



Commonwealth of Virginia
Office of Governor Ralph S. Northam

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE · May 22, 2020

Office of the Governor

Alena.Yarmosky@governor.virginia.gov

Department of Social Services

Cletisha.Lovelace@dss.virginia.gov

Virginia Receives USDA Approval to Join SNAP Online Purchasing Pilot Program

RICHMOND—Governor Ralph Northam today announced that for the first time, more than 740,000 Virginians who receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits will be able to pay for their groceries online and have them delivered, after the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) approved Virginia to participate in an innovative online purchasing pilot program.

“This continued public health emergency has made access to healthy, affordable food challenging, particularly for Virginians who live in food deserts, have disabilities, or face transportation barriers,” **said Governor Northam**. “Allowing Virginia families who receive SNAP benefits to purchase groceries online and have them safely delivered to their homes will give vulnerable populations additional flexibility to put food on the table without putting themselves at unnecessary risk.”

The program will launch statewide in Virginia on Friday, May 29 with online shopping access available through the Amazon and Walmart online platforms. Retailers interested in participating the program can find more information and apply by [contacting USDA](#). Transactions will take place using SNAP customers’ secure Personal Identification Numbers (PINs). SNAP benefits cannot be used to pay for fees of any type, such as delivery, service, or convenience fees.

“With so many Americans already opting to stay safe at home by ordering their groceries online, it’s only right that we make every effort to ensure our most vulnerable families are also able to take advantage of these services,” **said United States Senator Mark R. Warner**. “After having pushed USDA to approve Virginia’s participation in the SNAP online purchasing pilot program, I’m glad to know that many more families in the Commonwealth will soon be able to access nutritious food without requiring them to leave their homes.”

“I’m grateful that following our request, the USDA has approved Virginia’s inclusion in the SNAP online purchasing pilot program,” **said United States Senator Tim Kaine**. “Especially at this time of great food insecurity, it’s critical that Virginians have the resources they need to safely access food.”

The pilot, which was mandated through the 2014 Farm Bill, was designed to test the feasibility of allowing USDA-approved retailers to accept online transactions. The Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) administers SNAP in the Commonwealth.

“Agencies and leaders across the Commonwealth are constantly collaborating on innovative ways to meet the needs of individuals, families and communities during this pandemic,” **said VDSS Commissioner S. Duke Storen**. “Addressing the adaptive needs of Virginians right now, particularly expanding access to food, remains at the forefront of everything we are doing.”

Additional information about SNAP benefits in Virginia is available on the [VDSS website](#).

[Full Release](#)