



STATE AGENCY & VENDOR RELATIONSHIP

It is Missouri's Department of Health and Senior Services, WIC and Nutrition Services (WICNS) belief that the WIC authorized retail vendors are a vital portion of the WIC program. WICNS makes every effort to work in close partnership with our vendors to ensure they are well trained and informed.

DECISION TO GO TO EBT

- For many states the decision to go to EBT is a recent discussion item due to the Federal EBT mandate.
- For Missouri, we have been actively discussing WIC EBT with our vendors as early as 2006.
- EBT was a topic of conversation at our vendor committee meetings two (2) years before we received the USDA Grant solicitation.

DECISION TO GO TO EBT

- In May of 2008 WICNS created its first EBT survey, a one page survey, and sent it out to all authorized retail vendors.
- In 2009 Missouri submitted its EBT application.
- In December 2009 the draft RFP for a contractor was ready.
- In September 2010 a second survey was sent to all authorized retail vendors.

STATE AGENCY & VENDOR CURRENT RELATIONSHIP

- Missouri uses the following methods to keep its retail vendors informed:
 - Face to Face Annual Training
 - Letters, Memorandums, Emails & Faxes for major program changes or issues.
 - Quarterly vendor committee meetings (either attended face to face or by conference call).
 - Use of the WICNS and Missouri Grocers Association (MGA) website for program updates.
 - Putting on an information session at the MGA annual conference.

STATE AGENCY STEPS TO INFORM VENDORS OF EBT

- Besides the two (2) surveys, Missouri held seventeen (17) meetings for all of the small corporations and independent vendors at eleven (11) different locations to provide these vendors with a comparison of on-line and offline EBT information.
- The attendance was recommended and overall turnout was poor. If this is planned by other states make these meetings mandatory.
- MGA also performed four (4) “Get to Know EBT” meetings for vendors around the state.

WIC EBT SURVEY RESULTS

- The results of the survey showed there was confusion among the vendors as to the differences between On-line and Off-line. To correct this, Missouri put together a fact sheet showing a side by side comparison of components in the EBT systems.
- As a follow – up to this fact sheet nine (9) conference calls were set up with attendance again being highly recommended and the EBT fact sheet was discussed.

WIC EBT SURVEY RESULTS

- The results of the fact sheet & follow – up conference calls was astounding.
 - 51 vendors still failed to participate so their original choice on the survey remained the same.
 - Out of the vendors participating in the call over two-thirds changed their opinion as to which system they preferred.

STATE AGENCY & VENDOR CONTINUED RELATIONSHIP

- Current methods of communication with the vendors shall remain but additional methods will be employed.
- As Missouri moves towards implementation the vendors will play a larger role in forming the decisions as to when and where we roll out areas.
- Vendors will assist in the development of website training modules and training materials to be sent to all vendors.

STATE AGENCY & VENDOR CONTINUED RELATIONSHIP

- Vendor committee meetings will be increased to monthly meetings as necessary.
- Additional surveys relating to vendors' current and future POS equipment needs will be sent out.
- New manuals and cash register transaction procedure cards will be developed and distributed.

STATE AGENCY & VENDOR CONTINUED RELATIONSHIP

- All the steps discussed in earlier slides will be used during and after implementation.
- The working relationship with the vendors becomes even more important as the move to EBT requires more open communication to ensure that the UPC & PLU data remains up to date and that the training of vendor staff remains a priority.

QUESTIONS

