

The Integrity Profile Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)

How do I become authorized to access the TIP system?

To gain access to TIP users must obtain Level-2 E-authentication certification, complete the FNS-674 form requesting approval to access TIP and submit the form to FNS for approval, and sign the on-line FSP confidentiality statement.

How do I get my Level-II E-authentication certification?

To complete the on-line E-authentication form you must go to <http://www.eauth.egov.usda.gov/> and complete the form. Once the form is complete you can submit it to the E-authentication office. This form will ask you to generate a series of questions about yourself. We suggest that you write down your response to these questions and lock them in a secure place. You will be asked to respond to these questions if you forget your E-authentication password in the future.

Where do I get a copy of the FNS-674 form?

You may contact your regional FNS WIC office to obtain a copy of the FNS-674 form. Once you have completed the form you should send it to your FNS regional IT office for approval.

How do I complete the FSP confidentiality statement?

You may contact the FNS headquarters Food Stamp Office to receive a copy of the FSP confidentiality statement. This may also be available through your regional FNS WIC office.

What happens if I forget my E-authentication password?

If you forget your password you should click on the “forgotten password” option on the User ID login screen. The system will direct you to the E-authentication site and ask you a series of questions. These questions were selected by you when you applied for your Level-II E-authentication. FNS suggest you write down your password and lock it up in a secure location where you can refer to it if needed. Please do not share your password with other staff.

If I only access the TIP system once or twice a year, how do I prevent my password from expiring?

Authorized users should log into the TIP system or STARS on a quarterly basis to make sure your password does not expire. This will prevent you from being denied access when it is time for the annual TIP submission.

What is the URL address for TIP?

The URL address is <https://stars.fns.usda.gov/tip>.

Who do I contact to request training on TIP?

To request first time training or refresher training on the TIP system, you should contact your FNS WIC regional vendor manager.

Where can I obtain a copy of the TIP user's manual?

The user's manual is posted on the FNS WIC website under TIP. You can download a complete copy of the manual from our website.

What do I do if the system does not provide me with an update button to update my FNS-698, 699, or 700 forms? Who do I contact?

You should immediately contact the help desk. The number can be found on the welcome page under "Contact Us." If you do not get a response right away, you should contact your regional FNS WIC vendor manager for assistance. FNS may need to look at your user settings and verify they are correct.

Do I have to complete all three FNS forms before I can submit them to FNS?

No. You can submit each form once they are completed or wait to submit all three. Please make sure you submit all three forms by February 1st or you will be locked out of the system.

What if I have problems accessing the reports in the TIP system?

If you can not access the reports, you should first check to make sure your pop-up blocker is not set to block pop-ups. If your system shows that pop-ups are allowed and you still can't bring up a report, you should contact your IT office to see if your computer has specific security settings that do not allow you to access the reports. If this is not the case, you should contact your FNS regional vendor manager for assistance.

Where can I get a copy of the .txt file format if I plan to upload my TIP submission?

A copy of the .txt format can be obtained by contacting your regional FNS WIC vendor manager or you can obtain a copy on the FNS WIC website under the heading TIP Manual.

What happens if I need to upload a new .txt file? Does it overwrite the previous upload submission?

Yes. Each time a file is uploaded, it will overwrite the previous submission as long as the data is submitted by February 1st. Please make sure each .txt file you submit is complete and includes all vendor records.

What does it mean when I try to upload a .txt file and receive an error message that vendor records are not in the correct format?

If the error shows every vendor line (or record) the entire .txt file is not in the proper format. However, if it provides you with a certain number of lines, it means that the vendor records located on those particular lines in the .txt file are not formatted correctly. In most cases, the user needs to add one additional space or delete a space at the end of that vendor record. Remember the number showing on the error report is the line the record is located on and not the vendor ID number.

What if I receive an error message that the State agency ID or fiscal year is not the same as what I selected when I attempted to upload the file? What does this mean?

This is often caused because an additional blank space has been added to the end of the .txt file or the State agency or WIC ID number have an apostrophe somewhere in the character field causing the data to be rejected. Please check for these types of errors in your .txt file and correct them before uploading the file again.

What if I upload a file and some of the records do not pass the validation requirements and are rejected? How should I correct these records?

You have two ways you can correct the records. You can either correct your .txt file based on the discrepancy error report you receive from your email account or you can go directly into TIP under the “Vendors” section and select the “View Vendor Error File. This will allow you to correct each record directly in the TIP system. Keep in mind that if you update the records directly in the TIP system and later decide to upload a new .txt file that .txt file will overwrite everything currently in the system. Therefore, you should make sure your .txt file includes all the corrections before you submit a new file.

What if the “Type of Vendor” changes from a retail store to an above 50% store during the fiscal year? How do I report this in TIP?

The store should be identified as an above 50% store in TIP, regardless of when the status was changed in the fiscal year.

What if a vendor received both interactive training and annual training in the same fiscal year? How is this reported in TIP?

If the vendor received both types of training in the same fiscal year, the State agency should report the vendor as having received interactive training. The system will only allow you to report one type of training.

What if the vendor is not authorized by the Food Stamp Program?

If the vendor is not authorized by the Food Stamp Program the “FNS Number” field should be left blank on the vendor record. If the State agency is uploading a .txt file to submit their TIP data these character fields should be left blank.

What if I don't know a vendor's FNS number?

If the store is authorized by Food Stamps and you do not know the FNS number, you should access the STARS system to search for the correct FNS number. You can conduct a search by store name and address. You may contact your regional FNS WIC vendor manager for assistance on using STARS.

What is the URL address for STARS?

The URL address is <https://stars.fns.usda.gov>