

STATE OF ALASKA REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS



AK WIC PARTICIPANT DIRECT ORDERING PROGRAM

RFP 180000032

Amendment #2

ISSUED NOVEMBER 26, 2019

This amendment is being issued to provide questions and answers from offerors.

ISSUED BY: MATT MEIENBERG

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES
DIVISION OF PUBLIC ASSISTANCE

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RFP QUESTIONS & ANSWERS:

1. **Q:** The RFP suggests that vendors may have the option of interfacing with WIC Direct to query regarding participant's balances. Do you have examples of the technical documentation around this and/or a contact for these kinds of inquiries with WIC Direct?

A: The State currently does not have technical documentation about performing balance inquiries against WIC Direct. However, the vendor for WIC Direct, CDP, will work with the selected vendor to support balance inquiries, either in the existing message format defined in the ANSI X9.93 Part 1 specifications or in a mutually agreed upon API using OAuth.

2. **Q:** The RFP uses some medical terminology and it references another document "Information Technology Requirements - State of Alaska Department of Health & Social Services." Both

documents make direct or indirect reference to HIPPA and PII. It is our understanding that WIC data is explicitly exempted from HIPPA protections. Can you confirm?

A: WIC is not required to comply with HIPAA requirements.

3. **Q:** The RFP mentions that there are seven types of common "prescriptions" for WIC. May we have examples of these prescriptions and less common variants?

A: See Attachment A at the end of this amendment. If there are multiple participants in a household, the benefits will be aggregated and presented as one household "shopping list."

4. **Q:** It looks like eWIC may combine all of the prescriptions for a household into a single, aggregate prescription. Do you have any examples of this data? Technical information or contacts to elaborate on this would also be helpful.

A: The household benefits are presented as a consolidated list with each subcategory of food provided as a single line item. As an example, if three household members have a prescription for 40 ounces of cereal each, the total ounces of cereal will be itemized as 120 ounces. This is presented to participants as their "shopping list" (example below).

Redemption Period: 11/25/2019 thru 12/24/2019

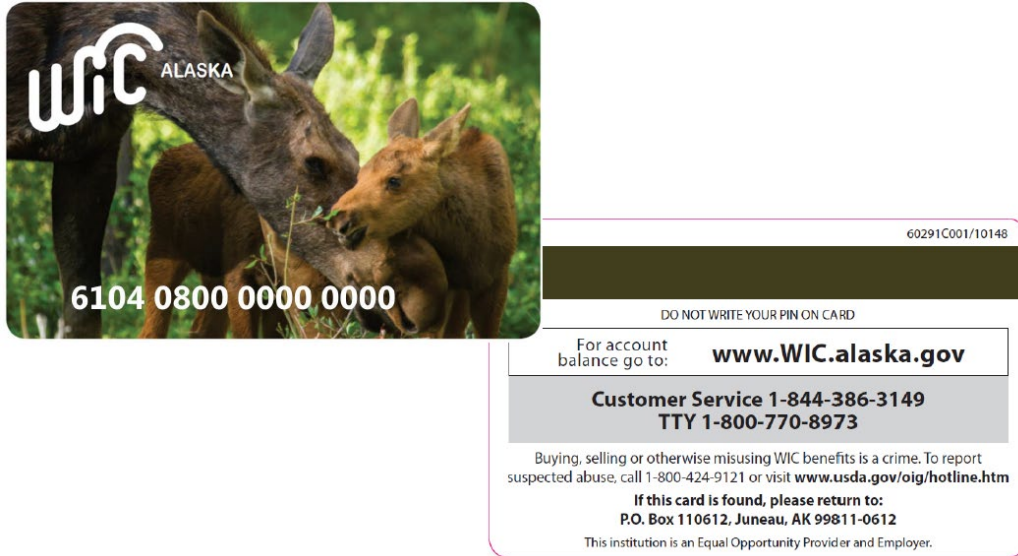
29.00 \$ Fruit or Vegetables, Fresh, Frozen or Container
 2.00 16 oz Dry Beans/Peas or 4 16 oz Cans or 18 oz PB
 1.00 16 oz Dry Beans/Peas/Lentils or 4 16 oz Cans
 1.00 18 oz Peanut Butter
 4.00 Dozen WIC Approved Eggs or 4.5 oz Pkg Dry
 12.00 Gallon(s) Fat-Free or 1% Fresh Milk
 3.00 Juice-12oz-Frz or 11.5oz Pourable Conc or 46-48oz
 4.00 Juice-16 oz Frozen Concentrate or 64 oz Container
 108.00 Ounce(s) WIC Approved Cereal
 30.00 Ounces Canned Tuna/Pink Salmon/Sardines/Mackerel
 80.00 oz Whole Grain (Bread/Tortilla/Brown Rice/Pasta)
 3.00 Pound(s) Cheese - All Authorized
 1.00 Qt Low or Fat Free Plain/Vanilla/Strawberry Yogurt

5. **Q:** Do you have any details on the state-provided POS that the RFP mentions?

