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## **Procedure: State Agency Review of Vendor Applications**

Functional Area: I Vendor and Farmer Management

Section: APPENDIX I B

Citation: 246.12 (g)

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### **Purpose**

Describe the State Agency process for reviewing store applications.

### **Review of Applications**

The State WIC office will review the application. The State WIC office will apply the selection criteria consistently for each vendor application.

- Prior to not approving a vendor, the Nebraska WIC Program will determine if non-approval would result in inadequate participant access.
- The Nebraska WIC Program will assess participant hardship through review of the following information.
- Identify the number of participants with the same zip code as the vendor. Identify the WIC authorized stores at which these participants redeem their WIC checks and the WIC clinics they attend. This data is reviewed to determine who would be affected if the store was not approved and where the participants live, shop, and receive WIC benefits currently.
- Identify the availability of another authorized WIC vendor(s)
  - In the same zip code as the vendor or
  - In the same zip code as the clinic(s) of the participants shopping at the vendor or
  - Within three miles of the vendor for cities with populations of 30,000 or more or
  - Within 45 miles of the vendor for cities/towns with populations less than 30,000.
  - Identify any geographic barriers to using another authorized WIC vendor.

- If the State Agency determines that not approving the vendor would result in inadequate participant access, the State Agency may approve the vendor.
- Participant access determinations are not subject to administrative review.
- Documentation of participant access determination and any supporting documentation will be retained in the file of each vendor who is not approved.

The final decision to approve or not approve will then be made by the State WIC office.

The State WIC office may reassess any authorized vendor at any time during the agreement period using the vendor selection criteria in effect at the time of the reassessment and must terminate the agreements with those vendors that fail to meet them.

### **Notification of Approval or Non-approval**

The State WIC office will notify the retailer in writing of approval or non-approval. Stores currently participating on the WIC Program will be notified by August 31. A store not currently participating on the WIC Program will be notified within 15 days after receipt of the application from the local agency.

The State WIC office will notify the local agency of each store that is approved, the local agency vendor manager will then contact the retailer regarding the contract training session.

The State WIC office will notify the local agency of each store that is not approved. If the store is not approved, the reason(s) for denial will be mailed to the retailer by the State Agency. The retailer will also be notified of his/her right to appeal this decision and instructed on the process of requesting a fair hearing.

- Stores that are denied approval must wait to apply for Nebraska WIC vendor authorization for at least six months from the date of the non-approval.

A copy of the approval or non-approval letter will be sent to the local agency for the retailer's file.