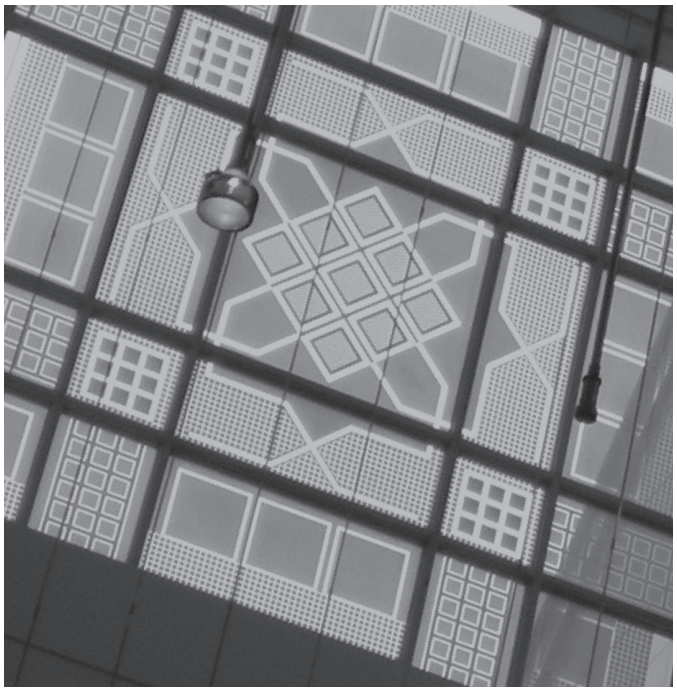
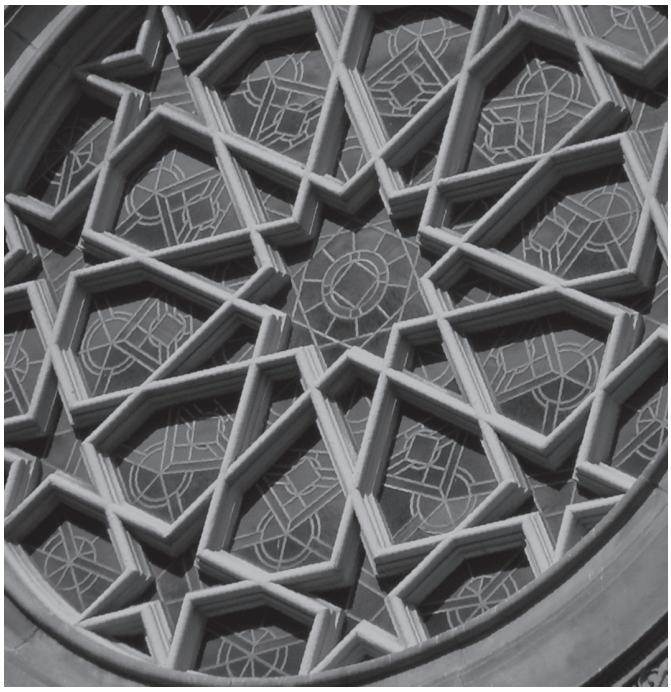
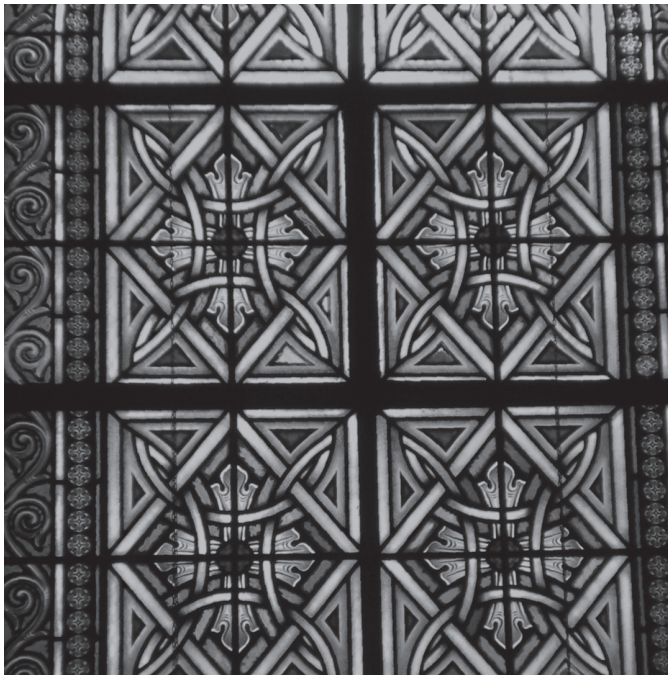
FIELD GUIDE

WORKING WITH U.S. FAITH COMMUNITIES
DURING CRISES, DISASTERS & PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCIES



A FIELD GUIDE FOR ENGAGEMENT, PARTNERSHIPS & RELIGIOUS COMPETENCY

National Disaster Interfaiths Network

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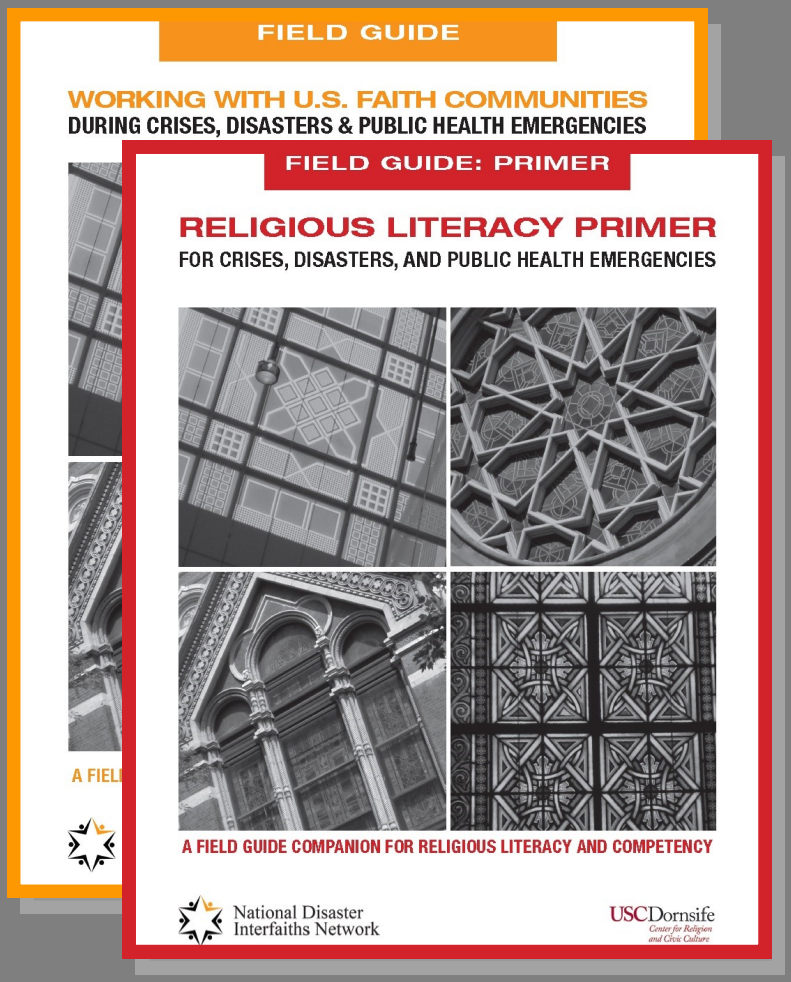

TWO NEW RESOURCES FOR ENGAGING FAITH COMMUNITIES DURING DISASTER

The **Field Guide** is a strategic framework for engaging and building sustainable and competent partnerships with faith communities throughout the entire disaster lifecycle.

The **Religious Literacy Primer** is a quick-reference tool providing at-a-glance information on basic religious literacy for 24 of the largest religious communities in the United States.

"Faith communities are the critical disaster preparedness, response and recovery partners...The degree to which government builds partnerships...will spell the difference between failure and success in disaster recovery… Essential guides for emergency managers to strengthen partnerships with faith organizations."
Ken Curtin
Federal Disaster Recovery Coordinator, FEMA Region II

"This well-organized and easy-to-read Field Guide set is a gem of a resource that many in the emergency management field will find helpful in opening doors to faith communities throughout the country and building stronger relationships based on a better sense of mutual respect and understanding...it demonstrates effectively how to cross-pollinate theory and practice for building resilient whole communities...a must read for all...in decision -making capacities."
Professor Ali. M. Gheith, Director, MPA Emergency & Disaster Management, Metropolitan College of NY

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Workshops and Training Courses

The National Disaster Interfaiths Network (NDIN) and the USC Center for Religious & Civic Culture offer both an orientation workshop called Principles of Religious Literacy & Competency and a Religious Literacy & Faith Community Engagement Training course. These offerings are designed for emergency management and public health/disaster mental health practitioners—as well as VOAD agencies and partners. They provide an orientation to basic religious literacy and competency as well as basic or intermediate practical training in disaster management-specific religious literacy and competency as well as faith community engagement.

PRINCIPLES OF RELIGIOUS LITERACY & COMPETENCY	RELIGIOUS LITERACY & FAITH COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
45 or 90 Minute Workshop	**Half-day or Full-day Training Course**
This workshop provides an overview of religious literacy and competency and its importance in crises, disasters, and public health emergencies. Participants will not only receive an overview of these terms but also walk away with practical tips and resources to improve their own levels of religious literacy.	This training course provides an introduction to religious literacy as well as a strategic framework for successfully engaging faith communities during crises, disasters, and public health emergencies. Participants will learn how to develop a faith community engagement plan.

NDIN and the USC Center for Religion & Civic Culture will also customize offerings upon request.

For more information or to arrange a training contact us: info@n-din.org or crcc@usc.edu

"...a unique and sorely needed addition to the field...As we come to rely more and more on faith congregations...we should heed the recommendations in the Guide so that we get it right and learn now, how to work side by side with faith communities and with faith based literacy from beginning to end."
Dr. April Naturale, Ph.D., Senior Advisor
SAMHSA Disaster Technical Assistance Center

National Disaster Interfaiths Network

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For the latest version of these documents please visit www.n-din.org or crcc.usc.edu.

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This *Field Guide* was compiled from best practices and lessons learned during response and recovery efforts on a number of disasters and public health emergencies in the United States. The expertise of contributors to the *Guide* is defined by their on-the-ground experience working with faith communities and networks throughout the United States. Special thanks go to the following people for their contributions:

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Glossary of Acronyms

CBO:	Community Based Organization
CCAR:	Central Conference of American Rabbis
CERT:	Community Emergency Response Team
COAD:	Community Organizations Active in Disaster
CRCC:	University of Southern California's Center for Religion and Civic Culture
DHS:	Department of Homeland Security
EMPG:	Emergency Management Performance Grant
ESF:	Emergency Support Function
FAC:	Family Assistance Center
FBCI:	White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives
FBO:	Faith-Based Organization
FEMA:	Federal Emergency Management Administration
HHS:	Department of Health and Human Services
HDHHS:	Houston Department of Health and Human Services
HPP:	Hospital Preparedness Program
ICS:	Incident Command System
ICNA:	Islamic Circle of North America
ISNA:	Islamic Society of North America
JIC:	Joint Information Center
LTRG or LTRO:	Long-Term Recovery Group or Long-Term Recovery Organization
MAS:	Muslim American Society
NDIN:	National Disaster Interfaiths Network
NIMS:	National Incident Management System
NRF:	National Response Framework
NVOAD:	National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster
NYDIS:	New York Disaster Interfaith Services
OEM:	Office of Emergency Management
PHEP:	Public Health Emergency Preparedness
POD:	Point of Distribution/Dispensing
PPD:	Presidential Policy Directive
RCPG:	Regional Catastrophic Preparedness Grant
UASI:	Urban Areas Security Initiative
URJ:	Union for Reform Judaism
VAL:	FEMA Voluntary Agency Liaison
VOAD:	Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster

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Key Definitions

I. Overview

The following definitions are provided as a point of reference for how a number of common terms used in *Working with U.S. Faith Communities During Crises, Disasters and Public Health Emergencies: A Field Guide for Engagement, Partnership and Religious Competency* can be defined. Each set presents two terms that are often incorrectly used interchangeably but actually have distinct definitions and meanings. For most of them, there is no universal "better" or "worse" choice, but rather correct usage depends on the context in which the term is used. Perceptions—sometimes accurate, sometimes inaccurate—may mean some terms are in common use by one group or sector and not used at all by another. These definitions serve to provide context, background, and standardize usage of terms that are used throughout the *Field Guide.*

One key component of Religious Literacy (listed below) is terminology. The *Field Guide* advocates for reducing jargon that faith communities do not use to refer to themselves, for example, "Faith Sector," "Faith NGOs," "Clergies," etc. Although it may be easier or more convenient to lump together all religious institutions as "The Faith Sector" or "The Faith Community," in reality there are thousands of distinct faith communities and networks throughout the country. Additionally, most congregations do not describe themselves as "Faith-Based Organizations (FBOs)" or "Faith-Based Community Organizations (FBCOs)," but rather as congregations (that may or may not meet in a house of worship). As you read the *Field Guide*, the authors hope this is a useful tool in providing context and a standard definition for terms you may encounter.

II. Definitions

House of Worship
The building. A prayer or worship building and its facilities—church, gurdwara, monastery, mosque, synagogue, temple, or other location where individuals or a group of people ("the congregation") come to worship, perform acts of devotion, veneration, or religious study.

VS.

Congregation
The people. The members of a specific religious denomination or house of worship. Often used to refer to Christian or Jewish groups, but also used more generically to denote all members of a particular house of worship or followers of a particular religious leader. Often government may view congregations as "FBOs," whereas this term would not commonly be used by a congregation or its members.

Clergy
Often used as a generic term referring to religious leaders of any rank. It actually refers to ordained "clergy". It may be appropriate to speak in general terms about "clergy," but not in an interfaith setting. But it is crucial that when referring to the "clergy" of a specific faith that the correct clergy title be used. Congregations may have designations such as rector, pastor, or deacon, but not everyone who fills these roles is necessarily ordained "clergy." Using accurate language for clergy titles such as rabbi, reverend, imam, and bishop is important; some clergy may use two titles, often depending on the formality of the situation.

VS.

Religious Leader
An ordained or lay religious leader of any rank. Not all religions have ordained leaders or clergy. The term "religious leader" is often more inclusive and therefore preferred when not referring specifically to ordained leaders or a diverse audience. Religious leaders may include people with roles as varied as medicine people in Native American communities or youth ministers.

The Faith Community
Used in the singular form to refer to all people and entities having some religious affiliation in the United States. Because of the vast diversity of religions and institutions, the authors of this Guide recommend using the term "Faith Communities" instead of "Faith Community," unless referring to a particular community.

VS.

Faith Communities
Term used to refer to formal organizations of persons with common beliefs and commitments, usually with designated leaders. Each community may include houses of worship, regional and national judicatories (administrative structures between a national body and local house of worship) and local, regional and national religious leadership. Each community may also include faith-based non-profits, human service organizations, and local and national disaster response organizations. The term includes religious schools, seminaries and colleges, as well as faith-based hospitals, clinics, burial societies and cemeteries. This is the term of preference as it is the most inclusive and appropriate term when referring to multiple religious communities as a whole.

