



Writing a Continuity Of Operations Plan (COOP) For Congregations and Faith-based Organizations: Public Health Emergencies

**Tuesday, March 10th, 2020 • 9:30am – 12:00pm
New York Disaster Interfaith Services, 4 West 43rd Street**

Zoom Webinar Orientation

- **Video for participants is turned off, except for the hosts**
- **Please mute your microphone during the training (bottom left of screen)**
 - The presenter will pause after each section to take questions from you, at which point you should unmute yourself to ask a question
- **You can use the Q&A feature to submit questions if you prefer**
 - The presenter will look at them and answer them at the end of each section
- **There will be chances to work on writing portions of your plan**
 - Please have a printout of the worksheets available, as well any of your congregation/organization's relevant documents
- **You will receive an evaluation in an email after the training to complete**

Welcome and Introductions

- **Instructors:**
 - **Peter B. Gudaitis, M.Div.**
Executive Director & CEO
 - **Helena Duran, Senior Manager**
Faith Sector Community Preparedness Program
- **Participant Self Introductions**
 - **Name, Role/Title, & Congregation/Organization Name**

Overview

- **Welcome and Introductions**
- **Module 1**
 - COOP for Congregations & Faith-based Organizations in COVID-19 Context
 - Participant-Submitted Priorities
- **Module 2**
 - Essential Functions, Orders of Succession, Delegations of Authority
 - Q&A, Worksheets 1-3
- **Module 3**
 - Communications, Human Resources Considerations, Tests/Trainings/Exercises
 - Q&A, Worksheets 4-5
- **Conclusion & Next Steps**
- **Evaluation (check your email)**

What is COOP?

Continuity of Operations Planning:

Planning done to continue to conduct the day-to-day administrative, religious functions, programs and services, and support for public or tenant programs within your facilities during an incident or after a crisis event.



COOP: For Congregations & Faith-based Organizations



What is COVID-19 & your Threat Assessment?

Module 1

1. COOP for Congregations & Faith-based Organizations in COVID-19 Context

2. Participant-Submitted Priorities

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Scenario

This Friday at 3pm, you find out you had two people infected with the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) attend your worship service last weekend.

In addition, 25% of your staff and volunteers are out sick. There is ongoing community spread of the virus. You have a worship service scheduled for Sunday morning, followed by a congregation festival.

Discussion: What is your plan, and what action(s) will you take?

Essential COOP Components in a COVID-19 Context

- **Essential Functions:** Identify all essential functions to make a plan of how you will continue to complete those vital tasks
- **Orders of Succession:** Identify who is in charge of completing your essential functions, and who will succeed them if they become unavailable
- **Delegations of Authority:** Plan for how the authority of second and third-in-line successors may be limited
- **Communications:** Document your communication systems and make a plan for communicating during an incident
- **Human Resources Considerations:** Document your personnel's unique vulnerabilities to threats such as COVID-19, and write up protocol
- **Tests/Trainings/Exercises:** Decide how often you want to review and update your plans, make a schedule to test your plan with exercises

COOP: For Congregations & Faith-based Organizations

What are the **categories** for COOP within a congregation & faith-based organization?

OR

What main focus areas should your COOP Framework organize around?

- Administration & Operations
- Prayer/Worship/Ritual Life
- Community Programs & Services



Participant-Submitted Priorities

- **Priority A:** how to maintain the maximum sense of community in worship while being sensitive to the need to protect all members of the congregation
- **Priority B:** be proactive in establishing and communicating policy to our members in advance of possible manifestation of COVID-19 within the community
- **Priority C:** reconciliation of any COVID-19 policy with scripture
- **Priority D:** coordinating/linking/triggering congregational policy with possible governmental mandates at local/county/state/national levels
- **Any Additional Priorities Offered Up by Participants**

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Module 2

1. Essential Functions

2. Orders of Succession

3. Delegations of Authority

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Module 2.1

Essential Functions

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What are **essential functions** for your congregation?

