ARIZONA, INTER TRIBAL COUNCIL OF ARIZONA, INC. AND NAVAJO NATION
WIC PROGRAMS FOOD SELECTION CRITERIA
FOR FFY 2026

PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT

The Arizona, Inter Tribal Council of Arizona, Inc. (ITCA) and Navajo Nation WIC Programs shall provide a reasonable selection of nutritious foods within each category and will consider the following factors: participant nutritional needs, participant cultural preferences, cost, and state and program-wide availability.

In addition to the criteria specified in this policy, WIC reserves the right to restrict the number of brands and types of any products. WIC is not obligated to authorize every available food that meets federal requirements.

GENERAL CRITERIA

Foods and their packaging shall be evaluated by the Tri-State Food Package Committee based on the following factors: nutritional considerations, cost, product distribution within the areas served by the Arizona, ITCA, and Navajo Nation WIC Programs, participant acceptance, and administrative feasibility.

1. NUTRITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS:
    - WIC foods shall meet all federal requirements specified in 7 C.F.R. §246.1 et seq. Refer to the following link: https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-7/subtitle-B/chapter-II/subchapter-A/part-246/subpart-D/section-246.10
    - The allowed food products must be compatible with current nutrition and public health recommendations for maternal, infant, and child health.
    - The food package shall offer a variety of types and brands of the allowed foods to ensure that all participant dietary needs shall be considered. (i.e. high fiber cereals, low-fat milk, lactose-free milk, etc.).

2. ACCEPTABILITY OF FOODS:
    - Foods shall be selected that can be consumed by the majority of participants and shall consider cultural and special food needs of the participants.
    - Each program is responsible for assessing and analyzing the preferences and food acceptability of the participants of their Program. Results will be compiled by each Program and reviewed at the Tri-State Committee Meeting. Foods that show a high degree of acceptability shall be considered for the next WIC food authorization process.
    - Cultural food beliefs, preferences, and practices shall be considered when evaluating a food item based upon participant characteristics, and responses to customer satisfaction surveys.
    - Environmental concerns and ease of preparation may also determine allowable forms and packaging of specific foods.

3. AVAILABILITY OF FOODS:
    - The selection of food products for the WIC Food Package shall be determined based on availability at the retail and wholesale level in urban and rural areas.
    - The food product shall be available from one of the five largest wholesale distributors for non-chain stores, in each of the three service areas (Arizona, ITCA, and Navajo Nation). Exceptions may be allowed based on specific Program needs.
    - Change in formulations of an authorized food item may be reviewed at any time and the food item may be removed if it does not continue to meet the food selection requirements.
    - The food product, with the exception of formula, shall have been available for at least one year on store shelves before it is considered for addition to the WIC Food Package in an effort to effectively assess cost and future availability. The Programs reserve the right to waive this requirement to ensure that appropriate food packages are implemented.

4. COST
    - The cost of food items shall be considered prior to authorization.
    - When there is an immediate (soon after being authorized) or a ten percent (10%) increase in the cost of an authorized food, it may be reviewed to assess the impact to the Program's budget and may be removed from the food list when the impact is relevant.

5. ARIZONA WIC PROGRAMS SELECTION CRITERIA

Food Item	GUIDELINES
Cereal	Any brand meeting the below criteria will be considered for inclusion on the authorized food list. • The package size shall not be smaller than 9 ounces for cold and hot cereals. • At least 75 percent of cereals on the food list must have whole grain as the primary ingredient by weight.
Juice	Any brand meeting the below criteria will be considered for inclusion on the authorized food list. • Juice may be ready to drink or frozen concentrate. • Allowable containers include plastic containers, cartons, and cans. • Shelf-stable and refrigerated must be 64 ounce size (52-64 ounce for orange). • Frozen concentrate must be 11.5-12 ounce size. • Individual servings of juice are allowed. Fresh and non-frozen concentrate juices are **not allowed**. Light or juice cocktail is **not allowed**.
Cheese	Any brand meeting the below criteria is allowed. The package size must be 8, 16, or 32 ounces. Pasteurized domestic cheese in blocks, sliced and shredded are allowed in the following varieties: • Cheddar (includes longhorn) • Colby (includes longhorn) • Monterey Jack • Mozzarella • Swiss • Provolone • Muenster • Any blend of the above varieties Mozzarella string cheese is allowed. Cheese sticks or cheese swirls are **not allowed.** Cubed, random weight, and deli counter cheeses are **not allowed**. Cheese with added flavors or ingredients such as wine, peppers, onions, or pepperoni is **not allowed.** Imported cheese is **not allowed.** Cheese food, cheese products, cheese spreads, and imitation cheeses are **not allowed.**

