Future of Retailer Certifications

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Moderator: Phil Swain, USDA/FNS
eWIC Certifications

Background and Future

FNS
Background

FNS Certification policy is changing

- FNS will not be sending BAH to Retailer Certifications or Federal Acceptance Tests.
- State agencies will not be required to certify systems
Background

How did we get here?

- Proof of Concept
- Stand Beside Terminals vs. Integrated POS
- Smart Cards vs. Mag Stripe cards
- We had little knowledge of retailer POS systems
- BAH served as the subject matter expert
Background

What did we learn?

• The existing process is resource intensive
• The existing process is expensive
• The existing process provides a snapshot view
• Retailer POS systems are difficult to categorize
• The first attempt to certify a POS will likely fail
Background

What is driving this change?

- Schedule/Time, Cost/Resources, Scope/Quality

FNS encouraged consensus across stakeholders

- Goal of developing alternatives
- Conference calls for 12 months
- Educational process to level the playing field
Changes

- Retailer certifications are not required
- FNS will not participate on a recurring basis
- State agencies will be responsible for ensuring that EBT systems process transactions correctly
- Includes both retailer and State systems
- Federal Acceptance Testing is also changing
- Includes review of UAT results and State agency recommendation
Alternatives

- Formal certification (lead state or single state)
- Self certification
- Contracted testing
- Shared test results
- In store testing and/or sampling
- Automated testing
- Revised Vendor and Processor agreements to transfer or share liability
Contact

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eWIC Certifications

An Online Perspective
Nevada WIC
Future of Retailer Certifications

A look at the history of the certification process:

• Risk assessment
• Selling the idea to stakeholders – both internal and external
• Time and effort
• Parties involved
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The present:

• Factors that have influenced change
• Certification options in pilot
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What will the future look like?
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eWIC Certifications

A Smart Card Perspective
Cherokee Nation WIC
Overview of Current Certification Process

- Changes to a Store System Trigger a Certification
- A Certification is a Comprehensive Test of WIC EBT Functionality
- Usually Two Days of Testing
- Multiple Programs Certify Concurrently
Ensuring a Positive WIC Experience

- An Error in the Lane Negatively Impacts Everyone Involved
- Small-Scale Problems Can Affect Your Most Vulnerable Participants
- Large-Scale Problems Can Spin Out of Control Before You Are Aware of Them
- Certifications Reduce the Occurrence of These Errors
Offline EBT WIC Programs Believe in Certifications

- Programs Will Be Responsible for Ensuring the Integrity of Their Transactions
- The Certification Process:
  - Established
  - Proven
  - Effective
  - Adaptable
The Offline Certification Process Is Already Adapting

- Centralization/Consolidation of Relevant Processes and Resources
- Designated Cert Teams Represent Many WSAs
- Changes to the Certification Process Itself
The Offline Certification Process Is Already Adapting

- Documentation Availability Through a Centralized Database
- Certification Approval Process
- Remote / Self Certification
- Two Technologies, One Certification
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eWIC Certifications

A Retailer Perspective
Kroger
Kroger WIC Team

Jennifer Simpson – Corporate Government Benefits Manager
• Oversees business side of WIC
• Responsible for training, compliance, in-store execution of technology, shelf labeling and customer shopping experience
• Experience – 9 years with Kroger – 4 years in stores, 2.5 years in Corporate Audit, 2.5 years in current role
• Jennifer.M.Simpson@Kroger.com

Chaz Veite – Application Analyst – Point of Sale Payments
• Technical support for payment acceptance (IBM ACE, Verifone PIN pads)
• Technical lead for WIC
• Experience – 14 years with Kroger, 7 years in current role
• Chaz.Veite@Kroger.com
Kroger Background

- Headquartered in Cincinnati, Ohio
- One of the nation’s largest grocery retailers
- Approximately 2,440 stores in 31 states
- Barney Kroger opened 1st store in 1883 for $372
Kroger Viewpoint

- Current internal testing process
- Kroger's interest in getting it right
- The great, the good and the ugly
- Looking for a Partnership – Kroger proposal
Contact

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