

ACTION BY: Regional Directors  
Supplemental Food Programs

SOURCE CITATION: Part 246.12

WIC Program--Food Delivery Systems: Separate Cashiers  
for WIC Participants

The practice of establishing separate checkout lines for WIC participants in retail stores is prohibited because it is discriminatory. As mandated by Section 246.12(f)(2)(x) of the regulations, vendor agreements must require that the vendor "offer Program participants the same courtesies as offered to other customers." Retail stores must treat WIC Program participants exactly the same as all other customers. Requiring WIC participants to form a separate line may be extremely embarrassing to some participants because it readily identifies them as recipients of public funds. This may act as a disincentive to participate in the WIC Program.

There are cases in which retail grocers have set aside express lines which do not accept personal checks. In those situations, excluding WIC participants from the express lines would be consistent with the grocer's policy of not allowing personal checks and is a fully supportable policy. However, we do not support the posting of signs in the express lines which indicate that WIC vouchers are not allowed to be negotiated. Such signs could be perceived to be discriminatory. We would advise that grocers who wish to ensure that WIC participants do not enter express lines post a sign which indicates that "Cash Only" is accepted in those lines.



RONALD J. VOGEL  
Director  
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5, 9, 15	Remove FNS Instruction 806-2 from Manual. Insert this Instruction.	<b>PREPARATION AND MAINTENANCE:</b> SFPD-100	
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FORM FNS-620 (4-86)