STATE OF WASHINGTON DEPARTMENT OF FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS SECURITIES DIVISION

3 IN THE MATTER OF DETERMINING
Whether there has been a violation of the
Franchise Investment Protection Act of
Washington by:

Order No. S-23-3647-23-CO01

CONSENT ORDER

Fresh Delivery LLC; Fresh Meal Holdings Inc.;

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Nisha Ramakrishnan;

Respondents.

Pursuant to the Franchise Investment Protection Act of Washington, RCW 19.100, the Securities Division and Respondents Fresh Delivery LLC; Fresh Meal Holdings Inc.; and Nisha Ramakrishnan do hereby enter into this Consent Order in settlement of the matters alleged herein. Respondents Fresh Delivery LLC; Fresh Meal Holdings Inc.; and Nisha Ramakrishnan neither admit nor deny the Findings of Fact or Conclusions of Law as stated below.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Respondents

- 1. Fresh Delivery LLC (d/b/a FreshMeal.com) is a Washington limited liability company formed on August 24, 2020. Fresh Delivery LLC is in the business of delivering subscription-based meal kits. Fresh Delivery LLC used a business address in Blaine, Washington. In September 2022, Fresh Delivery LLC became a subsidiary of RK Fresh LLC (a Wyoming limited liability company) and is now a subsidiary of Fresh Meal Holdings, Inc.
- 2. Fresh Meal Holdings Inc. is a Wyoming corporation formed on August 23, 2023. Fresh Meal Holdings Inc. uses a business address in Issaquah, Washington.

3. Nisha Ramakrishnan is the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and co-owner of Fresh Meal Holdings Inc. and the co-founder of Fresh Delivery LLC.

Related Entity

Nature of the Conduct

- 4. In 2023, the Respondents offered unregistered franchises to the general public, including residents of Washington.
- 5. In July 2023, Ramakrishan offered to sell a FreshMeal franchise that would be located in Seattle, Washington for \$100,000. Ramakrishnan sent multiple emails to a Washington resident regarding the proposed sale and included detailed financial and tax information. Under the terms of the offer, the franchisee would receive an exclusive territory, one year of marketing support, and two months of training. In August 2023, a representative of the prospective franchisee stated that it did not wish to purchase the franchise.
- 6. In August 2023, a detailed advertisement for Fresh Delivery LLC franchises was posted on the BizBuySell website (www.bizbuysell.com). The BizBuySell advertisement was captioned: "Exciting Franchising Opportunity with an Established Brand FreshMeal." The BizBuySell advertisement stated that the franchise fee was \$30,000 and that "FreshMeal's franchising model is simple and quick to the customer, which means franchisees can get off the ground and running in as little as 30 days after signing up." The advertisement stated that there was a royalty of 15% of gross revenue and that the company would provide two weeks of training in Seattle or at the franchisee's location. The BizBuySell advertisement made misleading representations and profit projections, including the following:
 - "we are one of the most profitable companies in the Pacific Northwest"
 - "FreshMeal's profit margins are unparalleled in the entire food industry"

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"you'll be profitable within 90 days of starting the business (something not most franchises can boast of)"

- 7. In September 2023, Fresh Meal Holdings Inc. commenced a crowdfunding offering of common stock for \$2 per share. As part of this offering, Fresh Meal Holdings Inc. filed an offering memorandum with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) that was publicly available through the SEC website. The offering memorandum represented that Fresh Meal Holdings Inc. was "planning to franchise across the USA and internationally and has several potential franchisee owners expressing interest." The offering memorandum further stated: "Fresh Meal's goal is to attract at least 50 enthusiastic franchisees across major cities throughout the United States" and "aims to establish a formidable nationwide presence with at least 3-5 franchisees per state with more in larger states[.]" The offering memorandum also stated that the company would be "Franchising our brand across the country" with the "Ambitious goal of signing on 200 franchisees within five years."
- 8. As part of its crowdfunding offering, Fresh Meal Holdings Inc. utilized StartEngine Capital LLC ("StartEngine"), a firm that is registered as a funding portal with the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority (FINRA). On October 2, 2023, the Respondents posted information on the StartEngine website that was captioned: "67 Franchise Applications Already for FreshMeal!" and "Franchisee Applications Surge!" The website stated that the franchise fee was \$50,000 and the royalty was 15%. In a "key reasons to invest" section, the website represented that "Over 67 franchise applications and counting, have been received by FreshMeal." In fact, no written franchise applications were received by the Respondents. Ramakrishan responded to questions posted on the StartEngine website and stated to one prospective franchise: "we have been posting applications for our franchise opportunities on online franchise marketplace platforms. I'd be happy to send you our franchise info packet directly." The website represented that the 67 franchise applicants "potentially represent up to \$3.35 million in additional revenue in franchise fees."

