



TEXAS
Health and Human
Services



Texas WIC Vendor Quarterly Webinar

February 9, 2022

1:30 – 3:00 p.m. CT

Call-in: 1-877-820-7831

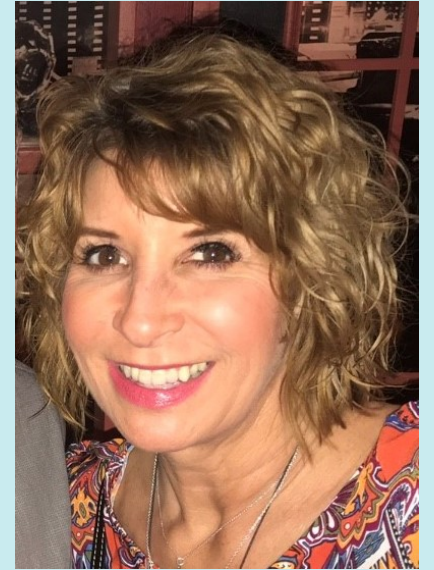
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Welcome

Celeste Lunceford

Vendor Management and Operations (VMO)
Unit Director



Stocking Updates

- ▶ Vendors must maintain minimum stocking requirements for WIC
- ▶ Infant Formula: Abbott increasing its distribution of formula
- ▶ Extended alternative can sizes [Vendor News Flash](#) - December 2021
- ▶ Texas WIC continues to monitor



Fruits and Veggies Benefit Update

Extended: Benefits for Fruits and Vegetables*

Now through March, each eligible WIC participant continues to purchase more fruits and vegetables.

Updated amounts:

- ▶ \$24/month for children
- ▶ \$43/month for pregnant and postpartum women
- ▶ \$47/month for breastfeeding mothers

* Fresh, frozen, canned, glass jars, and plastic containers approved in the *Texas WIC Shopping Guide*

[Vendor News Flash](#) - December 2021



Vendor Policy Update

Heather Claybrook

Analytics and Unit Support
Team Lead



Vendor Communication Updates

Vendor News Flash Reminders

- ▶ All vendor communication is sent out in a Vendor News Flash
- ▶ 2021 – 23 VNF sent to vendors
- ▶ All VNF posted on our [website](#)
- ▶ <https://www.hhs.texas.gov/providers/wic-providers/vendor-management-operations-unit/wic-vendor-communications>



EBT Operations



Steven Schnurer

EBT Operations

Redemptions Team Lead



EBT Operations

Federal Regulations (7 CFR 246.12(f)(2)(iv))

- ▶ (iv) Redemption period. The date by which the vendor must submit the food instrument or cash-value voucher for redemption. This date must be no more than 60 days from the first date on which the food instrument or cash-value voucher may be used. If the date is fewer than 60 days, then the State agency must ensure that the allotted time provides the vendor sufficient time to submit the food instrument or cash-value voucher for redemption without undue burden;



EBT Operations

What this means for Vendors

- ▶ Transactions for a month must be received at the State no later than the 15th of the following month. (WV:5.0 I.A)
 - A. Late submission of WIC EBT claims A **late claim** is a claim submitted after the 15th day of the month containing one or more transactions with a date from a previous month.
- ▶ Deadline to dispute a rejected claim is 60 days after the date of the rejected transaction (WV:05.0 IV.D)
 - D. Ineligible Claim Disputes: 1. Claims containing transaction(s) older than 60 days from the date the dispute is submitted.



EBT Operations

Tax Season

- ▶ 1099k forms were sent to all vendors at the end of January.

System Updates Effective 1/27

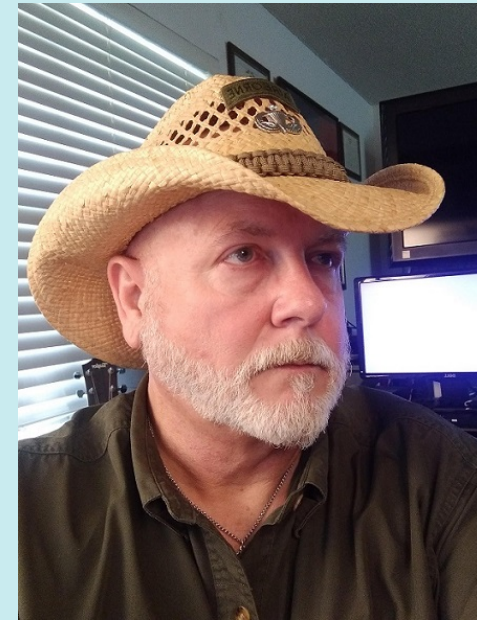
- ▶ Vendors having more than one outlet under an account can now have different banking information assigned to each outlet for payment distribution.
- ▶ Contact VOB if you have any questions.



Compliance Oversight Branch

Andrew Levý

Vendor Monitoring Team Lead



Compliance Oversight Branch

Routine Monitoring - *Federal Regulation 7 CFR 246.12(j)(2)*

Definition: Routine monitoring means overt, on-site monitoring during which program representatives identify themselves to vendor personnel. Monitoring techniques also include Inventory Audits (conducted overtly) and Compliance Buys (conducted covertly).

The State agency must conduct routine monitoring visits on a minimum of five percent of the number of vendors authorized by the State agency as of October 1 of each fiscal year in order to survey the types and levels of abuse and errors among authorized vendors and to take corrective actions, as appropriate...

