**Mask Up America Brief for State and Local Leaders**

This document provides talking points, messaging guidelines, and sample social media content that state and local leaders can use to promote mask wearing in their communities.

**TALKING POINTS**

* Governor *[Governor Name]* is among the Governors working with the NGA, COVID Collaborative, the Ad Council and the Infectious Diseases Society of America on the “Mask Up” campaign to amplify the importance of wearing face masks in their home state. This campaign further empowers Governors to urge all Americans to wear a mask while in public to help stop the spread of the virus.
  + The campaign includes TV, online video, radio, and outdoor Public Service Announcements (PSAs) that will run throughout the country.
* The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted our lives in every possible way. There is no doubt that we are in unchartered territory, with many of us feeling confused and fearful about what’s to come and how to best prepare.
* Face masks (combined with social distancing and handwashing) are the best defense in significantly reducing aerosol transmission of the COVID-19. Yet when we need widespread public compliance in the U.S., a third (32%) of Americans report not wearing a face mask at all times outside of the house. (Axios-Ipsos survey, 9/22/20)
* Add in any local data about face mask wearing by state.
  + [Note: You can find accurate COVID-19 reporting data specific to your state on [COVID Act Now’s website](https://covidactnow.org/?s=1173285).]
* Social distancing is not a substitute for face mask wearing. It’s a complement.
  + *Supporting Datapoint:* 3 out of 5 low-mask users say they don’t wear a mask because they were social distancing. ([COVID Collaborative, Aug. 2020](https://www.covidcollaborative.us/)) As the cold weather moves in, more people will be socializing indoors – a large concern as growing [evidence](https://www.epa.gov/coronavirus/indoor-air-and-coronavirus-covid-19) shows that the virus can remain airborne for longer times and further distances than originally thought, especially in indoor, poorly ventilated spaces.
* If we want to protect our country and get “back to normal,” we should wear face masks anytime we engage with people outside our home—even when we don’t want to or think it’s necessary.
  + *Supporting Datapoint:* For many, wearing face masks is becoming tiresome. Many are also confused about when and how to wear a mask. For example, while a large majority of Americans always wear a mask to the grocery store, only a third always wear it when going to someone’s home, a quarter when family/friends visit their homes, and half at their jobs. ([COVID Collaborative, Aug. 2020](https://www.covidcollaborative.us/))
* When you choose to wear a face mask, you help keep the doors open to your favorite businesses. You help keep America open.
  + *Supporting Datapoint:* Face masks offer an alternative to renewed lockdowns, which otherwise could cost the U.S. an additional $1 trillion in GDP loss ([Goldman Sachs](https://www.goldmansachs.com/insights/pages/face-masks-and-gdp.html)).
* As of Oct. 2020, it’s estimated that if 95% of the people in the US were to wear masks when leaving their homes, nearly 100,000 lives could be saved by Jan. 1st[[1]](#footnote-1). Mask wearing is the fastest way to get kids back to school, employees back to work, and the economy back on track.
  + *Supporting Info:* In a press conference on July 14th, CDC Director Dr. Robert Redfield said, “If all of us would put on a mask now for the next 4-6 weeks, we could drive this epidemic to the ground.” This recommendation is based on what the CDC knows about the role respiratory droplets play in the spread of SARS–CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, paired with [emerging evidence](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover-guidance.html#recent-studies) from clinical and laboratory studies that shows cloth masks reduce the spray of droplets when worn over the nose and mouth.
  + A [study](https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6928e2.htm?s_cid=mm6928e2_w) released by the CDC in mid-July found that wearing masks has significantly decreased the propensity of spreading COVID-19.

**CALL TO ACTION**

Mask Up America

**KEY SOUNDBITES**

* Mask up, America.
* It’s up to us. Mask Up. Help keep America open for business.
* Face masks are highly effective in stopping the spread of the COVID-19.
* They are also our pathway to safety, to freedom, and to keeping businesses open.
* When you choose to wear a face mask, you help your favorite places keep their doors open.
* Patriotism is about protecting our country, and one of the best ways to protect Americans right now is by wearing a face mask.
* By wearing a face mask, you help keep America open for business.
* Face masks are the fastest way to get kids back to school, employees back to work, and improve the economy by helping to lower community transmission.
* As of October 2020, it’s estimated that if 95% of the people in the US were to wear masks when leaving their homes, nearly 100,000 lives could be saved by Jan. 1st[[2]](#footnote-2).

