

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**June 5, 2020**

## **Online Grocery Purchasing for SNAP Recipients Now Available, Retailers Encouraged to Join Program**

**Harrisburg, PA** – The Department of Human Services (DHS) today announced that the system changes necessary to implement the pilot program that lets recipients of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) purchase groceries online through participating retailers have been completed, and online grocery purchasing is now active at approved retailers.

“SNAP recipients in Pennsylvania have not had the flexibility to use online purchasing for grocery delivery or for prepayment of curbside pick-up, potentially putting their health and safety at risk during this health crisis. We are proud to announce that that changes today. We are glad to launch this pilot program to allow us to expand flexibility to SNAP recipients looking to utilize online grocery purchasing to support social distancing and COVID-19 mitigation efforts,” said DHS Secretary Teresa Miller. “No one should be in the position of jeopardizing their health to get groceries for their family. I encourage retailers across the commonwealth to reach out to Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) and join this program.”

The pilot program currently includes three approved retailers: Amazon, Walmart, and ShopRite. Only eligible food items normally paid for by SNAP will be able to be purchased from these retailers online with SNAP benefits; delivery fees, driver tips, and other associated charges may not be paid for with SNAP benefits. Due to the expedited timeframe to implement, this initiative does not include the ability to transact Cash Assistance benefits using the EBT card. Therefore, individuals will need to use another method of payment, such as a pre-paid debit card, to cover non-allowable fees.

A fourth retailer, The Fresh Grocer, was approved by the federal government to participate in the program, and once necessary system changes are implemented, they too will begin accepting online SNAP payments. Retailers that are interested in participating must [contact FNS](#) to review the requirements to be added to the program.

Retailers that do not wish to join the pilot program can still offer delivery or pick-up flexibility options for SNAP recipients by using mobile EBT processing equipment that would allow customers to pay with SNAP when groceries are delivered or picked up. Farmers markets may be able to receive this processing equipment at no cost through [a grant opportunity](#) provided by DHS.

DHS is continuing to process applications for SNAP and encourages people and families who need assistance to apply online at [www.compass.state.pa.us](http://www.compass.state.pa.us). All SNAP applications are screened for expedited services criteria which can accelerate processing time for those with emergency needs. Pennsylvanians who need help feeding themselves or their family can also find and contact their local food bank or pantry through [Feeding Pennsylvania](#) and [Hunger-Free Pennsylvania](#) to access food resources in their community

Visit [pa.gov](http://pa.gov) for a [“Responding to COVID-19” guide](#) or the Pennsylvania Department of Health’s dedicated [Coronavirus webpage](#) for the most up-to-date information regarding COVID-19.

Guidance to DHS providers related to COVID-19 is available [here](#).