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### **City of Northampton Health Department Seeks Face Covering Donations**

NORTHAMPTON, MA: On April 16, 2020, the Northampton Health Department issued an order for all members of the public to wear face coverings when around people outside of their household where social distancing cannot be maintained. Following this announcement, the Health Department has received over 2,500 requests for face coverings from residents, social service agencies, Police Departments, Fire Rescue Departments, businesses, among others.

Cooley Dickinson Hospital and the City of Northampton have partnered to streamline collections, to launder and package donations, and to distribute face coverings to those in need. Face coverings can be simple and homemade, made of cloth, fabric, or other soft or permeable material without holes that cover the nose and mouth. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention provides [instructions](#) on how to make face coverings acceptable for distribution by the Health Department.

Residents who wish to donate face coverings should drop them off at Cooley Dickinson Hospital's North Entrance, Monday through Friday, between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. For more information on where to drop off face coverings, visit Cooley Dickinson Hospital's [donations website](#).

To facilitate the home production of cloth face coverings for the community, the City of Northampton is collaborating with local volunteers who sew. To volunteer, please contact Lilly Lombard, [jollyforager@gmail.com](mailto:jollyforager@gmail.com), who can help equip you with complete kits for assembling reusable cloth masks for donation.

To further aid this volunteer effort, the city is gratefully accepting the following donated items for drop off in the yellow bin outside the Northampton Fire Department at 26 Carlon Drive:

- All cotton, tight-woven fabric (eg sheets, including flannel)
- Polyester thread
- Elastic band-- $\frac{1}{8}$ " to  $\frac{3}{8}$ " wide

Residents and businesses in need of face coverings are encouraged to purchase them when possible. One local supplier that is employing local people who sew is [westernmaskproject.com](http://westernmaskproject.com).

Public agencies, businesses, and high-risk individuals that cannot afford face coverings can request them by submitting the following [form](#) or by visiting Northampton's [COVID-19 information page](#). In meeting these requests, the City will prioritize the highest-risk facilities and individuals.

"A face covering may reduce the risk of transmitting the virus that causes COVID-19 when maintaining at least 6 feet of distance isn't possible," said Public Health Director, Merridith O'Leary, "As always, the best and most reliable prevention is to stay at home."

The face covering must be worn in three main settings:

- Essential Businesses, or other businesses and facilities engaged in Minimum Basic Operations, Essential Infrastructure or Essential Government Functions
- When seeking health care (health care workers and facilities have a different set of requirements)
- Public transportation or other types of shared transportation

Employees, contractors, owners, and volunteers in all these settings must wear a face covering where the public is present or likely to be present, and at any time when others are nearby.