



March 30, 2020

Dear Business Leaders:

On behalf of Disability Rights Ohio and The Ohio Association of Centers for Independent Living, we want to thank you and the many other essential businesses that have remained open during this unprecedented pandemic. Your businesses are providing necessary items to the community while we all navigate this crisis together.

Disability Rights Ohio is the state's protection and advocacy system for people with disabilities. Our mission is to advocate for the human, civil, and legal rights of people with disabilities in Ohio. The Ohio Association of Centers for Independent Living is a nonprofit organization with a mission to promote the philosophy and exchange of information and ideas regarding consumer-driven independent living for people with disabilities, and to provide assistance to local centers for independent living. We write to raise concerns that have arisen in our client community – individuals with disabilities – who are having trouble accessing your businesses and services.

When individuals with disabilities seek to obtain necessary items either by shopping in-person or through online orders with delivery services, they may not be able to access the items needed. To address these concerns, we request two solutions: 1) as an in-store accommodation, create an hour of shopping for individuals who are higher-risk as identified under the CDC guidelines; and, 2) as an online delivery services accommodation, provide a checkbox option for higher-risk individuals to self-identify at the checkout to be prioritized for earlier delivery times.

First, we appreciate that per Ohio Department of Health Director Acton's [Stay at Home Order](#), many stores have created separate shopping hours for individuals who are elderly or vulnerable. We believe this is a critical step to ensure that individuals can timely access needed supplies during this pandemic. If your business has not done so already, we request that you ensure that these measures are available for all CDC identified higher-risk groups. For example, individuals who are immunocompromised are in the higher-risk group and do not always fall within the 60+ year of age category. Setting aside additional times for these individuals provides reasonable access to your stores. Without them, a trip to the grocery store could risk their lives.

Second, many individuals with disabilities who rely on delivery services for essential items are concerned that some necessary items are taking two or more weeks to be delivered. Because these individuals with disabilities have no other means of obtaining these items, we ask that you prioritize their delivery orders. To accomplish this, we recommend adding a checkbox to all

delivery orders that allows individuals to self-identify as an individual with a disability or someone in the CDC higher-risk categories. Those orders should then be prioritized in your delivery service scheduling. This simple step would ensure that people who do not have the option to leave home because of their disability or higher-risk category, can continue to receive the items they need to live.

We thank you for your consideration and we are open to discussions about these issues or any other issues as they might affect individuals with disabilities. Please feel free to reach out to us at ksjoberg@disabilityrightsohio.org or (614) 466-7264, ext. 114.

Sincerely,

/s/ Kerstin Sjoberg

Kerstin Sjoberg
Executive Director
Disability Rights Ohio