

Woolworths allocates over R34m towards Covid-19 response

Woolworths has announced a commitment of over R34 million to support a variety of initiatives to meet the challenges of the Covid-19 crisis in South Africa. While its fashion, beauty and homeware businesses are all under lockdown, Woolworths continues to deliver its essential food provision service across the country, putting a significant number of its employees at the frontline of the nation's Covid-19 response.



Jeffrey's Bay Woolworths employees wearing protective visors

Woolworths employees who are braving the lockdown to provide essential services during this period are receiving an Extraordinary Difference Award, an incentive that acknowledges their contributions to the country.

Woolworths' senior executive teams recently announced that they have decided to forego up to 30% of their salaries over the next three months. The savings from this will be used to provide additional financial support, over and above the current interventions, to Woolworths people who will be impacted during the crisis.

The retailer has also turned to its long-standing social investment partners to deliver emergency relief and help build resilience in vulnerable communities.

Woolworths corporate affairs director, Zinzi Mgolodela says, “We are fortunate to be able to leverage our strong, existing partnerships to get help to where it is needed as the outbreak evolves. One of our key focuses at this time is obviously on our frontline employees, but also on supporting healthcare workers and volunteers, while boosting food security in vulnerable communities and improving access to education for the many, many children who cannot access digital education platforms.”



Living Soils farm produce

The more than R34m allocated to the Woolworths Covid-19 response includes:

Employee health and safety

- One of Woolworths' local clothing suppliers is focused on the production of over R1.2m worth of reusable fabric masks which will be distributed to frontline employees in Woolworths South African stores, distribution centres, call centres, essential workers at head office as well as Woolworths retirees and colleagues working in other African countries.
- Each employee will receive 2 masks with 4 extra filters per mask for replacement or be able to make their own masks at home for family members if needed.
- 20,000 visors have been provided for store employees to boost in-store protection.
- Woolworths is providing all employees access to the flu vaccine at no cost. (Although the flu vaccine does not protect from Covid-19, it can prevent one from being sick with both the flu and Covid-19 during the upcoming winter months which will cause an unnecessary demand on the healthcare system.)
- Frontline staff have access to free hand sanitiser and are encouraged to bring their own refillable containers to ensure that they have access to hand sanitiser in and out of the workplace.
- A Covid-19 helpline has been implemented which was initially focused on supporting employees with medical queries

relating to the pandemic. This has recently been extended to provide all employees with toll-free access to psychological and emotional support through the pandemic.



Woolworths execs accept pay cuts to financially assist staff

6 Apr 2020



Protection for healthcare workers and community volunteers

- Woolworths has made a R500,000 donation to Gift of the Givers for PPE for healthcare workers at mobile testing sites.
- A R1m contribution of locally-made masks will be donated for use in community relief interventions.
- A donation of t-shirts and caps will be made to community volunteer response teams so that volunteers on the frontline can be easily identified.



Woolworths and MySchool donate R500,000 to Gift of the Givers

31 Mar 2020



Food security for communities

- More than a 1,000 charities continue to access surplus food directly from Woolworths stores on an ongoing basis.
- Woolworths will make a R2m contribution to improving food security during the Covid-19 crisis. This will be in the form of food packs to those most in need and a donation of over 23 tonnes of porridge for emergency food relief to Gift of the Givers and Food ForwardSA.
- Customers are invited to join hands in the effort by supporting an in-store food drive campaign. When they do their essential lockdown shopping, they can purchase non-perishable groceries like long-life milk, canned food and toiletries and place them in a designated trolley. Woolies has partnered with the Community Action Network (CAN) in the Western Cape, and with Gift of the Givers for Gauteng, KZN, East London, Port Elizabeth, Kimberley, Nelspruit and Polokwane areas to ensure that in-store donations are effectively distributed to the most vulnerable.
- Together with Infinity Culinary Training, Woolworths is delivering 160 meals per day to Life Child's branch in Philippi, which is among Cape Town's most impoverished communities.
- The Living Soils Community Learning Farm, which is a partnership that also includes Spier Wine Farm and the Sustainability Institute, has contributed to fresh produce boxes that have been disseminated with other neighbouring farms produce to over 130 vulnerable winelands families since the beginning of lockdown.

Access to education for the most vulnerable children

- Through its partnership with the National Education Collaboration Trust (NECT), Woolworths is in support of a variety of initiatives that help the Department of Basic Education improve access to educational resources for families without an Internet connection and little capacity to facilitate home-schooling on their own during lockdown.

“In the end, how we emerge from the Covid-19 crisis as a country, is not so dependent on what challenges unfold, but on the quality and expansiveness of our care for one another, and on how well we come together to meet those challenges.

We gratefully acknowledge the caring collaboration of Woolies suppliers, our leadership team and board, our courageous and disciplined employees, who are working responsibly at the frontlines, our generous customers and our hard-working partners such as Food Forward SA, Gift of the Givers and more. We are all in this together,” Mgolodela concludes.

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