

FAQs for Administrators and Leaders at Community- and Faith-Based Organizations

Get Prepared

Q. What steps should my organization take to prepare?

A. To help your organization prepare for the possible spread of [COVID-19](#), ensure your emergency operations plan includes [key COVID-19 prevention strategies](#) and covers groups at [increased risk for severe illness](#). This includes, but is not limited to, older adults and people of any age with serious underlying medical conditions, such as heart or lung disease or diabetes.

Be sure all staff, volunteers, and members are familiar with your emergency operations plan. Ensure you know how to contact them with information and updates (such as through text message and websites). Alert local public health officials about large increases in staff or regular member absenteeism, particularly if absences appear due to respiratory illnesses (such as, the common cold and the flu, which have [symptoms](#) similar to COVID-19 (fever, cough, and difficulty breathing). Read [CDC's guidance](#) to learn more about how to get your community- or faith-based organization ready for COVID-19. CDC also has [guidance](#) that covers additional strategies to protect your staff.

Q. How can my organization lower the chance that staff and members will get sick?

A. The best way to prevent COVID-19 is to avoid being exposed to the virus. Start by encouraging your staff and members to use [everyday preventive actions](#) (such as washing hands often, avoiding close contact with people, and covering coughs and sneezes with a tissue or the inside of the elbow). Be sure you have supplies on hand (such as soap, hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol, tissues, trash baskets) for your staff, volunteers, and those you serve. CDC has posters with messages you can post in your facility for staff about:

- [Staying home when sick](#); and
- How to [avoid spreading germs at work](#).

CDC also has information for members, including:

- [Health promotion materials](#);
- Information on [proper handwashing technique](#); and
- [Tips for families to help children develop good handwashing habits](#).

To help limit the spread of the virus, you should also develop [flexible sick-leave and telework policies](#) so that staff (and volunteers) can stay home when they are sick, when they need to care for a sick household member, or to care for their children in the event of [temporary school dismissals](#). You may also consider replacing in-person meetings with conference calls, video conferencing, or web-based seminars and postponing non-essential meetings and travel.



Q. How should my organization clean the facility to limit spread of the virus?

A. At least once per day, clean and then disinfect surfaces and objects that are touched often. Read [CDC guidance on cleaning and disinfecting](#) to learn more. This guidance includes cleaning objects and surfaces not ordinarily cleaned daily, for example, doorknobs, light switches, and countertops. Clean with the cleaners typically used. Use all cleaning products according to the directions on the label. For disinfection, most common household disinfectants should be effective. A list of products that are EPA-approved for use against the virus that causes COVID-19 is available [here](#).

Q. Where can my organization find out if the virus has spread to the local community?

A. You can get up-to-date information about local COVID-19 activity by keeping in touch with your local and state [public health officials](#), and keeping up-to-date with the [CDC website](#).

Q. What are things to consider when determining if a group event or gathering needs to be postponed or canceled?

A. Consult with local public health officials and continually assess current conditions. Be sure to regularly review the latest recommendations from the [White House](#) and [CDC](#) for all types of gatherings. When determining if you should postpone or cancel a gathering or event, consider the:

- Overall number of attendees or crowd size.
- Number of people attending who are at higher risk for serious illness.
- How close together attendees will be.
- Potential economic impact to attendees, staff, and the local community.
- Amount of spread in local community and the communities from where your attendees are likely to travel.
- Needs and capacity of the local community to host or participate in your event.

Read [CDC guidance on mass gatherings and large events](#).

Q. How can my organization get involved to help the local community?

A. Leaders should talk to staff and members about their concerns, as well as the potential [fears and anxiety](#) that may result from rumors or misinformation. Be sure to share resources that provide [reliable COVID-19 information](#) and speak out to prevent [stigma and discrimination](#).

Consider how your organization is uniquely able to assist the local community. Determine whether your organization can work with local health departments, if needed, so that your facilities can be used as temporary care facilities; quarantine facilities; or central distribution sites for food, water, supplies, or medicine. Coordinate with local health officials on ways to ensure care and services for vulnerable populations. Congregations and organizations with experience working with underserved communities (e.g., people who are incarcerated, people who are experiencing homelessness, immigrants, refugees, those with limited English proficiency, single-parent families, public housing residents, migrant-, farm-, and other low-wage workers) can work with local health officials to ensure these groups receive appropriate care and services.

