



Ohio Manufacturing Alliance to **Fight COVID-19**

Repurposing and Retooling to Make PPE

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Ohio Manufacturing Alliance Achieves Early Success in Fight Against COVID-19

Ohio manufacturers are collaborating to produce up to one million face shields over the next five weeks to protect those on the front lines.

COLUMBUS, OHIO – The [Ohio Manufacturing Alliance to Fight COVID-19](#) today announced a team of Ohio manufacturers will make 750,000 to one million face shields in the next five weeks to help combat the COVID-19 pandemic. The project represents a major early success in the Alliance's effort to help Ohio manufacturers repurpose and retool to fight COVID-19.

"These face shields will make a difference as we fight this invisible enemy," said Governor Mike DeWine. "The Ohio Manufacturing Alliance sent out a call for help producing PPE and more than 1,500 manufacturing companies responded. This reinforces what we know about Ohio companies, they are generous and will answer the call when needed. Together, we are going to protect our protectors and strengthen our manufacturing sector."

Face shields are a priority to protect frontline workers from COVID-19 infection, and many companies are interested in making them. The face shields will be added to the [Ohio Department of Health](#) stockpile. Governor DeWine announced the project in his daily 2:00 p.m. press conference, which can be seen on the [Ohio Channel](#).

According to **Eric Burkland**, president of [The Ohio Manufacturers' Association](#), "Ohio historically has a deep industrial base and is a manufacturing powerhouse. Because of embedded know-how, Ohio manufacturers are able to pivot to retool and repurpose their operations to help meet the immediate need for personal protective equipment and other products needed in the fight against COVID-19. The innovation and responsiveness of our manufacturers – and their supply chains – are bearing fruit immediately and will be critical to the recovery of the state."

In partnership with the Alliance, JobsOhio is connecting and aligning resources through its network partners to help companies accelerate their ability to produce PPE, while leveraging its business relationships in order to move this overall effort forward more efficiently and effectively.

Hundreds of thousands of high-quality, durable, reusable face shields will be shipped from Hudson, Ohio-based [Little Tikes™](#) – a manufacturer that normally produces plastic toys like the Cozy Coupe. That final assembly culminates an entire supply chain of 19 manufacturers, 3 hospitals and multiple additional partners pulled together by the Alliance in a matter of days to make the protective equipment.

“Pulling together a complex supply chain often takes nine months to a year or longer, but through the commitment of these Ohio manufacturers, we have done it in about a week,” said **Ethan Karp**, president and CEO of Manufacturing Advocacy and Growth Network ([MAGNET](#)), which is playing a key role in the Alliance by connecting suppliers and providing engineering support. “The project highlights the potential for Ohio manufacturers to pull together quickly to make a difference in battling COVID-19.”

The team effort includes companies from around Ohio with expertise in die-cutting, injection molding, tool production and assembly, along with a plastic supplier. Final assembly will be performed at the Little Tikes™ manufacturing plants.

“Little Tikes™ is proud to play a key role in this joint effort to drive the development of more than 750,000 face shields, one of the most urgently needed PPE items for hospitals across the country,” said **Isaac Larian**, CEO and Founder of [MGA Entertainment](#), which owns Little Tikes™. “Ensuring these supplies are distributed to the brave men and women who are fighting for us, is essential to stopping the spread of COVID-19.”

The Alliance was created just days ago – and announced by Gov. Mike DeWine on April 1. The public-private partnership was formed to help meet the urgent need for more [Personal Protective Equipment](#) (PPE) used by health care workers and first responders. The Alliance is led by The Ohio Manufacturers’ Association, the [Ohio Manufacturing Extension Partnership](#) (and its partner organization MAGNET), the [Ohio Hospital Association](#), and [JobsOhio](#), in partnership with the [Ohio Development Services Agency](#), the [Ohio Department of Administrative Services](#), and the [Ohio Department of Health](#).

