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NCDHHS

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Food and Nutrition Services Participants Can Now Use Benefits for Online Purchases From Food Lion Through Instacart

Starting today, North Carolina Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) participants can purchase groceries online using their Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) cards through Instacart.com or the Instacart mobile app, providing access to an additional authorized online EBT retailer, Food Lion. 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

Starting today, North Carolina Food and Nutrition Services (/assistance/low-income-services/food-nutrition-services-food-stamps) (FNS) participants can purchase groceries online using

their Electronic Benefit Transfer (/divisions/social-services/food-and-nutrition-services-food-stamps/electronic-benefit-transfer) (EBT) cards through Instacart.com or the Instacart mobile app, providing access to an additional authorized online EBT retailer, Food Lion. 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.

Users will be able to access their benefits for online grocery delivery and pickup while shopping through Instacart on the Food Lion storefront. Once items are added to their cart through Instacart.com or the Instacart mobile app, customers will be able to select how much of their benefits they would like to allocate to the order.

"Adding another retailer where people can use their EBT cards for online purchases continues to make the FNS program more accessible and convenient for families to shop safely, practice social distancing and get the nutrition they need during this pandemic," said NCDHHS Deputy Secretary for Human Services Tara Myers.

To help subsidize costs for EBT FNS (/divisions/social-services/food-and-nutrition-services-food-stamps/supplemental-nutritional) beneficiaries, through March 16, 2021, Instacart will waive delivery and/or pickup fees on up to the first three EBT FNS orders for each customer with a valid EBT card associated with their Instacart account.

Instacart's latest EBT FNS expansion to partner with Food Lion serves as North Carolina's fifth EBT retailer. In May 2020, North Carolina was one of the first 10 states to implement online purchasing for FNS, which will remain permanently in place beyond

the COVID-19 pandemic.

FNS participants will be able to use their benefits to purchase eligible food items from online retailers but will not be able to use their benefits to pay for service or delivery charges. The participant will be required to pay for these charges with another form of payment, such as a debit or credit card.

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.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture 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?mc_cid=32c143c2eb&mc_eid=764de28299)

More information about North Carolina Food and Nutrition Services can be found at https://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/?mc_cid=32c143c2eb&mc_eid=764de28299)

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