



CITY OF PITTSBURGH  
**OFFICE OF THE MAYOR**  
MAYOR WILLIAM PEDUTO

April 28, 2020

The Honorable Sonny Perdue  
Secretary of Agriculture  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Avenue, S.W.  
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Perdue,

On behalf of the City of Pittsburgh, I am writing to urge you to expand and promote EBT payment options for SNAP recipients who are unable to leave their homes and travel to grocery stores due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Enabling retailers to accept EBT payments through curbside pick-up, delivery, and online sales will ensure that SNAP households, one-third of which have a member who is older or has a disability, have access to healthy foods during the global pandemic without the need to leave home or visit a grocery store. While I am appreciative of the USDA's SNAP Online Purchasing Pilot Program to expand online EBT payment capabilities, it is limited to a few states. As such, I call on the USDA to work with retailers in Pennsylvania to promote and develop acceptable EBT payment methods in order to safeguard access to food for all SNAP recipients, especially individuals who are immunocompromised and lack reliable transportation options, from the safety of their homes.

As an increasing number of grocery stores and other food providers offer curbside pick-up, delivery, and online ordering in the midst of the current crisis, it is more imperative than ever that SNAP participants are not left behind and can benefit from these expanding choices. The USDA should notify and encourage retailers that accept SNAP benefits to offer delivery and other safe food purchasing options for families who rely on the SNAP program for their next meal and promote that technology is available to accept mobile EBT payments. In addition to helping to feed our most vulnerable neighbors, expanding mobile options for SNAP families also helps to lower the number of in-person shoppers with whom grocery store workers come into contact and allows local farmers, growers, and food purveyors the opportunity to conduct more direct-to-customer sales as sales at restaurants continue to dwindle. As such, I urge the USDA to support legislative efforts to safeguard SNAP households' ability to purchase nutritious food while also protecting our small businesses, such as a bill authored by United States Senator Robert Casey, Jr. that would reimburse retailers for SNAP recipients' delivery fees. I also call on the USDA to accelerate the funding of grant requests from farm stands, farmers markets, and other food providers who wish to purchase mobile EBT devices so they can more easily serve neighbors most impacted by the pandemic.

As we face this global crisis together, it is critical that we safeguard food access for SNAP participants, especially senior citizens, individuals with disabilities, residents who do not have access to transportation, and others who are unable to leave their homes due to the spread of COVID-19. Enhanced partnerships between the USDA, state government, and retailers will help to eliminate barriers to reliable food access and provide our most vulnerable neighbors with peace of mind during an already stressful time in their lives. Thank you for your consideration of these important actions that will have an immediate impact in Pittsburgh and communities throughout the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Should you have any questions, please contact Lindsay Powell ([lindsay.powell@pittsburghpa.gov](mailto:lindsay.powell@pittsburghpa.gov)) in my office.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "W Peduto", written over a light blue horizontal line.

William Peduto  
Mayor of Pittsburgh

CC: The Honorable Theresa Miller, Secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services