



# Community Production of Sewn Face Masks

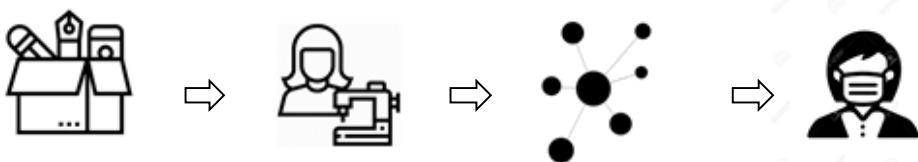


Seventy of the first 100 reported deaths in Chicago from COVID-19 were in African American communities. Today, African Americans still represent more than 50% of the deaths in Chicago even though they only represent 30% of the city's population. This community is also heaviest hit with pandemic-related unemployment on top of the already high unemployment numbers.

As Chicago enters Phase 4 of the COVID-19 pandemic, face masks are no longer an option but a necessary part of our city's recovery. Properly designed face masks are comfortable, considerably slow down the spread of the virus and allow us to move forward in the resumption of normal activities. While wearing masks won't remove the need for social distancing, they will make social settings safer and allow more people to return to work. **There are not enough masks to meet the need.**

**What is the solution?** To supply as many people as possible with protective face masks while providing income for those who make them, we are building a network of mask makers and support hubs. Using resources from institutions and foundations to purchase the masks from us to donate to their clients, members of our network are sewing fabric masks and beginning to scale up their output. The makers, who are primarily members of impacted communities, have a vested interest in slowing down the virus' spread.

**How it works:** Community members use a custom mask design based on CDC recommendations that is optimized for rapid production. The masks are made at distributed locations allowing the makers to sew them at home in a safe environment. To ensure affected communities are fully included in the effort, hubs were established to identify local needs. The masks are collected at hubs for sanitation, quality control and packaging for distribution. Community members are also supported with access to equipment, productivity tools, training and stipends.



**How you can help.** Making fabric face masks is labor intensive and large numbers of sewers are needed and they need to be supported. The proceeds would be used to buy supplies in bulk, purchase or repair sewing machines, and provide a stipend to the folks sewing the masks. Donations will be augmented by direct sales to individuals using a "buy one, give one" model to increase the number of masks we can afford to donate to those in need.

**Outcomes:** Thousands of people who currently lack PPE will receive face masks and the local makers will earn income for their efforts. This initiative will also activate our communities to be stronger, families will be more engaged in their communities and more civic aware.

**Please Join In:** We're seeking volunteers, funding and other support. Questions? Please contact Jackie Moore at [Jackie.Moore@AgapeWerks.org](mailto:Jackie.Moore@AgapeWerks.org) or [info@fieldready.org](mailto:info@fieldready.org)