Essential functions: the activities and services performed by congregations or faith-based organizations that are *critical to their mission* and contribute to life safety

Because each congregation and organization has their own unique mission, essential functions will vary

Example: Identifying Congregational Essential Functions

Example: House of Worship

Mission Essential Function: Ritual Life such as regular worship services

Essential Supporting Activity: Maintaining ritual items used for worship such as prayer books, sacred texts, and ritual garments. This is essential, however, just having ritual objects does not provide the service that the community expects (a ritual service). This supports the mission.

Deferable Mission: Providing general religious education to congregants is important and may be considered a part of a congregation's mission. However, this can be deferred until a later time.

Deferrable Supporting Activity: Operating community based programs that are not contributing to life safety. These are good programs but are usually not a house of worship's mission nor something it should spend time and resources on during a crisis.

COOP: For Congregations & Faith-based Organizations

When writing a COOP plan, you should consider how your congregation/organization will continue to provide:

- Ritual Life Services
- Emotional and Spiritual Care
- Social Services



Essential Functions: Goals

Return to your mission essential functions within **12 hours** of an incident

Return to your supporting activities within **30 days** of an incident

12 Hours / 30 Days

Essential Functions: COVID-19 Goals

Maintain your mission essential functions on or offsite

with “No Notice” of Exposure or Quarantine

0 Hours for 30 Days

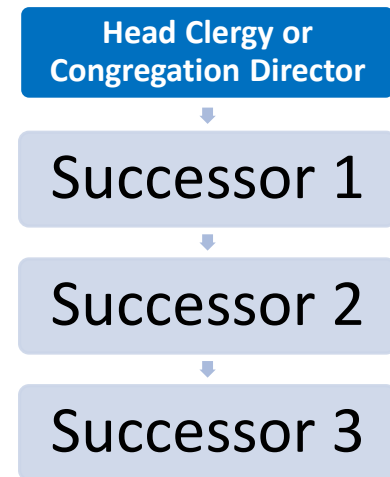
Module 2.2

Orders of Succession

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What is your congregation's **Orders of Succession** Plan?

Definition: A document outlining who would be in charge if clergy and lay led decision-makers are unavailable or incapacitated.



Elements of a COOP Plan: **Orders of Succession**

Why is it important?

- Creates a plan for a back up to each identified leadership position, if possible. Temporary or Permanent
- Ensures there is an orderly transition of leadership during any change to normal operations.

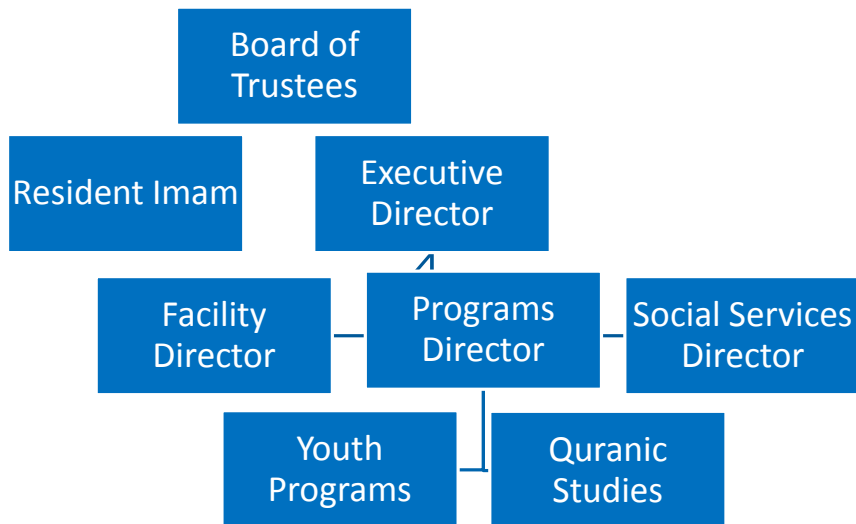
Keep in mind:

- In some cases, succession is prescribed by statute, order, or directive.