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Interreligious
Refers to groups, coalitions, activities, or other efforts connecting representatives from multiple religious traditions typically formed to foster dialogue, learning, and tolerance, to reduce hatred, mistrust and violence. Today, a growing number of interreligious groups have moved beyond trying to help religious traditions understand each other, to help them work together and build alliances and coalitions that solve some of the most serious problems in their communities. It is also common for these groups to be called "Multi-faith."

VS.

Interfaith
Refers to common goals, activities, and events carried out by interreligious groups, including planning and organizing meals, working in disaster response or recovery to support disaster survivors from any religious background, or building coalitions to address community unmet needs/problems.

Religious Competency
Component of cultural competence (ability to interact effectively with people of different cultures and socio-economic backgrounds) centered on knowing how to navigate and engage each faith community as a trusted, knowledgeable, and effective partner.

VS.

Religious Literacy
Basic understanding of the history, sacred texts, beliefs, practices, rituals, and current manifestations, and terminology of multiple faith traditions, AND The ability to understand the intersection of religions and social/political/cultural life through multiple lenses.

Similar to the fact that one cannot be literate in all languages, one may become literate in one or more religions (but not all religions); resulting in the fact that religious literacy would be more accurately described as religious literacies. For simplicity, the singular term "literacy" is used in its general sense throughout this text to refer to literacy in the largest religions in the U.S.

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Foreword

THE CASE FOR RELIGIOUS COMPETENCY IN BUILDING RESILIENT COMMUNITIES

For many Americans, religion occupies a central place in their lives. According to the Gallup Organization, more than 90 percent of Americans believe in God, and more than 43 percent say they attend worship services almost weekly.[1] These faith communities meet in over 350,000 houses of worship. By comparison, there are just 105,000 schools and universities in the United States.[2] Not only is America a country with a highly faith-affirming population, but today it is believed by many that America is also the most religiously diverse nation in the world. Professor Diana Eck argues this point in her acclaimed book, *A New Religious America: How a Christian Country Has Now Become the World's Most Religiously Diverse Nation*. In *Religious Literacy, What Every American Needs to Know—and Doesn't*, Professor Stephen Prothero states that while the United States has more Christians than there have been in any other country in the history of the world, it also "offers its citizens one of the world's largest menus of spiritual options."[3]

Religion is a part of the fabric of America's neighborhoods. Faith communities in the United States are formed from a rich tapestry of religions from every corner of the world, each with distinctive beliefs, history, forms of worship, sacred texts, rituals, social and organizational structures, and faith-based civic culture and social service organizations. In most places across the U.S., each faith community's local house of worship is also that community's cultural, educational, emotional, social, religious, and political center, as well as its prayer or ritual gathering place. The 350,000 houses of worship—whether church, gurdwara, mosque, synagogue, temple or other sacred space — play a critical role in the life, spiritual, physical and mental health, and overall well-being and resiliency of their members and of the surrounding community. The religious leaders of all local communities provide not just religious leadership to their congregations but may also provide influence and political and social leadership within the larger secular community and act as critical liaisons with state, federal and other governmental emergency management leadership. Religious leaders—including imams, medicine people, pastors, priests, rabbis, youth ministers, and others—usually possess a unique wealth of knowledge of the communities they serve and can provide valuable information on the demographic make-up, social, educational, fiscal, and emotional strength of their respective communities and participate in the needs assessment process.

[1] http://www.gallup.com/poll/147887/americans-continue-believe-god.aspx
[2] Hartford Institute for Religion Research, http://hirr.hartsem.edu/research/fastfacts/fast_facts.html
[3] See Prothero (2008) page 33.

Congregations, their leaders, and places of worship are not only a vital part of day-to-day life, but also play a critical role during disasters and public health emergencies. Faith communities and their institutions are a valuable and often untapped source of compassionate and skilled volunteers, community history, knowledge, resources, facilities, and trustworthy and sustainable leadership. They are often the first responders on the scene ready to provide practical support, meet needs in a concrete way, and deliver emotional care. Many faith communities and their congregations serve as the local home of immigrant and refugee populations. They are trusted voices linking the community to government risk communication and critical preparedness and recovery programs. They also are adept at providing local government with religious literacy, cultural competency, understanding of the communities and their needs and apprehensions, and valuable assistance in translating materials from English to a local population's native language.

For these and many other reasons, religious literacy and competency among government elected officials, civilian staff, and military personnel are critical to successful engagement of faith communities. By "engage," the authors of the *Field Guide* do not mean only in the aftermath of a disaster or public health emergency, but instead advocate for sustained and competent engagement and partnerships long before and throughout the entire disaster lifecycle—mitigation, risk reduction, prevention, and preparedness planning as well as response and recovery efforts.

We have only to look at the aftermath of September 11, 2001, Hurricane Katrina, the 2009 H1N1 Pandemic, the 2012 wildfires in California and Colorado, and Hurricane Sandy—to mention a few notable recent disasters and public health emergencies—to understand that faith communities across this country are eager to fulfill their sacred mandate to "help the least among us." From these catastrophic and highly publicized examples—and numerous others—it is clear that faith communities have and want to be seen as valued, primary partners with the government and are critical in responding to and recovering from disaster. A look at the extensive and robust national, state, and local disaster response organizations operated by faith communities show that many are knowledgeable about disaster response, the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) National Incident Management System (NIMS), the Incident Command System (ICS), the National Response Framework (NRF); and that many have the capability, resources, training, and experience to respond to a disaster in ways government simply cannot. Most importantly, when all the other response and recovery resources have left town, local faith communities are often still there on the job; caring for, fundraising, and rebuilding the whole community throughout years of long-term recovery. Therefore, engaging faith communities can enhance the sustainability of activities started by government and organizations providing immediate relief.

Faith communities want and need to be included in mitigation, risk reduction, prevention, and preparedness planning, as well as response and recovery efforts. They need to collaborate and coordinate with the government in building more resilient whole communities. They should be at the table when the decisions about preparedness and response efforts are made. Faith communities want and need to be involved in planning, not just called upon once a disaster has occurred.

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Whenever and wherever a crisis strikes, faith communities are there to help; to lend their resources, energy, and volunteers to do all they can to end suffering caused by the disaster or public health emergency. However, when faith communities lack coordination, engagement and co-planning with government, their efforts have the potential to complicate or undermine government efforts and disrupt the relief and recovery process. Faith communities should not only be used by governments for their resources and assets, but engaged as true partners. Partnerships between faith communities and government have the potential to create synergies that would not be possible if either side were to work alone.

If invested from the beginning and with sustained engagement, faith communities bring a deep and broad knowledge of their whole community, its strengths, its needs, and its resources to the table. If involved in the planning process, they can also become one of the government's greatest allies in establishing trust in government initiatives and in encouraging their congregations to "Make a plan, Build a kit, and Stay Informed": the three essential components of individual disaster preparedness. Faith-based organizations and members of faith communities possess the ability to positively influence the planning for and outcome of a disaster like no other community stakeholder.

Despite the long list of positive impacts that faith communities can have during disaster, one of the greatest barriers to building robust, sustainable, and effective relationships with them are the deficits of religious literacy and competency between faith communities, secular institutions, and the government, whether represented by elected officials, military, or civilian personnel. Faith communities themselves also need to improve their own literacy of other religious traditions. Historically, there has been a fear of proselytizing by rogue religious groups after a disaster. While some barriers remain, many have been reduced or eliminated. These barriers are discussed in more detail in Chapter 3.

The *Field Guide* is not a substitute for developing religious literacy. Rather, it makes the case for why religious literacy is an essential skill to be employed by the government and local provider agencies supplied with public and private funds when engaging faith communities in helping to solve problems and build a more disaster resilient nation. The Guide also provides suggestions, best practices, and guidance on how to approach faith communities, religious leaders, and faith-based non-profits to build durable, institutional relationships, and develop sustainable, faith-based preparedness and response programs. It makes a strong case for the establishment of, at minimum, a highly religiously literate and competent dedicated government liaison to national, state, or local faith communities—similar to staffing to address populations with disabilities or access and functional needs. This position, would be responsible for further establishing religious literacy and competency within an agency as well as in outreach efforts, planning documents and mass care operations. This function might be supported best by a regional or state governmental advisory committee or a staff team that supports local faith community liaisons with exceptional skills in religious literacy and competency, and that is responsible for sharing those skills and that knowledge with others in the agency as they work to engage faith communities in building a more resilient citizenry.

Former Secretary of State Madeline Albright, a highly vocal advocate of the public role of religion, wrote that the failure of Americans to understand religions other than their own "poses one of the great challenges to our public diplomacy." [4]

Overall, there are varying degrees of or no religious literacy and competency training and support systems within government - making it difficult for the leaders of faith communities to appropriately respond to the overtures of local, state or federal government agency staff. The White House Office of Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships (FBNP) exists to level the playing field and ensure equal access—but it is not set up to mandate the religious literacy of government personnel or overhaul public systems to improve their religious competency. In 2013, the FBNP Center at the Department of Homeland Security began to take steps toward developing trainings and resources to improve the religious literacy and competency of FEMA disaster assistance personnel. Faith communities have values, motivations, and struggles that differ from those of government. To truly partner with these communities, agencies must develop an understanding of their systems, to begin to speak their language, and engage them on their own terms with goals and objectives that bring value to both sides. Put simply, how can American religious leaders feel comfortable working with government representatives who demonstrate through face-to-face interaction or multi-media vehicles that they may know little or nothing of their faith community's composition, culture and tradition?

The deficit in religious literacy and competency is further complicated when one understands how many government agencies attempt to engage faith communities on a broad spectrum of issues. When one includes fire, police, EMS, local emergency management and public health emergency response, public works, housing, and other city, county, state and federal agencies, the result is that dozens of agencies in any given jurisdiction are attempting to partner with the same faith community groups. This overwhelms the capacity of faith communities and contributes to burnout, confusion, and erodes trust, thus amplifying the impact of the lack of religious literacy and competency.

Improving religious understanding and increasing religious literacy is not about political correctness. Rather, it is about intentionally demonstrating that a government agency or agent respects and wants to understand a religious person, a faith community, and/or their valued institutions, which the government seeks to engage. Competency and literacy illustrate that religious needs and goals are understood and are taken into account. Government officials do not need to become experts in every religion, but they must know how to "read" or understand what a religious leader says when he or she discusses concerns and critical needs and resources. Officials should also demonstrate that they know something about the history, beliefs, politics, economics, and structure of a faith community—or a group of faith communities—they hope to engage with as partners. They must also create effective communication strategies according to the needs of each group. While developing them is challenging, employing religious literacy and competency in engagement is a skillset that anyone can master.

Faith-based engagement and inter-religious coordination are, first and foremost, about parity, respect, fairness and religious literacy and competency. They are about the government understanding the diverse nature of their constituent communities, the whole

[4] From Madeleine Albright, *The Mighty and the Almighty*, Easton Press, 2003

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community – and, about honoring the evolving diversity by engaging each community for what they are, and learning their unique capabilities and capacities. Religious literacy and competency are understanding that not everyone who wears a "collar" is a Roman Catholic clergyman and realizing that some faiths have women as clergy and that others do not have clergy at all. Literacy and competency require that one should not call houses of worship "churches" when one's intent is to include mosques, synagogues, and temples. One must know not to ask a Christian Scientist which drugs he/she takes when ill without understanding his/her beliefs and decision making process. Moreover, it would be a severe lack of literacy and competency to ask the local Muslim community to help establish a food and water Point of Dispensing for the larger public without having their specific concerns about gender, prayer and diet addressed.

Religious literacy entails the ability to discern and analyze the fundamental intersections of religion and social/political/cultural life through multiple lenses. Particularly, religiously literate people will possess 1) a fundamental understanding of the history, sacred texts (where applicable), beliefs, practices and contemporary manifestations of the world's major religious traditions as they arose out of and continue to be shaped by particular social, historical and cultural contexts; and 2) the ability to discern and explore the religious dimensions of political, social and cultural expressions across time and place.[5]

One does not possess any level of religious literacy or competency without a basic knowledge of the evolving religious and/or faith-based organizational landscape of America today—and in particular the local community which a government agency has jurisdiction. The American religious landscape of 2014 is significantly different, more rooted in its primary culture and traditions, more diverse, and more complex than it has been in the past. In order to provide some understanding of the ecology and texture of religion in America, and as a small first step toward religious literacy and competency, the authors of this guide have developed an accompanying document entitled: *Religious Literacy Primer for Crises, Disasters, and Public Health Emergencies*. *The Primer* provides essential information on 23 of the largest religions currently practiced in the United States.

This guide, like American faith communities is a dynamic, living document. We apologize for any omission or failure to note the many exceptions to the rule. Although the document speaks in generalities, we must note that we are addressing the lack of systemic literacy and competence, and we accept the reality that a few government agencies and personnel already have the skills and practices for which we advocate. The goal is to increase their number, and their effectiveness.

The authors of the *Field Guide* urge all those who read and value it to share your experiences and best practices with us, and to provide suggestions on how we can improve and/or expand it. Please send any comments, edits, or corrections to crcc@usc.edu and info@n-din.org. We will review the emails and issue periodic updates.

RELIGIOUS LITERACY
THE BASIC UNDERSTANDING OF EACH FAITH COMMUNITY, ITS THEOLOGY, RITUALS, PRACTICES AND SACRED TEXTS.

RELIGIOUS COMPETENCY
KNOWING HOW TO NAVIGATE AND ENGAGE EACH FAITH COMMUNITY AS A TRUSTED, KNOWLEDGEABLE, AND EFFECTIVE PARTNER.

Download the *Religious Literacy Primer* from:

www.n-din.org
www.usc.edu/crcc

[5] From Moore, Diane L. *Overcoming Religious Illiteracy: A Cultural Studies Approach to the Study of Religion in Secondary Education.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007. Print.

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Introduction

THE ROLE OF FAITH-BASED INITIATIVES IN BUILDING RESILIENT COMMUNITIES

"We need to move away from the mindset that the Federal and State governments are always in the lead, and build upon the strengths of our local communities and, more importantly, our citizens. We must treat individuals and communities as key assets rather than liabilities."

"When disaster strikes, the initial services provided may not come from government, but rather from churches, synagogues, mosques and other faith-based and community organizations…FEMA is working to improve our preparedness through the Whole Community framework."

"When the community is engaged in an authentic dialogue, it becomes empowered to identify its needs and the existing resources that may be used to address them."

—W. Craig Fugate, FEMA Administrator under President Obama

Working with U.S. Faith Communities During Crises, Disasters and Public Health Emergencies: A Field Guide for Engagement, Partnership and Religious Competency is an attempt to provide a context and background for engaging faith communities; including information on the nature and structure of faith communities and faith-based emergency response organizations, and some simple steps and best practices to guide government agency staff on how to successfully reach out to and engage faith communities in an effort to help the community protect against, prepare for, respond to and recover from a disaster or public health emergency.

