COVID-19 Vaccine (https://mn.gov/covid19/vaccine/find-vaccine/locations/index.jsp) – Find out when, where, and how to get your shot.

Vaccine Rewards (https://mn.gov/covid19/vaccine-rewards/index.jsp) – Your shot to a safe summer. Claim your reward by June 30.

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# State Begins Distribution of Nearly 4 Million Masks

## State partnering with businesses, community organizations to distribute masks throughout Minnesota

July 29, 2020

[ST. PAUL, MN] – Today at Liberty Packaging, Governor Tim Walz and Lt. Governor Peggy Flanagan highlighted the state's distribution of nearly 4 million masks to businesses, their customers, and people who are unable to afford a mask or easily obtain one. The masks are being distributed to Chambers of Commerce, community organizations, and other providers across the state, who are then responsible for distributing to people.

**"There's no better way to demonstrate our Minnesotan values than by wearing a mask to slow the spread of COVID-19,"** said Governor Tim Walz. **"We are working to ensure masks are accessible for businesses and Minnesotans throughout the state. I urge everyone to mask up to protect our neighbors, keep our businesses open, and get us on track to return to the activities we love."**

**"Masking up is a quick, easy way to help slow the spread of COVID-19 and keep our communities safe,"** said Lt. Governor Peggy Flanagan. **"As we transition to a new normal, we must center those who have been hit hardest during this pandemic, including people of color, Indigenous people, low-income Minnesotans, and older adults and make masks available and accessible where they are most needed."**

Governor Walz signed Executive Order 20-81 last week, which requires Minnesotans to wear a face covering in indoor businesses and indoor public settings. The requirement went into effect on Saturday. Researchers have advocated for masking, calling it a simple and effective step to slow the spread of the COVID-19 virus. To date, 30 states across the country, Washington D.C., and Puerto Rico have issued similar mandates.

The one-time allotment of masks includes 4 million disposable masks for businesses and more than 300,000 cloth masks for underserved and at-risk communities. The Departments of Administration and Employment and Economic Development (DEED) are working together to get the masks distributed by the end of July.

**“We know that COVID-19 has a disproportionate impact on communities of color,”** said Administration Commissioner Alice Roberts-Davis. **“These cloth masks will be a literal lifeline for many, who either can’t afford a mask or don’t have easy access to obtaining one. We’re working with more than 40 community organizations, plus regional hubs for continuum of care centers, including food shelves and affordable housing providers. We know they have the necessary relationships and means to distribute the masks to those who truly need them.”**

“ **Wearing a mask is the quickest path to reopening our economy,”** said DEED Commissioner Steve Grove. **“We’re grateful to local Chambers across Minnesota, who are stepping up to help distribute masks to local businesses. This one-time push is a win-win for our communities – businesses can access free masks, and more Minnesotans can mask up.”**

The largest Chamber in each county will receive a shipment of disposable masks, based on the number of employees in that county. Each Chamber receiving masks has agreed to distribute them to local businesses, both those who are Chamber members and those who are not, free of charge. These larger chambers are encouraged to work with other chambers or organizations on the distribution. Participation is optional for the chambers.

The cloth masks will go to community organizations, food banks, area agencies on aging, and affordable housing providers. Each community organization, service provider, and Chamber is responsible for determining how to distribute the masks based on their own needs and resources.

The masks are coming from the state’s stockpile. These are masks the state purchased to distribute to organizations that need it, including local health departments, hospitals, long-term care facilities, community testing events, and more.

For more information on Executive Order 20-81, visit mn.gov/COVID19 (https://mn.gov/covid19/).

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