

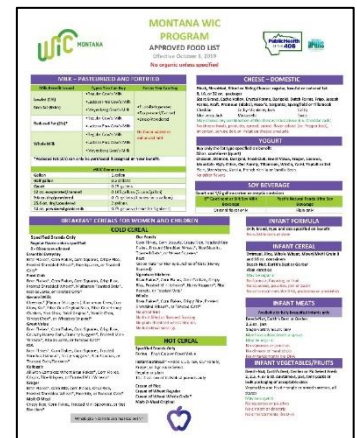


WIC's Spending Impact in October 2021

- 7,672 families went shopping using eWIC.
- 190 grocery stores accepted WIC benefits.
- There were 53,383 eWIC transactions.
- Statewide WIC spending totaled \$741,619.82

Annual Food List Update

The Montana WIC Program adds and removes foods from the Approved Food List every year. Starting October first, we added Organic yogurt, and new brands of breakfast cereal and juice. The list of all approved foods includes over 18,000 individual items and is downloaded to your store's point of sale nightly. This determines what is approved and denied for each WIC cardholder, and cannot be overridden at the checkout. But if questions come up, its helpful to have a copy of the food list at your register for quick reference. You can print copies off WIC's website or give us a call and we'll mail you as many as you need.



Formula Shortages are Affecting WIC Customers

WIC is aware of supply chain disruptions that are limiting the availability of infant formula in some locations. Thank you for doing your best to keep your shelves stocked for WIC customers, and please let us know if you are experiencing prolonged shortages of WIC approved infant formulas so we can best serve the families in those areas.

Increased Fruit & Vegetable Benefits Extended

This summer, the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) increased the fruit and vegetable benefit for WIC families to \$35. From June through September an additional \$543,708.43 was spent on fresh, frozen, and canned fruits and vegetables. Congress has



extended the higher fruit and vegetable benefit through December, and increased it to \$24 for children, \$43 for pregnant and non-breastfeeding women, and \$47 for breastfeeding women. Thank you for encouraging WIC families to fully utilize these extra funds and eat more healthy foods.



"It has taking a lot of stress off me knowing that I was able to put food on the table every month and the extra amount for vegetables and fruit was wonderful!"

– Helena Mom

Updated Vendor Agreements

Thank you to all the stores who renewed their WIC agreements this year and for submitting renewal documents in a timely manner. This year's process went smoothly, and your help is greatly appreciated! Montana WIC is in the process of sending out a revised and updated vendor agreement for all authorized stores. Look for this to arrive later this year or early spring. We will provide an update when we get closer to sending these out.

WIC Shelf Tags



WIC Shelf Tags are an effective way for customers to know which items are approved, but it can be a challenge for stores to keep them on all the correct items. We do not require shelf tags, but if a store chooses to use them, they must maintain them on all WIC approved items in the store. Remember that WIC food prescriptions are unique to families, and not all WIC

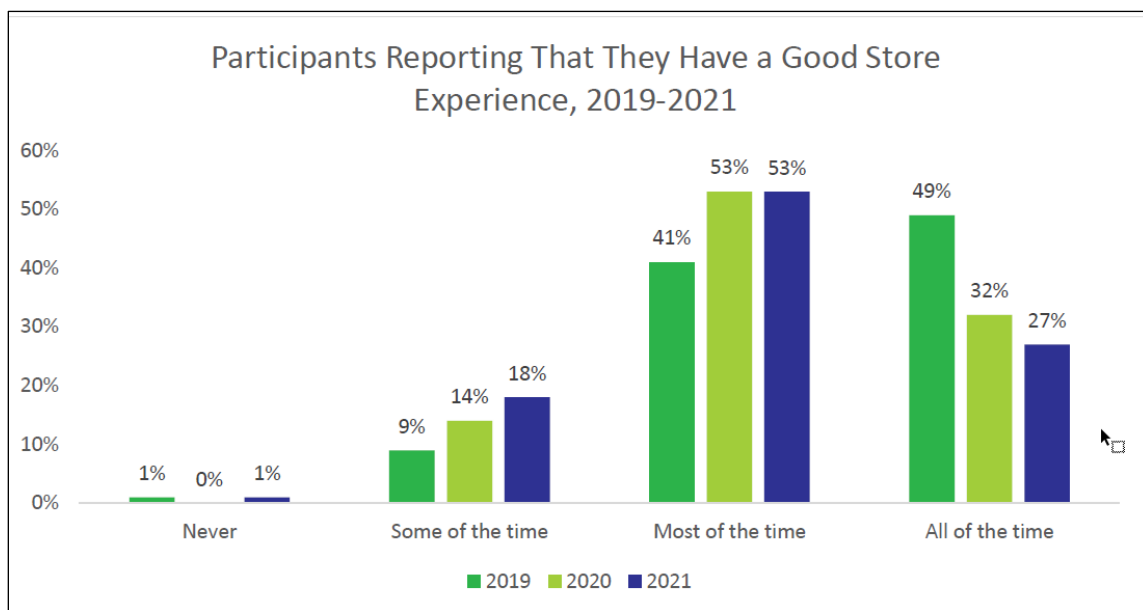
customers can get every authorized food that may have a tag. If your store wants to use shelf tags and needs more, please let us know. Another option is to use the WIC Shopper app to scan barcodes and see if an item is WIC approved.



Online Ordering, Curbside with Mobile POS

Many grocery stores are providing online ordering to customers, and historically eWIC cards have not been a payment type accepted. We hope this is changing and would like to work with any stores that are interested in accepting WIC for both online payments, or online orders and curbside transactions with a mobile point of sale. WIC cannot build this function within a store's system, or within the third-party system a store uses, but we can offer regulatory considerations and other resources that help. Reach out to kmoore@mt.gov to begin this conversation.

Survey Results: Most WIC Customers feel that they have a good store experience. In 2021, 80% reported this to be the case all or most of the time.



Where Can You Find More Information?

Visit Montana WIC's Retailer website for resources: <https://dphhs.mt.gov/ecfsd/wic/>

Retailers can contact their Local WIC Agency for concerns regarding participants and food items.

Contact **Kevin Moore** (406) 444-5530 for any eWIC transaction or program questions.

Contact **Glade Roos** (406) 444-2841 with questions about your contract or stocking requirements.

Thank you for your partnership with the Montana WIC Program. This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

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