The context of the discussion of the role of faith communities and organizations (commonly called faith-based organizations or FBOs by government agencies) in disaster preparedness and response takes place in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, natural disasters such as Hurricanes Katrina, Rita and Ike, the Joplin, Alabama and Mississippi tornadoes, and the wildfires of 2011 and 2012. Another important context is the establishment in 2001 of what is currently called the White House Office of Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships. The Federal Government has seen a steady increase in the necessity for partnerships between public agencies and faith communities to jointly build more resilient and stable communities. And while the need is clear, it is also clear that the onus is on government to be the one to reach out to faith communities in order to build such partnerships.

On March 30, 2011, President Barack Obama issued Presidential Policy Directive (PPD) 8. PPD-8 was unique from other Presidential Preparedness Directives in that it introduced the idea of an "all-of-Nation" approach to preparedness. PPD-8 says, in part:

> *Our national preparedness is the shared responsibility of all levels of government, the private and nonprofit sectors, and individual citizens. Everyone can contribute to safeguarding the Nation from harm. As such, while this directive is intended to galvanize action by the Federal Government, it is also aimed at facilitating an integrated, all-of-Nation, capabilities-based approach to preparedness.*

PPD-8 further directs the Secretary of Homeland Security to:

> *[B]uild and improve the capabilities necessary to prevent, protect against, mitigate the effects of, respond to, and recover from those threats that pose the greatest risk to the security of the Nation, and to…coordinate a comprehensive campaign to build and sustain national preparedness, including public outreach and community-based and private-sector programs to enhance national resilience...*

The directive recognizes and acknowledges that while federal, state and local governments have the primary responsibility for emergency preparedness and response, actively engaging the private and non-governmental sectors, as well individual citizens in disaster preparedness prevention, planning and response is a powerful strategy that offers rewards for everyone. PPD-8 acknowledges and calls on the private and non-profit sector and community organizations to share, and contribute, their unique resources, subject matter expertise, operational knowledge, and understanding of the diverse nature of their communities with government to develop more complete and stronger emergency preparedness strategies and operational plans.

A Whole Community Approach to Emergency Management: Principles, Themes, and Pathways for Action (published by FEMA in 2011), describes the "Whole Community" approach this way:

> *A Whole Community approach attempts to engage the full capacity of the private and nonprofit sectors, including businesses, faith-based and disability organizations, and the general public, in conjunction with the participation of local, tribal, state, territorial, and Federal governmental partners.*

Further, the Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG), the Public Health Emergency Preparedness (PHEP) grant, and the Hospital Preparedness Program (HPP) grant programs all require grantees and their local contractors to engage the whole community—especially faith communities—to help government comprehend the needs and capabilities of the community, understand and access the resources available to respond to disaster, and to develop plans for preparation and disaster response.

In the United States, disaster relief has long been associated with the faith organizations that color the American landscape. American history is replete with heroic stories of faith communities responding to the needs of those whose lives were disrupted by disasters; so much so that government officials and emergency managers, as well as those impacted by the disaster, have come to expect "The Faith Community" to be there in times of need. Long before there were organized government emergency response agencies to help disaster victims, members of local churches, synagogues, mosques,

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and temples were ever present to provide food, shelter, financial assistance, spiritual support and care, and encouragement to those in need.

What makes up this idea of "The Faith Community?" The reality is that this moniker belies a heterogeneous group of thousands of individual faith communities and networks. It is local houses of worship, regional and national judicatories (administrative structures between a national body and local house of worship) and local, regional and national religious leadership. It is also comprised of local faith-based non-profits, human service organizations, and local and national disaster response organizations. Religious schools, seminaries and colleges, as well as faith-based hospitals, clinics, burial societies and cemeteries are included as well.

Today, at a time when emergency response within government and the National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (NVOAD) membership base is highly organized, faith communities are more uniquely positioned than ever to be government's able and trusted partner in building robust, sustainable programs and systems to help the whole community protect against, prepare for, respond to and recover from a disaster or public health emergency.

What are some of the things that that makes faith communities the critical disaster preparedness and response partner for local, state and federal government emergency preparedness and response agencies?

1) Faith communities' core values include reaching out to and caring for those who are in need, especially the most vulnerable and under-served community residents.
2) Faith communities have a real working knowledge of the demographic makeup of their communities, as well as their strengths and needs.
3) Faith communities have a deep understanding of the ethnic, cultural and linguistic make-up of their community (cultural competence).
4) Faith communities have strong and established communications networks that can be used to disseminate vital, timely, disaster preparedness and response information.
5) Faith communities have a ubiquitous presence in neighborhoods.
6) Local religious leaders are often community leaders whose influence and respect within their congregations is often extended to the neighborhood and the city in which they work.
7) Local houses of worship often have human services, health and mental health services, and social services designed to build more resilient communities that mirror or even exceed those that government provides.
8) Faith communities have access to physical resources that can be used for sheltering.
9) Faith communities have access to monetary resources for response and recovery programming.
10) Faith communities have access to significant numbers of compassionate, caring, motivated, skilled and trained volunteers ready to help.
11) Faith communities can provide emotional and spiritual care to the community.
12) Faith communities can serve as a valuable source of situational awareness during a disaster response.

13) Many religious denominations have well established national emergency response organizations capable of providing people and resources to help communities impacted by a disaster.

Faith communities are a significant potential partner, that when engaged through competent outreach by government can help their communities prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters or public health emergencies. If actively and effectively engaged by local and/or state level emergency and public health preparedness managers, faith communities can be a valuable resource in all stages of the disaster lifecycle—mitigation, risk reduction, prevention, and preparedness planning, as well as response and recovery.

A vital, but often overlooked role of faith communities is their role in disseminating the preparedness and response plans established by government to help their congregations and the community prepare for and recover from a disaster. Local religious leaders, if educated on the local emergency response plan, and engaged by local emergency and public health management, can serve as a trusted voice conveying accurate information to their members and followers. They can convey the "Make a Plan, Build a Kit, Stay Informed" message extolled by FEMA and NVOAD members to their congregations in a trusted, demographically appropriate, religiously literate, culturally competent, and linguistically correct way. Faith communities may also be willing to help government translate emergency preparedness and response literature into the language of their members in ways an outside translation service cannot. Local religious leaders, if tied into local public health and emergency management agencies can also be counted on to communicate accurate, timely, and trusted life-saving information to their members in the aftermath of a disaster, again, in ways beyond the scope of government.

This rise in awareness of the value of partnerships between government and faith communities has led to a desire on the part of government agencies to develop policies, practices, and processes that promote a culture of diversity and religious literacy and competency to help build these valuable associations. In the very best cases these policies and practices include not just emergency preparedness and response plans, but human resources policies and procedures, dress codes, event and workplace menus, work hours that might reflect an employee's need to pray several times a day, and equal treatment regarding religious holiday time off, among other considerations. Equally important is the need to develop and train staff in a way that reflects this same culture in their interactions with each other and the community.

Likewise government agencies and faith communities must improve their understanding of each other's missions, goals and objectives, organizational structure and funding challenges to more effectively develop sustainable partnerships, and deliver needed services. To date, the record of government emergency managers and public health preparedness officials' engagement efforts with faith communities, national, state and local Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD), denominational emergency

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response agencies, and disaster "interfaith" groups, while well intentioned, has been inconsistent and has produced limited success. There are, however, outstanding examples of success that are the exception to this rule, which serve as a reminder that it is possible for this work to be done effectively.

Outreach campaigns often lack structure, clear goals and objectives, religious literacy and competency, and a systematic operational strategy. One consequence is that those faith communities willing to work alongside their local governmental agencies are bombarded with multiple government contacts—often with inconsistent messages, and unclear or unrealistic expectations. Too many times these outreach efforts come without the requisite sustainable financial and training support to accomplish initiative goals, which are often grant-related that government seeks to push off onto the faith communities. The need for competent, knowledgeable, religiously literate, and coordinated engagement of faith communities by public authorities is crucial if both sides are to be true partners in mitigation, risk reduction, prevention, and preparedness planning as well as response and recovery efforts. Seldom do most existing faith community liaisons have the adequate religious literacy or competency, or understanding of each faith community's mission, needs, and resources to engender the trust needed to build the desired, sustainable relationships.

It is not enough to simply have good intentions, and the desire to do good works. Experience has taught that the process of outreach and partnership building is not always easy. Effective outreach to faith communities requires individuals and public policies dedicated to engaging faith communities on their terms. Developing long-term, on-going relationships that are fostered by knowledge and understanding of the specific faith community—religious literacy —and a win-win philosophy are key characteristics of success. Experience also teaches that in order to truly engage faith communities, government officials and agency staff must be able to demonstrate, in their actions and speech, religious literacy and competency. For real partnership to grow and flourish, government agency staff must be able to speak to their faith community partners in the language they understand, and in a way that shows that the community liaison knows, understands, and respects the community he/she is reaching out to engage. This process does not lend itself to short term appointments to hold liaison positions but rather staff continuity to maintain and develop long-term relationships and continually improve his/her literacy of partner groups. In *Religious Literacy—What Every American Needs to Know, and Doesn't*, Professor Stephen Prothero, writes, "Like languages, however, religions are particular creatures. Just as it is not possible to speak language in general (one must choose to speak one particular language), religious literacy in the abstract is an impossibility."[6] To engage a particular faith community it is essential that the community outreach liaison demonstrate religious literacy in language, deed, and program design and expectations.

CASE STUDY

In Los Angeles, the DHS Office of Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnership, along with the Los Angeles Emergency Management Department, the USC Center for Religion and Civic Culture, and the Los Angeles Emergency Preparedness Foundation, have built a roundtable of diverse congregations and faith-based disaster human services organizations to coordinate resources for preparedness and response. This group has a dedicated seat in the Business Operations Center within the Emergency Operations Center in Los Angeles to coordinate the needs and assets of faith communities across the city. (Further details can be found in the report "From Federal to Local" http://crcc.usc.edu/resources/publications/from-federal-to-local.html).

[6] From Prothero (2008)

Today there is a huge gap between what is needed and what exists in efforts to build strong and sustainable government/faith communities partnerships. There are many causes for this, not the least of which is lack of clear goals and expectations, a real strategic plan to engage faith communities, staff experience, and religious literacy and competency on the part of government elected officials, agencies and their staff. While the problem is real, it can be rectified, and this *Field Guide* sets out to help government agencies and their partners do just that.

This *Field Guide*, along with its companion *Religious Literacy Primer for Crises, Disasters, and Public Health Emergencies* is designed to enhance understanding of the diverse nature of individual faith communities in the United States, their disaster response capabilities, and their national disaster response organizations and resources to help build strong, effective, competent, transparent non-sectarian and lasting partnerships with faith communities. The goal is to help you build government/faith community partnerships to better serve your entire constituency in times of disaster or public health emergency, to mitigate serious public health issues, and to find and implement programs to improve the day-to-day lives of all our nation's residents.

This document contains practical information for anyone wishing to improve their religious literacy, competency and knowledge. It provides vital information on the nature of, role, practices, mission, goals and objectives of faith communities and faith-based organizations for those seeking a more successful engagement between government agencies and faith communities, faith-based organizations, and religious citizens. The *Guide* also offers practical, organizational and policy information to enhance efforts to mobilize faith communities to mitigate existing disparities in health, access to health care, education, and income, as well as helping the community prepare for, respond to and recover from disaster.

The *Guide* does not simply seek to improve awareness of America's ethnic, cultural or religious diversity. It also seeks to provide a detailed and specific practical understanding of America's religious diversity and religious systems and organizations. The *Religious Literacy Primer*, the guide's tool kit for disaster response, moves beyond summaries of faith-community beliefs and practices to guidance for physical interaction (i.e. etiquette and hospitality); photos and drawings to illustrate symbols, characteristic clothing, and other identifiers; and guidance for locating and contacting religious leaders locally and nationally.

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It is the hope of the authors that you will use the information contained in this Guide to build strong and effective emergency management, public health emergency and disaster human services partnerships with local faith communities, their leaders and their national disaster response organizations to build a vibrant and active community based resource to help your community prepare for, respond to, and recover from a disaster or public health emergency, or to resolve long-standing needs for under-served and under-engaged residents.

Please let us know what works and what does not, and what successful programs and ideas you have attempted so we can include that information in the next edition of *Working with U.S. Faith Communities During Crises, Disasters and Public Health Emergencies: A Field Guide for Engagement, Partnership and Religious Competency*. You may send any comments, edits, or corrections to crcc@usc.edu and info@n-din.org. We will review the emails and issue periodic updates.

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Chapter One
AMERICA'S EVOLVING RELIGIOUS LANDSCAPE

I. An Overview of the Religious Landscape in America Today

The United States of America has been a nation with a majority Christian population. While early Europeans came to conquer for God and king, later settlers along the eastern seaboard of America came, in many cases, to practice their form of Christian Protestantism without fear of persecution and punishment. While they did not come to form a Christian nation, they did come to have the freedom to practice their Christian faith. Even today, recent surveys by Gallup and the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life confirm that close to 80 percent of Americans self-identify as Christian, whether or not they attend church regularly, or belong to an organized church.[1] This majority group produced a culture and laws that reflected their beliefs and understandings of the world. Many national institutions, practices, and cultural norms appeared to be an extension of Christian thought and belief. Non-Christian religions, while acknowledged to exist, were simply not given due consideration in public policy, in the body politic, or the town square. For example, despite hundreds of years of Muslim presence in the U.S., it was not until the 1990s that the U.S. Navy commissioned its first Muslim chaplain and opened its first mosque.

Yet, America has never been only a Christian nation. Long before the first colonists arrived on the North American continent, many diverse indigenous peoples lived and celebrated their religious beliefs and customs. Jews mark their first organized settlement in New Amsterdam in 1654. As the colonies grew into a nation, and the nation expanded west, those that came either through immigration or slavery, brought with them their own religious beliefs and practices. Although awareness of some religious groups has only recently started to increase, many have been in the United States for more than a century. For example, the earliest place of Muslim prayer on American soil was in Colonial Maryland, and mosques were established in Brooklyn, NY in 1907, and in Cedar Rapids, Iowa in 1934.[2]

Today most of the world's religions have some presence in the towns and neighborhoods of America. It is believed by many that America is now the most religiously diverse nation in the world. Professor Diana Eck argues this point in her acclaimed book, *A New Religious America: How a Christian Country Has Now Become the World's Most Religiously Diverse Nation*. Stephen Prothero writes that while Eck may "exaggerate," she "is right that the United States offers its citizens one of the world's largest menus of spiritual options."[3]

[1] From http://religions.pewforum.org/reports
[2] http://www.cnn.com/2010/OPINION/08/04/dodds.mosques.new.york/index.html
[3] From Prothero (2008), page 33

But even today, as one goes from town to town, neighborhood to neighborhood, it is still easy to think of America's religious landscape as without variation or diversity. Like the signs for Wal-Mart, McDonald's, Chevron, and other large retail chains that line the streets and highways of our country, the ubiquitous signs of Baptist, Lutheran, Methodist, Presbyterian, and Roman Catholic churches found in all American towns give the false impression of homogeneity. They might even give the casual onlooker the impression that the American religious landscape is without variety and diversity. But underneath this misperception of homogeneity lies a very rich, diverse, vibrant American religious landscape.[4]

One recent factor contributing to this change in the religious landscape of America was the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965. The Immigration Act of 1965 eliminated the quotas linking immigration to national origin. Since then, increasing numbers of Baha'i', Buddhists, Hindus, Jains, Muslims, Sikhs, Zoroastrians, as well as new waves of Catholic and Jewish immigration, have radically altered the religious landscape of the United States. Of course, many of these groups have historic roots in the United States that predate the post-1965 waves of immigration or that developed organically on American soil with unique expressions of their traditions. Members of the world's religions live not just on the other side of the world but in our neighborhoods; Hindu children attend school with Jewish children; Buddhists, Muslims, and Sikhs work side-by-side with Protestants and Roman Catholics.

