



## **WIC Vendor FAQ's**

### **1. What is eWIC?**

eWIC is an electronic benefits issuance system for WIC. It's a system that will replace the current paper checks with an electronic process for participants to purchase approved items in your stores.

### **2. How will Maryland implement eWIC?**

Maryland has contracted with Solutran, Inc. to design and implement the eWIC system, and to process the eWIC transactions. Solutran has been processing paper WIC checks for Maryland for over 10 years, and has WIC experience in many other states, as well.

### **3. How does eWIC work?**

Each WIC participant will be provided with an eWIC card. It's a plastic card (like an ATM, debit or credit card), with a magnetic stripe on the back. The participant will swipe the card in your store's POS equipment and enter a 4-digit PIN when making WIC purchases.

### **4. Is it like SNAP?**

Not quite. In SNAP, the cardholder has a specific dollar amount benefit that can be used to purchase any SNAP-approved food item. In eWIC, the participant continues to receive only specific food items which may be purchased, just as they are today. The majority of the participant's "account balance" is not a dollar balance but a list of specific food items and quantities which may be purchased.

### **5. Can the same card be used for SNAP and for eWIC?**

No. The cards will be separate.

### **6. If I currently accept SNAP, can I automatically accept the eWIC card, too?**

No. If you are currently an authorized WIC vendor in good standing, you will be eligible to accept eWIC cards,. You may need to upgrade your existing POS equipment or obtain new equipment to process eWIC transactions.

**7. Will Maryland continue to issue paper checks?**

Areas of Maryland where eWIC has been implemented will no longer issue paper checks. However, you will continue to see paper checks until all participants throughout the State have received their eWIC cards. We anticipate that all checks will be phased out of Maryland by the end of 2017.

**8. What is the rollout schedule for eWIC?**

eWIC will be rolled out in groups of counties, as follows:

Pilot 1:	Calvert, Charles, and St. Mary's counties	January 2017
Pilot 2:	Garrett, Allegany, and Washington counties	February 2017
Rollout 1:	Carroll, Frederick, Howard, Montgomery, Anne Arundel, and Prince George's counties	May 2017
Rollout 2:	Baltimore, Harford, Cecil, Kent Queen Anne's, Talbot, Caroline, Dorchester, Wicomico, Worcester and Somerset counties	June 2017
Rollout 3:	Baltimore City	July 2017

**9. If eWIC has been rolled out in my area, do I still need to accept a paper check?**

Yes. Regardless of when or where eWIC has been introduced, all paper checks remain valid. As long as the check has not expired, and you have confirmed the identity of the participant by reviewing their WIC folder, you must redeem the check.

**10. The cashier uses the WIC folder to verify the identity of the participant. Will Maryland continue to issue folders with eWIC? If not, how will the cashier verify the identity of the participant?**

Maryland will not issue folders with eWIC, and signature verification will no longer be required. The participant will enter a 4-digit PIN into your POS terminal; acceptance of the PIN by the POS constitutes identity verification of the participant. Vendors are not permitted to ask for additional identification, and participants are not required to show additional identification.

**11. If the account balance is made up of items instead of dollars, and I don't see the item listed anywhere (like I do now with the paper checks), how do I know a specific item is approved for a participant to purchase?**

In most cases, as each food item is scanned by the POS system, whether a state-provided stand-beside terminal or an integrated ECR system, the POS system will verify that the item is WIC authorized and that the participant has a sufficient remaining quantity (balance) to support what is being purchased. Upon completion of the eWIC transaction,

the central host computer will return a message to the POS indicating whether or not the purchase has been approved.

**12. What equipment do I need for eWIC?**

In order to process eWIC, your store will need an internet connection and a cash register system or eWIC stand-beside terminal with a UPC scanner.

**13. I currently process SNAP transactions on the same equipment I use for other debit/credit transactions (e.g. MasterCard, Visa, etc.), and have the ability to scan UPC codes. Can I use the same equipment for eWIC?**

You will need to contact your bank or Third Party Processor (TPP), or whoever provides support for that equipment, to arrange for a modification to accept Maryland eWIC transactions. If you use this type of equipment, you are considered an “integrated” vendor.

**14. I currently accept SNAP. Can I use the same equipment for eWIC?**

If you currently use stand-beside equipment (i.e. “EBT-Only”) for SNAP, you will need an additional “eWIC-Only” terminal, equipped with a UPC scanner, to accept eWIC transactions.

**15. Maryland gave me my SNAP stand-beside (“EBT-Only”) equipment for free. Will you provide free eWIC equipment too?**

Yes, but this equipment can only be used for eWIC transactions. You should also know that the USDA is considering a regulation change which will require most authorized vendors to pay for the equipment once eWIC has been fully implemented. The decision on this requirement has not been finalized.

**16. How many stand-beside eWIC terminals will I get? Can I get one for each lane in my store?**

The number of stand-beside eWIC terminals is determined by the type of store and amount of your WIC redemptions. According to the USDA formula:

Superstores & Supermarkets: one (1) terminal for each \$11,000 in monthly WIC redemptions, up to a maximum of 4 terminals (or up to the number of lanes, if less than 4).

All other vendors: one (1) terminal for each \$8,000 in monthly WIC redemptions, up to a maximum of 4 terminals (or up to the number of lanes, if less than 4).

**17. What if I want a stand-beside eWIC terminal in every lane?**

You can contract directly with Solutran, Inc., Maryland's eWIC processor, to lease additional stand-beside eWIC terminals for a monthly cost. The cost will be directly negotiated between you and Solutran. Maryland WIC will not be a party to that arrangement.

**18. I am a currently authorized WIC vendor and I want to participate in eWIC. What do I have to do?**

- a. If you currently process SNAP on the same equipment that you use for other credit and debit transactions, contact your bank or Third Party Processor, whoever supports that equipment, and tell them you want to accept eWIC.
- b. If you use State-provided (EBT-Only)\_equipment for SNAP, you will be contacted by Solutran, Inc., Maryland's eWIC processor, to submit the necessary paperwork and obtain the equipment you need for WIC. You can also contact Solutran directly at 1-866-730-7746 between 9 a.m.—6 p.m. Eastern Standard Time.