

WIC Transaction Troubleshooting Guide for Local Agency Staff

Definitions

Definitions for terms or abbreviations used in this document may be found in the Glossary of Vendor-related eWIC Terms.

Quick Tips & How-To's

Finding a Household Balance

Open a participant's folder in HuBERT. Click the "Benefit Management" tab and choose "Print EBT Account Balance" to get the condensed current household balance.

Accessing the APL

Click to download [MN WIC APL](#). It is updated every few weeks, but will always be available at that link.

Determining if a food is WIC allowed for a specific household

Open the APL Spreadsheet and the current household balance. With the APL spreadsheet as the active window, hit the control button ("ctrl") and "f" at the same time, to bring up the search box. Type in the UPC of the item and hit "enter." If the UPC is found in the APL, confirm that it is in subcategory (far right column) that is listed in the household's available benefit balance. For example, if a participant has benefits for "WIC-allowed Lowfat or Nonfat Yogurt" only, and you type in UPC 036632007896, you can see that that item is in the "Yogurt – Whole Milk" subcategory and is not allowed for that household.

Contacting the MN Help Desk

The MN Help Desk can be reached by calling 1.800.488.8799; press 2, 2, or by emailing mnhelpdesk@gainwelltechnologies.com. When reaching out to the help desk, you do not have to a completed [eWIC Transaction Issue Form](#), but you should have collected basic information including the Household ID, attempted transaction date and time, and what the participant was trying to buy (as much detail as possible). It's also helpful to have receipts and information any error messages seen at the time of the transaction.

Troubleshooting Steps

Troubleshooting suggestions for the following scenarios are included in this guide. Determine which situation outlined in each section applies to the participant's statement and follow the steps to work though the issue.

- A. [The Integrated POS System rejected the card OR it could not complete the transaction.](#)
 1. After the card was swiped, the POS did not allow the participant to enter the PIN.

2. The card appeared to be rejected after the participant entered the PIN, but a midpoint receipt did not print, showing which foods would be paid for with the WIC card.
3. The transaction would not finalize after the participant reviewed the midpoint receipt and accepted the WIC charges on the PIN pad.

B. The participant could not get a food that they think they should have been able to get.

1. The participant could not a plain fruit or vegetable.
2. The participant could not purchase formula with the WIC card.
3. The participant could not purchase another type of food with the WIC card, but they were able to purchase some items. (If they were not able to complete a purchase all, refer to section A.)

C. The WIC card was charged for foods that the participant did not receive.

1. The participant was at an integrated store and the POS system crashed after the WIC card was charged, usually while the participant was paying the remaining balance.
2. The participant was at a store that uses a stand-beside terminal to transact WIC cards, and an extra item (or more) was deducted from the card.
3. The participant states the card was charged without their knowledge or approval, and that they received none of the items in the transaction.

D. Providing General Information to State WIC Staff

1. Participants have stated that they've been unable to find a certain type of item.
2. A store's ability to transact WIC cards might be "down."
3. A store has questions about rules, eWIC technology, or becoming a WIC vendor.

A. The integrated POS system rejected the WIC card or could not finalize the transaction (benefits not removed from account).

Start by asking what happened and determine where in the transaction the issue occurred.

1. After the card was swiped, the POS did not allow the participant to enter the PIN.

a) Collect the following information from the participant or proxy:

- Participant's Household ID
- Exact name/location of store (not just Walmart, Target, Cub, etc)
- Time and date of attempted transaction

b) Call the MN Help Desk. Ask them to look up the store in WIC Direct to see if the store has been conducting transactions.

- If Help Desk staff confirm that there have been no transactions at the store for an **abnormal** period of time, including when the participant had the issue, please reach out to health.wicvendor@state.mn and let state WIC staff know that the store may be down

for eWIC. **Do not** notify the WIC staff that the store may be down without first confirming this with the Help Desk.

- If transactions were happening around the time that the issue occurred, or if it appears there have been regular transactions since the issue, it's unlikely that the store's connectivity was not affected or has been restored. There is not always an explanation as to why this happens. Encourage the participant to try to use the card again, possibly at a different store. If it still doesn't work, proceed to step A.1.c.
- c) If the participant attempts to use the WIC card again and is still not prompted to enter the PIN, it may be that the card is de-magnetized or damaged in some way. Issue a new card.

