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Amazon Launches Payday Advances for Its Most Precarious Warehouse Workers
Amazon has launched a payday advance program, called Anytime Pay, for its most precariously employed warehouse workers to “access up to 50% percent of the money [they’ve] earned instantly.” While it’s no secret that many Amazon warehouse workers live paycheck to paycheck, most Americans do, the implication of this new offering, which has been framed as a perk, is grim. The program codifies what many Amazon workers have been saying about their dangerous, low-paying jobs: warehouse workers need an option like this because they’re not earning enough to make it to payday. The payday advance program is specifically available to Amazon warehouse workers who work what is known as “pick-your-own-shift” jobs. Amazon has touted these positions for their flexible hours and opportunities for career growth.

But in Glassdoor reviews online, workers in these positions complain about having to fight to get on the schedule. In other words, workers who can’t get enough hours, or are underemployed, are likely scrambling to make ends meet. In March, Amazon raised its minimum wage from \$15 an hour to \$17 an hour to compensate workers for the health and safety risks of working during the pandemic. But the company ended that benefit in May, and warehouse workers expressed frustration that the company was cutting them off as major COVID-19 outbreaks continued to surface in Amazon warehouses.

“As is generally required by law applicable to pay cards, the Wisely pay card provides cardholders with the ability to access the full amount of pay without incurring any fees,” the Wisely spokesperson said. “As is customary with pay card solutions, the Wisely card generates revenue from transaction fees, for example, merchant interchange fees and certain ATM fees. It is important to note that pay card fee disclosure is required by law and all Wisely card fees charged by ADP are disclosed to our cardholders when they sign up for the card.”

Do you work for Amazon and have a tip to share with us? Please get in touch with the reporter Lauren Gurley via email Lauren.gurley@vice.com or on Signal 201-897-2109.

A spokesperson for Amazon told Motherboard that Amazon is not paying Wisely to use its services, and would not charge employees for using the Anytime Pay Program, inactivity, or transferring Anytime Pay to their Wisely card.

Proposition 26, backed by dozens of California’s Native American tribal governments, would have legalized sports betting at tribal casinos, while allowing them also to offer craps and roulette.

It was put on the ballot by sports betting companies such as DraftKings and FanDuel, which have expanded their business across the state since the U.S.