**SUGGESTED SOCIAL COPY FOR STATE AND LOCAL LEADERS**

*Campaign-Focused Content:*

* I am part of a coalition of Governors working with the NGA, COVID Collaborative, @adcouncil & @IDSAinfo to encourage face masks in their home state. #MaskUpAmerica
* When you choose to wear a face mask, you help keep the door open to your favorite places. #MaskupAmerica
* Let’s keep America open for business. I’m doing my part by wearing a face mask. Will you do yours? #MaskUpAmerica
* I am proud to help keep businesses and schools open by encouraging the continued usage of face masks in [State].
* I am doing everything I can to keep America open. Show you’re a patriot. Wear a mask. #MaskupAmerica
* When I go outside, I proudly wear a face mask. For myself, my family, and for [State]. It’s just one small act of kindness I can do to help stop the spread of COVID-19. #MaskupAmerica
* I will do everything I can to protect our country. That’s why I am wearing a mask. To protect my family and my community from COVID-19. #MaskupAmerica
* Governors are uniting behind one message—everyone needs to mask up to save lives.

*Mask-Focused Content:*

* Masks are the fastest way to get kids back to school, employees back to work, and improve the economy by helping to lower community transmission. Wear a mask – for your family, for your community. #MaskUpAmerica
* Face masks are our pathway to safety, to freedom, to keeping businesses open. Wear a face mask. #MaskUpAmerica
* The more people who wear masks, the more we prevent another economic shutdown. Wear a mask. Keep America open. #MaskUpAmerica

**SUGGESTED SOCIAL COPY FOR INFLUENCERS**

If you are enlisting influencers to reach out to target audiences in your state, the following is content to guide their communications:

* Masks are the most effective way to control COVID-19 in your community. Get your community back on track. Wear a mask. #MaskUpAmerica
* When I go outside, I proudly wear my face mask. For myself, my family, my community. It’s just one small act of kindness I can do to help stop the spread of COVID-19. #MaskUpAmerica
* I will do everything I can to protect our country. That’s why I am wearing a mask. To protect my family, my community, my country from COVID-19. #MaskUpAmerica
* #MaskupAmerica. It’s up to us to help keep America open for business.
* When you choose to wear a face mask, you help keep the door open to your favorite places. #MaskupAmerica

**HASHTAG:** #MaskUpAmerica  
  
**HANDLES TO TAG:** @AdCouncil, @NatlGovsAssoc, @COVID\_\_Collab, @IDSAInfo  
**MESSAGING GUIDELINES**

* The Infectious Diseases Society of America website contains science-based resources that you can link to in your social media posts and digital ads. Please use: <https://www.idsociety.org/masks>
* Avoid language that feels top-down. Instead, use language that makes the viewer feel empowered to make the right choice of wearing a mask.
* Highlight why/how masks are effective. Creative testing shows that respondents respond more favorably when given the reason why it is important.
* Highlight public health benefits, but also connect masks to the values and areas that this audience cares about, such as the economy and/or patriotism.
* Messages should be informative, clear, concise, and remind people of the positive impact of wearing a mask. Messages that are shaming are [ineffectual](https://www.kff.org/coronavirus-policy-watch/what-we-can-learn-from-hiv-in-communicating-about-covid-19/) and likely to backfire. Fear-framed messages, where the fear is a legitimate concern and not used to sensationalize, may work if presented alongside an empowering, hopeful, and action-oriented frame at the end.
* These messages are best delivered by messengers who exemplify the values that your target audience believe in and authentically communicate in language that resonates.
* Where appropriate, personalize the message and share personal reasons why you believe in mask wearing.
* Normalize the behavior by showing people role modeling correct face mask usage; It is *especially important that messengers are recognized by the audience as part of their “tribe.”*
* Consider using the “we” voice, rather than the “you” voice or “I” voice.
  + Ensure that everyone in any images used demonstrates correct and consistent face mask usage. This means face masks should:
    - Be worn in public settings, both indoors and outdoors, and when around people who don’t live in your household. If you are wearing a face mask, you still need to continue to practice social distancing.
    - Be placed on and taken off touching ear loops only and with clean, washed hands. Avoid touching face mask once on.
    - Cover both your mouth and nose and be secured under the chin.
    - Fit snugly but comfortably against the side of the face.
    - Include multiple layers of fabric.
    - Allow for breathing without restriction.
    - Not have filters on them.
    - Not be those mask types prioritized for healthcare professionals, such as N95s.

1. [Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation](https://covid19.healthdata.org/united-states-of-america) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. [Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation](https://covid19.healthdata.org/united-states-of-america) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)