To date, more than 1,500 manufacturers have contacted the Alliance looking to help in some capacity. One of those companies is Akron-based [Acro Tool and Die Company](#), which embodies Ohio’s spirit of innovation and collaboration. “We jumped right in the first week of the governor’s stay-at-home order. We knew there was a need and that we had the talent and technologies to share,” said General Manager **Terry Ellis**. “We really just wanted to help. So far it has been exciting – a great team effort in which our people and business partners are making sacrifices and pushing their personal needs down the priority list.”

With MAGNET as the lead, [Case Western Reserve University](#), power management company [Eaton](#) and MAGNET engineers designed and built the prototype. University Hospitals provided rapid clinical feedback to improve the design, while [Premier Health](#) and [Cleveland Clinic](#) confirmed the design. Sourcing the plastic locally was almost impossible with raw materials disappearing at record speed, but with private-sector businesses and state economic development agencies fast-tracking everything, MAGNET was able to secure emergency funding through JobsOhio to order the plastic that was needed.

The molds being used are often made in China and usually take 6-12 weeks to complete. The Ohio team expedited the process with the help of local 3D printers and around-the-clock overtime of very committed manufacturers to create many fast and effective molds. These die cutters, injection molders, elastic band cutters, plastic suppliers, and assemblers – which normally make products ranging from toys to engine parts – pivoted their production and made this happen, going from prototype to production in just days. This process is a model for other PPE products.

Many different inspirations motivate organizations to get involved in this initiative. Consider these:

“One of Eaton’s core values is to encourage and promote involvement in our local communities. The opportunity to play a leading role in the Ohio Manufacturing Alliance’s initiative to produce up to a million face shields to fight COVID-19 was perfectly aligned with that core value,” said **Michael Regelski**, senior vice president and chief technology officer for [Eaton’s Electrical Sector](#). “We have drawn upon our talent and expertise nationwide and across the globe to help produce creative solutions to protect our health care providers. Working with local manufacturers, health care providers and MAGNET has been a unique partnership creating much-needed product in record time.”

“Keeping our caregivers and patients safe is of utmost priority,” said **David Sylvan**, president of [UH Ventures](#), the innovation and commercialization arm of [University Hospitals](#). “In addition to the multiple ways we have rallied our supply chain providers to obtain necessary PPE, we have been collaborating with MAGNET to bring to fruition many innovations to address our caregiver needs during this pandemic. We are honored to

team up with an organization uniquely positioned to leverage relationships across the state to rapidly develop and deploy these potentially life-saving solutions.”

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(Attached are the key business and organizations that made this initial success of the Alliance possible.)

The Manufacturing Alliance to Fight COVID-19 – Face Shield Project

Overall Alliance initiative leaders

[The Ohio Manufacturers' Association](#)

[Ohio Manufacturing Extension Partnership \(Ohio MEP\)](#)

[Ohio Hospital Association \(OHA\)](#)

[JobsOhio](#)

Development and project management

Lead: [MAGNET: The Manufacturing Advocacy and Growth Network](#), Cleveland

[EASTLANE](#) at University of Dayton

[Eaton](#), Beachwood

[Case Western Reserve University](#), University Heights

Hospital design partners

Lead: [University Hospitals](#)

[Cleveland Clinic](#)

[Premier Health](#)

PPE Resource Alignment

[JobsOhio](#)

Assembly, logistics

[Little Tikes™](#), Hudson

Die-cutting shields

[Classic Laminations](#), Oakwood Village

[Die-cut Products Co](#), Cleveland

[GSH Industries](#), Cleveland

[HP Manufacturing](#), Cleveland

Plastic for shields

[Kent Displays, Inc.](#), Kent

[Professional Plastics](#), Twinsburg

Die-cutting bands:

[Ottawa Rubber Company](#), Holland

[Premier Seals Manufacturing](#), Akron

Injection molding and tool production

[Acro Tool and Die \(now Metalcraft Solutions\)](#), Akron

[Esterle Mold and Machine](#), Stow

[Evenflo](#), Piqua

[ITEN Industries Inc](#), Ashtabula

[Little Tikes™](#), Hudson

[MTD Products Inc](#), Valley City

[Pragmatic Manufacturing LLC](#), Brunswick

[Talent Tool and Die](#), Berea

[Thogus Products](#), Avon Lake
[Trifecta Tool & Engineering](#), Kettering