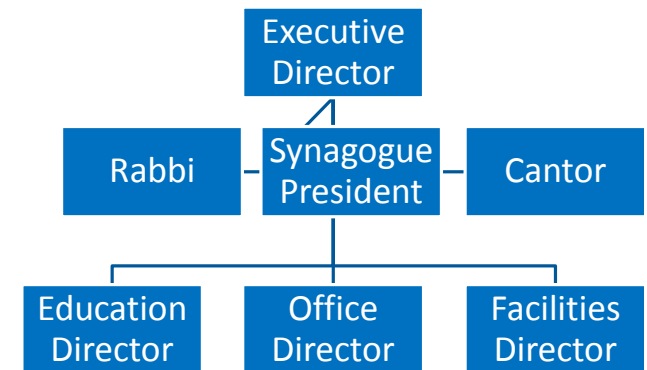
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Examples of Organization Charts:

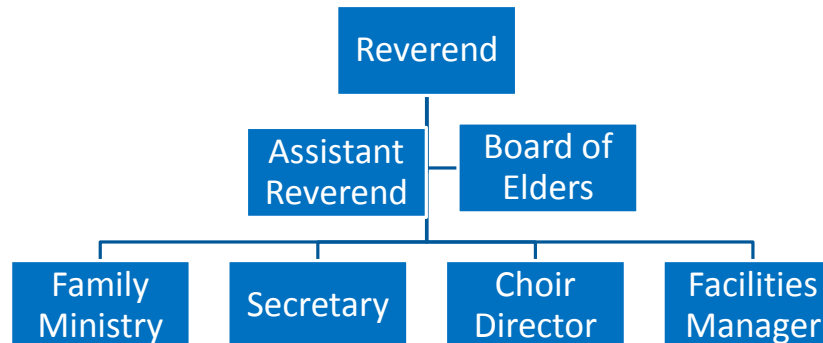
Example Mosque



Example Synagogue



Example Church



Module 2.3

Delegations of Authority

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What are your congregation's **Delegations of Authority**?

Definition: a formal written statement that designates leadership and roles during times of crisis.



Elements of a COOP Plan: **Delegations of Authority**

Why is it important?

- Explicitly outlines the authority
- Delineates the limits of authority and accountability process
- Defines the circumstances under which the delegation of authorities would take effect and end

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Module 2: Worksheets

1. Essential Functions

2. Orders of Succession

3. Delegations of Authority

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Instructions

- Complete Worksheets # 1, 2, 3
- Apply the concepts of Essential Functions, Orders of Succession, and Delegations of Authority as they relate to Administration and Operations, Ritual Life, and Community Services and Programs to your congregation or organization.

Step 1: Identify Congregational Functions

- Identify and list all the important functions your congregation or organization performs day to day.
- The requirements for performing these functions might be part of your core mission, internal procedure, etc.

Step 2: Identify Congregational Essential Functions

- Identify whether your congregation's functions are essential or non-essential
 - **Essential Functions** have to be performed during or immediately after an emergency
 - **Non-Essential Functions** are organizational functions that can be deferred until after the emergency
- Identify your Mission Essential Functions and Essential Support Activities
 - **Mission Essential Functions:** directly related to accomplishing the congregation or organization's mission
 - **Essential Support Activities:** support the performance of your Mission Essential Functions.

Example: Identifying Congregational Essential Functions

Example: House of Worship

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Report Outs



Module 3

1. Communications

2. Human Resources Considerations

3. Tests, Trainings, & Exercises

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Module 3.1

Communications

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How will your congregation or organization **communicate** during an outbreak or other incident?

Your ability to maintain communications and IT, and to communicate with congregants, congregations, staff, and other stakeholders during an emergency.

Otherwise known as Crisis and Emergency Risk Communication (CERC).



Why is it essential for your congregation to have a crisis communications plan?

Commonly Called a CERC Plan (Crisis and Emergency Risk Communication)

- Congregants, external stakeholders, and the public will expect information to flow from an affected or infected area.
- It is vital to be able to communicate your status and additional information that is accurate, quick, effective, and accessible to the whole community and members of your congregation.