Food Item	GUIDELINES
Eggs	Any brand meeting the below criteria is allowed. • Raw medium, large, extra large, or jumbo white or brown chicken eggs are allowed. • Specialty eggs, including organic, free range, and cage free eggs are allowed. • Eggs shall be packaged in cartons of a dozen. Egg substitutes are **not allowed.** Nest and fertile eggs are **not allowed**.
Canned Fish	Any brand meeting the below criteria is allowed. • Light tuna, pink salmon, and sardines are allowed (any size). • Flavored or seasoned canned salmon, sardines, and tuna are allowed. • Pouches are allowed. Solid white or albacore tuna, prime fillet, and tuna lunch or snack kits are **not allowed.** Canned red or Atlantic salmon or fillets are **not allowed.** Brisling and Norwegian sardines are **not allowed.** Added ingredients like rice, pasta, and beans are **not allowed.** Plant based fish is **not allowed.**
Dried Beans, Peas, and Lentils	Any brand meeting the below criteria is allowed. • Mature legumes are allowed. • The package size must be 16, 24, or 32 ounces. • Any type or variety of dry, plain mature beans, peas, or lentils is allowed. Fresh, frozen, bulk, and bean soup mixes are **not allowed.** Immature varieties of legumes such as green beans, snap beans, yellow beans, and wax beans are **not allowed.**
Canned Beans	Any brand meeting the below criteria is allowed. • The package size is up to 16 ounces. • Organic is allowed. • Regular or lower in sodium content. Added sugars*****, fats, oils, fruit, vegetables, or meat are **not allowed**. *****Note: <u>Small</u> amounts of sugar are added to some foods that are naturally sugar-containing during the canning process to prevent stress resulting in membrane rupture (e.g., kidney beans). This small amount of added sugar is minimal and helps to maintain the quality and structure of the food. To encourage greater variety in food choices in the WIC food packages, canned legumes that contain a small amount of sugar for processing purposes, such as plain canned kidney beans, are allowed. Pork and beans, baked beans, chili beans, and refried beans are **not allowed**.
Peanut Butter	Any brand meeting the below criteria is allowed. • The container size must be 14 to 18 ounces.

Food Item	GUIDELINES
	• Plain, smooth, crunchy, or chunky types of peanut butter are allowed. • Natural and organic peanut butters are allowed. Peanut butter with added ingredients such as jelly, marshmallow, chocolate, or honey is **not allowed**. Peanut butter spreads are **not allowed**. Peanut butter in tubes are **not allowed.**
Nut and Seed Butter	Any brand meeting the below criteria will be considered for inclusion on the authorized food list. • Almond, cashew, walnut, or sunflower seed butter • The container size must be 9 to 16 ounce • Organic is allowable Flavored nut or seed butters are **not allowed.** Added jams, jellies, chocolate, marshmallows, DHA, omega-3, or honey are **not allowed.**
Cow's Milk	Any brand meeting the below criteria is allowed. • Fluid whole, reduced fat, low fat, skim or fat-free cow's milk is allowed in gallon, half gallon, and quart sizes. • Organic milk in gallons is allowed. • Half gallon lactose free milks are allowed (also allowed in 96 oz containers, Navajo Nation only) • Milk in the following identities is allowed: o Canned evaporated milk (up to 12 ounces) o Dry milk (9.6 to 56.4 ounces) o Calcium fortified milk o UHT milk Flavored milks are **not allowed.** Organic milk in sizes other than a gallon, raw, non-dairy, filled milk, buttermilk, acidophilus, sweetened condensed milk and half and half or creamers are **not allowed.**
Soy Based Beverage	Any brand meeting the below criteria will be considered for inclusion on the authorized food list. • Package sizing must be 32 ounces (1 quart) or a half gallon. • Soy milk must be fortified to meet the nutrient levels described in the federal regulations. • May be flavored or unflavored Organic, light and added DHA/ARA are **not allowed**.
Kefir	Any brand meeting the below criteria will be considered for inclusion on the authorized food list. • 32 ounce containers. • Any flavor, fat-free, low fat, or whole milk. • Organic is allowed. Oat and grass fed are **not allowed**.