2. The card appeared to be rejected after the participant entered the PIN, but a midpoint receipt did not print, showing which foods would be paid for with the WIC card.

- a) There are several possible explanations as to why this might happen including that the participant entered an invalid PIN (and may have locked the card), that the participant used a deactivated card, that the participant didn't have any current benefits, or that the participant did not bring up any items for which they had available benefits. A less likely explanation is that the store's connection to the eWIC system is "down." Begin by collecting:
 - Participant's Household ID
 - Exact name/location of store (not just Walmart, Target, Cub, etc)
 - Date and time of the attempted/rejected transaction
 - Any error codes like "Insufficient Funds," "Contact Card Issuer," "Invalid PIN," or, "No Matching WIC Items."
 - As much detail as possible about the items the participant was trying to buy with the WIC card. UPCs are most helpful.
- b) Ensure that the participant had available benefits at the time of the attempted purchase.
- c) Use the household benefit balance (at the time of the issue) and the MN WIC APL to verify that at least one of the items in the transaction was WIC allowed and that participant had benefits available. If this is true for at least one item, proceed to step A.2.d. If none of the items were WIC allowed and included in the household balance, provide this explanation to the participant and educate them on selecting WIC allowed foods.
- d) Call the MN Help Desk. Ask them to look up the Household ID in WIC Direct to see if there were any action codes that might explain what happened. If the action code says "000 – Approved" the help desk staff will ask the WIC staff person to complete a WIC Transaction Issue form, with the information collected above and submit it to the helpdesk. They will review it and either provide an explanation or pass it along to the MN WIC Vendor unit. Otherwise, if they find one of the action codes shown below, provide the education to the participant according to the action code shown in WIC Direct.

- Invalid PIN: The participant entered an invalid PIN. The PIN pad typically has an error code with this information. Entering an invalid PIN four times will cause the card to lock.
- Insufficient Funds: The account didn't have benefits to purchase at least one item OR participant was shopping outside of a valid benefit cycle (should have been ruled out before calling the help desk).
- Card number exists but is not assigned: It's likely that the participant used an old card that had been deactivated.

Host	Local	Household/Type	Card	Vendor/Clinic	Settlement	Type	Action Code
10/14/2020 01:20:48 PM	10/14/2020 01:20:00 PM	[REDACTED] Normal	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED] - WALMART		Pre-purchase Balance Inquiry	117 - Invalid PIN.
10/14/2020 12:43:20 PM	10/14/2020 12:43:18 PM	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED] - Walmart		Pre-purchase Balance Inquiry	116 - Insufficient funds.
10/14/2020 12:38:57 PM	10/14/2020 12:38:00 PM	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED] - Cub Foods		Pre-purchase Balance Inquiry	114 - Card number exists but is not assigned.

3. The transaction would not finalize after the participant reviewed the midpoint receipt and accepted the WIC charges on the PIN pad.

- This is most likely a POS configuration issue, so it's important to get as much information as possible to confirm and resolve the issue. Collect the following information:
 - Participant's Household ID
 - Exact name/location of store (not just Walmart, Target, Cub, etc)
 - Date and time of the attempted/rejected transaction
 - Any error codes like "Insufficient Funds" or "Contact Card Issuer"
- Call the MN Help Desk. Ask them to look up the Household ID to see if there were any action codes that might explain what happened. Note that in Step A.2.d, they were looking at the "Pre-Purchase Balance Inquiry," but this time they're looking for action codes on a "Purchase Request."
- If they do see an error code on a purchase request, such as a Formatting Error, and Invalid Amount Field, or Insufficient funds, the Help Desk technician should take a screenshot of the error and send it to health.wicvendor@state.mn.us as soon as possible.