Communications Plan

Includes:

- Information Sources
 - Government*
 - Partners
 - Media
- Internal Communications
 - Staff & Leadership
- External Communications
 - Congregation, Clients, Public

Six Principles of Emergency Communication Messaging:

- 1 • Be First
- 2 • Be Right
- 3 • Be Credible
- 4 • Express Empathy
- 5 • Promote Action
- 6 • Show Respect

In an outbreak or public health emergency – public health is the only credible source of information.

Module 3.2

Human Resources Considerations

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What **human resources** plans does your congregation have?

Planning considerations to support your staff and volunteers to ensure the delivery of your mission essential functions, ritual life, and community service programs or activities post-incident.



Elements of a COOP Plan: **Human Resources**

1. Recognize and remain sensitive to staff and volunteer personal needs during incidents or outbreaks.
2. Maximize the contributions of all staff and volunteers, whether in providing essential operations or resuming full services
3. Encourage ***personal preparedness*** of each of your staff in order to maximize their efficacy during an incident



Elements of a **Human Resources** Plan:

- Takes self care and home life considerations of essential staff into account
- Explains the expectations, roles, and responsibilities to the staff and volunteers identified to assist
- Maintains an orders of succession plan that is regularly updated with contact information
- Ensures sustainability of response activities, allowing staff to contribute to mission essential operations in alternating shifts

Module 3.3

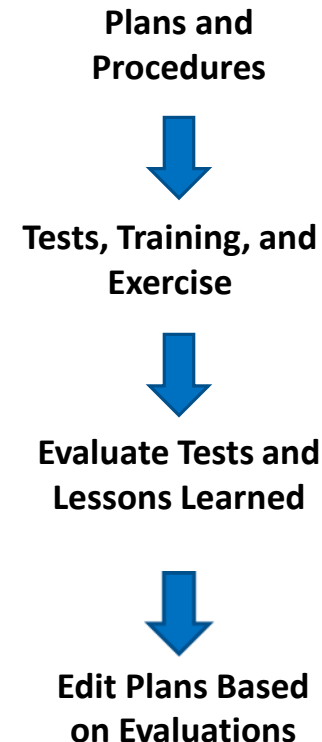
Tests, Training and Exercises (TT&E)

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COOP: For Congregations & Faith-based Organizations

Now that we have a COOP plan, how will your congregation **test, train, and exercise** it?

