**Considerations for Faith Based Organizations**

How do you provide funeral services for multiple families at a time? Or what will be your policy for handling multiple funerals that may have to be postponed due to staff illness, family illness or the demands exceeding funeral homes’ or your capabilities to work with families?

Belief systems will be tested at this time. How do you intend to address this issue during a time when people feel hopeless or frustrated, and are mourning the loss of loved ones? Do you feel it is important to address beliefs and values before such a potential event becomes catastrophic?

How can you maintain the support structure of your FBO and people you serve if individuals cannot physically come together?

**Counseling/support services needed** – also potentially reaching or pushing beyond your maximum capacity to serve

**Disruption of normal activities** simply from the attempt to minimize the spread of the disease

* Budget restrictions due to reduced capacity of flu-impacted members to honor pledges
* Loss of productivity
* Increased costs due to need for enhanced communications

**Communication**

* Disseminating information to those who need to know how your FBO will respond to a pandemic
* Developing a communication plan to disseminate that information
* Identifying those in your FBO with special needs who may need additional help or a different means of communication
* Coordinating with other FBOs or other agencies during a pandemic Sharing your plan with members of your FBO
* Determine how your organization handles rumors, misinformation, fear and anxiety, and consider the various cultures that may exist within your organization and community.
* Expanded electronic and other communications capabilities to transform worship and teaching services and maintain contact with members during a pandemic influenza outbreak. This might include websites, blogs, podcasts, local newspaper announcements and pre-recorded widely distributed phone messages.
* Expanded health activities to extend timely and factual information on pandemic influenza to staff, members and people in the communities. This includes plans to distribute materials with basic information about the pandemic, such as signs and symptoms, how it is spread, ways to protect yourself and your family, family preparedness plans and how to care for ill people at home.
* Expanded community-outreach efforts to minister to people with special needs, such as elderly, disabled and limited English speakers.

**Employees and Volunteers:** Be prepared to provide them with information on if, when and how to report during a pandemic. Set up a telephone call or texting tree, password-protected page on the organization website, an email alert or a call-in voice recording to communicate. Be clear on how their jobs or tasks may be affected.

**Organization Leaders:** Equip organization leaders with all relevant information needed for the protection of employees, members, volunteers and vendors. This might include the location of temporary services, alternative contact information for staff or alternate ways of conducting business, such as a payroll or bookkeeping service.

Potential budget reductions due to reduced capacity of pandemic-impacted members to honor pledges and other giving.  
• Potential loss of productivity from pandemic-impacted staff members and volunteers.  
• Potential increased costs to maintain critical functions during a pandemic, including printing and mailing for enhanced communications with members and expenses for alternative worship delivery systems, such as radio or TV ministry.

**Organization Members:** Update your members on how regular services have been changed to accommodate the situation. Set up a list of local media contacts that could help you facilitate the delivery of important messages. If possible, set up a designated Web page that would announce available or changed services and list ways in which members can help.

**Public:** It may be important to update the general public, with calm assurance, that all resources are being used to protect staff, organizational members and the community. If applicable to your organization, clearly communicate the plans that are in place for assistance during a pandemic.

**Government:** Tell local officials what your organization is prepared to do to help in responding to a pandemic. Also, communicate with local, state and federal authorities about what emergency assistance is needed for you to continue essential daily activities and services.

**Vendors:** Contact any company with which you conduct regular business on how common activities may have to be changed. Maintain an up-to-date contact list for all vendors.

**How to Assist Special Needs**

* Identify people with special needs, such as elderly, disabled, homeless, low-income populations, limited English speakers or reading/learning impaired, and include their needs in your response and preparedness plans.
* A list of people with special needs that your organization is prepared to assist during a pandemic.
* A list of volunteers who are willing to participate in this outreach ministry initiative.
* Procedures and a protocol for volunteers to maintain contact with the special needs population during the outbreak, making sure that these people receive the information and assistance they need.

**Coordination with Government**

* Delegate to an appropriate person(s) the responsibility to contact other local government and/or service organizations to determine what plans they already have in place. This will help to understand others’ capabilities and coordinate your pandemic preparedness and response plans during planning.
* For example, your facilities may be needed as a vaccination clinic, a food pantry or perhaps even an overflow health care or hospital facility. Additionally, there may be needs and opportunities for expanded community outreach involvement using volunteers to serve the communities in a variety of different roles, such as the delivery of food and other essential supplies to flu-quarantined families.
* But before exploring such needs and opportunities with external organizations and agencies, assess and define the scope and nature of your organization’s potential involvement in community outreach activities.