Religious diversity in America has increased for decades, but is only now becoming a main street phenomenon, with many Americans still unaware of the profound changes taking place. This change includes every level from local school boards to Congress, and in small-town Texas as well as New York City. Islamic centers and mosques, Buddhist and Hindu temples, and meditation centers can be found in virtually every major American metropolitan area. There are Buddhists, Hindus, and Muslims in Salt Lake City, Utah; Toledo, Ohio; and Jackson, Mississippi. Cities like Houston, Los Angeles, New York City and other large cities may have as many as 200 different religious groups among their residents. American Sikhs have once again been allowed to serve in the U.S. armed forces wearing uncut hair and turbans.[5] According to projections there may be more American Muslims than there are American Episcopalians, Jews or Presbyterians by the year 2030[6]. Los Angeles is the home of the greatest variety of Buddhists in the world, with more than 300 temples. See Table 1 for a current breakdown of major religious traditions in the United States.

[4] Adapted from Prothero (2008)
[5] http://www.nytimes.com/2013/07/08/us/taking-on-rules-so-other-sikhs-join-the-army.html
[6] http://www.pewforum.org/2011/01/27/future-of-the-global-muslim-population-regional-americas/

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Table 1

MAJOR RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS IN THE U.S.	
TRADITION	AMONG ALL ADULTS (%)
Christian	**78.4**
Protestant	51.3
Evangelical churches (26.3)	
Mainline churches (18.1)	
Historically black churches (6.9)	
Catholic	23.9
Mormon	1.7
Jehovah's Witnesses	0.7
Orthodox	0.6
Greek Orthodox (<0.3)	
Russian Orthodox (<0.3)	
Other Orthodox (<0.3)	
Other Christian	0.3
Other Religions	**4.7**
Jewish	1.7
Reform (0.7)	
Orthodox (<0.3)	
Other (0.3)	
Buddhist	0.7
Zen Buddhist (<0.3)	
Theravada Buddhist (<0.3)	
Tibetan Buddhist (<0.3)	
Other (0.3)	
Muslim	0.6
Sunni (0.3)	
Shia (<0.3)	
Other (<0.3)	
Hindu	0.4
Other World Religions	<0.3
Other Faiths	1.2
Unitarians and other liberal faiths (0.7)	
Native American religions (<0.3)	
Unaffiliated	**16.1**
Atheist	1.6
Agnostic	2.4
Nothing in particular	12.1
Secular unaffiliated (6.3)	
Religious unaffiliated (5.8)	
Don't Know/Refused	**0.8**
TOTAL	**100**

Source: Pew Forum for Religion in Public Life, http://religions.pewforum.org/reports

CASE STUDY

Interfaith Ministries for Greater Houston (IMGH) is an example of this extended vision of what an interfaith organization can do. IMGH has programs to feed hungry seniors, care for and naturalize refugees, conducts the annual National Amazing Faiths Dinners, and has for the last seven years operated the Office of Disaster Preparedness and Response to build a coalition of Houston's faith communities to prepare for and respond to disaster. Houston's IMGH even has a seat in the Houston and Harris County Joint Information Center during disasters, and served as a liaison to faith communities during Hurricane Ike, and the 2009 H1N1 Pandemic Influenza outbreak.

Along with the continued increase in religious diversity, these immigrants and refugees bring with them their national, regional, and ethnic cultures, attitudes about government, and experiences with disaster preparedness and response. These cultural, ethnic and religious beliefs and attitudes add to the rich tapestry of today's America. Additionally, Americans of all backgrounds have also changed their religious identification, and created unique expressions of religious life, adding another layer of diversity to the dynamic religious pluralism in this country. This diversity, while exciting and wonderful to many, can challenge openness to, and tolerance of, those who are considered "different." This increasing religious and cultural diversity may even stretch limits of tolerance, and expose unexpected hatred and/or violence. Attacks on Muslims and Sikhs in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks and the Boston Marathon bombing, the defacing of the mosque in Joplin, Missouri, after the tornadoes of 2010, and the Oak Creek, Wisconsin mass shooting at a Sikh gurdwara are a clear reminder that the country has a long way to go before it lives its ideals of pluralism, respect, and freedom for all. The changing religious and cultural landscape has a direct impact on the ability of government to effectively protect, and partner with these residents, and to help the whole community become more resilient, and to help prepare for, respond to and recover from a disaster or public health emergency.

How Americans of all faiths and beliefs, cultural backgrounds, attitudes, and levels of trust in government can engage with one another to shape more resilient communities is one of the essential questions for today's elected officials, emergency managers, and public health preparedness officials. While race has been the dominant American social issue of the past century, religious and cultural diversity are emerging as comparable challenges, especially for those charged with building our disaster response capacity and capabilities.

One of the very real benefits of the rise in religious diversity is the growth in interfaith, multi-faith, and interreligious groups all across America. Many of these groups were formed to foster dialogue, learning, and tolerance, and to reduce hatred, mistrust and violence. Today, as an increasing number of these groups dot the American landscape, many of them have moved beyond trying to help religious groups understand each other, to working together to build alliances and coalitions that solve some of the most serious problems in their communities.

While there are significant advantages to this increased religious diversity, this landscape presents a tremendous challenge to those who are charged with developing and implementing state or local emergency preparedness and response plans. It is not enough to make the assumption that all people are alike, and that the desire to help the community will be enough to bridge any gaps in understanding, knowledge, or difference. Knowing where to begin when attempting to engage faith communities similar to one's own, and knowing where to begin when reaching out to faith communities one does not understand is the crucial first step in engaging the whole community.

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One example of the challenges created by this diverse religious landscape is in the area of mass fatality planning. Most mass fatality response plans include some form of family assistance center. These centers must be prepared to provide resources, spiritual and mental/behavior health support, and autopsy and burial information that meet the needs of all members of the community in a religiously and culturally literate and competent manner. Understanding the religious and cultural beliefs, burial and death customs, and cultural customs of everyone in the community is a critical first step in providing a whole community approach to family assistance centers.

Another example of the many challenges placed in front of emergency managers and public health preparedness managers as a consequence of this new religious diversity is planning for a mass fatality event that would require a mass burial plan. To meet this challenge, in August 2007, Interfaith Ministries for Greater Houston partnered with the City of Houston and Harris County Emergency Management, the Houston Department of Health and Human Services, Bureau of Public Health Preparedness, University of Texas School of Public Health Bioterrorism Institute, and faith communities from across the region to have the area's first discussion of burial and mourning practices, and to discuss what issues needed to be addressed in establishing a mass fatality/mass burial plan.

A critical challenge, directly related to religious literacy, cannot be ignored: not all religious groups will work with each other. This is not caused by a misunderstanding, hatred, or lack of openness; it is simply a core theological belief. These religious groups may be willing to work with government. They may even be willing to work to provide shelter and care for everyone in the community, but they may not be able to work with other faith groups with differing theological views. While this is not the "kumbaya" moment that many might desire, it is a fact, and it is as much a part of religious literacy and competency as the steps mentioned above.
As you begin to layout your strategic plan for creating effective, sustainable, and dynamic partnerships with the faith communities in your jurisdiction you need to ask yourself these questions:

- Do I have basic understanding of the history, central texts, core beliefs, practices, rituals, contemporary manifestations, and terminology of each faith in your community? (Religious Literacy, see Chapter 5).
- Do I know how to navigate the structure and political landscape of each faith community, and understand how to approach them as a trusted and effective partner? (Religious Competency)
- Do I know and understand the social service and community service program goals and objectives of each faith community I want as a partner before making any specific proposals and requests? (This helps you know what the community is capable of and willing to do).
- In what way will the program I want to discuss with the faith community have meaning, and be important to them?

There is tremendous variation in how congregations are organized; as many as half of U.S. congregations are independent entities, while others are organized under the authority of a judicatory (denomination, association, or some other governing body). These can be as varied as formal bodies at the national level that also have regional authorities, or local or national networks of congregations, even ministerial alliances and interfaith groups, which are all autonomous voluntary organizations. Perceptions of congregations often differ from reality. Surveys show that most churches have a weekly attendance of only 7 to 99 worshippers with a median number of 75.[7] These Christian congregations tend to have bi-vocational leaders and are often autonomous.

Thus, faith communities can be quite complicated to understand and to navigate due to numerous denominational structures, qualities, and inaccurate perceptions. Each faith community has its own organizational structure and nomenclature. Furthermore, some non-hierarchal organizations lack a single comprehensive authority to interact with government. Based on his interaction with DHS and FEMA officials, Hull (2006) argues that the faith-based world, with all of its varieties and dimensions, is difficult for government personnel to fully understand. Some within government agencies may have personal knowledge of one or more aspects of faith communities given their own affiliation and practices, but the sheer range of religious groups and their organizations, makes comprehensive understanding elusive for most. The differences are not well understood by a faith community's own members or those on the outside attempting to understand how these organizations work.

This can lead to confusion about how an agency might interact with these groups, and also to a general lack of understanding of what religious groups believe and how they are perceived by the broader public and government officials. These issues have the potential for serious implications in post-disaster outreach. The risk of not understanding who, when, and how to engage has the potential for real consequences for delivering services to those affected by a disaster. In the Jewish Community for example, choosing to knock on doors of individual synagogues instead of engaging through a denominational body or organized group like a Board of Rabbis or Jewish Community Relations Council or scheduling meetings during the Sabbath can have real and lasting implications on reaching disaster survivors. Specifically, these actions could alienate key religious leaders if they feel appropriate hierarchies or religious holy days are not respected.

Understanding the organizational, political, geographic and social structure of a particular faith group or organization is an important step in demonstrating cultural and religious literacy and competency, and is vital to an effective partnership effort. Not knowing how a faith community or organization is structured may derail an agency's partnership and collaboration effort.

[7] http://hirr.hartsem.edu/research/fastfacts/fast_facts.html#sizecong

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The following discussion will not focus on theological constructs except to note that whatever the core beliefs of a religion, variations exist locally, regionally, and within practitioners of the same faith such that making general assumptions of what a specific person may believe can prove disastrous when attempting to engage that individual or his/her faith community in a partnership with a government agency. It is important to know and understand the specific religious beliefs of individuals, faith communities and faith-based organizations in the area in which you wish to partner.

TIP

Before engaging a particular religious group, it is crucial to understand what role, if any, a judicatory or governing body might play in determining what outreach or disaster preparedness and response activities are appropriate for the specific group.

Organizational Structure

While it is important to understand the theology, rituals, beliefs and customs of a given faith community, it might be even more important to understand how a specific judicatory, church, synagogue, mosque, temple or faith-based organization is structured socially, politically and locally. In other words, how does a particular institution function? Is the senior religious leader the key contact? Is the lay leadership the key contact for non-religious programming? Does the house of worship have only neighborhood ties, or does it have many campuses and serve a larger area? Do most members live in the neighborhood, or do they come from throughout the region? Does this denomination, congregation, or faith-based organization have a strong and active social service and outreach program? Does this house of worship serve a specific demographic, cultural, ethnic, or linguistic group?

Before engaging a particular religious group, it is crucial to understand what role, if any, a judicatory or governing body might play in determining what outreach or disaster preparedness and response activities are appropriate for the specific group.

If a local bishop (or other similar religious leader), for instance, has a say in what a neighborhood church can do, or supplies the funding to support critical programs, it may be crucial that the first contact by government be with the bishop. If the first meeting is with the bishop, it may require a senior manager or elected official be part of that introductory meeting. At the very least, the bishop or other senior religious leader should receive a phone call from the senior agency or elected official.

Understanding a faith community's structure is as complicated and no less important than understanding the culture and organizational environment of your own workplace.

There exists an almost infinite variety of structural forms and structures also vary from location to location. Provided here is a general overview of the various organizational and social structural forms around which faith communities are built. As an example, many Christian denominations have a world, national and/or state organization that provides leadership and determines theology. The majority of local churches or parishes tend to follow their leadership on theological issues. Some examples of the most hierarchical Christian church structures in America are the Orthodox Churches, the Salvation Army, and the Roman Catholic Church. As one example of a religious tradition with a hierarchical structure, following is a description of the organizational structure of the United Methodist Church of America.[8]

[8] Adapted from www.umc.org

General Conference *- The United Methodist Church is intentionally decentralized and democratic. The General Conference is the only body that can set policy for the Methodist Church.*

Local Church *- Most individuals have their initial contact with the denomination in the local church. Local churches must follow but there is also room for a local church to express its ministry according to the community and its congregation.*

Districts*- Groups of churches in a geographic area are organized to form a district, somewhat similar to the way cities and towns are organized into counties. Each district is led by a district superintendent ("DS"), an elder appointed by the bishop, usually for a six-year term.*

Annual Conferences (Regional Body) *- The annual conference is a regional body, an organizational unit AND a yearly meeting. The United States has 63 annual conferences, supervised by 50 bishops. There are 59 annual conferences in Africa, Europe, and the Philippines, which are supervised by 18 bishops. The annual conference has a central office and professional staff that coordinate and conduct ministry and the business of the conference.*

Jurisdictional/Central Conferences *- In the United States, The United Methodist Church is divided into five areas known as jurisdictions: Northeastern, Southeastern, North Central, South Central and Western. These provide some program and leadership training events to support the annual conferences.*

General Agencies *- United Methodist general agencies (boards, council, and commissions) are created by and responsible to the General Conference. The purpose of the general agencies is to provide resources and services that will enable individual congregations to serve God effectively in the world.*

Other Faith Communities

Many faith communities have defined national or international structures. In some cases these structures are more focused on theology, and for others they are more focused on how the elements of the structures interrelate with one another. In some structures, the national or international head of the faith community has more control than in other communities. For example, the Roman Catholic Church is seen as having a very clear organizational structure with the Pope being the head of the Church, and organizational structures in some way respond to Rome. A similar structure exists within the Coptic Orthodox Church of Alexandria with a Pope as leader. Buddhist, Jewish and Muslim communities are less unified in organizational structure. For instance the Reform Jewish community in America has the Union for Reform Judaism (URJ), which guides Reform Jewish congregations in areas of religious school, fiscal structure and management, and social and human services programs. The URJ is governed by a board of trustees made up of lay leaders. The Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR) provides religious leadership and guidance for Reform rabbis. Refer to Figure 1 for a depiction of inter-relationships within the Jewish faith.

