



## Legislation Text

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Resolution Urging Federal and State Lawmakers to Allow Virtual SNAP Benefit and EBT Card Use  
Currently, state law does not allow SNAP Benefits and EBT Cards to be used over the phone or online to purchase eligible grocery items. During the COVID-19 crisis and Coronavirus Pandemic, people are being urged to stay in their homes and to physically distance themselves from others. However, requiring recipients of these food assistance benefits to go outside of their homes and purchase groceries in person presents a public health risk and personal safety and health risk for those who need the assistance. With SNAP benefits having been expanded by the federal government, and more people becoming eligible as this crisis deepens, the failure to allow virtual purchases of grocery items presents will complicate our public health goals in Ann Arbor and across the state of Michigan.

Prepared by: John Fournier, Assistant City Administrator

Approved by: Tom Crawford, Interim City Administrator

Whereas, The federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program is an important and vital source of support for families all across America who are food insecure;

Whereas, In response to the Coronavirus Pandemic the federal government has expanded access to the SNAP program to include many more families, especially those whose children qualify for free or reduced school lunches and are no longer receiving this important support while the schools are closed;

Whereas, Michigan became the first state in the union to apply for and receive federal aid to expand eligibility for the SNAP program, a testament to the quick action and conscientious thinking of Governor Gretchen Whitmer;

Whereas, The federal government, recognizing the importance of maintaining physical distancing during this pandemic, passed laws allowing states to accept and review SNAP and EBT applications online and over the phone;

Whereas, In the state of Michigan SNAP benefits and EBT cards may only be used in person, creating a challenging public health situation for the recipients of this important support as they must leave their homes to use the benefits and potentially expose themselves to the virus; and

Whereas, In the interest of supporting better public health outcomes both in terms of slowing the spread of the Coronavirus and supporting better nutritional outcomes for Michigan families, the State of Michigan must allow virtual use of SNAP benefits and EBT cards;

RESOLVED, That the City Council of the City of Ann Arbor hereby calls on federal lawmakers, the Michigan Legislature, and Governor Whitmer to take any and all actions necessary to allow the use of SNAP benefits and EBT cards virtually during this Coronavirus Pandemic.

Sponsored by: Councilmembers Nelson, Eaton, Ramlawi, Hayner, Ackerman, and Mayor Taylor