

WIC OPERATING RULES AND TECHNICAL IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINES



Bonnie Belza
FNS EBT Users Group Meeting
November 3, 2009
San Diego, Ca

WHY WIC EBT?

“Why not use
cards...”

Why WIC EBT?

<http://www.examiner.com/x-627-Careers-and-Family-Work/x-627-Careers-and-Family-Work-627-WIC-depression>

October 12, 2009

I just checked out of Giant Eagle, after a particularly so mean to me. The checker was friendly and apologetic and had to go back and redo, causing an additional delay. me and subsequently packed up and left because it took so long anything. I didn't notice any dirty looks, although I was carefully any and all inanimate objects in my line of vision.

and I didn't even use my multi-item coupons. These were six coupons three for milk, and for juice. Easy-peasy, right? Wrong.

was nowhere near as horrible as it could have been, but I still brought back tears and a desire Giant Eagle's ceiling to cave in and crush me with a massive cardboard pill bottle or other display.

WIC is easy to qualify for, but difficult to use. Why is that? Why not use swipe cards encoded with information about each recipient's qualifying items? Is that too costly? There are only a small number of coupon packages, so it seems like cards would be easy to produce. The savings in the point of sale, and in paper for printing all these coupons, would be significant. Food stamps on a debit card now -- why couldn't WIC work the same way?

I'm going to do some research on this, and report back. But I'm interested in hearing from you. **Does WIC work the same way in your state? Have any states worked out a better system than paper coupons?**

Hi Jen,

My niece had a similar experience but was totally She needed the WIC benefits as does everyone on the program two children she never went back to WIC and chose to str humiliated. Your story made the FRAC news wire and I am appalled by the lack of respect given to Mom's just understand why it is taking them so long to change this to an automated card, why not WIC! You hang in there, a to help you family!!

October 21, 4:58 PM

Denise says:

“Food stamps are
on a debit card now
-- Why couldn't WIC
work the same
way?”

“Have any states
worked out a better
system than paper
coupons?”



WHAT WE'LL COVER

- ① Where did the need for Operating Rules come from?
- ① Who is developing rules and specifications?
- ① How were issues defined?
- ① What is being worked on?
- ① When will they be available?
- ① Where will they be used?
- ① How do I get involved?

WHERE WAS THE NEED?

- ③ States and Retailers frustrated with initial implementation of integrated systems and stand-alone options
- ③ Differences in technical implementations and interpretation of policy
- ③ Costs of developing, implementing and maintaining different systems

Why do we need
Operating Rules
and Technical
Specifications?

WHO IS DEVELOPING RULES AND SPECIFICATIONS?

- ⊙ State Agencies/ITOs
- ⊙ POS Terminal Vendors
- ⊙ Retailers
- ⊙ Third Party Processors
- ⊙ EBT Processors
- ⊙ FNS staff
- ⊙ Cash Register Vendors

Over 80 stakeholders
participating since August 2009



AUGUST MEETING

- ⊙ Meeting in Omaha, NE
- ⊙ Open forum for gathering operational and technical issues
- ⊙ Identified major areas of concern
 - ⊙ Merchant transaction processing rules
 - ⊙ APL file
 - ⊙ Different interpretations of technical specifications

SEPTEMBER MEETING

- ③ Meeting in Washington DC
- ③ Categorized and prioritized issues as Operational or Technical
- ③ Developed recommendations in breakouts that represented all stakeholders
- ③ Agreed that Business Operating Rules need to drive Technical Specifications



ONGOING EFFORT

- ③ Holding regular Conference calls to refine solutions
- ③ Updating Issues list as items are resolved and incorporated into Operation Rules
- ③ Gathering recommended changes to technical specifications



GOAL: SIMPLIFY IMPLEMENTATION

- ③ Provide core set of requirements for retailers that have not integrated
- ③ Provide a standard reference for RFP requirements, procurement and implementation
- ③ Minimize differences that can be costly to the WIC program and difficult to maintain if multiple State agencies are served by that system

Why have
Operating Rules
and Technical
Specifications?



GOAL: CONSISTENT OPERATIONS

Why Operating
Rules and
Technical
Specifications?

- ③ Provide a choice of EBT processors
- ③ Ensure a level playing field
- ③ Maintain common data for quality assurance and continuous improvement
- ③ Provide a framework for future EBT services

WHAT ISSUES DO THE OPERATING RULES ADDRESS?

Lane operations

⊙ Merchant processing requirements

⊙ Card appearance

Numbering standards

⊙ File handling

PINs and Hot
Card List

⊙ Risk and Security Management

⊙ Testing and Certification

⊙ Authorized Product List

UPC/PLU coding

⊙ Reporting

WHAT DO THE TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS COVER?

- ① Online EBT - real time messages from POS terminal to State's system
- ① Offline EBT – Smart card interface to EBT terminal
- ① File formats for Authorized Product List, Hot Card List, Claim, Reconciliation and Settlement files
- ① Data definitions and content

WHEN WILL DOCUMENTS BE AVAILABLE?

- © First draft of WIC Operating Rules released in November 2009
- © Technical specification changes January 2010
- © X9.93 standards 2008 version available from American National Standards Institute eStore
<http://webstore.ansi.org>

WHERE WILL THEY BE USED?

Using Operating
Rules and
Technical
Specifications

- ◎ By States and ITOs to plan, develop and implement WIC EBT
- ◎ By Retailers to design POS and Cash register systems
- ◎ By EBT Processors and Third Party Processors to provide WIC EBT services
- ◎ By FNS to manage the implementation and ongoing administration of WIC EBT

HOW DO I GET INVOLVED?

- ③ Review Operating Rules draft with your Agency
- ③ Provide technical specifications to your Information Technology staff
- ③ Participate in reviews and conference calls

Bonnie Howard Belza bhowardinaz@cox.net
Erin McBride Erin.mcbride@fns.usda.gov

UNITED STATES WITH WIC EBT

