

**DC**DEPARTMENT *of*  
HUMAN SERVICES

## Updates and Frequently Asked Questions about District of Columbia Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Online Purchasing Program *as of December 30, 2020*

Effective Wednesday, May 13, 2020, the District of Columbia (District) launched the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Online Purchasing Program. Below is the most current information on the program. This guidance will be updated as needed. If you have additional questions, please contact the Call Center at (202) 727-5355 or TTY: 711.

**Q:** *What retailers are participating in the SNAP Online Purchasing Program?*

**A:** Currently, District residents participating in SNAP may only use their benefits to make online purchases of authorized food using their Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) card through:

- Amazon: [amazon.com/snap-ebt](https://amazon.com/snap-ebt)
- ALDI via Instacart: <https://shop.aldi.us/>

Retailers participating in the District's SNAP Online Purchasing Program are selected and approved by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). Retailers may visit the USDA website to learn more about participating in the SNAP Online Purchasing Program at [fns.usda.gov/snap/retailer-requirements-provide-online-purchasing](https://fns.usda.gov/snap/retailer-requirements-provide-online-purchasing).

**Q:** *Is there a minimum purchase amount?*

**A:** It depends on the retailer and residents should review information on the retailer's website for the most up-to-date information. Currently, DHS is aware of the following minimums:

- Amazon: No minimum purchase amount. However, a minimum purchase amount is required to qualify for free shipping.
- ALDI via Instacart: \$10 minimum.

**Q:** *How do SNAP participants sign up to use their benefits online at participating retailers?*

**A:** In general, you must have or create an account with the retailer and add your SNAP EBT card information and zip code. There are also opportunities to add an EBT card during checkout. More information can be found as follows:

- Amazon: [amazon.com/snap-ebt](https://amazon.com/snap-ebt)
- ALDI via Instacart: <https://www.instacart.com/help/section/360009947632>



**Q:** *How will SNAP participants know which items are eligible for purchase with SNAP benefits?*

**A:** SNAP-eligible food items have a special label “SNAP EBT eligible.” or “EBT”. This label appears after a SNAP participant adds their SNAP EBT card to their account.

USDA requires all SNAP authorized retailers, including authorized online retailers, to ensure SNAP benefits are used to purchase eligible food items. A list of eligible food items that can be purchased using SNAP benefits is available [here](#).

**Q:** *What form of payment is accepted to make purchases using SNAP benefits? Are EBT cards accepted?*

**A:** District residents participating in SNAP may use their EBT card to complete purchases of eligible food items with their SNAP benefits. At participating retailers, customers will need to register their EBT card with an existing account or create a new account.

To learn more about using an EBT card online at participating retailers, visit the participating retailer’s website:

- Amazon.com: [amazon.com/snap-ebt](https://www.amazon.com/snap-ebt)
- ALDI via Instacart: <https://www.instacart.com/help/section/360009947632>
- If an order contains non-SNAP eligible food items or fees, customers are required to pay for these items/fees with another form of payment such as a credit or debit card, a gift card, or another acceptable form of payment.

**Q:** *Can SNAP participants use benefits to pay for shipping, delivery, or other fees?*

**A:** No. USDA requirements prohibit using your SNAP benefits to cover shipping, delivery, or other fees. If you are required to pay any fees, you will need to use another form of payment such as a credit or debit card.

**Q:** *Can SNAP participants get free delivery?*

**A:** It depends on the retailer and residents should review information on the retailer’s website for the most up-to-date information. Currently, DHS is aware of the following delivery fees:

- Amazon: Free delivery if the order’s total purchase amount is as follows:
  - Amazon Grocery: \$25 minimum
  - Amazon Fresh: \$35 minimum
  - Amazon Pantry: \$35 minimum

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- More information on Amazon delivery fees: [amazon.com/snap-ebt](https://amazon.com/snap-ebt)
- ALDI via Instacart: Yes. Delivery fees vary, starting at \$3.99 per order. Free delivery is available to Instacart Express Members which requires a \$99 annual fee.
  - More information on Instacart delivery fees:  
<https://www.instacart.com/help/section/360007902791/360039164252>

**Q:** *What are the differences between Amazon Fresh, Amazon Pantry and Amazon Grocery?*

**A:** Customers can use their SNAP benefits on Amazon.com groceries, Amazon Pantry, and Amazon Fresh to purchase authorized food items. The following is an overview of the Amazon Grocery, Fresh and Pantry “stores.”

