

Pennsylvania Manufacturers Play Critical Role in COVID-19 Recovery –

Investment in Industrial Resource Centers Ensures Their Success



Throughout history, Pennsylvania manufacturers have consistently driven our nation to triumph over its adversaries.

During World War I, Pennsylvania's industrial firms produced more than half of the firepower supplied to the U.S. Army; more ships to the U.S. Navy than any other state; many of the steam locomotives used throughout Britain, France and Russia; more steel than our opposing nations, combined; and over 3 million military troop helmets.

When the nation entered the Second World War, Pennsylvania manufacturers once again answered the call.

In addition to providing one-third of the nation's steel, our state's manufacturers built tanks, battleships, body armor, parachutes, mortars, electronics and other critical supplies.

In acknowledgement of those efforts, Pennsylvania became known as "The Arsenal of America."

Today, Pennsylvania is the ninth (9th) largest state in terms of U.S. Department of Defense contracts with more than \$13.4 billion of goods and services provided to defend our freedom in 2019.

Recent times have presented Pennsylvania and our nation with a new nemesis and an entirely different type of battle.

The COVID-19 pandemic caught our world, our state and our communities off-guard as we struggled to confront a threat that was unknown, invisible and deadly.

While healthcare providers, first responders, medical researchers and charitable organization workers unquestionably served as front-line fighters in this unprecedented war, the critical role of Pennsylvania's manufacturers should also be recognized.

As the nation's sixth (6th) largest state in terms of medical device employment, with more than 418 firms and a multitude of suppliers within that sector, the nation looked to Pennsylvania's industrial base for leadership amidst this medical crisis.

True to form, our manufacturing community did not disappoint.

Throughout the pandemic, more than 8,200 Pennsylvania manufacturers and their 370,000 employees remained operational and continued to produce goods that our domestic economy and citizens needed to remain viable.

Top 10 Medical Device States

California
Minnesota
Massachusetts
Florida
Indiana
Pennsylvania
Texas
New York
New Jersey
Illinois

Source: Medical Design & Outsourcing, Feb. 2020.

Our food, beverage, paper, plastic packaging and chemical plants kept products on store shelves while our advanced electronics, HVAC equipment, medical device, aerospace parts, machine parts and forging facilities continued to produce goods critical to other industries and essential to our everyday lives.

Many small and mid-sized manufacturers quickly transitioned to produce medical supplies and products needed for the fight against COVID-19 while also fulfilling existing customer demand for their core products.

[Gentex Corporation](#), a Carbondale-based manufacturer of advanced helmet systems for the Department of Defense, emergency response and industrial safety sectors, expanded its production capacity and introduced the Pureflo 3000 – a fully-integrated respirator and face shield. The company also pivoted to produce a variety of other protective hoods, shields and eyeglasses.



GENTEX Corporation's
(Carbondale, PA)
Pureflo 3000 System

Similarly, [i2M](#), an advanced polymer film manufacturer in Mountain Top, converted its production lines to manufacture a specialized anti-microbial gown appropriate for general and high-risk healthcare settings.

[Hayward Laboratories](#), located in East Stroudsburg, successfully integrated a line of hand sanitizers into their production schedule while [Martz Technologies](#) expanded its facility in Berwick to facilitate the manufacture of face masks using antibacterial fabric (X-Static) made in [Noble Biomaterial's](#) Scranton plant. In their quest to manufacture over one million masks, [Martz Technologies](#) created more than 100 new jobs for the region.

While many manufacturers modified their processes and production lines to contribute to the fight against COVID-19, others already in the medical device and equipment supply chain increased their output to meet growing demand.



Martz Technologies'
(Berwick, PA) masks will
utilize Noble Biofibers'
(Scranton, PA) silver
fibers to fight bacteria.



Hayward Laboratories
(East Stroudsburg, PA)
Hand Sanitizer

Area companies such as [Proctor & Gamble](#) (Mehoopany), [Pride Mobility](#) (Duryea), [Golden Technologies](#) (Old Forge), [Intermetro](#) (Wilkes-Barre), [PF Nonwovens](#) (Hazleton) and others rose to the occasion.

As we emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic, the ability of Pennsylvania manufacturers to adapt to changing business conditions, innovate new products, modify existing processes and work flows and efficiently bring new products to market is proving to be a key contributor to our success.

Now, as our manufacturers transition to full operations, it is time to ensure that they have the resources they need to fully recover from the impacts of COVID-19 and thrive well into the future.



Intermetro
(Wilkes-Barre, PA)
Holding Cabinet

A strong commitment to Pennsylvania's manufacturing economy by legislators and top government officials will undoubtedly yield a high return.

Since 1988, the [Pennsylvania Industrial Resource Centers \(IRCs\)](#) have served Pennsylvania's small and mid-sized manufacturers with the services and expertise they relied upon to meet the COVID-19 challenge.

The manufacturers mentioned above, along with many others, leveraged the Lean Manufacturing systems, ISO certifications, New Product Development processes, Supply Chain Risk Mitigation protocols, I.T. infrastructure, Cybersecurity frameworks and Disaster Preparedness & Recovery plans they received through the Northeastern Pennsylvania Industrial Resource Center, their local IRC, to survive and thrive during the COVID-19 pandemic.

By remaining open as essential businesses throughout the past three months, the IRCs provided consultative services to more than 1,000 manufacturers, helping them find new suppliers, implement improved safety measures, locate CDC-approved protective equipment and cleansers, integrate teleworking and remote technologies into their operations, develop new products, enter new markets and find qualified workers.

In most cases, manufacturers received a response to their inquiries and needs within 24 hours and remotely-delivered services soon thereafter, as the IRCs prioritized business-critical service requests and worked around-the-clock to meet client demands.

As a proven resource to manufacturers, with a verified one-year return of more than \$5:\$1 on the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's investment, now is the time to further bolster the strength, resiliency and long-term viability of Pennsylvania's manufacturers by investing in a program that this sector turns to in times of both boon and turmoil – the IRCs.

Our manufacturing community was an integral part of Pennsylvania's overall response to the COVID-19 crisis. Pennsylvania's investment in the long-term well-being and growth of manufacturing makes sense more now than ever.