Host	Local	Household/Type	Card	Vendor/Clinic	Settlement	Type	Action Code
10/13/2020 01:00:07 PM	10/13/2020 01:00:00 PM	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED] MILLS COUNTRY MARKET		Purchase Request	116 - Insufficient funds.
10/10/2020 11:27:03 AM	10/10/2020 11:27:00 AM	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED] - LUNDS & BYERLYS-HIGH		Purchase Request	307 - Format Error.
10/07/2020 01:06:38 PM	10/07/2020 01:06:00 PM	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED] - TEAL'S MARKET-CASS L		Purchase Request	110 - Invalid amount field.

- If they do not see an error code *on a purchase request* consider the following options:
 - If they see pre-purchase balance inquiries, but no purchase requests, refer back to steps A.2.d.

- If they see no card activity, widen the date range (in case the participant gave the wrong date). If there is still no card activity at that location, refer back to step A.1.b.

B. The participant could not get a food with the WIC card that they thought they should be able to get.

Start by asking what kind of food(s) they were trying to get.

1. The participant could not get a plain fruit or vegetable.

- While inadequate produce mapping is the most common reason that a participant won't be able to get a fruit or vegetable, other possible reasons are that the state WIC office needs to add a frozen fruit or vegetable UPC or a fresh produce PLU to the APL, or there may be an issue with the way the POS transacts CVB items. Do not assume that a UPC is not mapped; take the following steps to ensure that the issue is corrected as efficiently as possible. Begin by collecting:
 - Participant's Household ID
 - The CVB balance at the time of the transaction.
 - Exact name/location of store (not just Walmart, Target, Cub, etc)
 - The exact item that the participant tried to buy.
- Confirm that the participant had an available CVB balance at the time of the purchase for the item they tried to buy. If so, proceed to step B.1.c. If they tried to buy a frozen item, but had benefits for "FRESH ONLY" fruits and vegetables, or if they had no available CVB balance, stop here and provide follow-up education to the participant.
- If the item they tried to buy was a **fresh** fruit or vegetable, skip to B.1.d. If they tried to purchase a frozen fruit or vegetable, check to see if the UPC is in the APL. If it is listed in the APL, continue to step B.1.d. If it is not listed, **and** if it is a plain **frozen** fruit or vegetable, send a note with the UPC and a picture of the item to health.mnwicupc@state.mn.us.
- If the item is a fresh fruit or vegetable, or if it's a frozen fruit or vegetable with a UPC that's in the APL, send an email to health.wicvendor@state.mn.us and include:
 - Participant's Household ID
 - The CVB balance at the time of the transaction.
 - Exact name/location of store (not just Walmart, Target, Cub, etc)
 - The exact item that the participant tried to buy.

State WIC staff will review the submission and determine if the issue was caused by inadequate produce mapping or a POS configuration issue. If not enough detail is provided, State WIC staff will notify the submitter that the issue cannot be resolved.

2. The participant could not purchase formula with the WIC card.

- The most likely explanation for a WIC participant being unable to purchase a certain formula is that they accidentally selected one that is not in the subcategory assigned to their account. Begin by collecting the UPC that they attempted to purchase.

- b. Using the APL and the participant’s current household benefits, confirm that the UPC the participant attempted to purchase was in the APL and included in the subcategory assigned to the card. Ensure that they had current benefits for this item. If so, skip to step B.2.c. If the participant is unable to verify that they brought up the correct item, or if it’s possible to verify that they brought up one that is not assigned to their account, stop here and provide follow-up education. *Tip: a common mistake is that participants choose Pediasure with Fiber when their benefits are for Pediasure without added fiber (or vice versa).*
- c. If the participant had an issue with medical formula ordered through a pharmacy, skip to step B.2.d. If the participant’s benefits are for a contract formula or other widely available formula such as Alimentum, Neosure, Boost, or Pediasure, call the MN Help Desk and provide:

- Participant’s Household ID
- The Household benefit balance at the time of purchase
- Exact name/location of store (not just Walmart, Target, Cub, etc)
- The exact item that the participant tried to buy

WIC staff may be asked to complete an eWIC Transaction Issue Form if help desk staff are not able to determine the cause of the issue.

- d. If the participant could not purchase a medical formula at a pharmacy, send a note to health.wicvendor@state.mn.us and copy the local agency’s State WIC Consultant. Please provide:

- Participant’s Household ID
- Exact name/location of store (not just Walmart, Target, Cub, etc)
- The exact item that the participant tried to buy – confirm that the correct UPC was ordered.

