (whole, 1%, or fat-free) issued on their eWIC card. These UPCs, like all WIC approved foods, are included in the APL.



## Downloading the Alabama WIC Approved Product List (APL)

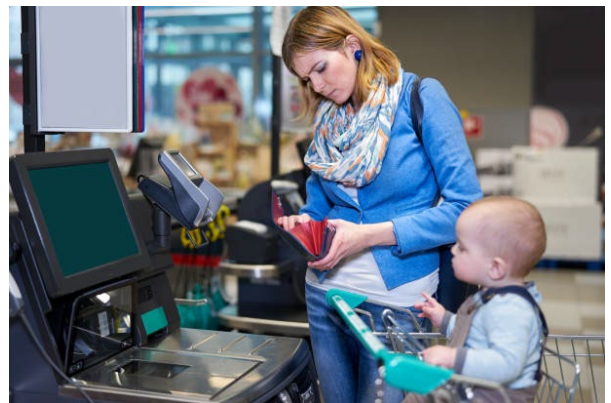
All vendors **must** connect their Point of Sale (POS) system for each eWIC device/outlet covered by the WIC vendor agreement to the state's eWIC system at least once each 24-hour period to download reconciliation files and the APL. This ensures WIC participants are able to purchase all WIC-approved foods at your store(s). **This is a contractual requirement for all authorized WIC vendors to connect to the eWIC processor's system to receive updates from the APL at least once every 24 hours.**

## Self-Checkout

Alabama eWIC can be used at self-checkout for stores that have gained approval. For a list of WIC vendors approved for self-checkout, visit the Alabama eWIC website.

<https://www.alabamapublichealth.gov/wic/ewic.html>

If you are interested in accepting eWIC at self-checkouts in your store(s), please contact the State WIC Office to discuss requirements and setup a Level III certification of your self-checkout register's software.



## Temporary Buying Options During the Nationwide Infant Formula Shortage

As you are aware, Alabama's WIC Program has made numerous powdered infant formulas available for purchase during the nationwide infant formula shortage. These are in addition to our standard Mead Johnson contract formula products. UPCs for these formulas have been added to the APL and will ring up as WIC authorized purchases when the participant's eWIC card is used at check out. It is critical that you update the most recent version of the APL each day for WIC participants to be able to purchase these formulas at your store. Once the formula shortage is resolved and the market returns to normal, Alabama WIC will notify WIC participants and vendors and remove the UPCs.

The current list of temporary buying options for infant formula is available at:

<https://www.alabamapublichealth.gov/WIC/assets/wic.temporary.buying.options.pdf>.

# WIC Program Integrity

To maintain the integrity of the Alabama WIC Program, routine monitoring visits and undercover compliance buys are conducted at authorized vendors across the state. These are used to detect noncompliance and fraud. Common reasons for warnings include failure to maintain the minimum stock (currently excluding infant formula with proof of unfulfilled order during the nationwide infant formula shortage), missing training acknowledgment forms, stocking and selling expired food items, and failure to properly map fresh fruits/vegetables. Should you have any questions, please consult your WIC vendor guidelines and [Alabama WIC Program Vendor Procedure Handbook](#) or call the State WIC Office toll free at 1-888-942-4673.



## Check List for Routine Monitoring Visits



As a currently authorized WIC vendor, you are subject to a routine monitoring visit at any time. A routine monitoring visit is an overt, onsite monitoring visit in which a program representative identifies himself/herself. In order to be prepared, please keep the information below in an easily accessible place because it will be requested during the monitoring visit. Failure to provide any of these will result in the applicable sanction.


- [Alabama WIC Program Vendor Procedure Handbook.](#)
- Vendor Information Publication (VIP) eNewsletter.
- Documentation/Invoices showing you are receiving infant formula only from approved sources on the list provided by the State WIC Office.
- A Valid Food Permit.
- Documentation on employee WIC training (Training Acknowledgement Form).

