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DATE: June 14, 2021
TO: New Jersey Current Authorized Vendors
FROM: Nancy Scotto-Rosato, PhD Executive Director NJ WIC Services

Reply to
Attention of: NJWIC #021-018

SUBJECT: New Jersey WIC will TEMPORARILY stop accepting new store applications from July 1st, 2021 to June 1, 2022

Background: The New Jersey WIC Program is in the process of transitioning from a paper check system to an electronic benefit transaction process, WIC EBT (or eWIC) for WIC food benefit delivery. This transition has already begun but it will be at full swing during the eWIC pilot, which starts September 23rd, 2021 and ends December 31, 2021. The NJ WIC program expects statewide transition to eWIC beginning January 2022 and be fully completed July of 2022.

Click onto the below link to learn more about eWIC and the eWIC rollout schedule:
<https://nj.gov/health/fhs/wic/ewic/>

During the transition from paper checks to eWIC, the State WIC office will not accept applications from prospective new retailers starting July 1, 2021 through June 1, 2022. The eWIC transition period is focused on the conversion of current authorized retailers. Introducing new applicants during this transition time will impact eWIC retailer conversion timelines and any activities that ensures vendors are accurately converted to meet WIC Program required Federal mandates while ensuring program integrity. The planned freeze period is based on best practices from other WIC programs and recommendations from USDA.

What this means for Interested WIC Retailers:

- New Jersey WIC will stop accepting new store applications on July 1st, 2021.

The application acceptance freeze includes any new stores, new corporate chain locations, and WIC-authorized stores that close and re-open. Exceptions to this application acceptance freeze may apply should a participant access issue arise. New retail stores will be authorized if the store is located in a “food desert” and participants have no other option but this store to redeem their WIC benefits.

NJ WIC is committed to ensuring that WIC participants have access to supplemental nutritious foods and supports New Jersey’s initiative to increase retail business and reduce food deserts in New Jersey by increasing the number of fresh food grocery stores in communities that are considered food deserts – limited access to fresh, healthy food.

Because of this commitment, the State agency WIC program will review participant access regularly during the application acceptance freeze period.

- New Jersey WIC plans to resume accepting store applications on June 1st, 2022.

During this time, new applications will be processed as per NJ WIC policy and procedure. Retailer store owners who have a store that's currently unauthorized and have interest in their store becoming authorized, should go to the Initial Retail Assessment web link at <https://wic.nj.gov/VendorWeb/> as a first step towards being NJ WIC authorized.