A: The State provided Point of Sale (POS) terminal that would be provided by the State is a Verifone Omni Vx520 terminal and a hand-held bar code scanner. The POS terminal is a stand-beside terminal that only supports eWIC transactions.

6. **Q:** Are you able to provide an image of a sample eWIC card?

A: Yes, please see image below for sample.



7. **Q:** For the purposes of supporting calculating how a shopping cart's contents map to the WIC prescriptions, we would like to better understand what this calculation might look like. It appears that the WIC-prescribed goods are categorized and subcategorized. The WIC APL has a column for "Category Description" and another column for "Subcategory Description." Are both of these columns used in a WIC prescription or just the former? Additionally, are the values in the "Unit of Measure" column the "units" that will be used in a WIC prescription?

A: WIC prescriptions are provided by category code, subcategory code, and benefit quantity. The values in the "Unit of Measure" column for the subcategory in the APL are the units that will be used for the WIC prescription. The "Subcategory Description" provides the description of the food benefit that is provided to the recipient on transaction receipts.

8. **Q:** The RFP mentions two, nightly electronic data exchanges that we may need to support (below). Do you have samples of this data? Could you provide us with any technical documentation or contacts around this to help us understand it better?
- Approved Product List
 - Eligible Participant List

A: The format of the Approved Product List is defined in the WIC EBT Technical Implementation Guide 2018 Version. The document can be obtained from the FNS website at <https://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/wic-ebt-technical-implementation-guide-and-operating-rules>. The format of the Eligible Participant List has not been determined yet, but will be developed with the input of the selected eMOV contractor.

9. **Q:** With respect to RFP scoring, sections of the response are described to be worth certain point values, but the process does not describe how the points are distributed among the questions for that section. Are you able to elaborate on this?

A: The points are assigned to each section as a whole and are not distributed between each individual question.

10. **Q:** Is the State of Alaska aware of any ecommerce systems that have support for WIC Direct integration? It seems reasonable that think that these may exist in other states to facilitate things like grocery delivery for disabled WIC recipients.

A: Currently there are no ecommerce systems that have integrated with any of the available eWIC Systems, including WIC Direct.

11. **Q:** Do the eWIC end users get charged for the actual postage/packaging by the state at any point?

A: Under federal regulations, WIC participants may not be required to pay for the costs of food received from the program. Postage and packaging costs are paid by the WIC Program.

12. **Q:** Food product cost is reimbursed electronically to vendor, actual postage/packaging cost is billed weekly to state by vendor. Would the state entertain a 'standardized' pricing structure with food cost and postage/packaging all combined to provide the eWIC customer a delivered price to their village?

A: The State is required to track food costs separately from packaging costs and mailing costs. The food costs will be reimbursed to the contractor after the participant's authorization code is entered into the POS or stand-beside terminal. The State reimburses separately for the packaging and mailing costs.

13. **Q:** If we currently don't inventory a requested WIC item on list and don't have catalog 'proof' of price do we leave it blank or quote the potential price when/if we inventoried it?

A: Please quote the price at which you would offer the product as of today.

14. **Q:** We currently consider Corn and Wheat Tortillas as a chill item because they tend to mold shipping US Mail to rural AK, do you still want us to price what we treat as a perishable?

A: For the purpose of responding to this RFP, please treat tortillas as a non-perishable.

15. **Q:** All are current catalog and website pricing for dry product that we are submitting is priced 'landed/delivered' to the rural AK villages. Will you be taking that into consideration when you compare our pricing with other vendors?

A: For the purpose of responding to this RFP, in completing Attachments 7, Cost Proposal, please submit the prices without including packaging and mailing costs. The State Procurement

Officer will compare the highest food item costs proposed by the bidders to determine the most responsive cost proposal. See Question 17 for more information about pricing.

16. **Q:** Do we need to request a waiver if we have the potential to have any (foreign located) staff help with our Bid Proposal?

A: Yes, a waiver must be requested and approved if staff located outside of the United States will be utilized in the completion of this contract. Please see SEC 3.07 Location of Work in the RFP for details on this process.

