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NCDHHS

THURSDAY, MARCH 11, 2021 - 00:00

Food and Nutrition Services Participants Can Now Use Benefits for Online Purchases from BJ's

North Carolina Food and Nutrition Services participants can purchase groceries online using their Electronic Benefit Transfer cards at an additional authorized online EBT retailer, BJ's Wholesale Club. This flexibility will allow participants to buy food while promoting social distancing to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and will help families with transportation and mobility barriers.

RALEIGH

North Carolina Food and Nutrition Services (/assistance/low-income-services/food-nutrition-services-food-stamps) participants can purchase groceries online using their Electronic Benefit Transfer (/divisions/social-services/food-and-nutrition-services-

food-stamps/electronic-benefit-transfer) cards at an additional authorized online EBT retailer, BJ's Wholesale Club. (https://www.bjs.com) This flexibility will allow participants to buy food while promoting social distancing to prevent the spread of COVID-19 (https://covid19.ncdhhs.gov/about-covid-19) and will help families with transportation and mobility barriers.

The online shopping system was developed to allow online purchasing by FNS households with EBT cards issued by North Carolina. BJ's became the sixth North Carolina EBT retailer on Feb. 24, joining Food Lion, Amazon, Walmart, Carlie C's and Aldi, to be approved for online FNS purchases.

In May 2020, North Carolina was one of the first 10 states to implement online purchasing for FNS and currently has the most authorized online retailers in the country, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. (https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/online-purchasing-pilot)

FNS participants will be able to use their benefits to purchase eligible food items but will not be able to use their FNS benefits to pay for service or delivery charges. Currently, BJ's is only allowing EBT purchases for pickup orders, not same-day delivery through Instacart. This service is available to all BJ's members with no additional costs or additional fees for either in-club or curbside pickup.

Online shopping can provide several benefits to the citizens of North Carolina, such as:

- Promoting social distancing and self-isolation during the

COVID-19 Pandemic.

- Limiting personal interactions for individuals at risk due to compromised health issues.
- Increasing access to healthy food for individuals with physical impairments, transportation issues or those living in food deserts.

Online purchasing for FNS will remain permanently in place beyond the COVID-19 pandemic.

USDA must approve retailers who wish to participate in the FNS online purchasing program. NCDHHS encourages other EBT retailers to pursue USDA approval to become authorized online retailers. All EBT retailers in North Carolina have received information from USDA about how to become approved for online FNS purchases. More information for retailers is available on the USDA website. (https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/retailer)

More information about North Carolina Food and Nutrition Services can be found at www.ncdhhs.gov/assistance/low-income-services/food-nutrition-services-food-stamps (/assistance/low-income-services/food-nutrition-services-food-stamps), and North Carolina individuals and families can apply for FNS at epass.nc.gov. (https://epass.nc.gov)

This press release is related to: