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CONTACT
GovernorsOffice@illinois.gov (mailto:GovernorsOffice@illinois.gov)

Pritzker Administration Announces 1.8 Million SNAP Recipients Will Be Able to Buy Food Online

Access will be provided automatically to all existing Link card holders beginning June 2; Customers will not need to call or visit an office; Traditional SNAP purchasing will continue

Today, Governor JB Pritzker and the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) announced the state's plan to enable 1.8 million SNAP recipients to purchase food from participating grocery retailers online has been approved by the federal government.

This new purchasing option will begin on June 2. All Link customers will be alerted when they can use their card to make food orders online.

"To keep more families safe and healthy, my administration is expanding the ways in which SNAP recipients can acquire groceries to include online purchasing," **said Governor JB Pritzker.** "The best part is that in addition to helping families shop a little easier and safer during this pandemic, this is a permanent new feature of the SNAP landscape in Illinois that will support our residents for many years to come."

"I partnered with Senator Duckworth and Governor Pritzker's Administration to push USDA to address technological barriers by approving Illinois' request to let SNAP recipients buy their groceries online," **said U.S. Senator Dick Durbin.** "This step will help millions of people in our state safely put food on the table. I will continue to look for ways to expand access to SNAP benefits and food programs as we respond to the COVID-19 pandemic so people do not go hungry."

"As someone whose family depended on food stamps and reduced-price meals after my father lost his job when I was in high school, I know firsthand just how important access to affordable food can be," **said U.S. Senator Tammy Duckworth.** "I also know that no individual or family should be disadvantaged or have to choose between putting themselves and their families at risk or going hungry simply because they rely on SNAP benefits. The reality is that the COVID-19 pandemic has made it challenging—and even unsafe—for Illinoisans to visit stores or travel to purchase groceries, and the work Governor Pritzker and IDHS are doing to provide our state's families with safe alternatives is an important lifeline. I'm glad to have a partner like JB in Illinois, and I'll keep working with Senator Durbin in Washington to secure needed support at the federal level."

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) a
implementation plan, which gives SNAP cust r (PI er

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groceries online. All SNAP recipients with Link cards in Illinois will be able to participate.

Walmart and Amazon have agreed to accept online orders in Illinois once the program site launches. Additional grocery retailers are welcome to join EBT Online. Any retailers interested in the program can find more information and apply at http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/online-purchasing-pilot (http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/online-purchasing-pilot).

“We are so pleased the USDA approved our request so that we can soon begin offering online purchasing to all SNAP recipients in Illinois,” **said IDHS Secretary Grace B. Hou.** “This is one more way we can make the lives of our customers a little easier during this difficult time.”

“This is a great step towards making sure all Illinoisans have access to food delivery, regardless of their income,” **said Illinois House Majority Leader Greg Harris.** “I encourage other retailers to partner with IDHS to provide at grocery delivery services to SNAP recipients across the state.”

“The individuals and families we serve are often facing tremendous obstacles in their lives,” **said Central Illinois Foodbank Executive Director Pam Molitoris.** “Giving them an online option to access quality food is the right thing to do, and I’m grateful to Governor Pritzker, IDHS and the USDA for making this option possible.”

“We applaud the Illinois Department of Human Services for taking action to increase equity in food access by giving households receiving SNAP benefits the option to purchase groceries online,” **said Kate Maehr, executive director and CEO of the Greater Chicago Food Depository.** “SNAP is our most effective tool to prevent hunger during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is only fair that a household receiving SNAP benefits should have the same opportunity as any other household to buy groceries online. This is critical for our most vulnerable neighbors, including those who are unable to leave their homes.”

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