Texas WIC Loves Our Vendors:

- ▶ The plan is to visit each outlet at least once during each contract cycle
- ▶ More often for Technical Assistance or Educational visits



Compliance Oversight Branch

Split Tender Transactions - Federal Regulation 7 CFR 246.12(f)(4)

The State agency must implement procedures that allow the participant, authorized representative or proxy to pay the difference when a fruit and vegetable purchase exceeds the value of the cash-value vouchers.

How is this observed?

- ▶ Training buys conducted during on-site store reviews
- ▶ Fresh fruits and vegetables
- ▶ Packaged fruits and vegetables
- ▶ The most **common observation** is that a training buy cannot be conducted because store representative does not know the process to place the register in training mode.



Compliance Oversight Branch

Monitoring Updates

- ▶ All Monitors have completed their training and are now conducting store visits
- ▶ Waivers and food flexibilities
 - Waivers remain in-place 30 days after the end of the nationally declared COVID-19 Public Health Emergency
 - Shelf prices must be prominently displayed; Minimum Stocking Requirements must be maintained
 - All LEBs must still be declared and labeled correctly
 - No sanctions will be given for LEBs with food flexibilities (milk, whole wheat bread)
- ▶ Feedback from our teams in the field
 - Stores looked clean, representatives were professional and friendly, stores easily navigated
 - Education issues with register training mode, labeling LEBs and non LEBs

REMEMBER: We offer Technical Assistance to all Vendors on any violations, sanctionable or not!



Compliance Oversight Branch



Kimberly Minty

Cost Containment – Team Lead



Compliance Oversight Branch

PWIC Vendors and Cost Neutrality

- ▶ WV: 10.0
 - ▶ Predominantly-WIC (PWIC) Grocer – A vendor type and competitive pricing classification given to an outlet that has or is expected to have WIC food sales above 50% of the outlet's total sales of foods that are eligible for purchase using benefits issued by the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). A PWIC is also known as an Above-50-percent vendor as described in 7 CFR Part 246.
- ▶ Federal Regulations – 7 CFR Part 246
 - ▶ Vendors that derive more than 50 percent of their annual food sales revenue from WIC food instruments, and new vendor applicants expected to meet this criterion under guidelines approved by FNS, are defined as above-50-percent vendors.



Compliance Oversight Branch

PWIC Vendors and Cost Neutrality

- ▶ WV: 10.0

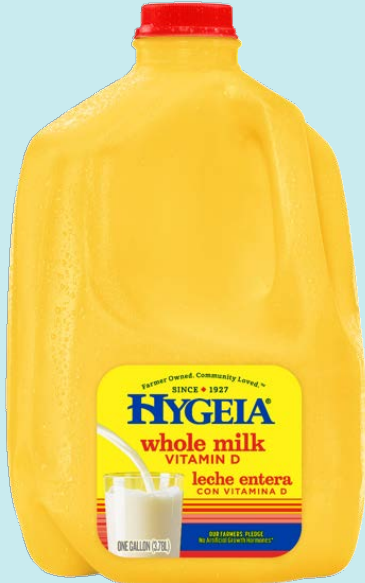
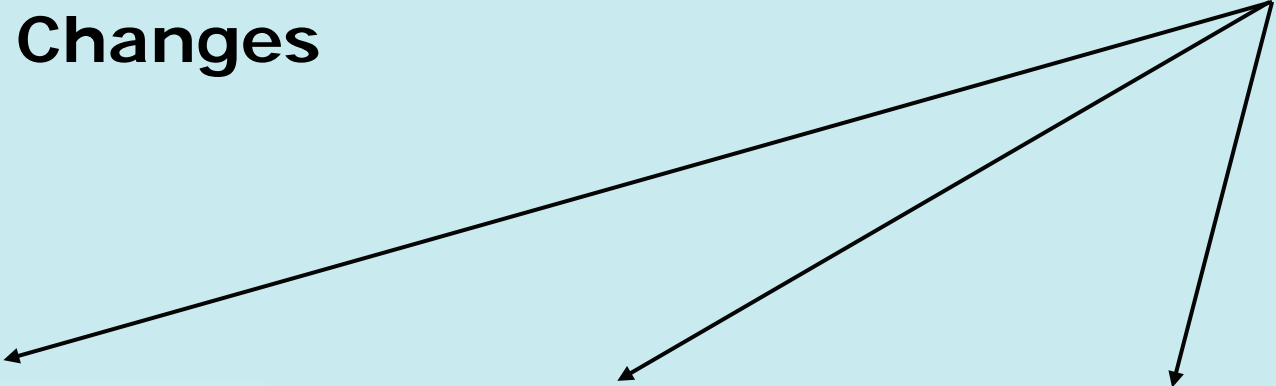
- ▶ PWIC pricing shall be compared utilizing the statewide average pricing of TWICs. The SA will confirm cost neutrality between TWICs and PWICs by ensuring that prices paid to PWICs do not exceed the statewide average price paid to TWICs (regardless of their price region or WIC sales volume band).

