

2020 CSAC CHALLENGE AWARDS – EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Los Angeles County - Library's PPE Relief Program Utilizes Maker Skills

OVERVIEW: LA County Library creatively reimagines existing and donated Library resources to make much needed protective personal gear to assist those on the frontline during the COVID-19 pandemic.

CHALLENGE: When COVID-19 cases began to increase in LA County and California, it became clear that the predicted number of cases would lead to a shortages of personal protective equipment (PPE) needed for frontline workers to protect themselves and those around them. This not only meant medical professionals, but also other essential workers and LA County employees who were assigned as Disaster Service Workers (DSW), providing much needed services to the county. The county was experiencing shortages of medical-grade PPE, thus what was available needed to be reserved for those in hospitals and medical facilities. In mid-June, when masks became mandatory for all LA County residents, production of masks and other PPE gear was needed for those that otherwise could not readily access them but still needed to continue their essential work.

SOLUTION: LA County Library joined efforts to provide much-needed protective personal gear to assist those on the front line by utilizing resources on hand and the diverse talents of Library staff. A group of 48 LA County Library staff, organized by the Adult Services team, volunteered to sew non-surgical face masks to help protect LA County Disaster Service Workers, and LA County workers who were not be able to practice physical distancing. Volunteers used either their own sewing machines, or borrowed machines from the Library's MākMō program, the Library's mobile delivery system to support makerspaces and promote STEAM programs. Library staff repurposed fabric from sewing programs the Library often offers, or donated their own supplies, sewing in their own homes or inside of library locations. The masks were created using instructions from the Medical College of Wisconsin to ensure that the fabrics and design are medically-sound. Additionally, moving beyond sewn masks, LA County Library formed a partnership with the LA County Department of Health Services (DHS) and the Rancho Los Amigos National Rehabilitation Center (RLANRC), an acute care comprehensive rehabilitation facility, to print mask extenders to alleviate ear pain from elastic bands and headbands for plastic face shields, as well as help assemble face shields. With a donation from consumer electronics retailer, Monoprice, of 13 MP Delta Pro 3D printers added to the Library's existing inventory of 3D printers, the MākMō,

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Adult Services, and Facilities teams were able to increase printing to 30 – 40 headbands and 100 extenders per day. These items were then added to the RLANRC Shield Makers project production line, distributing extenders and face shields to healthcare workers in hospitals. In addition, the donation of 3D printers will be available for programming to the public in the future, allowing the Library to further assist with PPE efforts, as well as enhancing existing 3D printing programming for LA County residents.

INNOVATION: When libraries had to close due to the ongoing COVID-19 epidemic, LA County Library repurposed materials and equipment, and the staff shifted from their regular roles to contribute to the dire need for PPE. By seeing new potential for in-house resources, and partnering with organizations and other LA County departments distributing PPE, the Library was able to respond quickly and efficiently, providing services to communities in need, utilizing librarians' creative and maker skills in new ways.

RESULTS: Through these PPE making efforts, the Library was able to make over 5,000 non-surgical face masks, 7,922 mask extenders, and 1,547 headbands for PPE shields. These items have been distributed to numerous healthcare sites, or to LA County disaster service workers on the frontline.

REPLICABILITY: The program can be replicated for any county and for other disaster related relief efforts. The partnerships with the healthcare sector currently created for this program can be made in different locations and at varying scales, as well as can be sustained for any future relief efforts. In addition, reimagining use of the current inventory of equipment, and staff skillsets, could be done at varying capacities in order to respond to emergencies.

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OPTIONAL SUBMISSION: Video footage about the mask sewing project can be found at:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IGj_2i6KKbs. Video footage about the 3D printing PPE efforts can be found at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=clme8MzHmxA>.