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# Price Increase Request Form

When the price on a product increases more than ten cents from the price submitted on the latest WIC Semiannual Vendor Price Survey, the increase should be reported. Price increases must be reported on the Price Increase Request Form which is available on our website <https://www.alabamapublichealth.gov/WIC>.





ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF  
PUBLIC HEALTH

# ALABAMA WIC PROGRAM

## PRICE INCREASE REQUEST FORM

I am notifying the State WIC Office that the vendor listed below has had a price increase of more than 10 cents for the following WIC approved food item(s):

WIC Food Item	Size	Current Survey Price	New Survey Price

**STORE INFORMATION**

Store Name:	Vendor Number:
Street Address:	
City:	State:
Zip:	
Vendor Representative (Print):	
Representative Title (Print):	
Signature:	Date:
Contact Telephone Number:	

The State WIC Office will not accept prices that exceed the current price maximum.  
You will be notified if your prices exceed the current price maximum.

Mail or fax completed form to:  
 Debbie Free  
 ADPH – WIC Division  
 P.O. Box 303017  
 Montgomery, AL 36130-3017  
 Fax: (334) 206-2914

Submit form to the State WIC Office at least five (5) days  
prior to new price effective date.

DO NOT WRITE BELOW THIS LINE

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STATE WIC OFFICE USE ONLY

Date Received: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

# You are Responsible for Training Your Cashiers and Training Acknowledgement Form

The Training Acknowledgement Form should be signed by all employees yearly after watching the training video and/or reading the VIP Training Edition. In addition, all new employees should watch the training video and sign and date the form.

Follow the link below to Alabama WIC Vendor Training Module:

<http://alabamapublichealth.gov/alphnt/features/wic-vendor-training.html>.

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## Reminders for the Upcoming 2023 Agreement Renewal Year



- During renewal year, the Alabama WIC Program does not process applications from June 1 through September 30.
- Renewal applications will be mailed out by January 2023.
- Vendor training will be conducted in person or virtually.
- Renewal agreements will also be mailed out to vendors mid-2023 and must be returned before September 30.
- Training will be conducted between August and September 2023.

## What do you do if...Your Store Closes, is Sold, or has Other Business Structure Changes??

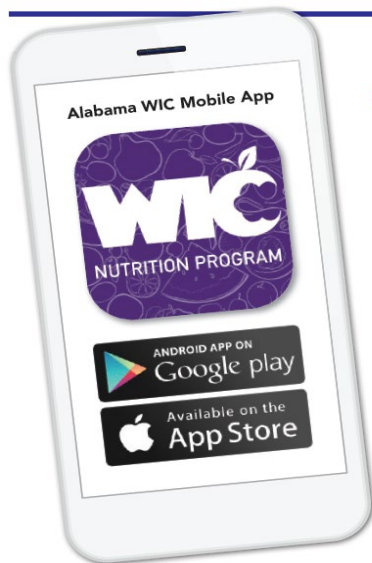
Vendor contracts are NOT transferrable from one owner to another.

The State WIC Office must be notified in writing no less than 15 days prior to any changes in information to include, but not limited to, change in name of store, ownership, management, business structure, or closing. The effective date must be specified in the letter. In addition, the State WIC Office must be notified 15 days prior to the store being sold.

Review your Alabama WIC Vendor Contract of your [Alabama WIC Program Vendor Procedure Handbook](#) (page 21) for additional information.







## CHECK OUT THE ALABAMA WIC APP!

Access the WIC Approved  
Foods Brochure and stay  
connected with social media  
posts and current  
WIC news.

## Don't Forget to Check Out the Alabama WIC App!!!



**Remember you can Submit UPCs on the WIC App!!!**

## Need Supplies? Have Questions? Contact Us.

If you need shelf labels, window clings, WIC Approved Food Brochures, or additional copies of the [Alabama WIC Program Vendor Procedure Handbook](#), call the State WIC Office to request these items at no cost to you. In addition, if you have questions or concerns that you cannot find an answer to in your Alabama WIC Program vendor resources, please call your friendly Vendor Management team member at the State WIC Office toll free at (888) 942-4673 or (334) 206-5673.





*This institution is an equal opportunity provider.*