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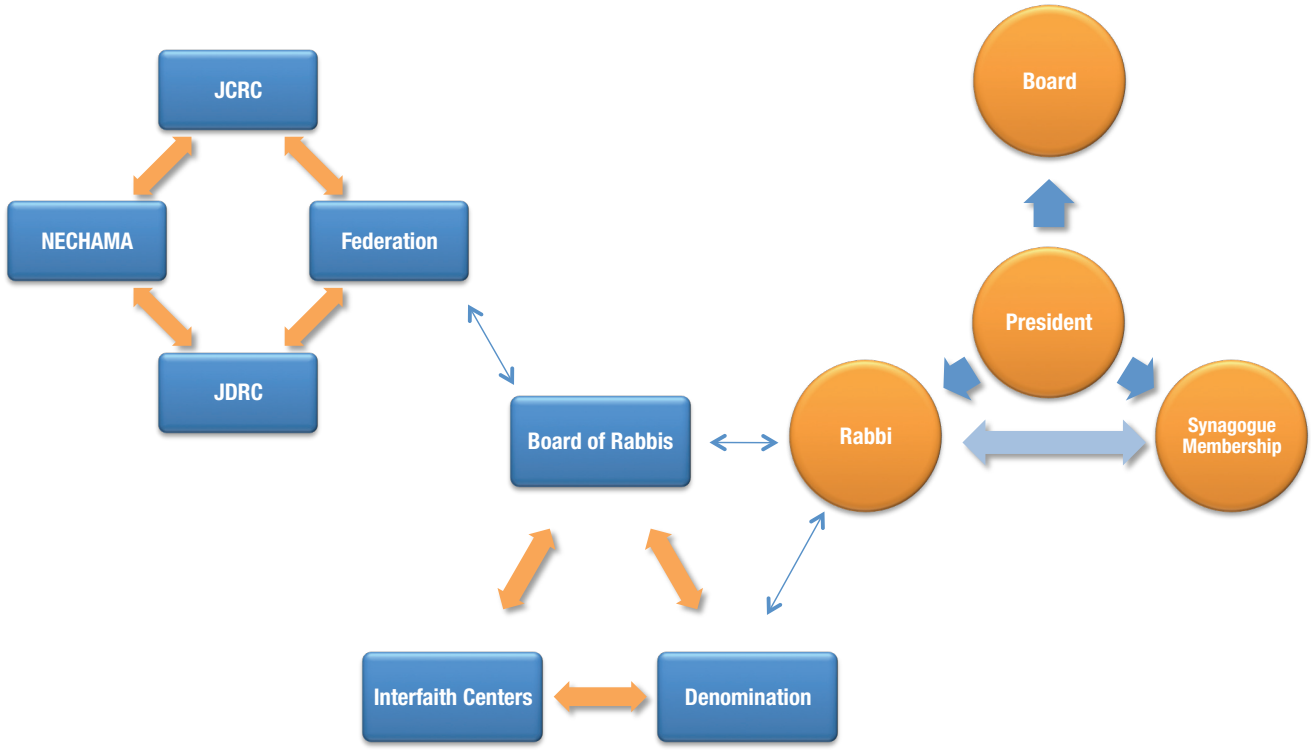
Figure 1

Inter-Relationships Within the Jewish Faith



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Muslim communities are complex and difficult to typify in organization theologically and structurally, due to the many ethno-cultural facets of the diverse population of Muslims in the United States. Muslim followers in a geographic location, if there are enough mosques in the area, may choose to form an association to share ideas, resources, and put forward a unified face and voice to the non-Muslim community around them. Theological guidance is more local in nature, coming from the local imam while adhering to traditional beliefs of the community's specific Sunni or Shiite sect. From a national viewpoint there are numerous national organizations with local and regional offices that support the Muslim community in America. Some of the more notable organizations are the Islamic Circle of North America (ICNA), Islamic Society of North America (ISNA), The Muslim American Society (MAS), the Aga Khan Council, the Fiqh Council of North America, and the Council of Shia Muslim Scholars in North America. No one body speaks for all Muslims and all of these groups are voluntary affiliations and associations with no structural authority or universally recognized communal authority.

In addition to the structures just described, there also exist unaffiliated houses of worship in the Christian faith. These are churches that are not affiliated with any particular denomination, and follow a range of different Christian theologies. These churches often have a single strong leader. Non-denominational churches range in size from the very small storefront congregations to the largest church in the United States, Lakewood Church in Houston, Texas.

II. Review

- America is a nation with a Christian majority.
- America is one of the most religiously diverse nations in the world.
- Religious diversity provides both challenges and great opportunities for emergency and public health preparedness mangers to help their communities prepare for, respond to, and recover from a disaster.
- Interfaith organizations can be an asset in building partnerships with diverse faith communities.
- Elected officials and government agencies and their staffs need to understand the faith communities in their jurisdictions, and develop skills in religious literacy and competency to successfully engage each faith community.

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Chapter Two
FAITH COMMUNITIES AND RESILIENT COMMUNITIES

I. Unique Role of Faith Communities in Building Resilient Communities

Local faith communities, faith-based non-profits, and human service organizations have always responded to disasters in their communities and to disasters across the nation, whether or not they were part of their denomination's or faith community's disaster response organization, or included in the local jurisdiction's emergency management plan. More often than not, it is part of these organizations' core value systems and missions to reach out to those who have been impacted by a disaster, and to serve "the least among us." Regardless of religious group, nearly all have core tenets that include helping those in need, or those who are suffering—especially from a catastrophic event like a natural disaster. Each religious group has some form of local, state, national or international level programs that provide human services, financial assistance, spiritual care, and day-to-day support to those who have been impacted by a disaster.

Congregations and faith communities not only have the desire to help, but in many cases have the human resources, physical assets, and extensive volunteer organizations that can support small, medium and large disaster response efforts, as well as strengthen the emergency management and public health preparedness response efforts of the community in which they live and serve.

In many instances, faith communities are on the ground in the wake of a disaster, providing relief in the form of food, clothing, shelter, and mental health support long before government or the national disaster response organizations arrive.

In many instances, faith communities are on the ground in the wake of a disaster, providing relief in the form of food, clothing, shelter, and mental health support long before government or the national disaster response organizations arrive.

Worden (2006) argues that faith communities provided the initial response to Hurricane Katrina because of their immediate proximity to the disaster:

> *From tiny storefront congregations to deep-pocketed denominations, the communities of faith arrived first. In the harrowing hours and days after Hurricane Katrina, when survivors roamed the desolate streets in search of water, food and medicine, (religious) groups—not FEMA, not the [American] Red Cross, not the National Guard—provided dazed residents with their first hot meal, their first clean water, their first aspirin.*

In 2012, New York City's religious diversity yielded numerous examples of faith communities responding in the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy to feeding, sheltering and other mass care needs, in part to fill gaps left by traditional disaster response institutions. It became clear that Kosher-certified food did not satisfy the needs of Muslim communities, and jeans and T-shirts were not viable clothing options for many in the Eastern Orthodox, Hindu, Jewish and Muslim communities. Due to these experiences, and many more, faith communities in New York are now preparing themselves from the perspective that they are the "first responders" for their respective communities.

Faith communities will respond to disasters whether or not they are in concert with local emergency response plans. They may even respond when they do not have the capacity and capability to do so. There are countless stories of small churches in Houston, Beaumont, Atlanta, and other cities that took in evacuees from New Orleans in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, and became financial victims of their own good works. Furthermore, in the case of Hurricane Sandy, many of the congregations that provided mass care were outside larger response networks, and not only exhausted their resources but also struggled to rebuild or repair their own houses of worship.

Given these examples, local emergency management and public health officials should explore ways to harness this incredible resource to support written emergency management plans.

Seasoned as well as new emergency management and response personnel know the axiom: "the second phase of a disaster is that of the spontaneous unaffiliated volunteer." While a faith community's volunteers are affiliated with a house of worship, their house of worship may not be affiliated with the organized emergency response plans in their jurisdiction. During Tropical Storm Allison several large Houston churches encouraged their members to show up at the flooded Texas Medical Center to help clean up the mess left by the worst tropical storm in American history. What they did not know was that contractors and their work crews hired by the hospitals and medical schools in the medical center were already in place and at work. It was the right impulse, but the wrong activity.

Another story from Tropical Storm Allison epitomizes what happens when faith communities' good intentions are met with lack of planning and ongoing relationships with local government. After Tropical Storm Allison many national faith-based disaster response organizations came to Houston to help rebuild lives and homes destroyed by the storm. Because these national organizations had not worked out details for parking their construction trailers, mobile housing units, waste disposal, or temporary fire and building codes, their efforts were nearly derailed. The discussions to resolve the issues with local government took more than two weeks, wasted valuable time, and created mistrust between local government and faith-based organizations that had come to help those in need. Some of this ill-will remained when Hurricanes Katrina and Ike also impacted the Houston area.

The reality is that faith communities will respond to disasters. They will always offer their resources and energies to help heal the lives of those impacted by disaster. The question is whether or not government will engage them in ways that benefit government, the faith communities, and ultimately the residents of the jurisdiction, or will they both work in their silos, wasting valuable resources, good feelings, and support?

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Faith communities represent a potential partner that can join the whole community effort to prevent, mitigate, prepare for, respond to and recover from disaster; with resources, capacities and capabilities that government needs, but at times without the skills and financial resources to effectively carry out disaster activities on their own. Let's look at some of the reasons why faith communities have the potential to be ideal partners for emergency and public health preparedness managers in helping the community develop and implement response plans.

Faith communities represent:

- Comfort and hope during times of disaster and human suffering. Religious leaders are trusted caregivers to whom the majority of Americans turn for assistance and healing. They can offer comfort, support, clarity, and direction in times of crisis. They are in a unique position to respond to people who are impacted by a disaster because they are already trusted and in established leadership roles.
- A vigorous and constant voice to curtail disaster-related bias crimes.
- Compassion and a desire to help—it is the life's bread of communities of faith to step up and help those in need. Faith communities remain present and active in the community to continue recovery work long after government plans and responsibility ends.
- Prayer/Worship services/events—Religious institutions and leaders help communities find meaning in crisis. Providing opportunities for, and leading prayer/worship services, provides a means and venue for community recovery for many Americans for whom faith and religion are part of their life.
- Community memorial, healing and anniversary commemorations—working with their own and other faith communities, and government partners, faith communities can offer community-based worship services.
- Local knowledge—faith communities have local knowledge of the community's strengths, needs, and resources.
- Provide religious and cultural guidance on, and assistance in, expediting and implementing best practices—especially sheltering, feeding, medical care, and end of life and burial customs and traditions.
- Knowledge of and access to vulnerable populations—faith communities have a very real knowledge of, and connection to vulnerable populations in their congregations and neighborhoods.
- Programmatic knowledge—many faith communities have health and human services programs, and financial assistance programs that rival those of local government. They know how to run successful programs on tight budgets.
- Situational awareness in times of disaster—because they have first hand, on the ground knowledge of their community, faith communities can be a valuable asset for situational awareness in the aftermath of a disaster.
- Physical space—many houses of worship have meeting space, classrooms and kitchens that can be accessed to serve as shelters, immunization clinics, or points of dispensing or other response activities.
- Human resources—many houses of worship have access to trained volunteers as part of their congregations or networks.

- Communications networks—faith communities have established communications networks with their membership, as well as other faith communities within their religious community locally, regional and nationally.
- Ability to provide spiritual and behavioral/mental health support—recent experience and surveys indicate that more than 60 percent of Americans say they turn to their faith for spiritual support and help in times of crisis.
- National networks—many local faith communities have ties and access to their denomination's national disaster response organizations and volunteer networks.

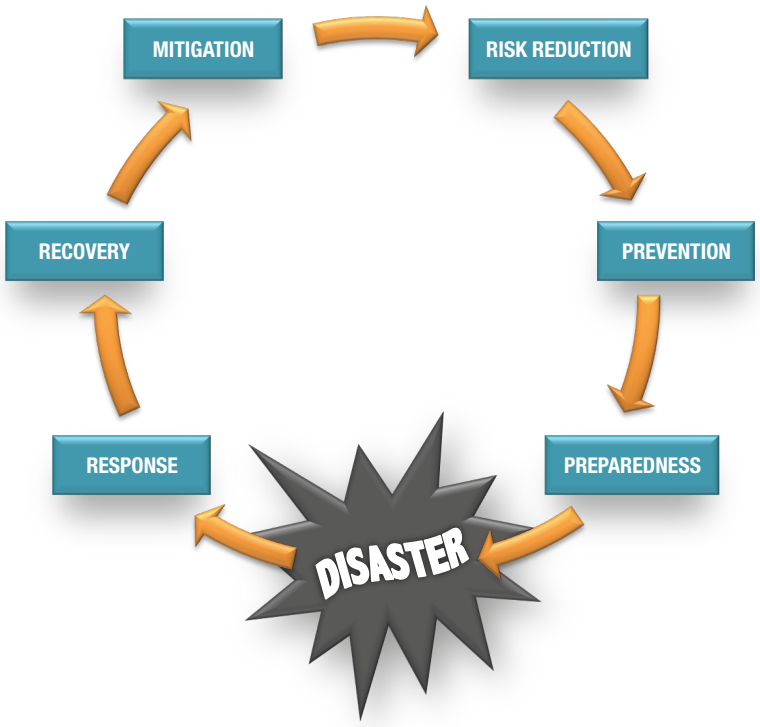
II. Faith Communities and the Disaster Lifecycle

In section one of this chapter we listed numerous reasons why emergency managers and public health preparedness managers should look to the faith communities in their jurisdiction to further develop the government's existing human and physical resources, and to build stronger and more resilient disaster preparedness and response networks. It was also pointed out that building deep and broad partnerships with faith communities around disaster preparedness and response efforts extends the reach of local government beyond its' current staff and budget, and makes it easier for the whole community to return to normal more quickly after a disaster.

In this next phase of the discussion we will look at how faith communities fit into the entire disaster lifecycle.

Figure 2

The Disaster Lifecycle



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Before diving headlong into the discussion of the role of faith communities in the seven phases of the disaster lifecycle, it is important to discuss the critical role of religious leaders in securing a sustainable and robust partnership between a faith community and local or state government. While it is clear that religious leaders often serve as the voice of the faith's sacred tradition and the "conscience" of a congregation, what may not be clear is that religious leaders are also community leaders in the immediate neighborhoods they serve, and many times, in the larger community in which their house of worship resides. Because of their dual role as community and religious leaders, their voice is heard not just within the walls of their house of worship, but in many cases in the halls of power and in the homes of their followers. Further, religious leaders have deep knowledge of the make-up, customs, culture, strengths and needs of their community. This is especially true for their knowledge of vulnerable, under-served, senior, and populations with access and functional needs.

From an emergency management perspective religious leaders can make the refrain of "Make a Plan, Build a Kit, Stay Informed" a reality within their congregation. In the aftermath of a disaster, they can—if they are included in the local emergency response plan and network—deliver critical, timely, trusted messages regarding response and relief efforts to their communities in ways that local elected officials, emergency managers, and electronic media cannot.

Should local emergency managers choose to engage religious leaders in the planning stages of creating the local emergency management plan, they can become government's most trusted partner in promoting the plan to their followers. Said another way, if religious leaders are incorporated into the planning team, they will feel a sense of ownership for the plan, and this will enable them to promote the plan to their followers. They may also, with some level of encouragement and support, begin to see their house of worship and congregation as disaster response assets for the whole community.