17. **Q:** Please clarify **Contract Term (sec. 3.02)** in relationship to **Contract Type (sec.3.04)** and how a **fixed fee** should be presented to the state in the proposal? Does the State expect vendor to hold pricing that is presented on the 'Cost Proposal – Attachment 7' for the first 2 years of the contract?

A: Sec. 3.02 sets the term of the contract for two years, with three additional one-year renewals allowed. Contract renewals are amendments to the original contract.

Sec. 3.04 describes the payment terms. This contract will pay a fixed price for each food item; the food item prices may be adjusted by amending the contract, either annually (including at the end of the first year), or if there is a documented large increase in the cost of a food item. If the cost for a food item is higher than the Program considers to be reasonable, that item may be removed from the APL. If removed from the APL the participant will no longer be able to purchase the food with eWIC.

The State wishes to provide participants with a robust variety of WIC approved foods from which to order. The food items in the RFP Attachment 7, the Cost Proposal, will be evaluated to help select the most qualified bidder. After the contract has been awarded, the successful bidder will be required to propose pricing for all of the items on the eMOV APL that will be available on their website for WIC participants to order. The products with prices that the State approves will be able to be offered to participants on the web.

18. **Q:** We would like to be able to reflect any price increases from our manufacture/suppliers on the eWIC website at the time of increase, throughout the contract term. We plan to have an open book policy, if we experience a price increase on an item(s) the state would be able to review our actual invoice from manufacture/supplier as a reference. Would this be acceptable?

A: Food price increases will be allowed consistent with manufacturers' price increases. See the response to Question 17.

Attachment A

Seven Common Food Packages and Variations

(Milk in the mail out packages would be dry, evaporate or UHT milks, not “fresh” milk as specified in the prescriptions below.)

Exclusively Breastfeeding

1 - PKG(S)-16 OZ-WIC APPROVED CHEESE
 2 - DOZEN WIC APPROVED EGGS or 4.5 OZ PKG DRY
 1 - BAG-16 OZ-DRY BEANS/PEAS/LENTILS or 4 15-16 OZ CANS
 1 - JAR(S)-18 OZ-PEANUT BUTTER
 36 - OUNCE(S) WIC APPROVED CEREAL
 3 - JUICE-12OZ-FRZ or 11.5OZ POURABLE CONC or 46-48OZ PLSTC/CAN
 30 - OUNCES CANNED TUNA/PINK SALMON/SARDINES/JACK MACKEREL
 16 - OUNCE(S) WHOLE GRAIN (BREAD/TORTILLA/BROWN RICE/PASTA)
 24 - QUART(S) FAT-FREE OR 1% FRESH MILK
 1100 - FRUIT OR VEGETABLES, FRESH, FROZEN or CONTAINER

Partially Breastfeeding

1 - PKG(S)-16 OZ-WIC APPROVED CHEESE
 1 - DOZEN WIC APPROVED EGGS or 4.5 OZ PKG DRY
 1 - BAG-16 OZ-DRY BEANS/PEAS/LENTILS or 4 15-16 OZ CANS
 1 - JAR(S)-18 OZ-PEANUT BUTTER
 36 - OUNCE(S) WIC APPROVED CEREAL
 3 - JUICE-12OZ-FRZ or 11.5OZ POURABLE CONC or 46-48OZ PLSTC/CAN
 16 - OUNCE(S) WHOLE GRAIN (BREAD/TORTILLA/BROWN RICE/PASTA)
 19 - QUART(S) FAT-FREE OR 1% FRESH MILK
 1100 - FRUIT OR VEGETABLES, FRESH, FROZEN or CONTAINER

Child < 2 Years

Quantity	UOM	Item
13	QUART	QUART(S) WHOLE FRESH MILK
1	PKG	PKG(S)-16 OZ-WIC APPROVED CHEESE (3 quarts of milk product)
1	DOZ.	DOZEN WIC APPROVED EGGS or 4.5 OZ PKG DRY
1	EACH	BAG-16OZ BEANS/PEAS/LNTLS or 4 15-16OZ CANS or 18 OZ PNT BTR
36	OZ.	OUNCE(S) WIC APPROVED CEREAL
32	OZ.	OUNCE(S) WHOLE GRAIN (BREAD/TORTILLA/BROWN RICE/PASTA)
2	EACH	CAN(S)-16 OZ-FROZEN CONCEN JUICE or 64 OZ PLASTIC CONTAINER
900	EACH	FRUIT OR VEGETABLES, FRESH, FROZEN or CONTAINER