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- 9. None of the advertisements posted by the Respondents disclosed that Fresh Meal Holdings Inc. and Fresh Delivery LLC were not registered to offer or sell franchises in the state of Washington. The advertisements failed to disclose the risks of purchasing an unregistered franchise.
- 10. According to Fresh Delivery LLC and Fresh Meal Holdings Inc., no franchises have been sold and no fees have been paid by prospective franchisees.

Registration Status

11. Fresh Delivery LLC and Fresh Meal Holdings Inc. are not currently registered to sell franchises in the state of Washington and have not previously been so registered.

Based upon the above Findings of Fact, the following Conclusions of Law are made:

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

- 1. The offer or sale of franchises as described above constitutes the offer of a franchise as defined in RCW 19.100.010(6) and RCW 19.100.010(12).
- 2. The offer of said franchises was in violation of RCW 19.100.020 because no registration for such offer is on file with the Washington Securities Administrator.
- 3. The offer of said franchises was in violation of RCW 19.100.170 because the Respondents made untrue statements of material fact or omitted to state material facts necessary to make the statements, in light of the circumstances in which they were made, not misleading

Based upon the foregoing and finding it in the public interest:

CONSENT ORDER

IT IS AGREED AND ORDERED that Respondents Fresh Delivery LLC; Fresh Meal Holdings Inc.; and Nisha Ramakrishnan; and their agents and employees shall each cease and desist from offering or selling franchises in violation of RCW 19.100.020, the registration section of the Franchise Investment Protection Act.

IT IS FURTHER AGREED AND ORDERED that Respondents Fresh Delivery LLC; Fresh Meal Holdings Inc.; and Nisha Ramakrishnan; and their agents and employees, shall each cease and desist from any violation of RCW 19.100.170, the violations section of the Franchise Investment Protection Act.

IT IS FURTHER AGREED AND ORDERED that Respondents Fresh Delivery LLC; Fresh Meal Holdings Inc.; and Nisha Ramakrishnan shall be liable for and shall pay investigative costs of \$3,125 prior to the entry of this Consent Order.

IT IS FURTHER AGREED that the Securities Division has jurisdiction to enter this Consent Order.

IT IS FURTHER AGREED that Respondents Fresh Delivery LLC; Fresh Meal Holdings Inc.; and Nisha Ramakrishnan enter into this Consent Order freely and voluntarily and with a full understanding of its terms and significance.

IT IS FURTHER AGREED that in consideration of the foregoing, Respondents Fresh Delivery LLC; Fresh Meal Holdings Inc.; and Nisha Ramakrishnan each waives their right to a hearing and to judicial review of this matter.

CONSENT ORDER

| 1 | WILLFUL VIOLATION OF THIS O | RDER IS A CRIM | INAL OFFENSE. | |
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| 2 | Signed this day of | <u>January</u> | , 2024 | |
| 3 4 | G: 11 | | | |
| 5 | Signed by: Fresh Meal Holdings Inc. | | | |
| 6 7 | By <u>/s/</u> Nisha Ramakrishnan CEO | | | |
| 9 | Signed by: Fresh Delivery LLC | | | |
| 10 11 12 | By <u>/s/</u> Nisha Ramakrishnan Manager | | | |
| 13 14 | Signed by: | | | |
| 15 | By <u>/s/</u> Nisha Ramakrishnan, Individually | - | | |
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| SIGNED and ENTERED this 16th day of January, 20 | 024 |
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| S. C. S. H. C. | /s/_ William M. Beatty Securities Administrator |
| Approved by: | Presented by: |
| /s/Brian J. Guerard Chief of Enforcement | Robert Kondrat Financial Legal Examiner |
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