- ▶ Federal Regulations – 7 CFR Part 246

- ▶ Must compare above-50-percent vendors' prices against the prices of vendors that do not meet the above-50-percent criterion in determining whether the above-50-percent vendors have competitive prices and in establishing allowable reimbursement levels for such vendors.
- ▶ If average payments per food instrument for above 50-percent vendors exceed average payments per food instrument to regular vendors, then the State agency must take necessary action to ensure compliance, such as adjusting payment

Compliance Oversight Branch

Dairy Pure Milk Changes



Compliance Oversight Branch

Dairy Pure Milk Changes

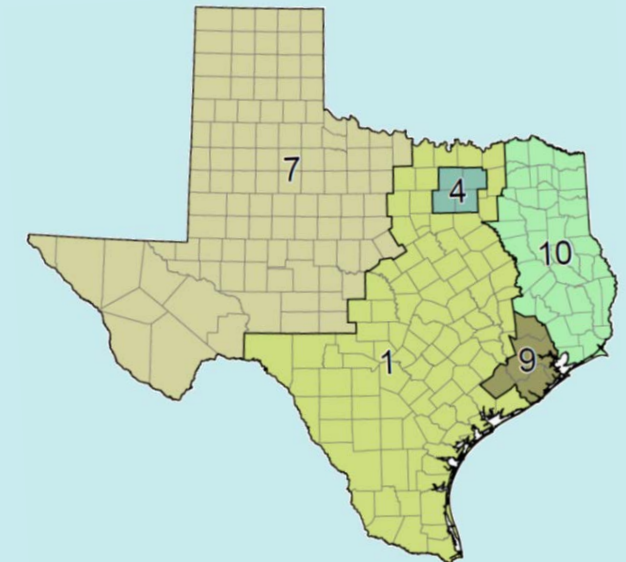
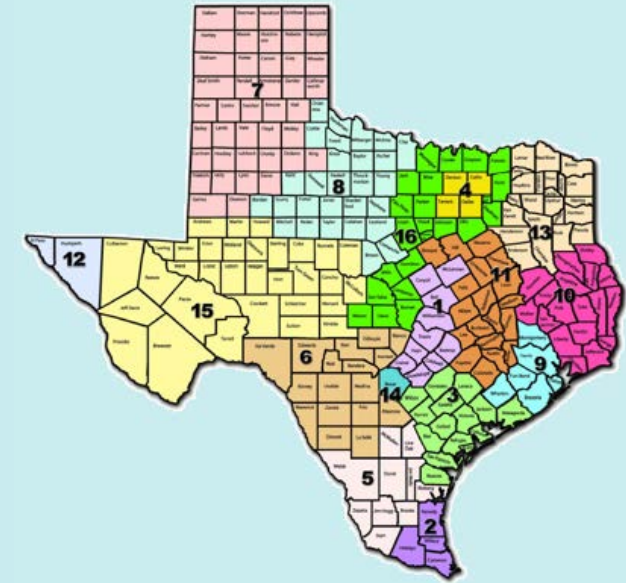
- ▶ New Changes effective February 1, 2022
- ▶ Accepting both current and new UPCs to allow vendors to sell through stock
- ▶ When stocking the new milk products, be sure to update your Least Expensive Brand (LEB), with the new name, UPC code, and effective date. Use the [LEB Change Request form](#) and submit it to WICLEB@hhs.texas.gov.
- ▶ [Vendor News Flash](#) announcing the changes.



Compliance Oversight Branch

New Peer Grouping – It's Here!

- New Methodology Effective with January 2022 Process Month
 - Results will be available toward the end of February
- Recap
 - TWIC geographic regions changing from 18 down to 7
 - Regions #4 & #9 will remain the same
 - All Commissaries will be grouped together under a single sales volume band
 - No changes to PWIC vendors or to our policies regarding Maximum Allowable Reimbursements or Competitive



Compliance Oversight Branch

New Peer Grouping

Tools to help with the new changes:

1. Check your monthly Peer Grouping notification emails to see what your Peer Group is.
ex: 007-1 First 3 digits is Price Region, last digit is Sales Vol Band
2. Review the new map on our website which also contains a list of the counties included for each new price region.
3. New peer grouping averages can be found on our website
<https://www.hhs.texas.gov/sites/default/files/documents/doing-business-with-hhs/provider-portal/wic/vendors/twic-new-peer.pdf>