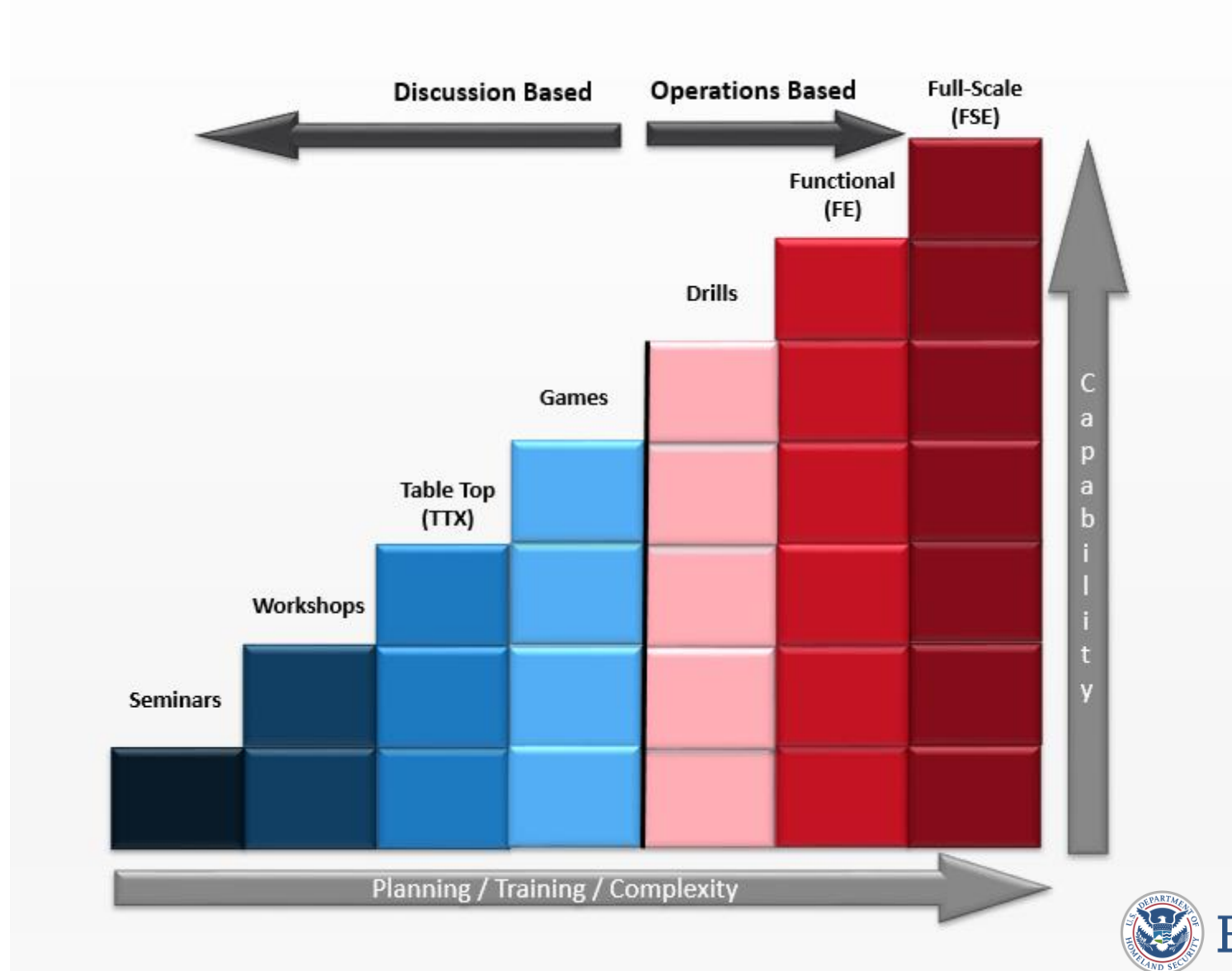
Exercises play an important role in preparedness by enabling the congregation or faith-based organization to test and validate their plans, and identify and address gaps or areas for improvement.



Considerations When Planning Your Exercise

- Decide how often and to what extent your congregation or faith-based organization will test your COOP plan.
- Understand that trainings will range in complexity depending on the capabilities of your congregation or organization.
- Make sure your exercises and trainings are specific to your vulnerabilities.

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FEMA

Application of Exercises

After an Exercise



Recap Exercise



Documentation



Improvements

After An Incident



Documentation



Reporting



Improvements

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Module 3: Worksheets

1. Communications

2. Human Resources Considerations

3. Tests, Trainings, & Exercises

COOP Workshop for Congregations and Faith-based Organizations

Instructions

- Complete Worksheets # 4, 5, and 6
- Apply the concepts of Communications, Human Resources, and Tests, Trainings, and Exercises (TT&E) as they relate to Administration and Operations, Ritual Life, and Community Services and Programs to your congregation or organization.

Worksheet 5: Scenario

Scenario: This Friday at 3pm, you find out you had people infected with the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) attend your worship service last weekend. In addition, 25% of your staff and volunteers are out sick. There is ongoing community spread of the virus. You have a worship service scheduled for Sunday morning, followed by religious education classes.

