

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Human Services Provides Update on SNAP Online Grocery Purchasing, Encourages Retailers to Join

Harrisburg, PA –Department of Human Services (DHS) Secretary Teresa Miller today reminded Pennsylvanians of the ability to use Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) funds to purchase groceries online through select retailers. This flexibility allows SNAP recipients to purchase groceries from home, which can help limit trips out of the home as Pennsylvania sees rising cases of COVID-19. Last month, DHS launched the pilot program overseen by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) that allows SNAP recipients to purchase groceries online through participating retailers approved by the USDA.

“We are pleased that Pennsylvanians have the ability to purchase groceries online using their SNAP benefits, and we encourage any SNAP recipients to use online purchasing when possible to support social distancing and help keep themselves and their family safe from COVID-19,” said Secretary Miller. “This pilot has been a success so far, and I would encourage retailers to reach out to Food and Nutrition Service to join this program to provide even more opportunities for Pennsylvanians to purchase groceries online using SNAP.”

The pilot program currently includes four approved retailers: Amazon, the Fresh Grocer, Shoprite, and Walmart, and since the program’s launch, these retailers saw about \$6.5 million in online purchases by Pennsylvanians. Retailers that are interested in participating in this program must [contact the USDA’s Food and Nutrition Service \(FNS\)](#) and review the requirements. 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. Online grocery transactions made up only 1.5 percent of total SNAP purchases during the month of June, equating to nearly 87,000 total online food transactions. Walmart (63 percent) and Amazon (29 percent) had the majority of the purchases, while ShopRite and Fresh Grocer experienced transaction activity of over half a million dollars combined.

Only eligible food items normally paid for by SNAP may 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. 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. More information on the online program, including a list of locations of participating retailers, can be found [here](#).

Applications for SNAP and other public assistance programs can be submitted online at www.compass.state.pa.us. Those who prefer to submit paper documentation can print the application from the website or request an application by phone at 1-800-692-7462 and mail it to their [local County Assistance Office \(CAO\)](#) or place it in a CAO’s secure drop box, if available. While CAOs remain closed, work processing applications, determining eligibility, and issuing benefits continues. Clients should use COMPASS or the MyCOMPASS PA mobile app to submit necessary updates to their case files while CAOs are closed.

For more information about food assistance resources for people around Pennsylvania impacted by COVID-19 and the accompanying economic insecurity, visit https://www.agriculture.pa.gov/Food_Security/Pages/default.aspx.

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