

# Instacart seeks 250,000 more delivery workers as demand surges

April 23 2020

---



Instacart also announced new safety measures for personnel following a wave of protests about health risks for the delivery workers

US grocery delivery startup Instacart said Thursday it was seeking an additional 250,000 contract "shoppers" to meet soaring demands during the coronavirus lockdown.

The San Francisco-based group, which uses independent gig workers to shop and deliver groceries, also announced new safety measures for personnel following a wave of protests about health risks for the delivery workers.

"Instacart has become an essential service for millions of families relying on us to help deliver their groceries and household goods in the wake of COVID-19," chief executive and founder Apoorva Mehta said.

"Overnight, we've become a necessity for millions of people and our teams are working tirelessly to launch new products that speed up our service and open up more delivery windows for customers."

Instacart said it had already filled the 300,000 new delivery positions it announced a month ago to bring the total number of independent shoppers to some 500,000.

The company said its volume has soared 500 percent from a year ago with average customer orders increasing by 35 percent.

"Instacart will be focused on scaling its shopper community in key areas with the most consumer demand right now including California, Massachusetts, New York, Pennsylvania, Washington, DC, and Toronto," a company statement said.

The move comes following news that some 26 million Americans sought unemployment benefits in recent weeks due to pandemic-related shutdowns, and with grocery stores seen as a risk for spreading the disease.

Amazon, Walmart and others have also been adding large numbers of workers to help with grocery stocking and delivery.

Instacart said that it would include a wellness check for workers within its app to detect coronavirus-related symptoms. Those who report symptoms such as fever, coughing or difficulty breathing will be logged off the platform for the day and instructed to contact their physician.

The company said those on quarantine or diagnosed with COVID-19 would be eligible for up to 14 days of pay.

"Today, we're announcing the extension of this financial assistance for the duration of the COVID-19 crisis to support employees and shoppers impacted by the virus," the statement said.

Last month, a group of Instacart workers called for a walkout to seek improved pay and safety for the delivery personnel. It was unclear how many participated in the action.

Instacart operates with some 25,000 stores in 5,500 cities in North America, reaching about 85 percent of households in the US and 70 percent in Canada.

© 2020 AFP

Citation: Instacart seeks 250,000 more delivery workers as demand surges (2020, April 23) retrieved 26 April 2024 from

<https://techxplore.com/news/2020-04-instacart-delivery-workers-demand-surges.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.