



NM small businesses switch gears to make critical supplies for Lab employees

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Preparing for employees to return to onsite work safely at the Laboratory requires protective and preventive measures such as face coverings, hand sanitizer and more frequent cleaning.

So when regular supply chains couldn't keep up with unprecedented national demand, the Laboratory looked for a way to get the supplies it needs, and support small businesses in Northern New Mexico at the same time.

Doing business locally and with small- or minority-owned vendors is a priority for the Laboratory's parent company, Triad National Security, LLC. In addition, in order to stay afloat in the current situation, many businesses have adapted their offerings, providing new procurement opportunities for the Lab.

For example, local distilleries have shifted gears to make hand sanitizer, including Santa Fe Spirits and Distillery.

"We went from making high-end artisanal single malt whiskey to hand sanitizer, which has become a lifeline for us now," says Santa Fe Spirits owner Colin Keegan. He said he feels fortunate to have the facility and license to process the alcohol and turn it into something helpful for the public and large organizations. "It has become a new income stream to help keep my full-time staff of five employed."

Santa Fe Spirits and Distillery staff prepare hand sanitizer.

Each week, the Lab purchases 110 gallons of hand sanitizer from Santa Fe Spirits and Distillery. Keegan has also received orders from the City of Santa Fe, FedEx, UPS and the New Mexico Department of Health.

The Lab has also purchased hand sanitizer and ethanol for cleaners from other versatile businesses, such as the Broken Trail Distillery in Albuquerque and Kymia Arts in El Prado.

From fashion shows to masks

Laura Hermosillo, owner of Alterations and More in Santa Fe, was sewing corsets in preparation of the Santa Fe Chamber of Commerce's fashion show when events started getting canceled. "I had material, so I went from creating corsets to face masks," says

Hermosillo. “I have six people working, mostly women, and most of them are now the only source of income in their household due to the COVID-19 situation.”

Masks made by Alterations and More, a business based in Santa Fe.

The Lab recently received its first order of 1,700 of the company's colorful coverings, which meet CDC recommendations for wearing cloth face coverings in public settings. Hermosillo has acquired a second industrial embroidery machine and is now also offering custom variations.

Thanks in part to small businesses like these, the Laboratory is prepared for when employees start to return to their buildings and facilities. “We have product on hand for when people come back to the Lab. It should work out really well,” says Steve Vandebusch, a property manager who has been working to make the required supplies available.

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