Food Item	GUIDELINES
Yogurt	Any brand meeting the criteria below will be considered for inclusion on the authorized food list. • Regular and Greek yogurt are allowed. • Light is allowed. • Organic is allowed. Package sizes include: • 24-32 ounces containers • Single serving containers and packs • Yogurt tubes in packs Yogurt sold with accompanying mix-in ingredients such as granola, candy pieces, honey, nuts, and similar ingredients are **not allowed.** Drinkable yogurts are **not allowed.**
Plant-Based Yogurt	Any brand meeting the criteria below will be considered for inclusion on the authorized food list. • Any size container • Plant-based yogurt must be fortified to meet the nutrient levels described in the federal regulations. Yogurt sold with accompanying mix-in ingredients such as granola, candy pieces, honey, nuts, and similar ingredients are **not allowed.** Drinkable yogurts are **not allowed.**
Goat's Milk	**Arizona WIC only** Any brand meeting the below criteria will be considered for inclusion on the authorized food list. • Low fat or whole • Package sizes must be 32 ounces (1 quart), 12 ounces powdered, or 12 ounces evaporated.
Tofu	Any brand meeting the below criteria will be considered for inclusion on the authorized food list. • Package size must be 14 to 16 ounces. • Any texture that meets calcium requirements without added fats, sugar, oils or sodium is allowed. • Organic is allowed. Tofu with added fats, sugars, oils, or sodium is **not allowed.**
Fresh Fruits and Vegetables	• Any variety of fresh fruits and vegetables is allowed, including organic. • Whole or cut fresh fruits and vegetables are allowed. • Bagged vegetable are allowed. • Fresh herbs and spices are allowed. Added sugar, fat, oil, or salt; dried herbs and spices; potted herb plants; edible blossoms such as squash blossoms; creamed or sauced vegetables; vegetable-grain mixtures; fruit-nut mixtures; breaded vegetables; fruits and vegetables for

Food Item	GUIDELINES
	purchase on salad bars; salad kits; with nuts; ornamental fruits and vegetables, such as chilies on a string; painted pumpkins; fruit or vegetables with dressing or dipping sauce; fruit baskets; dried fruits and vegetables are **not allowed**.
Frozen Fruit	• Any brand and type of container is allowed, including organic. • Any variety of plain frozen fruits without added sugars is allowed. • Any brand and type of container is allowed. Added sugar, fat, oil, or salt; any other added ingredients; and artificial sweetener such as aspartame, Splenda, or stevia are **not allowed**.
Frozen Vegetables	• Any brand and type of container is allowed, including organic. • Any variety of frozen vegetables without added sugars, fats, or oils is allowed. • Any brand and type of container is allowed. Added sugar, oil, fat, pasta, or rice; breaded vegetables; french fries, tater tots, or hash browns; and sauce such as cheese, butter, or teriyaki sauce are **not allowed**.
Canned Fruit	• Any brand and type of container is allowed, including organic. • Any variety of canned fruits including applesauce, juice pack, or water pack without added sugars, fats, oils, or salt (i.e. sodium) is allowed. • Containers may be cans or other shelf-stable or refrigerated containers (i.e. jars, pouches). Artificial sweeteners are **not allowed.**
Canned Vegetables	• Any brand and type of container is allowed, including organic. • Any variety of canned vegetables without added sugars, fats, or oils. May be regular or lower in sodium. ○ Note: Small amounts of sugar are added to some foods that are naturally sugar-containing during the canning process to prevent stress resulting in membrane rupture (i.e. sweet peas). This small amount of added sugar is minimal and helps to maintain the quality and structure of the food. To encourage greater variety in food choices in the WIC food packages, canned vegetables that contain a small amount of sugar for processing purposes, such as plain canned sweet peas and corn, are allowed. • Containers may be cans or other shelf-stable or refrigerated containers (i.e. jars, pouches). Pickled or creamed vegetables; pizza sauce, soups, ketchup, relish, or olives are **not allowed**.
Whole Grains	Any brand meeting the below criteria is allowed. **Whole Wheat and Whole Grain Bread:** Any size package. Bagels, bread (including gluten free and organice), buns, English muffins, pita, and sandwich thins are allowed. Packaging must be labeled with 100% Whole Wheat or 100% Whole Grain.