Vendor Outreach Branch

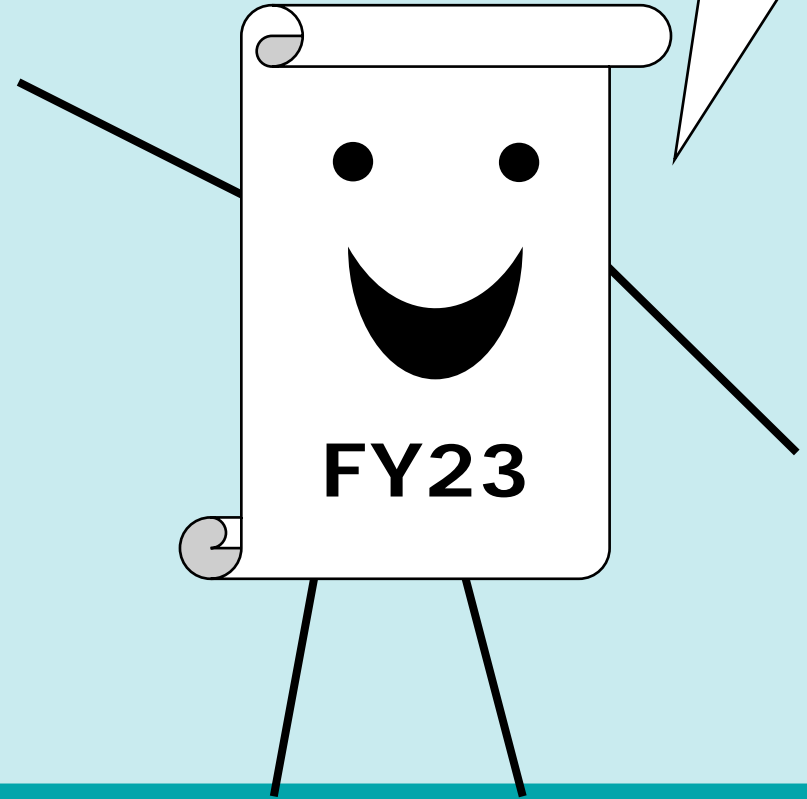
Jennifer Frasier

Branch Manager



Vendor Outreach Branch

Who's ready for
FY23 renewals!!!



Vendor Outreach Branch

Federal Regulations

- ▶ *Compliance with vendor selection criteria.* The vendor must comply with the vendor selection criteria throughout the agreement period, including any changes to the criteria. Using the current vendor selection criteria, the State agency may reassess the vendor at any time during the agreement period. The State agency will terminate the vendor agreement if the vendor fails to meet the current vendor selection criteria.



Vendor Outreach Branch

FY2023 Vendor Renewals

- ▶ 101 contracts renewing
- ▶ Sending out applications on February 10th
- ▶ Completed applications are due back May 1st



Vendor Outreach Branch

Coming Soon

- ▶ New Program Specialist position being posted



Vendor Outreach Branch

Jody Ramey

Vendor Outreach Specialist



Vendor Outreach Branch

Renewal Application Reminders

- ▶ Tomorrow, **February 10th**, we will send an email to vendors, who need to renew, this year.
- ▶ Renewal packets are **due by May 1, 2022**.
- ▶ Submit all required documents from the renewal application checklist.
- ▶ Interactive training and annual training are required by **September 30, 2022** for each outlet.



