



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**MAYOR LORI LIGHTFOOT JOINS CORE CO-FOUNDERS TO PROVIDE UPDATE ON  
CITY'S COVID-19 TESTING CENTERS**

*City announces an additional testing facility bringing total to seven City-run sites*

**CHICAGO** — Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot today joined co-founders of Community Organized Relief Effort (CORE), Sean Penn and Ann Lee, to provide an update on the City's COVID-19 testing facilities, which are strategically placed throughout Chicago to target the neighborhoods most in need. The City announced a partnership with CORE and Curative last week to stand up six City-run testing sites in Chicago in an effort to increase testing over the next several weeks and better understand Chicago's readiness for reopening under its 'Protecting Chicago' five-phase framework.

"These new sites serve as the cornerstone of our effort to dramatically expand COVID-19 testing in Chicago through the rest of the month, with a special focus on our communities of color, which have been disproportionately impacted by this disease," said Mayor Lightfoot. "With the incredible support from our partners at CORE and Curative, our entire city will also be able to move that much closer to Phase Three of our reopening plan that will allow us to safely ease restrictions on many businesses, support our recovery from this crisis, and get Chicago back on track."

In partnership with the City's Racial Equity Rapid Response team and community organizations, the City has already opened and begun operating two testing sites in communities that have experienced a disproportionate impact from COVID-19. The first two sites were Maria Saucedo Scholastic Academy, which opened on Wednesday, May 13, in the Little Village neighborhood and Dr. Jorge Prieto Math and Science Academy, which opened on Friday, May 15, in the Belmont Cragin neighborhood. Together, these two sites are testing symptomatic residents in the surrounding communities and have collectively conducted over 800 tests in the less than one week they have been open.



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Moving forward, the City will be opening four additional sites. One of which will be located in the parking lot at Guaranteed Rate Field. Unlike the others, this site will be testing asymptomatic persons, focusing specifically on frontline workers battling the COVID-19 pandemic – including both first responders and healthcare workers. The remaining sites will have staggered launches over the next several weeks.

CORE brings their testing expertise to Chicago after administering nearly 200,000 free tests at 19 testing sites across California, Georgia, North Carolina, Michigan and the Navajo Nation. With a team of 150 dedicated staff and 450 volunteers, CORE is focused on expanding free COVID-19 testing to vulnerable and underserved communities, including low income groups and communities of color, as well as first responders and essential workers.

“We are honored to work alongside collaborative and capable partners such as Mayor Lightfoot and the Rainbow Coalition to offer free testing to Chicago, particularly for communities who are disproportionately affected by the pandemic,” said CORE Co-founder Sean Penn.

City officials and CORE co-founders were joined today by world renowned chef and humanitarian José Andrés. Andrés is the founder of nonprofit World Central Kitchen (WCK) which will be providing fresh meals to the medical workers and teams staffing the testing sites. WCK has already distributed 75,000 fresh meals to Chicagoans in need and the city's frontline workers at hospitals, testing sites, senior centers and other community sites. Most of the meals are sourced from local restaurants simultaneously stimulating the city's economy while providing relief.

“As food first responders who mobilize with the urgency of now in the wake of crises to get fresh meals to affected communities, all of us at World Central Kitchen know that for these testing-site professionals working tirelessly to help others, a nourishing meal is so much more than a plate of food—it's hope, it's dignity, and it's a sign that the entire community stands with them,” said Nate Mook, CEO of WCK. “It's an honor to work with our friends at CORE to support Chicagoans on the front lines of this crisis.”

Dramatically increasing its testing capacity is critical as Chicago looks to move into the next phase of its reopening plan. The City must meet critical benchmarks in terms of the amount of people being tested, and it will also rely on data from these testing sites to better understand the spread of the COVID-19 virus. All test results from this site will be reported to the Chicago Department of Public Health, in accordance with a health order issued in March to help determine the areas where COVID-19 is most prevalent throughout Chicago and assist in determining how to most effectively allocate resources.



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“Throughout this pandemic we have talked about the critical importance of expanding the availability of testing as we work to contain the spread of COVID-19 and direct our resources to areas that are most in need,” said CDPH Commissioner Allison Arwady, M.D. “We’re now looking to move to the next phase of our response and this additional testing is key to that.”

Symptomatic residents and asymptomatic frontline workers that are looking to be tested for COVID-19 are encouraged to pre-register for a test online at [chicago.curativeinc.com/welcome](https://chicago.curativeinc.com/welcome). For more information about the City’s response to COVID-19 text COVID19 to 78015, email [coronavirus@chicago.gov](mailto:coronavirus@chicago.gov) or visit [Chicago.gov/coronavirus](https://Chicago.gov/coronavirus).

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### **About CORE**

CORE (Community Organized Relief Effort) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to saving lives and strengthening communities affected by or vulnerable to crisis. Within hours of the 2010 earthquake in Haiti, founder Sean Penn mobilized a powerful network to take immediate action. More than 10 years later, CORE continues to lead sustainable programs focused on four pillars: emergency relief, disaster preparedness, environmental resiliency and community building. The organization has expanded beyond Haiti to support communities in The Bahamas, Puerto Rico and the United States. CORE has taken a leadership position in the COVID-19 response to provide free testing for high-risk individuals and vulnerable communities. More information: [www.coreresponse.org/COVID19](http://www.coreresponse.org/COVID19) and follow CORE on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) or [Twitter](#).

### **About World Central Kitchen**

Founded in 2010 by Chef José Andrés, World Central Kitchen (WCK) uses the power of food to heal and strengthen communities through times of crisis and beyond. WCK has transformed the field of disaster response to help devastated communities recover and establish resilient food systems. Since its founding, WCK has served over 19 million meals to those impacted by natural disasters and other crises around the world in countries including Albania, The Bahamas, Colombia, Guatemala, Haiti, Mexico, Mozambique, Spain, Venezuela, and the United States. Learn more at [WCK.org](http://WCK.org).