Pandemic Preparedness for Faith-based Organizations
Instructor Guide: Section 3: Putting Your Community Back Together: The Role of Your Faith-based Organization

Goals
This section enables congregations, synagogues, mosques and other places of worship to fulfill their mission during a pandemic by:

- Identifying the possible and potential roles a faith-based organization can have in rebuilding a community after a pandemic.
- Developing a community recovery plan that meshes the needs of the community with the strengths of the FBO.

Objectives
By the end of this section, religious leaders or individuals given the task of disaster planning within an FBO will be able to:

- Go back to their organization and confidently describe the potential roles a faith-based organization can have in rebuilding a community after a pandemic.
- Identify the most appropriate people within their organization who could make up a solid planning team for community rebuilding.
- Write critical action steps that are specific to their organization for community rebuilding.
- Develop priority tasks and functions, keeping in mind the resources (especially staff and volunteers) that could continue to be decreased due to sickness and fear of the sickness.

Course Duration
This section is 2–3 hours in length, depending on the depth and breadth of the class discussions.

Additional Preparation
This section encourages student interaction, so be prepared to lead discussions, facilitate activities, answer questions and interact effectively with the class.

Additional materials and equipment include:

- Printed Community Recovery Plan template for each participant.
- Chart paper, easel, sticky notes, pencils and markers

The first section of Preparing Your Faith-based Organization for a Pandemic covered the basics of what pandemics are and how they spread. We discussed that a pandemic is an illness or disease that is widespread geographically, that affects many people and that is infectious or contagious. We also discussed the difference between seasonal influenza and pandemic influenza. Finally, we discussed measures to help stem the spread of a pandemic.
In Section 2, we discussed how a pandemic would affect your faith-based organization and outlined the steps for developing a plan for your FBO to best survive a pandemic.

Now what?

In Section 3, you will learn the role of your FBO after the worst of the pandemic is over and how your FBO can help your community recover.

First, let’s examine the potential roles your FBO can serve in your community.
Does your FBO have large spaces that could be used to shelter people displaced by the pandemic? Depending on the nature of the pandemic, people may not be able to stay in their homes. Volunteers from other cities may need short- or long-term shelter. Is your FBO equipped with showers or near a facility with public showers? Do you have the facilities to feed large numbers of people?

Maybe your FBO doesn’t have the facilities to provide shelter, but most FBOs have gathering spaces. Can you provide space for community meetings, volunteer meetings or perhaps space for temporary office work?

Can your FBO provide meals to volunteers? Or prepare meals to be delivered to those who have recovered from the pandemic but are still not able to cook? Keep in mind that many restaurants may be temporarily out of business.

Does your FBO have staff or members who can provide emotional comfort services? Could your FBO provide a network of emotional support for your members?
Many people will have missed a great deal of work during the pandemic. This will create financial hardship for individuals, families and businesses. Does your FBO have direct financial resources that can assist members during this time? Are there indirect ways your FBO can assist with financial hardship? Providing meals? Transportation vouchers? Job referrals?

Depending on the nature of the pandemic, many people may need assistance with day-to-day tasks in their homes and businesses. Can your FBO provide child care free or at a reduced rate? Does your FBO have a parish nurse program that could provide visitation services? Could your FBO assist small businesses with staffing or accounting services?

Now that we have identified some of the possible roles for your FBO during the recovery from a pandemic, it’s time to develop a plan for your FBO to play a vital role in assisting your community in recovery.

Primary planning steps include:
- Identify the existing conditions in your community.
- Identify potential needs in your community following a pandemic.
- Brainstorm ideas for meshing community needs with your FBO resources.
- Develop a plan for using the most feasible of the ideas.
- Finally, manage the plan and update it when conditions in your FBO change.
The first step is to identify the resources available in your FBO. This will include both physical resources and human resources.

**Note to Instructor:** Refer participants to the Community Recovery Plan template, and spend some time filling in the Logistical Information and Step 1.

Start by taking an inventory of the existing conditions in your FBO. What resources does your FBO have to offer? This includes both your physical building and grounds and your human resources. What are your conditions today?

- First, examine your location(s) within the community. Are you in the middle of town? Close to a hospital? Along a major highway? What is significant or unique about your location?
- Next, examine each space within your physical location. Record the square footage and number of seats in each space. Also record other assets for each space, such as proximity to kitchen facilities and bathrooms. Does the space have easy-to-clean surfaces and/or a drain in the floor?
- Next, look at your staff. What skills do they possess? What are their strengths?
- Finally, look at your members. What skills do they possess? Do you have an extraordinary number of members in one profession, such as education, medicine or banking?