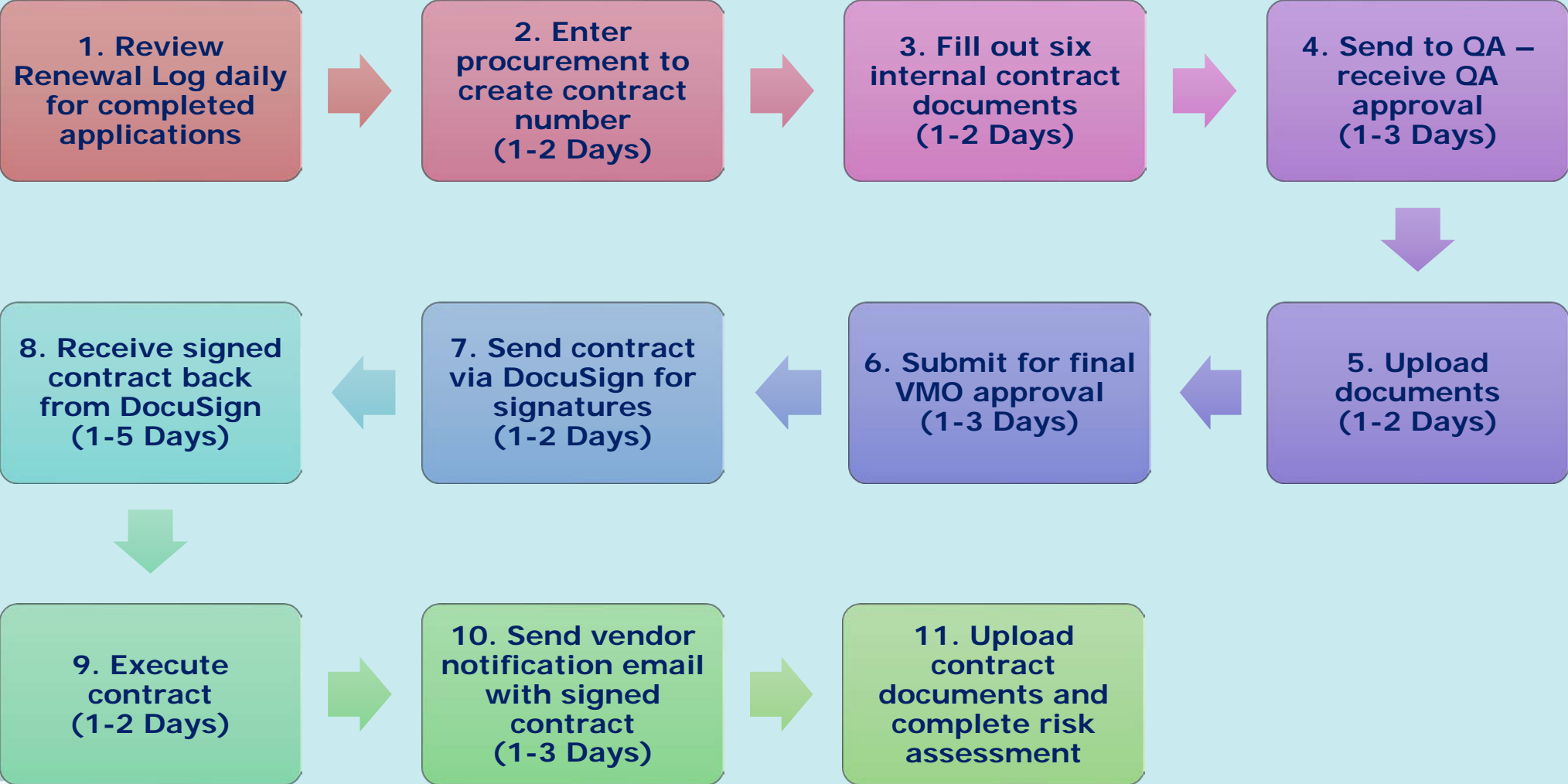
Vendor Outreach Branch

Krisy Wilson

Vendor Application Contract Specialist



Contract Process - Behind the Scenes



Vendor Outreach Branch



Chris LaFleur

Vendor Outreach Branch

Training Specialist



Vendor Outreach Branch

Training

- ▶ Vendors renewing their contract are required to complete what type of training(s)? [Interactive Live Webinar and Annual On-Demand Training](#)

Federal Regulations:

The State agency must train all vendors annually. Each year, the State agency must provide training to one or more representatives of each vendor; this is referred to as annual training. Annual training may be presented in a variety of formats, including webinars, newsletters, videos, etc. At least every 3 years, annual training must be presented in an interactive format (see Handbook section 5.1 for more information).



Vendor Outreach Branch

Training

▶ Vendor not renewing their contract are required to complete what type of training(s)? [Annual On-Demand Training](#)

▶ Does today's webinar count towards your training compliance?

No



Vendor Outreach Branch

For reauthorization, live interactive training and annual training is required by **September 30, 2022**, for each outlet.

FY22 Annual Online/On Demand Trainings

Use Google Chrome or Microsoft Edge to play Annual Training's. Internet Explorer is not compatible.

Vendor
Annual/On
Demand
[Training](#)
[Catalog](#)