Following are the ways in which faith communities are involved in the seven phases of the disaster lifecycle, along with possible roles they can play.

Disaster—The general role of faith communities in disaster response has been universally discussed. Faith communities have responded and will continue to respond to disaster either as a part of a coordinated response with government or on their own. Faith communities not only have their local resources, experience and volunteers available to respond, many also have access to the disaster response resources of their national judicatories or associations.

Response—Response is one of the two traditional areas that faith communities have filled for generations. In times of disaster or crisis faith communities are highly motivated to step up and provide spiritual support, care and compassion, shelter, food, clothing and other very real support to those impacted by disaster. Some denominations like the Southern Baptist Convention have national disaster response organizations that specialize in one area of disaster response, for example, feeding. Another Baptist denomination, American Baptists USA, have a response organization known as American Baptist Men. Baptist Men is nationally known for its well-trained

TIP

Working with long-term recovery organizations can be an excellent way to engage multiple faith communities simultaneously. Many faith communities are part of their denomination's long-term recovery or disaster recovery organization. Many of these groups are professionally staffed and well-funded. Their mission is to help rebuild or repair homes and lives in the impacted area. These long-term recovery and unmet needs teams are skilled in case management and many have worked prior disasters. They understand coalition building, the needs of vulnerable and under-served communities, and more importantly, they understand the FEMA process, its limitations, and its benefits.

and well- equipped disaster response feeding teams. Baptist men from all over the country responded to Hurricane Katrina providing food for people at the New Orleans Superdome, and more than 10,000 New Orleans evacuees housed in Houston's George R. Brown Convention Center.

Baha'i', Buddhist, Episcopal, Evangelical, Hindu, Jewish, Lutheran, Muslim, Presbyterian, Sikh, Zoroastrian, and many other groups also have national disaster response organizations that can be mobilized locally to respond to a disaster.

Recovery—It is in Recovery that faith communities have the most potential to help restore the whole as quickly as possible. Faith communities will be there, working to help improve the lives of those impacted by the disaster long after government programs and disaster responsibilities have ended. Many of the programs faith communities conduct during disaster response are extensions of the human service, health care, rent, food, clothing, and utility support programs they offer every day of the year. They know what the community needs and have delivery systems in place. They have trained volunteers and staff doing the work day-to-day. They are there to do what they can to ensure everyone they touch is made "whole" to the best of their ability, day-to-day, and in the aftermath of a disaster.

Additionally, many faith communities participate in non-governmental long-term recovery and unmet needs programs. These programs are almost always funded through national grants to faith communities or the National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster members. While longer-term recovery efforts are often led by nonprofit groups, local government and emergency management officials can play an important role by maintaining involvement and lending assistance where it makes sense.

Finally, many faith communities are part of their denomination's long-term recovery or disaster recovery organization. Many of these groups are professionally staffed and well-funded. Their mission is to help rebuild or repair homes and lives in the impacted area. These long-term recovery and unmet needs teams are skilled in case management and many have worked prior disasters. They understand coalition building, the needs of vulnerable and under-served communities, and more importantly, they understand the FEMA process, its limitations, and its benefits. At the date of writing, groups from many faith traditions were still working in Alabama, California, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Texas, and other states in the aftermath of hurricanes, tornadoes and wild fires occurring as early as 2005. These organizations are independent of local government emergency management plans but can be counted on by local government to fill a gap in human services and housing relief.

Many faith communities are involved in long-term recovery simply because they are there in the community, they see the need, and take it as their responsibility to do something to mitigate the need. Government would do well to connect with that commitment, energy, training, resources, and leadership.

Mitigation, Risk Reduction, and Prevention—The greatest potential for creative and

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transformational partnership is in the areas of Mitigation, Risk Reduction, and Prevention. Faith communities face the same challenges in the areas of Mitigation, Risk Reduction, and Prevention that government, the private, and non-profit sectors do. It is always easier to build energy and raise funds to respond to a disaster than it is for the work of mitigation, risk reduction and prevention. But it is in these phases of the disaster lifecycle that the greatest opportunity for partnership and reduction of risk to the lives of those who live in the community exists.

With ongoing engagement, education, training, and support, religious leaders can help promote mitigation efforts, risk prevention campaigns, and prevention strategies for their house of worship, and to and for their membership and followers.

Preparedness—Religious leaders have the ability and moral authority to positively influence those members of their house of worship who to take a desired action. If local government can mobilize large numbers of religious leaders to teach and promote the preparedness message and activities in ways that are culturally appropriate for, and doable by, their community they can help make a huge positive change in community disaster resiliency. For example, local emergency managers can recruit religious leaders to assist with local government preparedness campaigns and in promoting the "Make a Plan, Build a Kit, Stay Informed" message extolled and promoted by federal, state, and local government authorities as well as national disaster response organizations.

In summary, if local clergy and religious leaders can be rallied to promote disaster preparedness to their followers in a culturally and linguistically appropriate way, they can be the strongest and most effective voices for encouraging their followers to take steps to be prepared for the next disaster, and to understand the goals and limitations of the local jurisdiction's emergency management plan.

III. Faith Communities and Local, State and National Disaster Response Organizations

One possible way for local or state level emergency managers and public health preparedness managers to introduce themselves to local faith communities is through local preparedness and response networks that already exist in their community. These networks can help facilitate introductions, make use of existing communication mechanisms, and reach a larger number of faith communities in less time. There exist both government and nonprofit sector networks:

Government networks include:

- Community Emergency Response Teams
  The Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Program educates people about disaster preparedness for hazards that may impact their area and trains them in basic disaster response skills, such as fire safety, light search and rescue, team organization, and disaster medical operations. Using the training learned in the classroom and during exercises, CERT members can assist others in their neighborhood or workplace following an event when professional responders are not immediately available to help.

CERT members also are encouraged to support emergency response agencies by taking a more active role in emergency preparedness projects in their community. Many of these teams are sponsored by, or are located in local faith communities. They can be contacted through the CERT coordinator (a position usually housed in the local fire department, office of emergency management, or other related emergency response organization).

- Citizen Corps

  The mission of Citizen Corps is to harness the power of every individual through education, training, and volunteer service to make communities safer, stronger, and better prepared to respond to the threats of terrorism, crime, public health issues, and disasters of all kinds.

  Many local faith communities or judicatories are members of the local/regional Citizen Corps council. The local Citizen Corps council is an excellent venue for local emergency managers and public health preparedness managers to make contact with local faith communities.

Nonprofit sector starting points include:

- National, state and local VOADs/COADs

  State VOADs and local VOADs (also known as Community Organizations Active in Disaster, or COADs) are the local link for government with the NVOAD. The local/regional VOAD/COAD can also serve as a very effective introduction to a jurisdiction's emergency manager or public health preparedness manager to the disaster preparedness and response agencies active in their community. Most local or regional VOADs/COADs meet monthly. With the National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster leading the way, faith communities in the U.S. have a strong network of disaster relief organizations with local and or regional offices that can and should be engaged in the effort to build robust and broad local or state emergency response plan.

  The mission of NVOAD reads:
  National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster is the forum where organizations share knowledge and resources throughout the disaster lifecycle—preparation, response, and recovery—to help disaster survivors and their communities. Members of National VOAD form a coalition of non-profit organizations that respond as part of their overall mission.

  Each member of National VOAD has a unique role to play in the disaster lifecycle. There are over three dozen faith-based organizations that are members[9].

[9] For the full list and disaster-related mission of each, please see http://www.nvoad.org/members or reference NDIN's "National Faith-Based Disaster Service Organizations" tip sheet, available at http://www.n-din.org/ndin_resources/tipsheets_v1208/03_NDIN_TS_NationalOrganizations.pdf

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The American Red Cross is a member of National VOAD that may be able to assist in connecting to existing networks in a local area. In 2010, FEMA and the American Red Cross signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) that sets the framework for the Red Cross and FEMA to jointly lead the planning and coordination of mass care services in disaster. As part of this MOA, the American Red Cross has roles in convening NGOs, government agencies, and the private sector and facilitating linkages between these groups. American Red Cross local chapters and Community Recovery teams on specific disasters may therefore be able to facilitate connections with faith communities in a local area.

- National, state and local interfaith/interreligious networks and coalitions

  Many states and localities have some form of an interfaith/interreligious network. In areas where these networks exist, working with these groups is an efficient option for local emergency managers and public health preparedness managers to make contact with local faith communities[10].

Local faith communities do not exist in isolation: many belong to some form of state or national organizing body. Many, if not all of these national bodies have some form of disaster response organization capable of responding to local, state-wide or nationally declared disasters at some level.

These national disaster response organizations have resources (people, equipment, and vehicles) and trained volunteers that can be mobilized to serve those impacted by disaster. They are self-sustaining and can work in a community for months, often recruiting additional volunteers from their communities across the country. They also bring the ability to coordinate the disaster response activities of local faith communities from outside the impacted area. Most of these groups belong to NVOAD, which allows them to work with each other before a disaster to develop lines of communication and inter-agency operational plans and agreements.

IV. Government Engagement and Partnerships with Faith Communities

With community knowledge, leadership and a commitment to serve, faith communities are actively sought out as partners with government agencies to create more effective and robust emergency management preparedness and response plans and programs. The resources, local knowledge, and mission of organizations in the faith communities can serve as an effective supplement and partner to government resources. The challenge for local and state government officials, then, is to determine the best and most effective ways to engage the faith communities within their jurisdiction to fully leverage these resources in ways that are meaningful to them, are supported with education, training, and (where appropriate) funding; and meet each faith community's own goals, and mission(s).

[10] Available at http://www.n-din.org/ndin_forms/directory_list.php.

The work of engaging faith communities involves at least three strategic elements:

1) Developing a high level of religious literacy and competency;
2) Finding and engaging a multi-faith network or coalition as a liaison to faith communities; and
3) Developing clear and attainable goals and objectives for the partnership between your office and faith communities.

It is important to understand that engaging faith communities is a necessary component of the "whole community" approach to disaster preparedness and response, and in building more resilient communities. It is also a very arduous task requiring skilled community liaisons, and an unwavering commitment to the program. Detractors within government or a faith community have the potential to try to derail the partnership process based on personal opinions and biases about which communities or groups should be included or excluded.

The work of engaging faith communities must be done strategically. Gaining the trust and respect of religious leaders involves engaging the appropriate level of leadership and authority within a given faith community. Furthermore, there are simply not enough resources for any agency to attempt partnership by going door-to-door to the houses of worship in a given area, nor is it an effective use of time. Instead, creating or leveraging an existing multi-faith body that is able to serve as an intermediary group between faith communities and government agencies is vital. These bodies need to be open to all faith groups, self-governed, and respect the leadership of any faith tradition regardless of theological differences.

Truly effective outreach to faith communities takes place long before disaster strikes and is supported and promoted at all levels of government (elected officials as well as government agencies and their staff). Effective outreach is well structured, consistent, and specific in terms of goals, objectives, role and responsibilities, and continues on a seemingly daily basis. Outreach and partnership should also reflect religious competency and literacy in all government policies, business practices, and programs.

This *Guide* often refers to the need for elected officials and government agencies and their staffs to be religiously literate and competent, and to acknowledge the value of creating and sustaining partnerships with local faith communities. These outreach efforts to faith communities must also be actively supported by senior elected officials. This is not meant to impose additional duties or responsibilities to overworked public figures, but it is to acknowledge the vital role senior elected officials play in setting the stage for a successful, effective, robust, sustainable partnership between government and faith communities. Specifically, the positive impact on a jurisdiction's faith communities and leaders cannot be overstated when they receive an official invitation from the senior elected official to attend a meeting to ask for their knowledge, experience, leadership and help in developing a more whole community focused emergency management or public health emergency plan. The governors of Missouri, North Carolina, and Rhode Island, for example, have had significant success in establishing statewide interfaith disaster councils and task forces.

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Following are some essential steps required for successful outreach to faith communities:

- Build religious literacy among elected officials and agency staff, including a basic understanding of each faith community, its theology, rituals, practices and sacred texts, and mission for serving its community. The most basic tool when engaging faith communities is religious literacy and competency. If government officials/liaisons do not understand a faith partner, and do not know how to engage them on their terms, the would-be partnership will be one-sided at best, or at worst create mistrust, which effectively dooms the work to failure before it can begin.
- Build and demonstrate religious competency—Know how to navigate and engage each faith community within its own environment, as a trusted, knowledgeable, and effective partner.
- Build a multi-faith network—The work of actively engaging faith communities is the work of relationship and network building. Building networks of faith communities from across the jurisdiction is the essence of the "whole community/whole nation" concept and enables local government to recruit large numbers of faith communities to the cause of preparedness and response.
- Reduce barriers to participation—By their very nature faith communities and government agencies create barriers to sustainable partnership. Government must listen to its would-be partners in non-defensive ways to see how they can remove the barriers for which they are responsible in a way that meets everyone's needs. Faith communities also need to understand that some government rules and regulations are in place for everyone's protection and help make the community better. Getting everyone to talk openly and honestly listen to each other is a critical first step in this partnering process.
- Define specific ways that government will help faith communities build capacity and capabilities to help build resilient communities within the jurisdiction. Government can provide training and support to partner organizations to help its partners more effectively carry out their disaster-related missions. It is critical that government make its partners comfortable with the level of training and support government will provide to maintain and sustain the partnership, and help build both capacity and capabilities of their partners.
- Employ religious literacy to get the basics around meeting/event planning right: Take into account holy days when scheduling meetings/events and, consider diet and days of particular religious observance when food is being provided.

Challenges do exist for emergency management and public health emergency preparedness leadership in working with faith communities but the rewards for the community as a whole significantly outweigh the challenges.

TIP

The University of Southern California's Center for Religion and Civic Culture states in the conclusion of its recent publication *Faithful Action: Working with Religious Groups in Disaster Planning, Response and Recovery,*

Faith-based organizations represent an important ally for public agencies as they seek to strengthen and enhance disaster preparedness and response...Because of their diversity and ubiquity, faith-based organizations serve as bedrock institutions of many neighborhoods, especially in low-income and predominantly immigrant communities. Moreover, they are often trusted sources of information, counseling, and social services of all kinds. Many faith-based organizations have the capacity to respond to disasters and have physical resources that can be utilized to serve in times of need. Other faith-based organizations must be encouraged to expand their vision to include the world beyond their limited definition of community. *(continued on page 50)*

TIP

(continued from page 49)

For public agencies, faith-based organizations represent a challenge. Not only are they numerous, but they often have cultural, linguistic, and religious barriers that must be overcome. Intermediary organizations could play a significant role in overcoming barriers by assisting both agencies and FBOs and providing the appropriate toolkits to enhance understanding. The authors of this report contend that strengthening networks through intermediaries, building knowledge in public agencies and FBOs, and facilitating the ability of FBOs to serve during and after disasters will benefit the people… and enhance the ability of communities to prepare for and recover from disasters.

