

Amazon enters the Home Services market

Hopes to do for the service economy what it already did for retail

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Hire an Electrician by Amazon Home Services

We're sorry, no pros near ZIP 22124
Available in select cities
We're continuing to expand and expect to add this service soon.



Hire a Handyman by Amazon Home Services

We're sorry, no pros near ZIP 22124
Available in select cities
We're continuing to expand and expect to add this service soon.



Faucet Installation by Amazon Home Services

\$98.00 - \$270.00
3 offer(s) near ZIP 22124
Amazon Home Services
Hand-picked pros. Backed by our Happiness Guarantee.



House Cleaning by Amazon Home Services

We're sorry, no pros near ZIP 22124
Available in select cities
We're continuing to expand and expect to add this service soon.



Light Fixture Replacement - Up To 2 by Amazon Home Services

\$159.00 - \$195.00
3 offer(s) near ZIP 22124
Amazon Home Services
Hand-picked pros. Backed by our Happiness Guarantee.



Treadmill Assembly by Amazon Home Services

\$135.00 - \$189.00
2 offer(s) near ZIP 22124
Amazon Home Services
Hand-picked pros. Backed by our Happiness Guarantee.



Garbage Disposal Installation by Amazon Home Services

\$95.00 - \$175.00
2 offer(s) near ZIP 22124
Amazon Home Services



Hire a Plumber by Amazon Home Services

We're sorry, no pros near ZIP 22124
Available in select cities
We're continuing to expand and expect to add this service soon.



Bed Assembly by Amazon Home Services

\$100.00
1 offer(s) near ZIP 22124
Amazon Home Services
Hand-picked pros. Backed by our Happiness Guarantee.

This week, Amazon launched a new product aiming to let people buy and sell home services through the company, the way they already can buy physical retail products — expectant parents could always order a crib on Amazon, but now you can also hire someone to put that crib together for you (at least in certain select markets).

[Amazon Home Services](#) is, according to Amazon's press release, “a new marketplace for on-demand professional services [from] handpicked pros offering upfront pricing on pre-packaged services.” In other words, Amazon's version of start-ups like [TaskRabbit](#) (which is [integrating, rather than competing](#), with Amazon Home Services): Amazon itself isn't providing any services, but listing (and vetting) independent contractors for customers to find.

The company also promises a money-back “Happiness Guarantee” to ensure customers are satisfied with their service purchases.

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Thus far, Home Services is only available in select (and for the most part densely populated) urban areas, which currently include Los Angeles, San Francisco, New York City and of course Seattle, where Amazon is headquartered. Those four cities are currently the only ones offering a “HIGH” level of Home Services coverage, according to [Amazon's own map](#).

But “medium” to “light” coverage is available in over a dozen other cities across the country and, as Amazon's marketing language says, “More locations and service pros are being added to Amazon Home Services every day.”

Reviews are mixed

Reactions thus far have been mixed. Megan Geuss at *Ars Technica* [tried hiring](#) a contractor through Home Services, but it didn't work out:

The cheapest service I could find in my area was getting windshield wipers replaced (\$15 if you provide your own wiper blades). I selected that service, hoping that a team of underemployed teens/drones would descend on my vehicle within the hour. I was disappointed to learn that, despite the "Home Services" moniker, I could only get the service if I took my car in to a nearby shop—even then, I couldn't get an appointment until Wednesday. Sorry, but I can replace my own wiper blades, after all.

Other “home” services also turned out to be “in-store” services, including various forms of virus or spyware removal that required customers take their infected devices to a service center.

In my neck of the woods (a part of Virginia technically considered an outermost suburb of Washington D.C.), Amazon only offers a short and oddly inconsistent list of offered services. Under the category “General Repair and Odd Jobs,” for example, there was nobody near my zip code I could hire for “furniture assembly,” although there were offerings for “hutch assembly” (\$139), “bookcase” or “bar stool assembly” (\$100 each), \$150 for “dining set” or “buffet or sideboard assembly” – but nobody who'd assemble a “kitchen island or cart.”

Amazon says that Home Services is “an invite-only marketplace for professional service providers,” who in turn are “handpicked.” That said, the Home Services page also includes [a link](#) for service providers to click if they'd like to get an invitation (though Amazon told *The Verge* that it [only accepts](#) 3 out of every 100 professionals in an area).

The gig economy

While most attention to the Home Services rollout focused on the customers' perspective, others wondered what effect this would have on the service providers. Alison Griswold writing for Slate said [that Home Services](#) “could take Uber's iffy labor model to a whole new level,” by increasing the number and types of services performed by “independent contractors” rather than “employees” who (at least in theory) have better benefits and job security than pay-by-the-gig independent contractors.

On the other hand, David Lumb at *Fast Company* proclaimed that Home Services could be “[great for gig economy workers](#),” in part because it will allow them to set their own locally competitive prices. At the same time, Lumb reminded readers of previous Amazon ventures, such as its Fire smartphone and now-defunct subscription diaper service – which launched to much hoopla yet failed to live up to the hype.

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And *Ars Technica* pointed out [another potential problem](#) with Home Services: its pricing model. Amazon plans to make money off of Home Services by taking a cut of each contractor's fee – anywhere from 10 to 20 percent, depending on the type of service.

That's likely to work well for one-time hires, but what about recurring services? As Megan Guess said: “Once you find a babysitter or drum teacher you like on Amazon Home Services, there's less of a drive to keep paying through Amazon if the company is taking a cut. If you really love your drum teacher, you'll pay her under the table and let her keep the extra 10 percent.”

Link: <http://www.consumeraffairs.com/news/amazon-enters-the-home-services-market-040215.html>