

Vendor Advisory Council

Meeting Minutes

July 18, 2008

10 a.m. – 12 p.m.

Attending:

Vendors and Guests –

Claudia Knotek (New Seasons Market)
Sandra Wilken (Northwest Grocery Assoc.)
Cindy Marbut (Walgreens)
Jeffery S. Juckel (Haggen Foods)
Chris McAllister (Albertsons)
John McConville (Jack's Family Market)
Ronnie Nault (Safeway)
Kristina Cook (Rite Aid)

Jeff Kleen (Oregon Food Bank)
Kym White (Winco Foods)
Sharon McFadden (Western Family Foods)
Melodee Birlew (Su Casa imports)
Beth Wilson (Gresham Food 4 Less)
Shirley Christen- Wolfe (Portland Food 4 Less)
Bret Meldrum (Fred Meyer)
Hayli Victor (Roth's) - **via telephone**

WIC staff –

Michelle Aarhus (WIC Vendor Trainer)
Colette LaDue (Vendor Systems Specialist)
Maria Menor (WIC Vendor Team Coordinator)
Jazette Johnson (Compliance Specialist)
Sarah Rosenberg (WIC Operations Manager)

Julie Reeder (WIC Research Analyst)
Diane Van Epps (Alaska WIC program rep)
Karen Cleary (WIC Vendor Trainer) **via telephone**

Welcome & introductions:

Michelle welcomed all in attendance and asked for introductions.

Cash Value Voucher for fruits and vegetables:

Julie Reeder presented information about the surveys she has conducted with WIC participants throughout the State about how they would like a Cash Value Voucher (CVV) for fruits & vegetables to look. The CVV denominations will be in \$6, \$8 and \$10 increments. Julie asked participants about the amount of money they spend on fruits and vegetables per shopping trip. The average was \$20 - \$30. Julie showed examples of what a CVV might look like. Vendors preferred "\$6 Fruits/Vegetables (Fresh/Frozen)" and "Up to \$6 for Fruits and Vegetables (Fresh or Frozen)". They would like it to read "up to the maximum value" and have a message on the voucher that the participant is able to pay the difference. They would also like to see the ineligible fruits and vegetables listed on the voucher. The CVV will only be printed in English, just like the regular WIC vouchers.

Vendor concerns included participants wanting change back from the voucher, scale differences between those in the produce section (used for estimating only) and those at the check stand, and participants' ability to convert pounds into a monetary value.

WIC is currently working on a training video for checkers that will include information about how to transact a CVV at the grocery store. Vendors would like participants to have some training on fruit and vegetable shelf life. Vendors are concerned with the potential financial loss due to participants not having money to pay the difference.

USDA clarification on CVV:

The State asked USDA if it was possible to combine multiple CVVs into one purchase at the check stand. The answer is yes!

Price and availability surveys:

WIC staff will be traveling around the state during August and September to do price and availability surveys at approximately 47 WIC authorized grocery stores throughout Oregon. They will be checking for product availability and prices on a number of WIC food items.

Minimum Stock

The minimum stock requirements will be changing next year as a result of the food package. We will discuss that further at the next VAC meeting. Vendors wanted to know if the 1 lb. of carrots will still be on WIC vouchers. The answer is "no". All WIC participants will receive the CVV for fruits and vegetables. Exclusively breastfeeding women that previously received carrots will receive a \$10 or \$15 CVV benefit. Thus, carrots will no longer be a specific minimum stock requirement.

Fresh Choices Video Conferences:

190 people representing a total of 121 stores participated in the Fresh Choices Video Conferences in April. The broadcasted PowerPoint presentation with narration is posted on the Oregon WIC website.

NEW WIC Vendor training video:

The Oregon WIC program is in the process of creating a new vendor training video. DVDs and VHS tapes will be available. We reviewed the basic storyline and video content with VAC members. Vendors would like the focus to be less on the allowed foods and more on the transaction at the check stand. The suggested length is 18-20 minutes maximum. Vendors would also like a reference guide to go along with the video to give to new checkers. They would like to see examples of WIC tools including shelf tags. They would like the CVV piece to show how to use scales in the produce section for estimating. They would also like the video to stress that no change is allowed back on the CVV. Vendors do not want to emphasize what to do with rude shoppers, as they already have a strong customer service piece they train on. They would like the video format to be downloadable to go with their other checker training. They would like the video to include more information about using the WIC ID card and to show that the WIC participants name on the voucher and the shopper's signature do not have to match.

Voucher rejection summary review:

Colette presented data on WIC voucher rejections from the past year. Vendors requested 2 years of data next time for comparison purposes. Colette talked about the banks' Image Replacement Documents being the increased numbers of vouchers being rejected due to illegibility. She gave instructions on how to write the 4-digit vendor ID on vouchers rejected for missing vendor number.

The next VAC meeting is October 17, 2008 from 10 a.m. to noon at the Portland State Office Building, room 1C.