State WIC staff will work with the pharmacy to determine and correct the issue.

3. The participant could not purchase another type of food with the WIC card, but they were able to purchase some items. (If they were not able to complete a purchase all, refer to section A.)

- a. A participant being unable to purchase a WIC Food item (non-CVB) is most often because they selected a food that is either not WIC-allowed or it’s not included in their benefits. In very limited situations, it may also be caused by an out-of-date APL at the store or another glitch. Begin by collecting:

- Participant’s Household ID
- Exact name/location of store (not just Walmart, Target, Cub, etc)
- The exact item(s) that the participant tried to buy
- Receipts, if the customer chose to pay for the item out of pocket. (WIC cannot give refunds, but this will help with troubleshooting the issue.)

- b. Using the APL and the participant’s household benefits confirm that the UPC the participant attempted to purchase was in the APL and included in the subcategory assigned to the card. Ensure that they had current benefits for this item. If so, skip to step B.3.c. If the participant

does not have adequate information to show that what they tried to purchase was WIC allowed for their household, or if you can verify that the items they attempted to purchase are not allowed or included in their benefits, stop here and provide follow-up education. Here are a few common scenarios where participants select an item that is not included in their benefits:

- The benefit balance lists lowfat or nonfat yogurt, but they bring up whole milk yogurt.
 - The benefit balance lists Skim or 1% lactose free milk, but they select 2%. Note that the COVID-19 milk flexibility in place for regular cow's milk does not extend to lactose free milk.
 - The participant selects cheese in size that is not 8 oz or 16 oz, or they select 16 oz size when they have only 8 oz available.
 - The participant selects fluid juice when their benefits are for frozen (or vice versa).
- c. If the item is in the APL in a subcategory included in the household balance, contact the MN Help Desk. Provide the detail collected in step B.3.a.
- If the Help Desk staff determine that the transaction was prevented by one of the action codes discussed in section A2 or A3, follow the steps outlined in those sections.
 - If they are unable to identify the cause of the issue, the WIC staff person will be asked to complete and submit an eWIC Transaction Issue Form for further troubleshooting.

C. The WIC Card was charged for foods the participant did not receive.

Begin by asking the participant to describe what happened and how they became aware they were charged for foods they did not receive.

1. **The participant was at an integrated store and the POS system crashed after the WIC card was charged, usually while the participant was paying the remaining balance.**
 - a. If a the POS system crashes after the WIC card transaction is approved, cashiers and WIC participants should always perform a balance inquiry to see if benefits were deducted from the card, *before* attempting the transaction again. This does not always happen. Instead, they may think the card was not charged and send the participant home without some or all of the foods. Begin by collecting:
 - Participant's Household ID
 - Exact name/location of store (not just Walmart, Target, Cub, etc)
 - Any receipts they might have gotten (they should have a beginning balance and possibly a midpoint receipt)
 - Summary of what happened, including which items (if any) the participant may have been allowed to take.
 - b. Check the participant's transaction history to confirm that the benefits were deducted from the card. This can be found in HuBERT or by calling the MN Help Desk. If benefits were deducted, continue to step C.1.c. If the benefits were not deducted, stop here. Let the participant know

that the benefits are available to use. It may be helpful for them to purchase their WIC foods in a separate transaction to make it easier to keep track of their benefits.

- c. Send an email to health.wicvendor@state.mn.us with the information collected in step C.1.a., along with a brief summary of what happened.
- d. State WIC staff will review the information and follow-up with the store as needed. If there is enough time remaining in the same benefit cycle when the issue occurred, it may be possible to return some of the benefits to the WIC card.

2. The participant was at a store that uses a stand-beside terminal to transact WIC cards and, an extra item (or more) was deducted from the card.