V. Review

- Many faith communities' missions and core values include the provision of spiritual support, food, clothing, shelter, and behavioral health support in the aftermath of a disaster.
- Faith communities have always responded to disasters, many times outside of the official emergency management plan.
- Faith communities have access to volunteers, physical space, and communications networks that government does not.
- Religious leaders are also community leaders and can lend their leadership to disaster preparedness and response education, and messaging to support government's plans and goals.
- Government needs to reach out to faith communities long before the next disaster occurs.
- If government does not partner with faith communities they will continue to prepare for and respond to disasters as they always have.
- Government outreach to faith communities needs to have specific goals and objectives, and be supported by sustained education, training, and where appropriate, funding.
- Religious literacy and competency are key elements for successful government outreach to faith communities.
- Senior elected officials' support for these efforts is critical. Get them involved in a kickoff event to help ensure a successful outcome for the outreach efforts.

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Chapter Three
CURRENT STATUS OF FAITH-BASED ENGAGEMENT

Note: The University of Southern California's Center for Religion and Civic Culture (CRCC) recently published a report titled *Faithful Action: Working with Religious groups in Disaster Planning, Response and Recovery*. Except where noted, Chapter Three is adapted from that report.

I. Current State of Government Engagement and Partnerships with Faith Communities

Faith-based organizations provide services before, during, and after disasters. Studies of catastrophes from 9/11 to Hurricane Sandy to historic river flooding in Colorado in 2013 describe the important role of faith communities as a source of physical, social, and spiritual care. At times, however, this role is often informal and not regarded as a significant part of disaster preparedness, recovery, and response plans.

Many regard Hurricane Katrina as a moment when the system failed. Government incompetence— exemplified by a failure to prepare, to respond, and to adequately communicate risks—was fueled by perceived bigotry, hesitancy, and an impotent bureaucracy. In the midst of this failure, some faith-based and community actors rose spontaneously to fill the gaps and meet the needs of the many affected by this tremendous storm and its aftermath. Thus, the story of Katrina is also a story of awakening and realization. It has long been recognized that faith communities, their houses of worship, and social service agencies offer relief programs, but Katrina set a new standard by shining the light anew on the domestic work done by faith-based organizations in response to local problems, both catastrophic and minor. The successful provision of services by FBOs and NGOs contrasts with the many chronicled deficiencies and failures of government during the catastrophic 2005 hurricane season.

The story of Katrina, and the role of the faith communities in response to the devastation caused both by the storm and human error, helped fuel a new and evolving interest in the role of faith-based organizations during public health emergencies and disasters. These local FBOs (the term is inclusive of congregations and faith-based nonprofits) are increasingly viewed as formal assets that are capable of mobilizing a disaster response without much support. Yet, the story of the overwhelming and effective response by FBOs in the Katrina context must be tempered by stories of the many congregations that did not respond, those that responded but were untrained or ineffective in their efforts, and those that responded only to be ultimately overwhelmed by the burdens on their programs and forced to close down or still suffer from the emotional and financial scars of their service.

It has long been recognized that faith communities, their houses of worship, and social service agencies offer relief programs, but Katrina set a new standard by shining the light anew on the domestic work done by faith-based organizations in response to local problems, both catastrophic and minor.

A difficult reality exists between the extreme views that cast FBOs as either fully prepared and able to spring into action without much support in the event of a disaster, or as incompetent or irrelevant to planning and response. The category itself includes entities such as fifty member storefront congregations, college campus-like megachurches, service organizations, advocacy groups, and many others. Understanding these groups and supporting their disaster planning, response and recovery efforts requires some complex navigation. There is admittedly, a significant lack of religious literacy on the part of government, and even between faith communities.

Nonetheless, the challenge of working with faith-based organizations should not be a deterrent to engaging them. FBOs currently play a critical and expanding role once disasters strike, providing "Mass Care" (food, shelter, and many other essential services), along with risk communication, transportation, emotional and spiritual care, among other services, to their congregants and their surrounding communities. These responses, however, lack systematization. Outside of the VOAD structure, FBOs and congregations are generally not included in the formal disaster mitigation planning process mandated by local emergency managers and public health emergency officials. The disaster response structure does not usually recognize congregations and their unique resources and capital that can be harnessed before, during, and after disasters. In addition to their typically recognized capabilities, some FBOs are also able to coordinate activities because of their formal partnerships with other FBOs and local government social service networks that license, contract, and coordinate those services.

Therefore, there is an opportunity to increase the effectiveness with which congregations and many FBOs prepare for and respond to disasters, and thereby increase the ability of local and state emergency management officials to more effectively meet their preparedness and response obligations.

As the social safety net of the United States erodes, faith communities often work to fill many of the unmet needs of their congregations and their surrounding communities on a day-to-day basis. They respond to public safety problems of gang violence by providing intervention programs. They bring hope and healing to communities in times of distress, operate food banks, provide shelters and clothing distribution, and run spiritual, child, and senior care programs.

Congregations often see the effects of emerging trends among their members and in their communities before they become public policy challenges. In disaster scenarios, this could include things like poor housing conditions or food insecurity. During natural disasters such as floods, hurricanes and earthquakes, congregations can marshal or have the potential to marshal additional resources, human capital, and other support to meet the pressing challenges of their communities in these emergency situations. They respond because caring for people in need is intrinsic to all religious traditions. *Yet, they typically work outside of any government agency and without public funding or preexisting coordinated efforts.* Congregations may undertake these efforts on their own, through denominational associations, or through network ties that leaders have formed with other congregations and FBOs. Others operate with little formal connection to other congregations or community-based efforts and are not able to contribute to larger efforts beyond their own walls.

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Over the past decade, there has been increasing interest among public officials to engage faith communities. This increase in both desire and mandate to work with faith communities has not been adequately supported with the requisite knowledge, cultural competence, and religious literacy to deal with the complexities of the many different faith communities and the resulting myriad of organizational expressions in the United States. In fact, many government efforts see congregations solely as locations from which to execute government initiatives, source individual volunteers, or perhaps provide shelter during an emergency. *By contrast, congregations should be understood as systems with unique institutional attributes, substantial underutilized assets, and organizational partners that can be more fully harnessed in times of crisis.*

Similarly, congregations across the religious and political spectrum are simultaneously interested in, and cautious about, engagement with public officials. While they work to meet the needs of their congregants and their surrounding communities, and in some cases may have a more global perspective, they remain wary of partnerships with public agencies because of legitimate concerns about government intrusion into the lives of their congregations, or historic experiences of partnerships gone awry. However, if the sustainable involvement of congregations can be systematized, there is great potential to increase their engagement and effectiveness in disaster preparedness and response. Understanding the capacity and capabilities of congregations and envisioning what they might be able to do with more training and sustained support represents an important step. Addressing mutual concerns and closing the knowledge gap that exists between faith communities and government will also enhance partnerships. Addressing this critical link in the emergency management and public health emergency chain will enable congregations, FBOs, and government efforts to more effectively and efficiently work together during times of crisis.

II. Challenges for Faith Communities in Working with Government in Disaster Preparedness and Response

Congregations and FBOs often experience barriers to working with government. These barriers may be due to the characteristics of a particular faith group, or due to the lack of religious literacy or other limitations of public agencies. At times, FBOs and public agencies exhibit suspicion regarding any formal relationship with each other because of issues related to the separation of church and state. This may be the result of a two-way lack of contact between the groups or a mutual lack of knowledge. Potential partners could also be wary due to previous experience, or because of theological or political ideas. These issues fall within the generally accepted role of government and government agencies following a disaster.[11] For example, Hull (2006) found that his interview subjects believed that the impact of FBOs and NGOs during a disaster would be heightened if the government could address the following limitations and challenges.

[11] Hull (2006), Referenced in *Faithful Action: Working with Religious Groups in Disaster Planning, Response and Recovery.*

Problems with Access and Credentialing[12]

Faith-based organizations, particularly local ones, often have difficulty with physical access to disaster areas and associated activities. Without government-issued credentials identifying them as serving in some official capacity, they find themselves blocked from delivering resources and services in mass care settings. This is an issue for smaller FBOs that are not recognized at law enforcement and military checkpoints. As an example, the reality of law enforcement organizational cultures in some areas may mean that certain religious leaders (for example, a Roman Catholic priest) may gain access more easily than leaders from other religious traditions. In addition, spiritual care providers are often not allowed access to some shelters because of credentialing issues. While this rightly restricts access to appropriately credentialed personnel, this presents a primary limitation and challenge in several functional areas for FBOs: mental health, spiritual support, logistics management, and transportation management and services.

This challenge is one for interfaith/interreligious networks to address. In general, government agencies will have a licensing process defined but faith communities should be responsible for "self-policing" membership to determine legitimacy of requests. Faith communities should continue working to develop interfaith networks to vet, train, and police their membership and work with government together as a united front on agreements related to access during disaster as part of disaster preparedness planning.

Inadequate Training and Experience[13]

The great geographic scale of destruction and the intensity of Hurricane Katrina, combined with the perception that government and organizations like the American Red Cross could not take care of all of the resulting problems, prompted action by many local organizations that had never served in a disaster relief capacity. Despite their lack of experience, these FBOs became, among other things, shelter operators, builders, case managers, caregivers, and providers of shelter, food, and medicine. Although their effectiveness improved quickly, their lack of initial training and experience proved to be a challenge. Those organizations with prior training initially fared much better than those who had none. Training and experience are limitations and challenges in three functional areas: shelter, medical services, and physical reconstruction services. These areas need to be addressed if public agencies expect greater and more skilled participation from congregations and FBOs in disasters and other emergencies. A number of resources exist related to mass care training. To contribute to building the capacity of faith-based partners in disaster, NDIN has developed Disaster Tip Sheets for U.S. Religious Leaders.[14]

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[12] From Hull (2006), Referenced in *Faithful Action: Working with Religious Groups in Disaster Planning, Response and Recovery.*
[13] Ibid
[14] Available at http://www.n-din.org/ndin_resources/ndin_tips_sheets_v1208.php

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Unanticipated Needs for Long-term Routine Services[15]

Immediately following Hurricane Sandy, government agencies and other responders did not anticipate the extent of long-term housing needs facing thousands of survivors. Hundreds of households required temporary housing for up to a year or longer; many living in government-sponsored hotel rooms. Mental health support needs began to increase approaching the one year anniversary of the storm. Long-term routine needs are frequently overlooked or are inadequately addressed in six functional areas: shelter, mental health and spiritual support, physical reconstruction of infrastructure and housing, transportation, waste management and sanitation, children's services, and disaster case management.

This lack of understanding often stems from a lack of understanding of the disaster lifecycle and its seven phases (see Figure 2: The Disaster Lifecycle). The recovery phase, while often thought of as a short-term process, is in reality a process that may take years for many survivors, especially those who may have experienced a loss of life of a relative or a significant asset such as their home. FEMA provides a number of training courses, including online courses, which provide more information on the disaster lifecycle.[16]

Lack of Trust

Congregations often serve particular populations and language groups (in some cases more than one population or language group). Each group and individual has their own set of biases and preconceptions based on prior experience in the United States or in their home countries. Some may make assumptions based on negative prior experience and avoid outreach by government agencies altogether. Issues such as fear of revealing too much information about themselves, their buildings, and programs may work against efforts to form positive relationships with city, county or state agencies. If trust underlies most of these relationships, then it may be unrealistic for government agencies to assume that they are regarded as a trusted entity when working with different faith groups. Researchers have found that there is a significant amount of distrust on the part of religious groups, especially when asked specific questions about their buildings, programs and capabilities."[17]

Issues of trust may be influenced by experiences with government during past disasters, experiences with government in their country of origin, or linguistic differences with the majority population. Other factors inhibiting the building of a culture of preparedness may be lack of resources, lack of imminent danger from an approaching disaster, or experiences in one's home country that make natural disasters seem insignificant, all of which may indirectly present issues of a lack of trust for government agencies and programs.

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[15] Ibid
[16] Available at http://training.fema.gov/
[17] See *Opening the Gates: Congregations Confronting Gang Violence*: University of Southern California, Center for Religion and Civic Culture, 2012, Referenced in *Faithful Action: Working with Religious Groups in Disaster Planning, Response and Recovery.*

CASE STUDY

Jamie Aten, co-director of the Humanitarian Disaster Institute at Wheaton College in Wheaton, Illinois, describes responses to interviews he conducted with churches in Mississippi after Hurricane Katrina:

Within a number of different churches that we surveyed, the attendees reported seeking out help from clergy and their faith community overall before seeking government help. One of the reasons that we hypothesize is that some were coming from lower socioeconomic status or maybe areas that were marginalized, and therefore it made it harder to get to government help and vice versa.

This lack of trust is of particular importance, and danger, when it comes to immunizations or the dispensing of medical counter-measures in a pandemic or bio-terrorist attack response. The distrust of some communities regarding vaccines and medications provided by government is a very real and concerning issue that has some possibility of resolution as a result of outreach efforts.

Confused by Government Agencies

Beyond the trust factor, there are often more practical issues that keep congregations from approaching government entities. In areas with limited social service provision, residents may simply not be accustomed to turning to government agencies for assistance. After a disaster, when state and federal disaster response or emergency management agencies descend on the area, there may be information overload. This is especially true in large-scale disasters or in urban areas when many nonprofit, faith-based, and humanitarian agencies may also be providing assistance and information from multiple channels.

Lack of Religious Literacy

Lack of religious literacy is not only a challenge for government agencies and their civilian and military staff, but also for faith communities themselves. For faith communities to partner effectively with government and be a full participant in the disaster lifecycle, they must also build their own capacity in religious literacy. It is equally critical that faith communities who, for example, provide mass care/sheltering in a post disaster setting do so in a religiously competent manner. Creating or strengthening interfaith/interreligious/multi-faith networks are an important step toward building this understanding. Faith communities can also reference NDIN tip sheets.[18]

III. Challenges for Government in Working with Faith Communities

Barriers to public agencies working with faith communities are, in many ways, similar to the barriers that faith groups experience with public agencies. For example, there may be a general suspicion of faith groups and their motives, and an uncertainty about their abilities to act in disaster situations. Further, as noted above, a lack of contact and/or knowledge of faith groups make it easier to avoid working with them. Finally, public agencies and officials may have inaccurate assumptions about the capacity of congregations and FBOs. For example, officials may assume that a congregation's pastoral leadership can be approached in a fairly easy manner so as to access their resources. However, it is important to note that large numbers of congregational leaders are bi-vocational; their role is only one job that they maintain, and it may not actually pay them much, if any, salary. This bi-vocational role is a particularly prominent characteristic of congregational leaders in communities that are typically most at risk in a disaster. On a practical level, bi-vocational religious leaders find it difficult to attend important informational meetings and trainings related to disaster preparedness and response that are more often than not, held on weekdays during work hours.

[18] Available at http://www.n-din.org/ndin_resources/ndin_tips_sheets_v1208.php

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Lack of Religious Literacy

Government agencies often lack adequate and accurate knowledge of faith-based groups, how they operate, and how best to approach them. While many staff and leaders in government are religious, in general, government agencies are not often competent in working with faith communities that are not mainstream, mainline, and do not represent the majority of the population. While government leaders understand politics, they may not understand the people, the religious structures, the theology, and the culture. In addition to the general lack of understanding faith communities, what they believe, and how that may impact their willingness and ability to act in a disaster, are other, more practical issues related to what congregations and FBOs can actually do in disaster situations.

