

Ohio WIC EBT
Retailer Enablement Solutions
(Integrated vs Stand-Beside POS)

Ohio recognizes the importance of working closely with the WIC authorized vendor community to make WIC EBT a reality. Outreach to vendors has already begun and will continue through statewide rollout. There are different approaches for vendors to enable their stores to accept WIC EBT; vendors may integrate WIC EBT into existing cash register systems or utilize State-owned stand-beside equipment.

Introduction to Vendor Enablement

Vendor enablement for WIC EBT simply means having the capability at your Point of Sale (POS) to accept a WIC EBT transaction. Integrating WIC into your POS and your normal business processes is the preferred solution as it allows you to manage inventory, payment, and settlement for WIC items within the same system that manages transactions for cash and other tenders, and it also provides a more streamlined purchase experience for the customer. The alternative to an integrated POS is a stand-beside WIC device. This device is capable of supporting a WIC transaction – it will validate the items against the benefit balance and the State's Approved Products List and UPC database, accept an EBT card as payment, and submit WIC transactions for settlement. However, a stand-beside device is maintained separately from your overall store management system – to determine total inventory, payment, and settlement for all transactions, you will need to reconcile the WIC stand-beside with your store management system. Below are descriptions of integrated and stand-beside solutions. **Please note** that regardless of the solution you implement, not every lane in your store is required to accept WIC EBT; Ohio WIC will determine the minimum number of lanes that your store needs to equip for transacting offline WIC EBT.

System Upgrade (Integrated)

Vendors may choose to upgrade their current Point-of-Sale (POS) system hardware and/or software. This option lends itself to vendors that currently use advanced integrated Electronic Cash Register (ECR) or proprietary systems. An integrated ECR system, upgraded to accept WIC EBT transactions, allows the vendor to maintain their current POS and business processes while integrating WIC redemptions with other payment types and inventory accounting processes. Software upgrades purchased from a POS vendor may have been tested and certified by USDA in other EBT States which limits the level of testing required for certification in Ohio. An upgrade to an integrated ECR:

- allows vendors to maintain their existing POS and business processes,
- allows vendors to take advantage of current investments while leveraging WIC EBT development efforts,

- supports a seamless WIC transaction at the POS,
- integrates WIC into vendors' existing inventory, redemption, and settlement processes,
- eliminates the need for WIC participants to separate items at the checkout (mixed basket), and
- may have been tested and certified by USDA in another State.

System Replacement (Integrated)

Vendors may choose to replace their current POS system with an integrated WIC EBT certified ECR system. Vendors may choose this option if there is no WIC EBT upgrade available to their existing system or if they are currently planning to refresh their POS systems. System replacement with an integrated ECR has all of the advantages of a system upgrade. Ohio WIC will assist vendors in identifying systems certified in other offline WIC EBT States so that vendors can take advantage of prior investments in WIC EBT. A full system replacement with an integrated ECR:

- allows vendors to update outdated equipment and processes while achieving WIC EBT enablement,
- supports a seamless WIC transaction at the POS,
- integrates WIC into vendors' existing inventory, redemption, and settlement processes,
- eliminates the need for WIC participants to separate items at the checkout (mixed basket), and
- may have been tested and certified by USDA in another State.

Stand-Beside POS (Non-Integrated)

The stand-beside POS solution consists of a terminal and item scanner that operates independently of vendors' ECR systems. The stand-beside POS communicates directly to the EBT system through a dedicated phone line or internet connection. As this solution is not an integrated solution, the stand-beside POS is entirely separate from the store's overall inventory, payment, and settlement system for other tender types. The stand-beside POS is a State-provided solution, so vendors that are unable or not ready to invest in upgrades or replacements in order to accept WIC EBT may utilize this solution. The State will provide a stand-beside device to vendors that need one, and will provide onsite installation and training. Vendors currently operating a State-provided SNAP stand-beside device should note that the WIC stand-beside POS will be a separate device.

A stand-beside POS:

- is installed, supported, and maintained by the State,
- is a simple solution that requires no investment by the vendor,
- does not support mixed basket (WIC items are the only items that can be transacted), and
- may require a "double scan" – first against the stand-beside POS and again through the vendor's ECR system.