



City of Manassas, Virginia
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**City of Manassas works to Distribute PPE
to Local Residents in Need**

City of Manassas, VA . . . The City of Manassas has been working with local volunteers and City staff to pack more than 5,000 bags full of masks (4 per bag) and hand sanitizers for families in our community who most need it. These supplies were donated as part of the Commonwealth's Health Equity Task Force Program's Pilot Program to increase equitable access to essential supplies in underserved and historically disadvantaged communities, many of which have been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. Also, in the bags is culturally appropriate public health materials to help stop the spread of COVID-19.

More than 1,000 bags have been distributed to date. Next week local volunteers and City staff will work to distribute more bags to homes in our community.

"The City of Manassas is happy to be working with the Commonwealth and the Health Equity Task Force on this endeavor," said Mayor Harry J. Parrish II. "Anything we can do to help our neighbors during this pandemic is a win for our community."

The Health Equity Task Force Program uses a data-driven approach to select areas in the Commonwealth that are most in need and where residents are at risk of contracting COVID-19. Communities were identified using indicators such as chronic diseases, household income, age, disability status and other important health factors. More than 40 localities were identified and selected to receive these materials during this pilot program.

"The Equity Leadership Task Force is excited to partner with the City of Manassas for our health equity reform and PPE distribution program," said Dr. Janice Underwood, Chief Diversity Officer to Governor Northam. "COVID-19 cases are still increasing throughout the Commonwealth; therefore, it will take all of us wearing a mask, using appropriate hygiene practices, and staying home when we can to protect each other. Under-resourced communities have disproportionately carried the burden of COVID-19, but collaboration with localities like

the City of Manassas highlight Virginia's commitment to local-state partnerships that promote an equitable response and recovery from this deadly disease."

To date, the commonwealth has partnered with 35 localities. City officials in 19 localities have completed a health equity and public safety training and begun distributing much needed resources within their communities, while the others are in the planning phase of the pilot program and set to begin distribution in the upcoming weeks. Over 500,000 cloth masks and 420,000 bottles of hand sanitizer have been delivered to localities across the state.

"I am proud that VDEM can work collaboratively with the City of Manassas to implement the Health Equity Pilot Program," said VDEM State Coordinator Curtis Brown. "This program supports the city's efforts to equitably distribute lifesaving PPE to communities disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. It is more important than ever to embed equity into every mitigation and recovery effort as we continue to see the devastating impact of this pandemic."

The Health Equity Leadership Taskforce provides leadership to the Unified Command Health Equity Work Group, which was formed at the beginning of the COVID-19 outbreak in Virginia. This working group is the first ever in Virginia's history to ensure a health equity lens is applied during an emergency response. Dr. Janice Underwood, the Commonwealth's first Chief Diversity Officer, leads the Unified Command Health Equity Work Group.

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