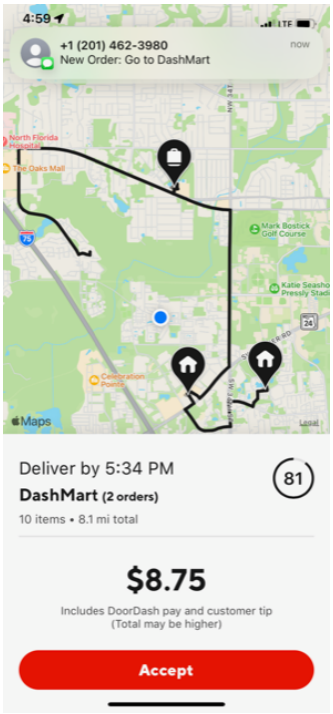
How Food Delivery Works

By Natasha Parks, Family and Consumer Sciences Agent and Patrick Lewicki

Millions of Americans today have small secondary jobs called 'side hustles'. One very popular side hustle is food delivery because of its relatively low barriers to entry. In fact, 1.4 million people already drive for food delivery services. As a delivery driver myself, I figured I would share how deliveries work (at least for Doordash) to help those needing a secondary income source decide if delivery work is right for them.

Step 1: Receiving the Order

When you are out driving, Doordash will send you an order to pick up. On this screen you see where the restaurant or store is, where the drop off is, and how much money you'll earn by doing this delivery. As a "Dasher", you can accept or decline the order. One might decline an order if, for example, the delivery is far away and the pay is small. While there are incentives to accept deliveries wherever possible, don't be afraid to decline an especially bad delivery.



Step 2: Pickup

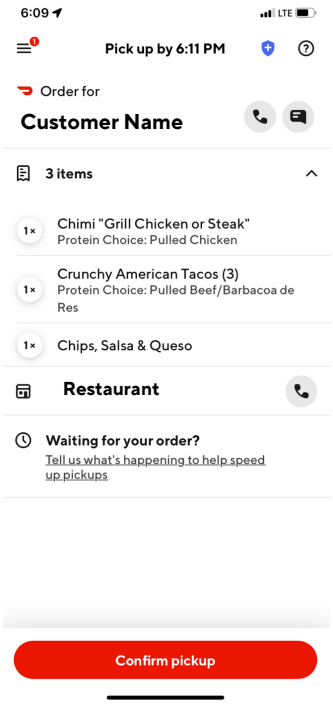
After accepting a delivery, drive to the pickup location. Some stores require you to go in and purchase the goods (with a credit card Doordash sends you), but most will have a designated delivery/mobile order area in the store. If you're unsure where to go, ask an employee.

Step 3: Delivery

After pickup, drive to the customer. While easiest in concept, this is the step that often takes the longest. My recommendation is to check your Maps app to make sure you know where you're going, and find a podcast/radio station you like to listen to while driving.

Step 4: Drop Off

There are two main kinds of drop off, in-person or contactless. For contactless drop off, just set the delivery by the door, take a picture of it, and hit confirm. In-person drop off is even easier, because you just walk up to the location, knock, and hand the delivery to the customer.



Step 5: Pay

Your pay per delivery is made up of two main parts: Doordash pay and Tip. Those two parts should add to the amount you saw on screen when you accepted the delivery. Doordash pay generally floats around $3/delivery while the tip can vary widely. Sometimes when it gets busy, Doordash offers "Peak Pay" where they increase everybody's Doordash pay by a certain amount per delivery (usually $1-$4). As a rule of thumb, I generally make $15/hour minus gas.

Whether you're considering food delivery as a side hustle or are just curious about how your delivery order arrives at your door, I hope looking at how food delivery (specifically for Doordash) works will help inform your future decisions.

An Equal Opportunity Institution. UF/IFAS Extension, University of Florida, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, Tom Obreza, Interim Dean and Director. Single copies of UF/IFAS Extension publications (excluding 4-H and youth publications) are available free to Florida residents from county UF/IFAS Extension offices.