

PRESS RELEASE

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County of Orange Social Services Agency Announces Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) Card Online Purchasing During COVID-19 Crisis

Enhanced access to essential items through two major retailers

Orange County, Calif. (April 24, 2020) – The County of Orange Social Services Agency (SSA) today announced that the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) has expedited the implementation of EBT online purchasing to allow greater access to food and other necessary household items during the COVID-19 crisis and statewide stay at home order.

EBT online purchasing is set to begin on April 28, 2020. The new functionality will provide eligible California recipients with more purchasing options to avoid in-person interaction at stores and ensure adherence to social distancing guidelines that help prevent the spread of illness.

Online purchasing functionality will initially be available through two major California retailers, Amazon and Walmart. Both merchants accept EBT payments for food purchases using CalFresh benefits; Walmart also accepts EBT payments for non-food items using CalWORKs cash benefits.

CDSS is working to expand the number of participating retailers once online purchasing is fully implemented and operational in California.

When buying groceries at either of the designated retailers, customers are charged a grocery delivery fee when less than \$35 of food is purchased; for food purchases over \$35, delivery is free. At this time, CalFresh food benefits cannot be used to cover delivery fees at either retailer. Eligible CalWORKs recipients may use their cash benefit to pay for delivery fees at Walmart.

“We are pleased that CDSS is expediting this enhanced functionality to Orange County EBT cardholders to redeem their benefits online,” said SSA Director Debra Baetz. She continued, “This additional purchasing capability provides our vulnerable populations with greater access to the essential food and non-food items they need, and at the same time allows them to remain at home for their health and well-being, as well as for the safety of the community.”



Orange County residents who are interested in applying for Medi-Cal, CalFresh, CalWORKs and General Relief can apply as follows:

- By phone through the SSA Call Center at (800) 281-9799
 - The SSA Call Center is available from Monday – Friday from 6:30 a.m. to 8 p.m. and on Saturdays from 7 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
- Online:
 - www.MyBenefitsCalWIN.org
 - Additionally, individuals can apply for CalFresh only through www.GetCalFresh.org

To apply for In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) or for questions related to ongoing IHSS cases, please call (714) 825-3000.

You can stay up-to-date with information concerning the COVID-19 situation in Orange County, by visiting <http://www.ochealthinfo.com/novelcoronavirus>.

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