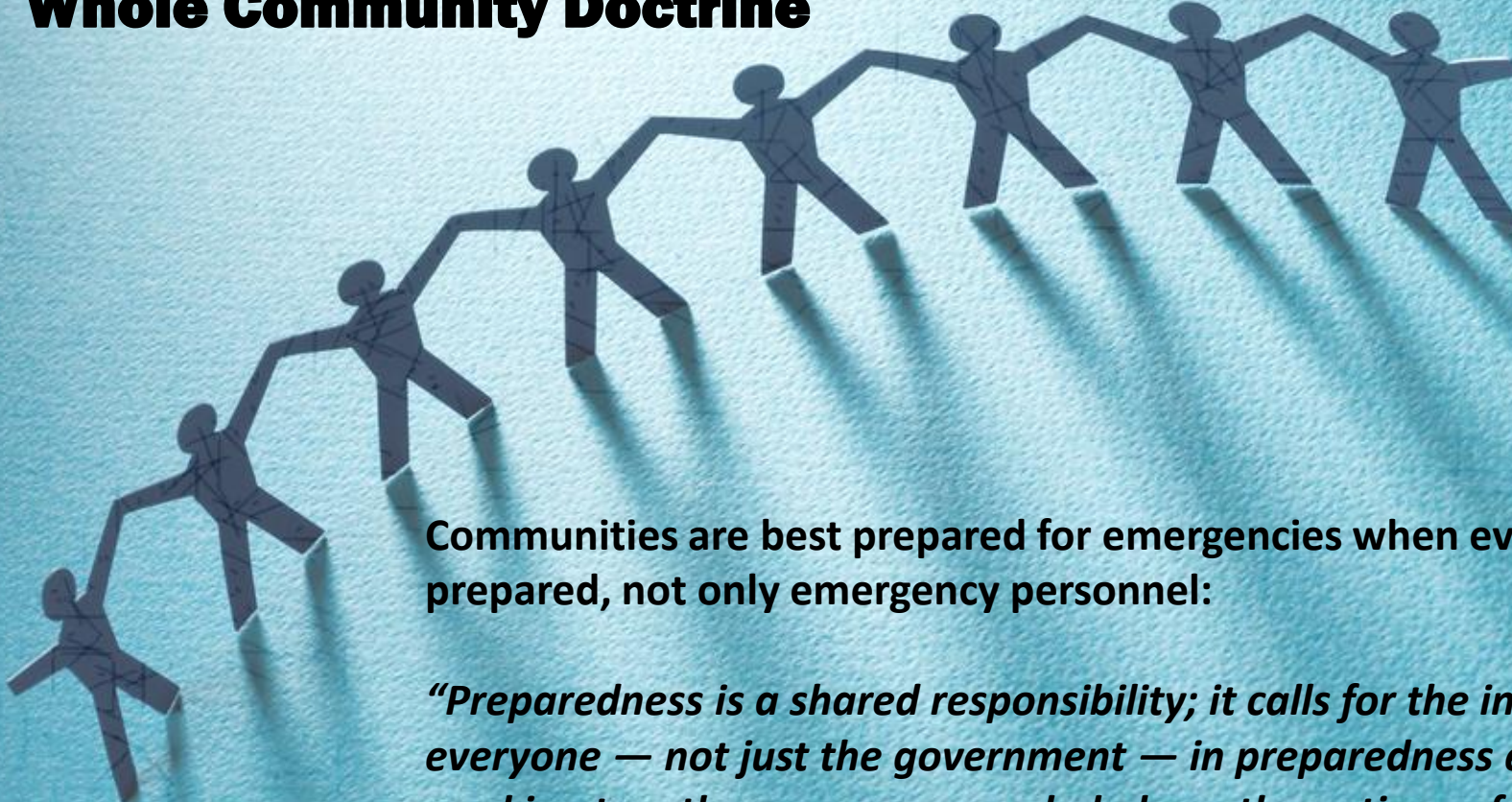
Task: Compose an email for your congregation members and community members to give facts and update.

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Report Outs



Whole Community Doctrine



Communities are best prepared for emergencies when everyone is prepared, not only emergency personnel:

*“Preparedness is a shared responsibility; it calls for the involvement of everyone — not just the government — in preparedness efforts. By working together, everyone can help keep the nation safe from harm and help keep it resilient when struck by hazards, such as natural disasters, acts of terrorism, and pandemics.”**

* “Whole Community.” FEMA, <https://www.fema.gov/whole-community>.

Putting It All Together

Next Steps:

- **Meet** with appropriate congregation officials and stakeholders
- **Develop and write** a COOP for your congregation
- **Test** your COOP within your congregation/organization

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Evaluation in Email





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