Food Item	GUIDELINES
	Brown or Wild Rice: Package size must be 14 to 32 ounces, includes organic. Long grain or short grain rice is allowed. Instant, quick, boil-in-bag, or regular cooking rice is allowed. Seasoned, flavored, white, Basmati, Jasmine are **not allowed.** **Other Grains:** Any package size barley, buckwheat, bulgur, sorghum, or wheat berries, includes organic. Flour, grains in bulk bins, and soup kits are **not allowed**. **Whole wheat pasta:** Any package size, includes organic. Whole wheat flour and/ or whole durum wheat flour must be the only flours listed in the ingredient list. Added sugars, fats, oils or salt is **not allowed**. **Corn Tortillas:** Package size must be 14 ounces or larger, includes organic. Whole corn (or ground masa/corn flour) must be listed as the first ingredient. Soft corn plain, yellow, or white tortillas are allowed. Taco chips, tostada, or shells are **not allowed.** **Whole wheat flour tortillas:** Package size must be 14 ounces or larger, includes organic. Whole wheat flour must be listed as the only ingredient on the package. White or flavored tortillas are **not allowed**. **Oatmeal:** Any package size, includes old fashioned, quick cooking, steel cut, and organic. Oatmeal with added flax or chia, flavored oatmeal, granola, instant oatmeal, oat flour, overnight oats, or protein oats are **not allowed**. Any brand meeting the below criteria will be considered for inclusion on the authorized food list. **Quinoa:** Any package size, any color, includes organic. Quinoa and rice blends are **not allowed.** **Corn Flour:** Any size yellow, white, or blue corn flour or corn masa flour, includes organic. Must meet whole grain corn flour standards in the federal regulations.
Infant Fruits and Vegetables	Any brand meeting the below criteria will be considered for inclusion on the authorized food list. • Stage 1 or 2 single variety or combination of plain fruits or vegetables in 2 or 4 oz containers. Single or packs. • Natural or organic. Added formula, cereal, DHA/ARA, probiotics, yogurt, salt, sugar, oil and/or starches are **not allowed**. Pouches, smoothies, desserts, dinners and food combinations are **not allowed.**
Infant Meats	Any brand meeting the below criteria will be considered for inclusion on the authorized food list.

Food Item	GUIDELINES
	• Any stage, 2.5 oz single ingredient infant meats with added broth or gravy are allowed. • Organic is allowed Added salt and/or sugars are **not allowed**. Desserts, dinners, and food combinations are **not allowed.**
Infant Formula	Contract formulas are allowed. Non-contract and exempt formulas are authorized per each state agency's policies as defined in the Federal Regulations.
Infant Cereal	Any brand meeting the below criteria will be considered for inclusion on the authorized food list. • Container size is 8 or 16 ounces. • Organic is allowed. High-protein cereals are **not allowed.** Cereals with added fruit, sugar, yogurt, formula, or DHA/ARA are **not allowed.** Cereals in jars, cans, single serving cups, or variety boxes are **not allowed.**

6. ARIZONA WIC PROGRAMS' WIC FOOD AUTHORIZATION PROCEDURE
    - All foods must meet nutrient standards as defined by the United States Department of Agriculture (7 C.F.R. §246 et seq.).
    - The following process will be used for authorization of food products for the WIC program:
        - A food company or other entity, such as a local WIC clinic, shall submit a written request for authorization of a product.
        - The food company representative shall furnish package flats or labels, information on package sizes and prices, and a summary of current distribution.
        - The food company's summary of current distribution shall be in writing and shall include, but is not limited to:
            - Identification of the wholesaler(s) carrying the product; and
            - An assessment of when the new product will replace the old product on store shelves (when there is a change in the product formulation).
        - The Tri-State Food Package Committee shall evaluate each food product based on the federal requirements and the Arizona, ITCA, and Navajo Nation Food Selection Criteria.
            - The Tri-State Food Package Committee is comprised of:
                - Representatives from each of the WIC programs (Arizona, ITCA, and Navajo Nation). Care will be taken to ensure appropriate representation from the three programs. Each program has an equal say in the decision-making process.
                - Vendor representatives.
                - The Arizona WIC Program will select a chairperson to oversee the authorization process for WIC foods.

- The Tri-State Food Package Committee shall verify product availability and price information for all foods submitted that meet the federal and state requirements. This will be accomplished by completing site visits to a sampling of each Program's authorized Vendors and documenting the above-mentioned information.
- The Tri-State Food Package Committee shall review all data and recommendations and shall present their recommendations to the WIC Directors from Arizona, ITCA, and the Navajo Nation.
- The WIC Directors' (Arizona, ITCA, and Navajo Nation) acceptance or denial of all or part of the recommendations will be final.
- The Tri-State Food Package Committee will disseminate information regarding upcoming changes to the authorized foods.
- There shall be opportunities to review food products outside the established time frame. The Tri-State Food Package Committee shall determine when special reviews are necessary and make decisions as to how a limited process shall occur. Special circumstances that may require additional reviews include, but are not limited to:
    - Changes in federal regulations
    - Changes in product formulations that make the authorized product ineligible
    - Changes in product packaging that cause difficulties in product purchases
    - Changes in price that negatively impact one or more of the three WIC Programs' budget(s)
    - Changes in product availability due to unforeseen circumstances, i.e., natural disasters that negatively impact participant variety.
- An Authorized Food List shall be available on each Program's website.