Q. Is there information my organization can share with staff and members about COVID-19?

A. Share these resources to help people understand COVID-19 and steps they can take to help protect themselves:

- [How to Protect Yourself](#)
- [Groups at Higher Risk](#)

- [What to Do If You Are Sick](#)
- [FAQs: Pregnant Women and COVID-19](#)
- [FAQs: Coronavirus Disease-2019 \(COVID-19\) and Children](#)
- [Handwashing: A Family Activity](#)
- [Handwashing: Clean Hands Save Lives](#)

Minimal or moderate spread of COVID-19 in the local community

Q. What steps should my organization take to protect staff and members if there is minimal or moderate spread of COVID-19 in the local community?

A. If there is minimal or moderate spread of COVID-19 in your community, you should:

- Continue to encourage [everyday preventive actions](#).
- [Clean and disinfect](#) surfaces daily.
- Use multiple strategies to increase space between people, especially for those who are at high-risk for serious illness (such as putting at least 6 feet of space between desks and between people who are in line).
- Develop ways to continue essential services for clients or members, such as meal, [mental](#) and spiritual and health, and social service programs.
- Cancel large events or modify into smaller gatherings. (see [CDC guidance](#) for more information)
 - Follow the directions of your state and local authorities.
 - Encourage people who are at [high-risk for serious illness](#) not to attend in-person. Instead, offer call-in or online viewing options.
- Postpone or cancel trips that could put staff, volunteers, or members at risk for COVID-19.
- Limit access of non-essential visitors to the facility.

For more information related to group activities or events, read CDC guidance on [mass gatherings and large events](#).

Q. Should my organization cancel or postpone an event if there is minimal or moderate spread of COVID-19 in the local community?

A. To find out if your organization should cancel or postpone a group event or activity, read [CDC guidance on mass gathering and large events](#).

Substantial spread of COVID-19 in the local community

Q. What steps should my organization take to protect staff and members if there is substantial spread of COVID-19 in the local community?

A. If there is substantial spread of COVID-19 in the community, you should:

- Follow the directions of your [state and local authorities](#).
- Cancel in-person community and faith-based group events or gatherings of any size.
- Continue to encourage [everyday preventive actions](#).
- [Clean and then disinfect](#) surfaces daily.
- Develop ways to continue essential services for clients or members, such as meal, mental and spiritual and health, and social service programs.

- Consider closing the facility or limiting access to the facility by non-essential visitors and limit non-essential services.
 - Offer alternative ways (e.g., phone, online) for those at high risk of severe illness to participate.
 - Encourage them not to attend in-person.

For more information related to group activities or events, read [CDC guidance on community events](#).

Q. Should my organization cancel or postpone an event if there is substantial spread of COVID-19 in the local community?

A. You should first follow the directions of your state and local authorities. If authorities do not have specific directions related to cancelling or postponing a group event or activity, read [CDC guidance on community events](#).

Confirmed COVID-19 case within your organization or facility

Q. What should my organization do if a member, volunteer, or a staff member might have COVID-19?

A. If you think someone on your staff or one of your members who has been in your facility might be sick with COVID-19 (see [COVID-19 symptoms](#)):

- Send the sick person home right away or separate them from others (such as in a separate room just for sick people) until they can go home.
 - Give them a clean, [disposable facemask](#) to wear until they can leave, if available. If not available, provide them with a tissue or some other way to cover their coughs and sneezes.
 - Do not use of public transportation, shared rides, and taxis to transport the sick person home.
 - Contact emergency services for those who need emergency care, when needed, and let them know about the person’s symptoms.
- Contact local public health officials and communicate with staff, members, and volunteers about possible exposure to the virus.
 - Read [preventing the spread of COVID-19 if someone is sick](#) to learn more.
- Local health officials can offer guidance for closing the facility or restricting access. An initial short-term closure may be recommended to allow time for the local health officials to gain a better understanding of the COVID-19 situation.
 - Implement flexible telework and sick-leave policies for staff, if possible, and provide instructions about how and when to safely return to work.
 - Consider the need to cancel in-person group activities in other locations. Instead use phone and online (live or recorded) meeting and service options.
 - Work with local public health officials to decide when it is safe to re-open the facility and your programs and services.

Q. What is the best way to clean and disinfect rooms and other areas after a confirmed case of COVID-19?

A. CDC has guidance for cleaning and disinfecting rooms and areas where a person with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 has visited. See [Environmental Cleaning and Disinfection Recommendations](#).