New York City Expands Minimum Pay Protections to Grocery Delivery Workers

September 29, 2025
By Sarah Goodman

On September 10, 2025, the New York City Council voted to override Mayor Eric Adams' vetoes and enacted legislation extending workplace protections and minimum pay standards to grocery delivery workers. With this development, app-based couriers delivering groceries through third-party platforms, such as Shipt or Instacart, will now be entitled to the same $21.44 per hour minimum pay rate that has been in effect for restaurant delivery workers since April 2025.

Background: How We Got Here

New York City has steadily built out a framework for regulating app-based delivery work. In 2021, the city became the first in the nation to pass comprehensive legislation creating wage and workplace protections for restaurant delivery couriers. That law prohibited companies from charging workers fees to access their pay, guaranteed restroom access at restaurants, required companies to provide insulated delivery bags, and mandated greater transparency around pay and tips. It also authorized the Department of Consumer and Worker Protection (DCWP) to study working conditions and establish a minimum pay standard.

Following DCWP's review, the city implemented a pay floor for restaurant couriers in 2023. After scheduled increases, the minimum pay rate reached $21.44 per hour as of April 1, 2025. Until now, however, grocery delivery workers have remained excluded from those protections.

The July 2025 Legislation

On July 14, 2025, the City Council passed a package of bills aimed at closing that gap. In addition to extending the minimum pay standard to grocery couriers, the bills required delivery apps to build in a 10% tipping option at checkout and mandated that workers be paid within seven days of the close of a pay period.

When Mayor Adams did not act within 30 days, most of the bills automatically became law on August 13, 2025. However, Adams vetoed two of the most significant measures, including those that would have extended minimum pay to grocery delivery workers. In his veto message, he expressed concern that higher labor costs would lead to rising grocery prices at a time when many New Yorkers, particularly seniors, families relying on SNAP or EBT, and individuals with disabilities, already face food insecurity.

The Council Override

The City Council strongly disagreed, emphasizing that grocery couriers face the same risks and exploitation as restaurant couriers and deserve equal treatment. On September 10, 2025, the council voted to override the mayor's vetoes, enacting the measures in full. While some provisions are tied to the effective dates of related safe-access legislation, the core result is that

grocery delivery workers are now covered by the same $21.44 hourly pay standard as restaurant couriers.

Reactions and What Comes Next

The legislation has sparked vigorous debate. Worker advocates and council sponsors hailed the change as a victory for fairness, pointing out that grocery and restaurant couriers often perform identical tasks under similar conditions. Delivery platforms and some grocers, by contrast, have warned that the laws will significantly raise costs, potentially by as much as 46%, reduce tipping, cut shifts, and increase fees for local grocers. At least one company has already threatened litigation against the city.

DCWP will continue monitoring compliance, and enforcement is expected to be strict. For businesses operating in New York City, this means both restaurant and grocery delivery models are now subject to enhanced wage obligations, new in-app tipping requirements, and accelerated payment timelines.

Employer Takeaway

The expansion of New York City's delivery worker protections represents another step in the city's effort to regulate the gig economy. App-based service providers should act quickly to review pay practices, update app functionality, and confirm compliance protocols to avoid penalties or reputational risk. Grocers that rely on third-party platforms should also be prepared for potential increases in delivery costs and related contract renegotiations.