- a. The most common explanation for this is that the cashier accidentally scanned an item too many times. This can happen if a UPC has already been scanned once in the transaction; the cashier may be waiting for the terminal to ask for the price, but it will not do that if the UPC's price has already been entered. Begin by collecting:
 - Participant's Household ID
 - Exact name/location of store
 - The exact items that were deducted from the card but not received by the participant.
 - Receipts (if available)
- b. Send an email to health.wicvendor@state.mn.us with the information collected in step C.2.a., along with a brief summary of what happened.
- c. State WIC staff will review the information and follow-up with the store as needed. If there is enough time remaining in the same benefit cycle when the issue occurred, it may be possible to return some of the benefits to the WIC card.

3. The participant states the card was charged without their knowledge or approval, and that they received none of the items in the transaction.

- a. Check the participant's transaction history and confirm which the dates and times of the unauthorized transaction(s).
- b. If the participant's statement matches the transaction history in HuBERT, send an email to health.wicvendor@state.mn.us with the following information:
 - Participant's Household ID
 - Exact name/location of store (not just Walmart, Target, Cub, etc)
 - Date/time of transaction

State WIC Staff will review this information and act accordingly. In some cases, it may be possible to void the transaction to return the benefits to the participant's card.

4. If the participant is in possession of the card, they should change the PIN. If the card is not in their possession, designate the card lost or stolen and issue a new one. Provide education about keeping the WIC card safe and secure.

D. Providing General Information to State WIC Staff

Begin by reading through the scenarios below to know how to escalate an issue or concern.

1. Participants have stated that they've been unable to find a certain type of item.

- a. While it's true that some stores have periodic stocking issues of certain WIC foods, or that they may choose to not stock a non-required item, there may be other factors, such as the practice of keeping infant formulas behind the service counter, which may cause participants to think there is a lack of availability of an item. Begin by collecting:
 - Participant's Household ID
 - The store(s) where this participant looked for and were unable to find the item(s)
 - The dates they were looking and were unable to find the item (for each store)
 - Area/stores where the participant would prefer to shop
- b. Verify that the participant had benefits for the item(s) in question on the dates they report being unable to find the items. If they had valid benefits, continue to step D.1.c. If they did not have benefits for those items on these dates, stop here. It's likely that they attempted to purchase items for which they did not have current benefits.
- c. Send a detailed email, including the information collected in step D.1.a., to health.wicvendor@state.mn.us. If the participant is open to shopping at other locations, please include this information as well. State WIC staff will assess availability of the item(s) in question and suggest alternative items or stores for the participant to try. If the stores in question appear to have a significant stocking issue, State staff will address that as well.

Important: If reporting an issue raised by multiple participants, it's critical that to report only the specific stores that each individual participant visited. For example, a report should state that "Participant A shopped at Target and Cub in Apple Valley on Cedar Avenue and was unable to find Similac Advance on [date]. Participant B was unable to find Similac Sensitive at Walmart and Target in West St. Paul on [date]." State WIC staff are unable to verify stocking issues if reports are too vague, such as "Participants have had difficulty finding WIC allowed soy milk at stores in Minneapolis." State WIC staff may be able to offer suggestions about where the participant may be able to find an item, based on redemption trends or by contacting retail partners.

2. A store's ability to transact WIC cards might be "down."

- a. It's possible that Local WIC staff and participants may know that a store is unable to process WIC transactions before State WIC staff do. If the report is based on a specific participant's experience, refer to the steps in section A1. If a specific participant's transaction detail is not available, proceed to D.2.b.
- b. Call the MN Help Desk. Ask them to look up the store in WIC Direct to see if the store has been doing transactions.
 - If Help Desk staff confirm that there have been no transactions at the store for an **abnormal** period of time, including when the participant had the issue, please reach out

to health.wicvendor@state.mn and let state WIC staff know that the store may be down for eWIC. Do not notify the WIC staff that the store may be down without first confirming this with the Help Desk.

3. A store has questions about rules, eWIC technology, or becoming a WIC vendor.

- a. Refer the vendor to the State WIC office.
 - Email (fastest): [health.wicvendor@state.mn.us](mailto:health.wicvendor@state.mn)
 - Phone: 651-201-4404

Department of Health
WIC Program
85 E 7th Place
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St. Paul, MN 55164-0882
651.201.4404
health.wicvendor@state.mn.us
www.health.state.mn.us

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To obtain this information in a different format, call: 651-201-4404