

Vermont WIC
Annual Grocer Training
Effective October 2022

MODULE 3

Provide Excellent Customer Service



1. Be Your Best



1. Be Your Best

Treat all customers equally

- Offer WIC customers the same courtesies offered to other customers, including:
 - Store bonus or savings cards
 - Manufacturer and store savings coupons
 - Sales and “buy 1, get one free” promotions
 - Incentive items: (must be free or under \$1.99 cost to grocer) including, but not limited to: food items, merchandise, or services.

1. Be Your Best

Treat all customers equally

- In accordance with federal law and USDA policy, authorized WIC grocers are prohibited from discrimination based on race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability.
- Do not discriminate against:
 - WIC customers
 - Parents or caretakers of infants or children in WIC
 - Proxies of WIC customers

Cashiers and Customer Service Representatives

- Cashiers play a major role in WIC's partnership with Grocers.
- Cashiers are the ambassadors of WIC; you are the face families see when purchasing their WIC food.
- Cashiers are a resource families depend on. The more familiar you are with WIC, the more you can share that expertise and offer the best customer service.

1. Be Your Best

Respect WIC Customers' Confidentiality

- Do not use the word “WIC” during the transaction, even if the family does so first. Use “benefit” or “card” instead.
- No PA announcements such as “*Need help for WIC lane #4.*”
- **Choose a code word** that works for your team and train staff to use it when they need assistance.

1. Be Your Best

Tips for staff

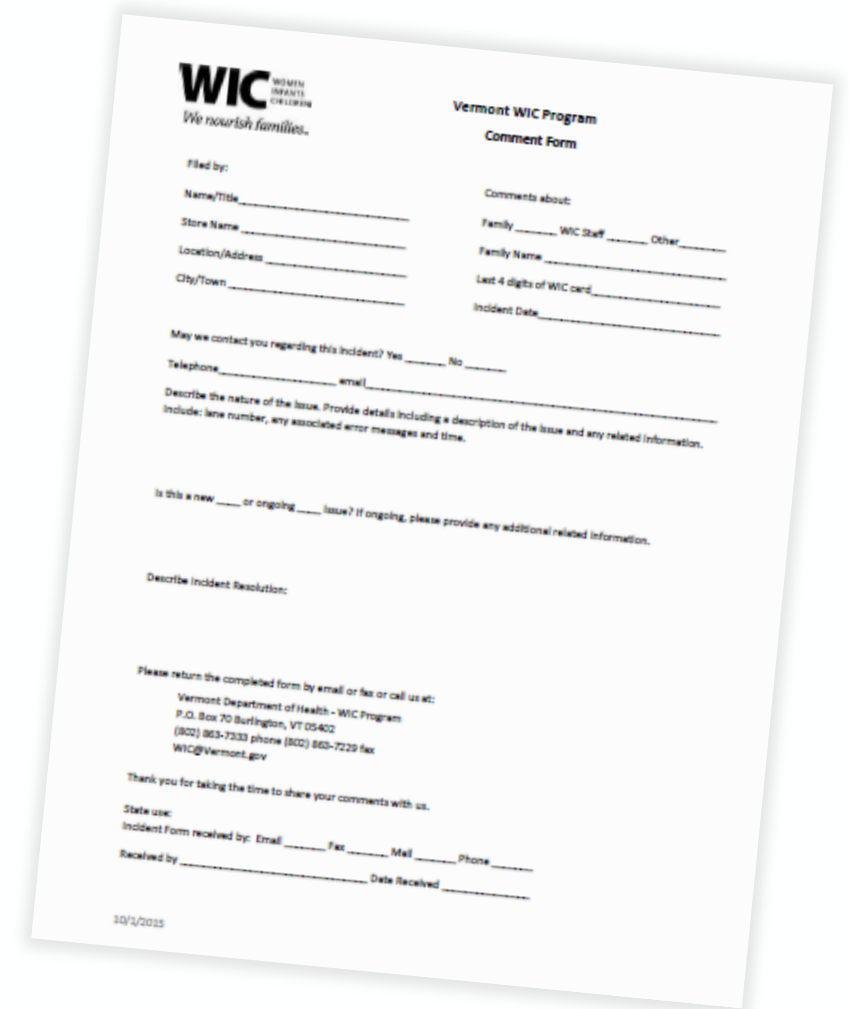
- **Be pleasant.**
 - Make sure your body language and tone of voice, as well as your actual words are welcoming
- **Be patient.**
 - A WIC transaction takes longer than other transactions as the system must direct connect to the EBT host
- **Be respectful.**
 - Don't break confidentiality rules by mentioning WIC during the transaction

1. Be Your Best

What if a WIC customer is disrespectful?

If a WIC customer or their proxy is physically or verbally abusive to store staff:

- Follow store policy regarding abusive customers.
- You may contact the WIC Help desk directly 802-863-7333.
- You may submit a comment form to WIC@Vermont.gov



The image shows a 'Vermont WIC Program Comment Form' from the Vermont Department of Health. The form is titled 'Vermont WIC Program Comment Form' and includes the WIC logo with the tagline 'We nourish families.' The form contains several sections for user input:

- Filed by:** Name/Title, Store Name, Location/Address, City/Town.
- Comments about:** Family, WIC Staff, Other, Family Name, Last 4 digits of WIC card, Incident Date.
- Contact Information:** May we contact you regarding this incident? (Yes/No), Telephone, email.
- Description:** Describe the nature of the issue. Provide details including a description of the issue and any related information. Include: law number, any associated error messages and time.
- Additional Info:** Is this a new or ongoing issue? If ongoing, please provide any additional related information.
- Resolution:** Describe incident Resolution.
- Return Information:** Please return the completed form by email or fax or call us at: Vermont Department of Health - WIC Program, P.O. Box 70 Burlington, VT 05402, (802) 863-7333 phone (802) 863-7229 fax, WIC@Vermont.gov.
- Thank you:** Thank you for taking the time to share your comments with us.
- State use:** Incident Form received by: Email, Fax, Mail, Phone.
- Received by:** Received by, Date Received.

The form also includes a date stamp '10/1/2015' at the bottom left.

1. Be Your Best

Continue training

- Customer service training should be reinforced throughout the year, especially in stores that have few WIC sales.

2. Feedback from Secret Shoppers



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“Very friendly cashier. Easy transaction with WIC items. No issues. Cashier interacted with my daughter and gave her a free apple!”

“The cashier saw that I did not have much and three kids with me and opened a register to help me get in and out faster!”

“When asked what wasn’t covered, cashier stated she didn’t know.”

“Very impersonal cashier – never smiled or made eye contact.”

“Cashier was too busy talking with other employees to tell me anything.”

“No whole wheat pasta choices.”

3. Non-Discrimination Statement

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- In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

3. Non-Discrimination Statement

- Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

3. Non-Discrimination Statement

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, found online at:

<https://www.usda.gov/oascr/how-to-file-a-program-discrimination-complaint> or at any USDA office, or call (866) 632-9992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Completed complaint forms or letters should be sent:

by mail to:

U.S. Department of Agriculture Director, Office of Adjudication 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W. Washington, D.C. 20250-9410

by fax to: (202) 690-7442

by email to: program.intake@usda.gov

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- This institution is an equal opportunity provider.