Incentive Items: A Guide to Policy WV-09.0



Policy WV:10.0 Training



LEB & Label Training



Understanding Cost Containment



Store Manager Training



Cashier Training

Live Interactive Webinar sessions typically on 2nd & 4th Wednesday



Vendor Outreach Branch

Victoria Pierce

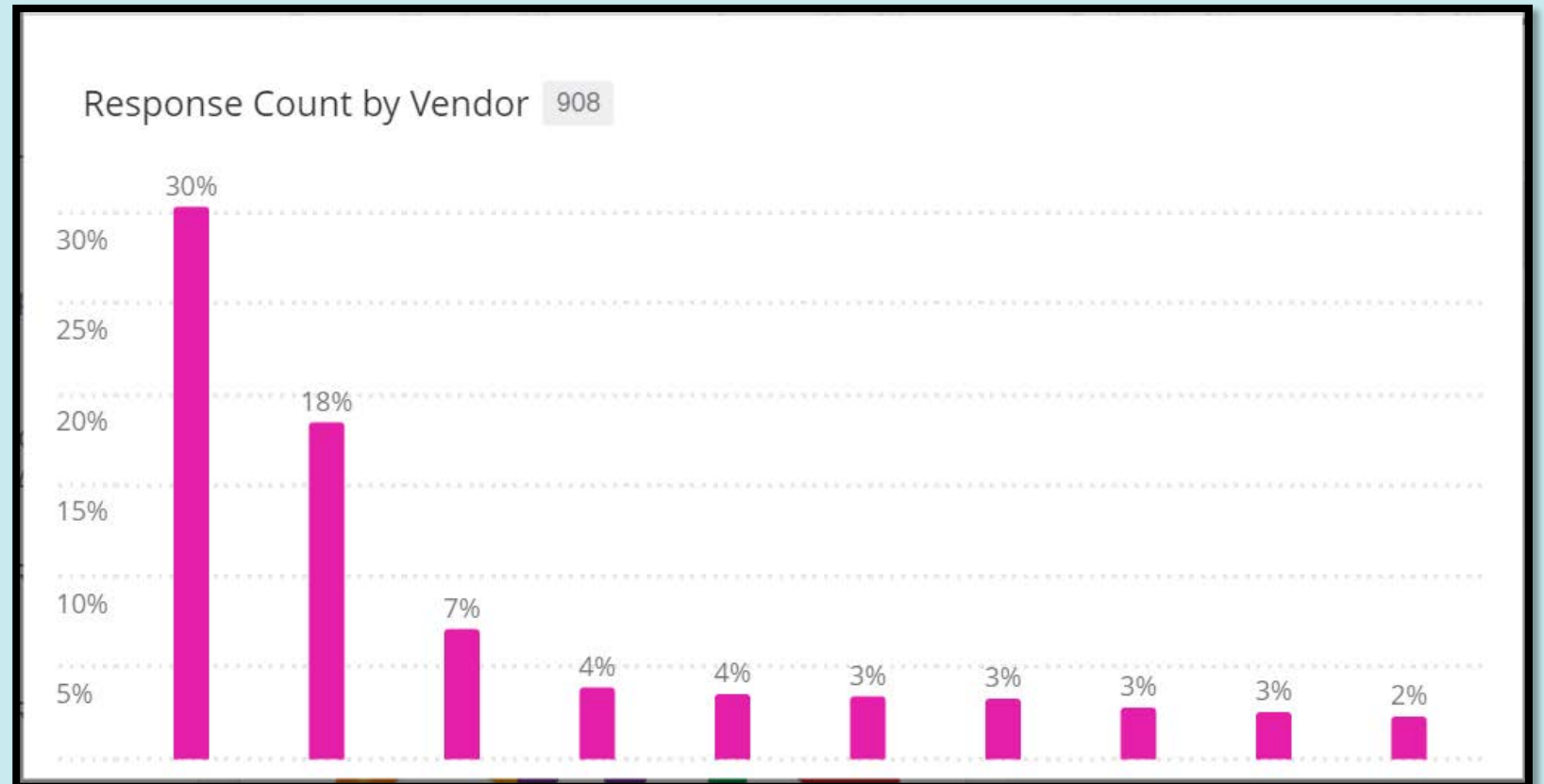
Team Lead



Vendor Outreach Branch

New Shopping Survey Feedback

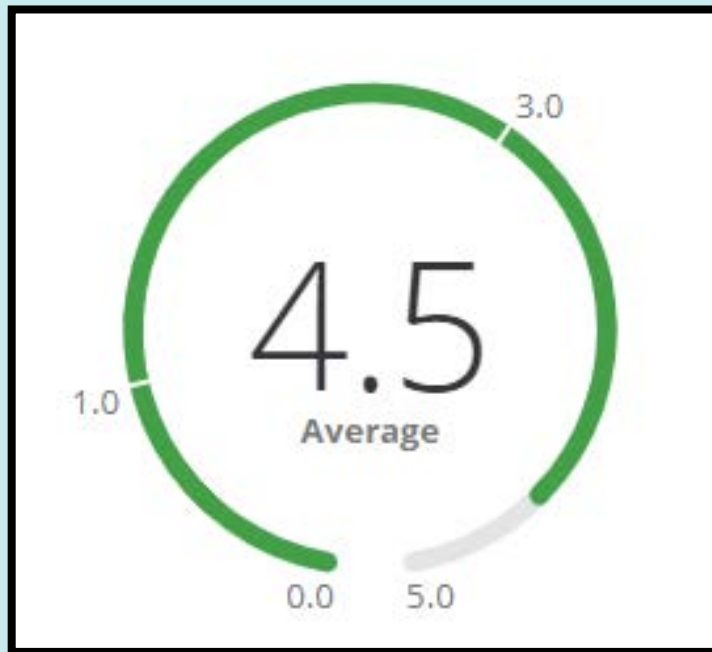
- ▶ 10 WIC accounts with the highest number of responses
- ▶ 908 total responses
 - ▶ 30% = 353
 - ▶ 18% = 215
 - ▶ 7% = 83
 - ▶ 2% = 27



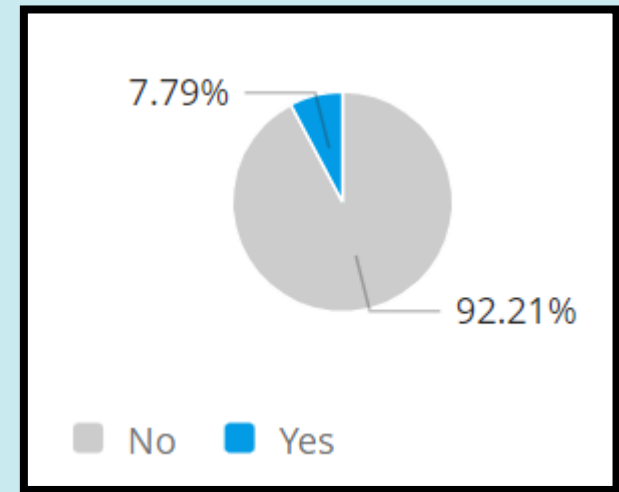
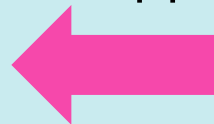
Vendor Outreach Branch

New Shopping Survey Feedback

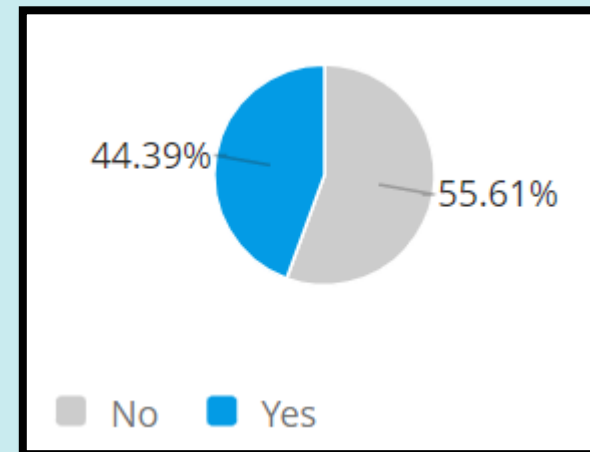
Useful, vendor-specific feedback has increased!