Child < 2 Years - Variation

5 - QUART(S) WHOLE FRESH MILK
 8 - QUART(S) WIC APPROVED SOY BEVERAGE, PLAIN OR VANILLA
 1 - PKG(S)-16 OZ-WIC APPROVED CHEESE
 1 - DOZEN WIC APPROVED EGGS or 4.5 OZ PKG DRY
 1 - BAG-16OZ BEANS/PEAS/LNTLS or 4 15-16OZ CANS or 18 OZ PNT BTR
 36 - OUNCE(S) WIC APPROVED CEREAL
 2 - CAN(S)-16 OZ-FROZEN CONCEN JUICE or 64 OZ PLASTIC CONTAINER
 32 - OUNCE(S) WHOLE GRAIN (BREAD/TORTILLA/BROWN RICE/PASTA)
 900 - FRUIT OR VEGETABLES, FRESH, FROZEN or CONTAINER

Child > 2years

13	QUART	QUART(S) FAT-FREE OR 1% FRESH MILK
1	PKG	PKG(S)-16 OZ-WIC APPROVED CHEESE (3 quarts of milk product)
1	DOZ.	DOZEN WIC APPROVED EGGS or 4.5 OZ PKG DRY
1	EACH	BAG-16OZ BEANS/PEAS/LNTLS or 4 15-16OZ CANS or 18 OZ PNT BTR
36	OZ.	OUNCE(S) WIC APPROVED CEREAL
32	OZ.	OUNCE(S) WHOLE GRAIN (BREAD/TORTILLA/BROWN RICE/PASTA)
2	EACH	CAN(S)-16 OZ-FROZEN CONCEN JUICE or 64 OZ PLASTIC CONTAINER
900	EACH	FRUIT OR VEGETABLES, FRESH, FROZEN or CONTAINER

Infant- Exclusively Breastfeeding

31 - JAR(S)-2.5 OZ-WIC APPROVED INFANT MEAT
 24 - OUNCE(S) WIC APPROVED INFANT CEREAL
 64 - 4 OZ JARS INFANT FRUIT/VEGETABLES

Infant- Formula Feeding

24 - OUNCE(S) WIC APPROVED INFANT CEREAL
 7 - CONTAINER(S)-12.4 OZ-SIMILAC ADVANCE POWDER
 32 - 4 OZ JARS INFANT FRUIT/VEGETABLES

Formula Feeding-Variation*

9 - CONTAINER(S) - 12 OZ - SIMILAC FOR SPIT UP POWDER

Non-Breastfeeding Woman**

1 - PKG(S)-16 OZ-WIC APPROVED CHEESE
 1 - DOZEN WIC APPROVED EGGS or 4.5 OZ PKG DRY
 1 - BAG-16OZ BEANS/PEAS/LNTLS or 4 15-16OZ CANS or 18 OZ PNT BTR
 36 - OUNCE(S) WIC APPROVED CEREAL
 2 - JUICE-12OZ-FRZ or 11.5OZ POURABLE CONC or 46-48OZ PLSTC/CAN
 13 - QUART(S) FAT-FREE OR 1% FRESH MILK
 1100 - FRUIT OR VEGETABLES, FRESH, FROZEN or CONTAINER

Pregnant Woman**

1 - PKG(S)-16 OZ-WIC APPROVED CHEESE
1 - DOZEN WIC APPROVED EGGS or 4.5 OZ PKG DRY
1 - BAG-16 OZ-DRY BEANS/PEAS/LENTILS or 4 15-16 OZ CANS
1 - JAR(S)-18 OZ-PEANUT BUTTER
36 - OUNCE(S) WIC APPROVED CEREAL
3 - JUICE-12OZ-FRZ or 11.5OZ POURABLE CONC or 46-48OZ PLSTC/CAN
16 - OUNCE(S) WHOLE GRAIN (BREAD/TORTILLA/BROWN RICE/PASTA)
19 - QUART(S) FAT-FREE OR 1% FRESH MILK
1100 - FRUIT OR VEGETABLES, FRESH, FROZEN or CONTAINER

***Other Infant formula variations could include:**

(Standard WIC formulas are Similac Advance and Similac Soy Isomil and will show up in most prescriptions)

Other Formula Feeding Variations could include:

Similac Sensitive

Similac for Spit Up

Similac Total Comfort

Similac Expert Care Alimentum

Nutramigen with Enflora

Enfamil Enfacare

Similac Neosure

Neocate Infant

Neocate Jr.

Elecare

Pediasure and Pediasure with Fiber

Ensure

Between 1-10 cans of formula per month

****Children's and women's package variations could include:**

Soy milk, and dry, evaporated, or UHT milks in lieu of fresh milk