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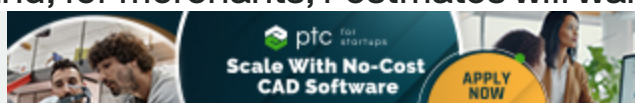


Postmates reveals plans to cover medical costs for couriers as part of COVID-19 response

Jonathan Shieber

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Postmates said that it will be creating a fund to cover the costs for doctor appointments and medical expenses related to the COVID-19 outbreak for its delivery fleet, and, for merchants, Postmates will waive commission



The goal, the company said, is to give small business owners access to on-demand delivery at no additional cost. Postmates said it would launch the initiatives this week.



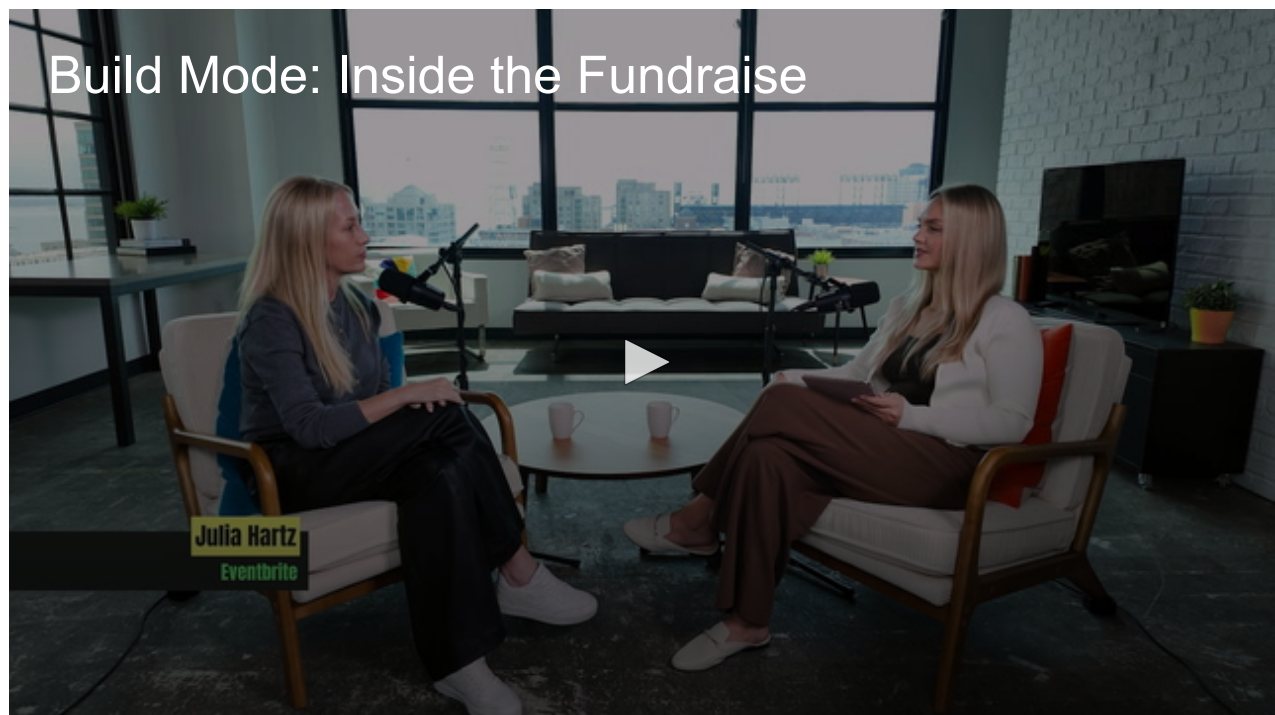
As the company noted, more than half of Americans are unable to afford a \$400 unexpected expense, so the Postmates Fleet Relief Fund will allow its couriers to take proactive preventive health. The company said the new policy builds on steps it has already taken, like issuing guidance from CDC to its fleet, and the creation of the new [non-contact drop-off option](#) inside the app.

Postmates couriers who have made at least one delivery in states where cases of COVID-19 have been identified will be eligible for credits from the emergency relief fund, which can be deposited toward the Postmates health savings vehicle (which is powered by Starship), the company said.

Any Postmate courier who doesn't have a health account but is interested in the emergency relief credit can sign up for the health savings vehicle and become eligible for the stipend to cover expenses, irrespective of diagnosis or quarantine. Interested couriers can [sign up on the company's website](#).

The company is also waiving commission fees for companies that want to sign up with the service for a "pilot program."

The pilot program is only for businesses that are not currently on the platform and are operating out of San Francisco.



Like other technology companies in the Bay area and beyond, the Postmates program is a mix of social good (and aligns with other big tech companies' initiatives) and an attempt to grab additional customers and market share in the time of a crisis.

The company's move is also a little less risky, given that the government is weighing options to compensate hourly workers for health expenses related to the coronavirus, as well as bailouts for small businesses impacted by the ways in which state and local governments attempt to mitigate the spread of the disease.

“Nationally, one in four private sector employees lack access to any sick leave at all. While our ongoing campaigns in California, New York, New Jersey and Illinois seek to modernize 20th century laws to fit 21st century work for independent workers, now is the time to put aside the politics of the gig economy and work with all stakeholders to develop creative and meaningful emergency support for frontline workers who may be exposed — it's the right thing to do,” said Vikrum Aiyer, vice president of Public

carry out deliveries through the Postmates app have healthcare, but we want to make sure anyone can afford preventative expenses.”



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Jonathan was an editor at TechCrunch./p>

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