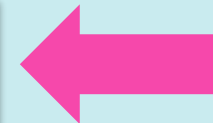
Overall "Happiness with Shopping Visit" Score



First Time WIC Shoppers

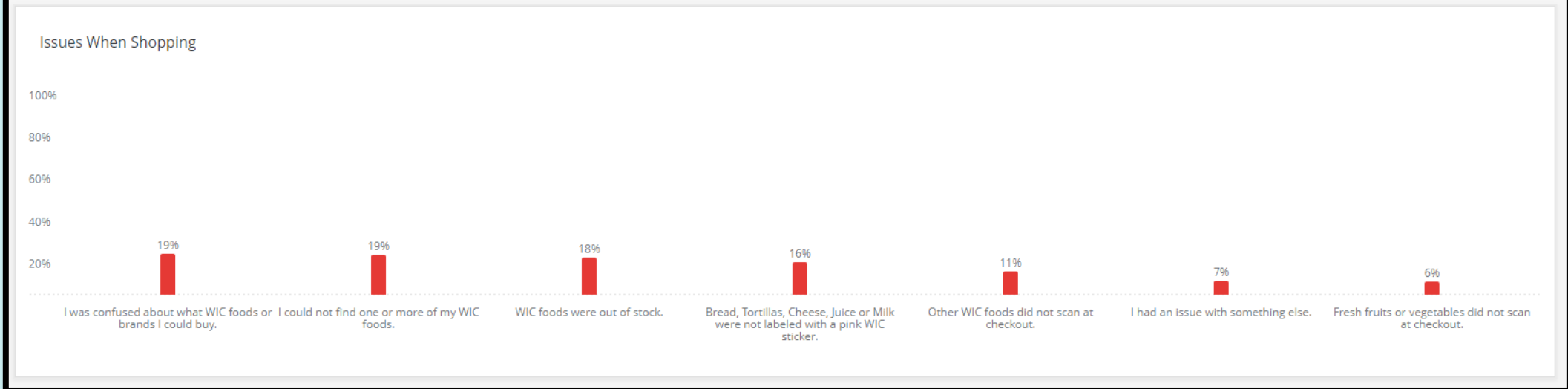


Shoppers using *myTexasWIC* Shopping App



Vendor Outreach Branch

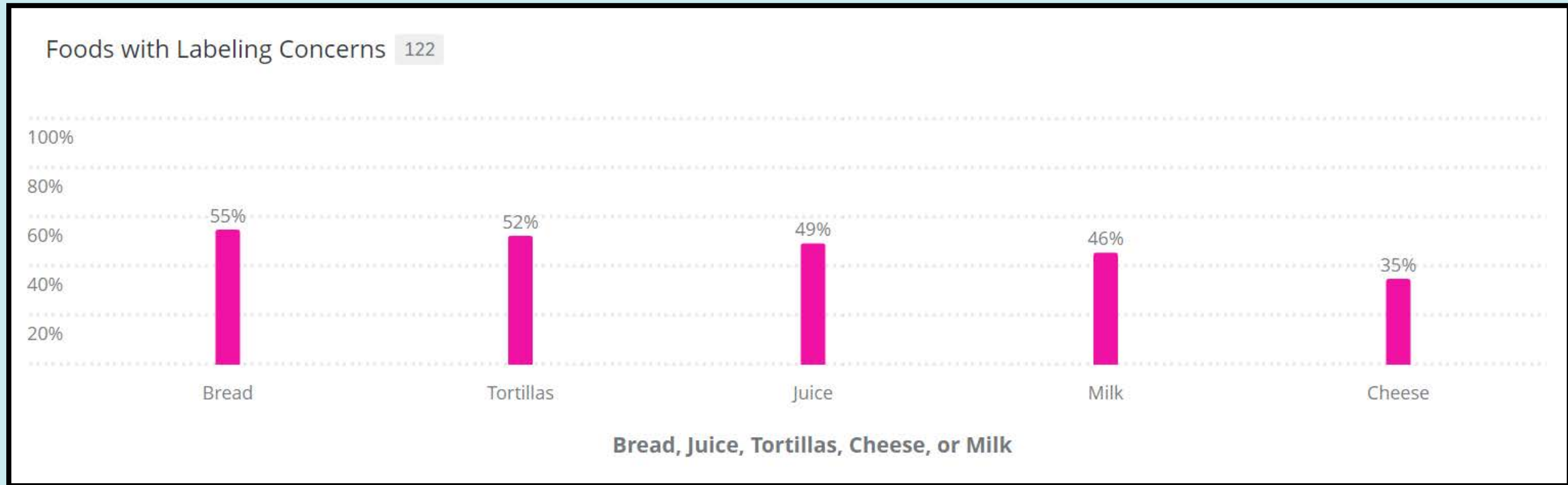
New Shopping Survey Feedback



Vendor Outreach Branch

New Shopping Survey Feedback

- ▶ 122 respondents report labeling concerns
- ▶ Bread is most reported LEB with labeling concerns