**Note to Instructors:** Ask participants to attempt each section. Perhaps they will want to start by examining three primary spaces and just a couple of staff members. The focus here is to get an idea of how to develop this plan with their own FBOs.

The second step is to identify the needs in your community.
Identify Community Needs

- Shelter
- Elder care
- Business support
- Agency coordination

Note to Instructor: Refer participants to Step 2 of the Community Recovery Plan template. This section may take a bit of research after the class. FBOs need to become familiar with agencies in their community that would be involved during and after the pandemic.

- First, what challenges will your community possibly face following a pandemic? Will shelter be a major need? Care for the elderly? Business support?
- Next, identify key community agencies related to these challenges. Start with your community website. If you are located in a large city, you should identify agency offices closest to your FBO as well as two or three slightly more distant. If you are located in a small town or rural area, where are the closest agencies? Identify hospitals, medical clinics and community/public health agencies as well as city government offices and university or college facilities. What other agencies are unique to your area? Refer back to Step 7 in your Preparedness and Response Plan for a list of some of these agencies.
- Finally, check the agency websites for pandemic preparedness plans or contact them to determine what those agencies identify as areas of need following a pandemic.

Note to Instructor: If all the participants are from the same area or community, complete this section as a group. If there are several communities represented, divide the large group into smaller community groups to complete this section. If your space has Internet access, you might want to demonstrate how to find agency information websites.

Step 3 involves brainstorming ideas to match your community needs with the resources of your FBO.
The idea behind brainstorming is to put as many ideas on the table as possible. Every idea, no matter how strange or unreal, is treated equally. You can use sticky notes on a wall, large sheets of paper or any of a number of computer brainstorming programs.

The question is: How can your FBO help your community recover from a pandemic? How do the resources or existing condition of your FBO mesh with the potential needs of the community?

**Note to Instructor:** Provide a method for your participants to do some brainstorming. Sticky notes are an easy method as individuals in a group can write their own ideas as quickly or slowly as they like. Provide at least 10 minutes for brainstorming. If an FBO is represented by only one person, group similar FBOs together.

Step 4 is where all your previous hard work comes together into a plan.

**Note to Instructors:** Refer participants to Step 4 of the Community Recovery Plan.

There are many ways to develop a plan. Each will be unique, just as your pandemic plan is unique to your FBO. Developing a plan involves taking those ideas identified during your brainstorming session and developing them into a unique plan for your FBO.
First, examine every idea from the brainstorming session. Even those ideas that at first seem preposterous may hold a glimmer of a concept that can supplement another idea. Discard ideas you are no longer considering. Discarded ideas may include those that are not financially feasible for your FBO, that require more personnel than you have available or that require facilities not available to your FBO.

Identify the most feasible ideas for your FBO. For example, if your FBO has an unusual number of medical professionals, you may want to concentrate on how your FBO can help the medical community recover. If your FBO is located in an urban area, you may want to concentrate on helping your neighborhood recover financially.

Arrange your ideas into categories. For example, if you have several ideas that involve medical professionals, put them together. If you have several ideas that involve using your facilities for food and shelter, put those together.

Since a pandemic holds many unknowns, you will want to develop several ideas.

You should first identify the idea that is most plausible for your FBO. It might be the one that best matches your staff and members or your facility or your financial limitations. Maybe you have a large kitchen area and your FBO would be best suited for providing meals. Maybe you have an established strong parish nurse program and you can provide follow-up medical monitoring. What is your FBO best suited to provide your community during the pandemic recovery period?

If the situation doesn’t fit with your primary idea, you should identify a second primary idea, a secondary idea or even several secondary ideas.

Finally, can any of these ideas work simultaneously? Do they use different parts of your facility or different members of your FBO? Perhaps one could potentially be a heavy financial burden, but another has little or no cost. You can identify a laundry list of ideas and then match them to potential situations.

Each idea now needs a plan. For each idea, identify who you will help and how you will do it, who will be in charge, what you hope to accomplish and when you will know you are finished with your part of the recovery.
A plan isn’t effective if it is on a shelf, old and out of date. Share information about your plan with staff, members and people in the communities you serve. Make sure you update your plan at least yearly. Although a pandemic can occur at any time, the winter season is the most likely time for a pandemic, so make it a policy to update your plan in the late summer or early fall. Look at both the changes that have occurred in your FBO and the changes that might have occurred in your community.

Your FBO’s Pandemic Preparedness and Response Plan is only as good as you make it. By taking part in this Pandemic Preparedness for Faith-based Organizations program, you’ve done everything you can to help your faith-based organization thrive and remain an important part of your community during and after a pandemic. Good luck as you complete your plan and keep it up to date.