Amazon Fresh:

Amazon Fresh is similar to your typical grocery store, delivering perishable, shelf-stable and household products in everyday package sizes. Amazon Fresh is typically available only to Prime members. However, Amazon is making Amazon Fresh selection available to customers who shop with a SNAP EBT card in eligible regions without Prime membership fees. To receive free delivery on Amazon Fresh orders, purchase \$35 or more (\$50 in select regions) – or place a smaller order and pay a shipping fee. Customers can schedule their preferred delivery time within a 1 or 2-hour delivery window, as early as the same day. Please visit [About Amazon Fresh Delivery](#) for more information. For more information on Amazon Fresh, including lower free shipping thresholds, visit [About Amazon Fresh](#).

Amazon Pantry:

Amazon Pantry features food items and household products in everyday package sizes. To receive free delivery on Amazon Pantry orders, purchase \$35 or more – or place a smaller order and pay for shipping. Please visit [About Amazon Pantry Delivery](#) for more information. For more information on Amazon Pantry memberships, including lower free shipping thresholds, visit [About Amazon Pantry](#).

Amazon Grocery:

The Grocery and Gourmet Food category on Amazon features shelf-stable food and household items in multi-pack sizes. Prime orders receive free 2-day Prime shipping. Orders of \$25 or more of eligible items receive FREE shipping in 5-8 business days – or you can place a smaller order and pay a shipping fee.

The minimum order size for free shipping is calculated separately for Amazon Fresh, Amazon Pantry and Amazon Grocery. To receive free shipping for any one of these programs, simply meet order minimums for that program and shipping fees will be waived.

**Q:** *Can District households participating in the SNAP program purchase eligible food from Whole Foods using their SNAP benefits?*



**A:** No. However, some Whole Foods brands are available on the Amazon Grocery, Fresh, and Pantry “stores.”

**Q:** *Where may District residents participating in the SNAP program learn more about using their benefits online?*

**A:** Visiting on the following participating retailer’s website to learn more about using SNAP benefits for purchasing authorized food:

- Amazon.com: [Amazon.com FAQ](#)
- ALDI via Instacart: <https://www.instacart.com/help/section/360009947632>

**Q:** *Are there stores in the District that offer District residents participating in SNAP to place an order online for pickup at a food retail store?*

**A:** Yes. Currently DHS is aware that District residents can place an order online for pickup and pay at the [Safeway Piney Branch](#) location (6500 Piney Branch Road, NW). During pickup, you must provide your EBT card to process the payment. More information can be found here: [Safeway SNAP EBT Program](#)

**Q:** *Where can interested retailers find more information about how to become authorized to accept SNAP benefits online?*

**A:** Retailers may visit the USDA website to learn more about participating in the SNAP Online Purchasing Program at [fns.usda.gov/snap/retailer-requirements-provide-online-purchasing](https://fns.usda.gov/snap/retailer-requirements-provide-online-purchasing).

Any retailer approved to accept SNAP benefits is eligible but must meet additional USDA requirements and have an online ecommerce platform. The District is working with interested local and small retailers, farmers markets and technology partners interested in participating in the SNAP Online Purchasing Program and assisting them meet USDA requirements. Retailers may contact the District at [DCSNAP.Retailer@dc.gov](mailto:DCSNAP.Retailer@dc.gov) to learn more about program requirements.