Analytics & Unit Support Team



Miranda Brown

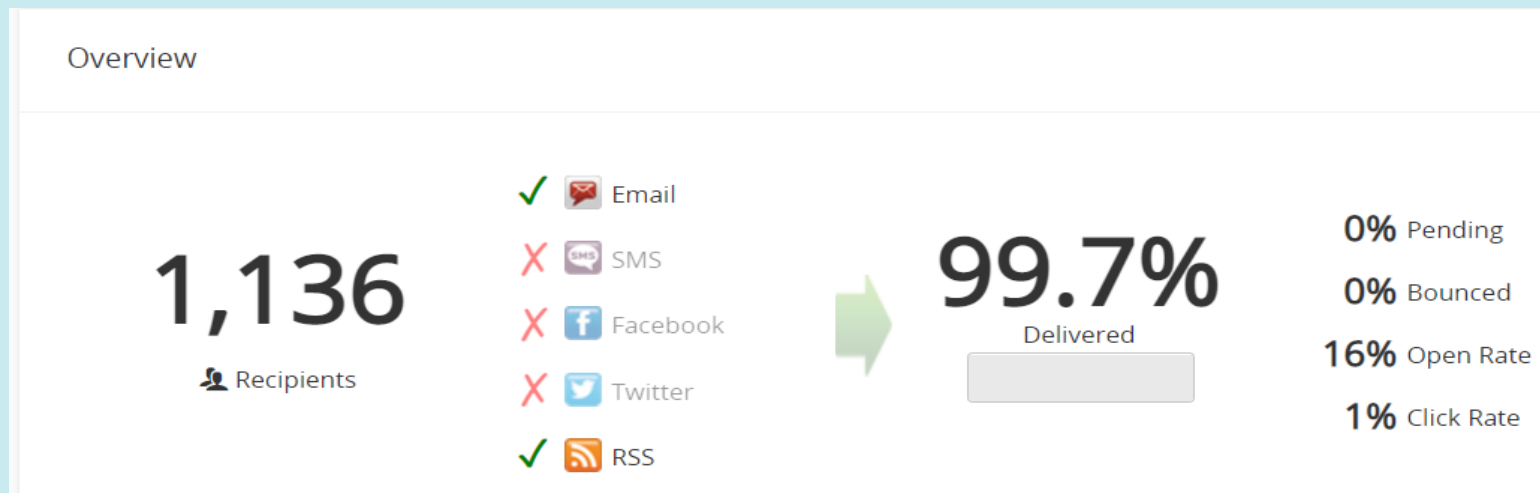
Policy and Project Specialist



Analytics & Unit Support Team

GovDelivery

- ▶ If you have opted out, but wish to resubscribe please email WICVendorRelations@hhs.texas.gov
- ▶ Texas Health and Human Services Commission txhhs@public.govdelivery.com



Compliance Oversight Branch

LEB Forms/Questions:

WICLEB@hhs.texas.gov

Cost Containment/Peer Grouping Questions:

WICCostContainment@hhs.texas.gov

WIC Monitoring/Compliance Questions:

WICMonitoringOversight@hhs.texas.gov

Submit New UPCs for Addition to the Authorized Product List:

WICUPC@hhs.texas.gov



EBT Operations Contacts

Claim Payments/Reimbursements/Disputes, Drop Ship Vendors, and Direct Deposits:

WICEBTVendorRedemptions@hhs.texas.gov

General WIC EBT, Claims Processing/Reductions, WIC EBT Training Cards and Technical Issues, POS System Referrals, and WIC EBT/POS System Certifications:

WICEBTSupport@hhs.texas.gov



Vendor Outreach Branch

Contract Support, Contact Updates, Authorizations, Terminations, Amendments, & Applications:

WICVendorRelations@hhs.texas.gov

General WIC Questions, Requests for WIC Training, Technical Assistance, & Signage Approval:

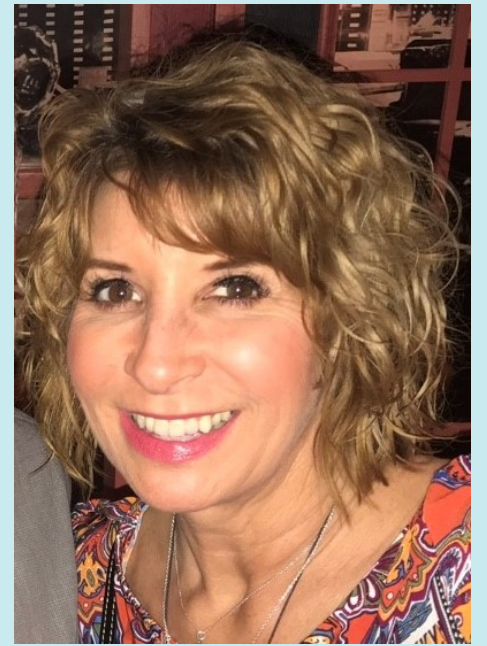
WICVendorInfo@hhs.texas.gov



Wrap Up & Vendor Open Forum

Celeste Lunceford

Vendor Management & Operations
Unit Director



**Food Town #14,
Baytown**

I love it

**Kroger #565,
McKinney**

Self checkout
lanes accepted
WIC method of
payment!

**Brookshire
Grocery#133,
Joshua**

Have all foods
labeled.

**Albertsons#4231,
Grand Prairie**

Everything about
WIC is very easy to
find in Albertson's.

**Walmart#964,
El Paso**

Fruits and
vegetables are
fresh. They have
a better variety
to select.

**Why we do
what we do...**

**Bryant's Market,
El Paso**

Was clean and
labeled.

Porter's, Seminole

They had the
Similac Sensitive
formula in stock

**HEB #620,
Pearsall**

When I can't
find an item,
they are very
helpful.

**Mata's Food
Store, El Paso**

He took care of
me very well.



Thank you for your ongoing support of Texas WIC
and your continued efforts to ensure
Texas families are healthy families.

Next Vendor Quarterly Webinar

May 2022

