



March 20, 2020

Re: Prioritizing Food and Other Essentials Delivery to Community Settings Supporting People with Intellectual, Developmental Disabilities

Mr. Jeff Bezos  
Chief Executive Officer  
Amazon  
410 Terry Avenue North  
Seattle, WA 98109

Dear Mr. Bezos:

I write to you with an urgent request in my capacity as Chief Executive Officer for the American Network of Community Options and Resources (ANCOR), the leading national, nonprofit trade association representing community-based providers of long-term supports and services for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. **Can we partner together to prioritize Amazon food deliveries to community settings that support people with I/DD, some of the people in our country left most vulnerable during the COVID-19 pandemic?**

ANCOR's 1,600+ members provide essential residential and day services in small settings in neighborhoods across the country. The millions of people with disabilities served by our members receive services in their own homes, in small group homes (typically three to six residents) and in "host homes" in every corner of our country.

Regardless of where these vulnerable people live, they require direct care staff who shop, cook and provide support for all manner of essential daily life activities. Unlike nursing homes, psychiatric facilities and medical hospitals, trucks do not deliver food to these settings. Rather, direct support workers—often accompanied by the people they support—shop at local grocery stores. As you might imagine, already crisis-level staff shortages are being exacerbated by closures of daycares, the spread of illness among direct support workers themselves, the need for direct support workers to care for their own loved ones who have fallen ill, and more. In turn, people with intellectual and developmental disabilities are facing fewer and fewer opportunities to go out to shop for groceries and other critical staples.

Well before the COVID-19 pandemic, our field was dangerously short staffed, with a turnover rate of 51%, and providers reporting about one in every five direct support positions being vacant. These dedicated professionals are caught in the same quandary as other essential workers, but on top of these challenges, these professionals work mostly in the homes of the people they support or in small group settings spread across the community. In these settings, there is no asking your colleague to cover for you so you can leave early. There is no running home on your lunch break to check on Mom and Dad. There is no homeschooling the kids when distance learning becomes the norm.

Although the situation is dire, a smart, simple and low-cost way to make a difference would be to ensure that our supply chains prioritize delivery of food and other essential items (such as personal protective equipment, medications, incontinence supplies) to disability service provider organizations that support people in the community. Doing so would make a world of difference for the people who don't have a truckload of groceries coming to their small group home, who don't have direct support professionals who can take them shopping or to the pharmacy, and who may lack access to the resources needed to navigate the community on their own.

Given the outsized role Amazon plays in grocery retail and home delivery of all essentials, it is ideally situated to make an impact at this time of crisis for some of our most vulnerable neighbors. Furthermore, as the leading global retailer, Amazon has an opportunity to exhibit leadership that signals to other retailers that we can take smart, meaningful steps to look out for our communities during this unprecedented time of need.

On behalf of millions of people with disabilities and the workforce on which they rely, ANCOR would be immensely grateful for the opportunity to partner with Amazon. **Can we schedule a call this weekend or early next week to discuss this partnership?** I can be reached anytime at [bmerrill@ancor.org](mailto:bmerrill@ancor.org) or 617.935.5543.

Thank you for your consideration.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Barbara Merrill".

Barbara Merrill  
Chief Executive Officer  
ANCOR