For example, government organizations typically lack the basic operational knowledge of faith communities such as whether they, by virtue of their internal organizational authority structures, can act without specific permission from key religious authorities. The government, in general, regards faith communities as self-sustaining resources that can be tapped at will in a disaster. Thus, government agencies must gather and institutionalize in their own organizational structures basic competencies such as understanding religious groups, including their lines of authority and the types of resources that might be mobilized in a disaster.

Proselytizing and Preferential Treatment

One fear that contributes to the hesitancy to financially support faith-based groups involves both perceived, or actual, hidden religious agendas. The fear of proselytizing, as well as preferential service for fellow believers, runs deep in secular communities and organizations. For example, one denominational disaster relief website listed "Professions of Faith" and four other evangelism categories prior to reporting other direct services on its annual activity report.

This agency is a signatory of the National VOAD "Points of Consensus on Emotional and Spiritual Care," which prohibits member organizations from such activity:

> *People impacted by disaster and trauma are vulnerable. There is an imbalance of power between disaster responders and those receiving care. To avoid exploiting that imbalance, spiritual care providers refrain from using their position, influence, knowledge or professional affiliation for unfair advantage or for personal, organizational or agency gain. Disaster response will not be used to further a particular political or religious perspective or cause—response will be carried out according to the needs of individuals, families and communities. The promise, delivery, or distribution of assistance will not be tied to the embracing or acceptance of a particular political or religious creed.*

Thus, despite the prohibition by the National VOAD agreements, this agency openly includes religious conversions as one of their measures of success, suggesting efforts at proselytizing can even be a problem with organizations that have signed agreements to refrain from such activities.

At times, houses of worship are accused of providing their own members with preferential treatment. De Vita and Kramer (2008) noted one church-based group that attempted to serve its members first by creating a tracking system to identify members and prioritize their service. With regard to the same issue, a public agency that became a conduit for donations routed significant private donations to a local faith-based organization because the director believed that pastors were best suited to identify where services were needed.[19]

Regardless of the challenge raised by the possibility that one or more individuals from a specific faith community may proselytize during a disaster response, the benefits of working with faith communities outweighs this challenge. With education and careful response assignments these challenges can be minimized or eliminated. Much of this responsibility lies within faith communities themselves to self-police and ensure adherence to their own standards. Government can play a role by ensuring it does not take actions to overly focus on the majority (often an easier "target") at the expense of the minority. A misstep could be as seemingly benign as holding an event on a Friday because Roman Catholics and Jews will be available, even though Muslims may not.

IV. Categorizing Congregations and FBOs

The large number of congregations and faith-based organizations creates the challenge of including them all in risk communication efforts and determining which group(s) might be able to contribute in a significant way to disaster preparedness, response and/or recovery, and community resilience. There could be any number of ways to organize thinking about what segments of faith communities might be most capable of participating in the disaster response process. Thus, the authors of this report have developed a four-part typology, comprised of *tiers* of groups, each tier indicating a different level of capacity and willingness to be a part of the disaster response process. This typology provides a way for public agencies to think about how best to focus their attention when seeking out participants from faith communities in disasters. The result is a system through which public entities can categorize congregations and FBOs in terms of their potential contributions, and manage their relationships with different types of organizations and congregations. This system can also help public entities identify the most fruitful FBOs to work, how to work with them, and how to assist different types of organizations as they show interest and ability to participate in the disaster process. Finally, the system can establish the groundwork for networking groups so that they can complement each other's strengths and weaknesses.

[19] De Vita and Kramer, 2008, Referenced in *Faithful Action: Working with Religious Groups in Disaster Planning, Response and Recovery.*

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Four Tiers of Congregations

Tier 1: "Have It All" Organizations
The first tier of congregations and FBOs are what we call "have it all" organizations that are *Fully Capable* of inclusion in the disaster response, mitigation, and recovery process. These organizations have physical assets (including a kitchen, parking lot, and indoor space) and they also have active congregations and a pool of volunteers, organizational capacity, sufficient staff, and niche leadership capable of managing various types of programming. They already have a range of social programming, community programs in place, an ethic of civic engagement, and a supportive board and general operations capability. These organizations, while valuable in many ways, will still view disaster related activities as secondary or tertiary activities until a disaster occurs. Thus, relief groups should work to have structures in place at these congregations, which can then be activated when needed.

Tier 2: "Interested with Potential" Organizations
The second tier consists of congregations that want to "do something" in emergencies and disasters. We classify these as *Interested with Potential*. These congregations and organizations have an interest and passion to be involved, but may have limitations in space, resources and programming.

Tier 3: "Internally Focused" Organizations
Congregations in the third tier tend to be *Internally Focused*. Their primary interest is "doing our own thing for own people." These congregations and FBOs may have capacity, space, and resources, but they lack an active ethic of civic engagement. They seldom move beyond caring for their own congregation or a specific small community.

Tier 4: "Unprepared or Uninterested" Organizations
The fourth tier includes congregations that are either *Unprepared* (limited capability and little initial interest but potentially helpful congregations) or *Uninterested* in any sort of disaster preparation or response. Unprepared congregations may be storefronts, temporary, or small groups, but they have some value to disaster relief. These small congregations may have little to offer, but can still serve as a place to access harder to reach communities and serve as a place to distribute important material and information. Uninterested congregations would be difficult, if not impossible, to mobilize in effective ways, but they can still be utilized to affect some level of individual preparedness among their members.

In each of these tiers, it is important to note that not only are there congregations of varying sizes and religious traditions, but also that these are representative of different social classes, racial/ethnic makeup, relative isolation of a group or community, and many other considerations. Given the range of theological, political, social and asset based differences between and among congregations, how should outreach to these congregations be organized? Should government agencies focus resources on the most equipped congregations or should they attempt to reach as many as possible? Focusing on each and every congregation, or even focusing on only one or two of the tiers identified above, is the wrong approach. Rather, the best way to access

CASE STUDY

Tyler Radford, former New York State Community Recovery Supervisor for the American Red Cross's Hurricane Sandy recovery program argues:

In the post-Hurricane Sandy environment, the American Red Cross's Community Recovery team was tasked with reaching out to, engaging, forming networks with, and increasing the preparedness of thousands of faith communities in New York City, Long Island, and the Lower Hudson Valley. To do this, we began outreach by working closely with interfaith networks and that were already in existence and by participating in Long-Term Recovery groups where many representatives from faith communities were active. In addition to collaborating with the New York Disaster Interfaith Service (NYDIS) on outreach, some Long-Term Recovery groups were facilitated by interfaith alliance leaders; simplifying the process of bringing representatives from various faith traditions into the recovery effort. We also worked side-by-side with FEMA Voluntary Agency Liaisons (VALs) to ensure government, NGO, and faith-based partnerships were formed and activities were aligned.

TIP

Peter Gudaitis offers the following recommendation:

One of the things that we advocate through NDIN is that every community in the U.S., at least every state, and preferably every locality, either a county or a city, should have some sort of a "disaster interfaith" group. These coordinative groups could be an interfaith disaster council like San Diego, or fully functional nonprofit disaster human service agencies like New York Disaster Interfaith Services (NYDIS). Or it could be a group of volunteer long-term recovery committees similar to the network in Florida called—Florida Interfaith Networking in a Disaster, which supports and trainings the efforts of every county-based Long-term Recovery Committee to have a faith-based caucus. But every community should have some FBO coalition that congregations coordinate through and get risk-communications from.

and leverage the potential contribution of faith communities to the disaster response process is through representative or intermediary organizations that stand between congregations and public agencies, and serve to organize and manage the multitude of congregations and their pertinent information.

Thus, agencies must value each tier and type of congregation differently and approach and partner with them in specific ways based on an understanding of their strengths and weaknesses. Yet the best organizational strategy for both faith communities and public agencies is not to have thousands of congregations in a disaster-affected area interfacing directly with government agencies. Rather, congregations should be classified first in terms of the four tiers described above, and then brought into existing intermediary faith-based or community organizations oriented toward sustainable disaster work in all phases of the disaster lifecycle—whether the Citizen Corps Council, local VOADs, or national VOAD. These intermediaries can manage the information on resources, abilities and interest, and then serve as the points of contact for public agencies during a disaster. It is also important, when using a community-based or whole community approach, to assess the field in order to recognize the entities that are already working. Once players are identified, groups can be networked to avoid duplication.

Finally, given the wide range of congregations and FBOs, approaches to outreach should vary based on the tier in which particular groups can be categorized, and the geographic (and political) landscape of the territory, whether city, county, or state.

V. Review

- Many faith-based organizations have the capacity to respond to disasters and have physical resources that can be utilized to serve in times of need.
- Other faith-based organizations must be encouraged to expand their vision to include the world beyond their limited definition of community.
- Faith-based organizations can be classified into four tiers.
- For faith-based organizations, working with government can represent a challenge due to reasons such as access and credentialing, inadequate training and experience, lack of trust, and confusion.
- For public agencies, faith-based organizations can represent a challenge because they are numerous and often have cultural, linguistic, and religious barriers that must be overcome in addition to the risk of proselytizing and prioritizing their own members.
- Intermediary organizations could play a significant role in overcoming barriers by assisting both agencies and FBOs in their understanding of one another.
- Strengthening networks through intermediaries, building knowledge in public agencies and FBOs, and facilitating the ability of FBOs to serve during and after disasters will enhance the ability of communities to prepare for and recover from disasters.

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Chapter Four

GUIDANCE FOR EMERGENCY AND PUBLIC HEALTH PREPAREDNESS MANAGERS

I. Developing Cultural & Religious Competency & Literacy

It is a long held belief that America is the great melting pot where people of all nations, backgrounds and religions could come together to become one integrated and homogenous people. This notion is far from the reality of life in America. Today's cities, large and small, are gathering places for people from all over the world who come here to work, raise families, and participate in community life. They bring with them their skills, education and drive to succeed and contribute to the common good. They also bring with them their language, ethnic and cultural history and customs, and religious beliefs, traditions and moral codes. Those that have migrated to the United States more recently from other, more dangerous parts of the world may also bring with them very different definitions of disaster, and levels of trust in the government. Residents of cities like Boston, Houston, Los Angeles, and New York City are from numerous countries and speak hundreds of languages, as well as practice a wide variety of faith traditions/ religions. And while they all come here to be a vibrant part of this country, they also want, and need to, retain their cultural identity, as well as practice freely their religious beliefs, customs and traditions, as guaranteed by the Bill of Rights. Thus, America is much more akin to a salad, where each ingredient maintains its own flavor, but when combined, the taste is more than the sum of its parts.

Cultural and religious literacy and competency are the most basic, essential tools in government's tool kit when reaching out to these highly diverse communities. If a government official does not speak their potential partner's religious "language," does not understand their cultural background and traditions, and does not understand how to engage them on their terms, would-be partnerships will be one-sided at best, but more likely doomed to failure before they begin.

From an emergency preparedness and response perspective there are numerous potential intersections between government plans and religious literacy and competency. One example of this might be the jurisdiction's mass care or mass sheltering plan. Below is an excerpt of the Guidelines for Providing Muslim Competent Sheltering & Mass Care for emergency and public health preparedness managers to facilitate mass care and sheltering needs of Muslims. Developed by the National Disaster Interfaiths Network and University of Southern California's Center for Religion and Civic Culture in conjunction with Islamic Circle of North America and Islamic Relief, the guidelines are available for use by local and state emergency managers.[20]

[20] Available at http://www.n-din.org

Figure 3

NDIN Tip Sheet - Competency Guidelines: Sheltering and Mass Care for Muslims

National Disaster Interfaiths Network

BE A READY CONGREGATION PARTNER
Tip Sheets for Faith Community Partners

Competency Guidelines: Sheltering & Mass Care for Muslims

These guidelines are provided to inform cultural competency and reasonable religious accommodation mandates for U.S. Mass Care providers, and to assist staff and volunteers in competently meeting the needs of Muslims during disaster response or recovery operations—whether at a government or private shelter, or a shelter in a Mosque (Masjid, in Arabic) or any other house of

In Mass Care registration or service settings, Muslims may or may not choose to self-identify and, despite common assumptions, their outward dress or appearance may not identify them as Muslims. Moreover, ethnic or regional garb does not necessarily indicate religious observance. For example, Christians, Hindus, Sikhs, and members of other faith communities from the Middle East or South Asia may also wear the same/similar ethnic clothing. Although some Muslims may feel comfortable raising concerns about their religious needs, others may not voice their concerns regarding any/all of the following issues.

SHELTERING

- **Greetings and Physical Interaction:** Upon entering a Mass Care setting, families and individuals who appear in Islamic dress or self-identify as Muslim will feel most welcome if staff demonstrate a willingness to respect and meet their cultural and religious needs. These first impressions matter. Staff must also recognize greeting customs, especially between males and females. Muslims greet one another, and can be greeted by, the Arabic salutation—As-Salamu Alaykum ("peace be upon you"). Muslims do not generally exchange handshakes with, or embrace, people of the opposite gender. Staff and other guests should understand that this is not a sign of rudeness, but a cultural and/or religious custom. Therefore, when greeting a Muslim of the opposite gender, one should wait until or if they extend their hand to shake, rather than first extending one's own.
- **Shelter Setting:** Due to religious prohibitions, Muslim families and individuals will be most comfortable in sleeping settings where men are segregated from women and children. When a communal sleeping space is the only option, it is customary for Muslim men and women to remain fully clothed and take turns sleeping in order to watch over their resting family. A gender segregated sleeping space, divided into same-gender areas by a curtain or partition (acceptable), or separate rooms (preferable), is advised. Preadolescent Muslim children may accompany either parent or guardian, wherever they are most comfortable. However, where the family includes only an adult male and a preadolescent girl, shelter operators should attempt to allow the two to sleep in an area without women or adolescent boys.

ISLAMIC DRESS

- Muslims may dress in clothing that may fall outside of American/Western fashion norms. Males may wear a small hat (*kufee*) or turban. Some may wear long robes (*thobes*) or a long shirt and pant set (*shalvar-kameese*). Some males may wear their pant-legs slightly shorter than the standard fashion. Females may wear a head covering (*hijab)* over their hair, ears, and neck. Some may cover their entire bodies with loose fitting clothing, covering all of their body, except for their face, feet, and hands, called an *abaya*. Though rare in the United States, some females may veil their faces, using what is called a *niqab*, wear elbow length gloves, or a *burka*, if covering the body from head to toe. Islamic dress is usually a combination of culture and ethnicity as much as piety. It is a false assumption that females are forced or required to dress modestly, and most would be deeply offended by that assumption. Islamic dress does not indicate a person's level of education or reflect on a particular conservative (or liberal) religious or political orientation.

ISLAM

Islam, the world's second largest religion, has an estimated one billion adherents. Approximately 2.6 million Muslims live in the U.S. and worship at over 2,100 masjids. Islam, which means "submission to Allah (God)," has five pillars: prayer, fasting, charity, pilgrimage to Mecca, and testifying on the oneness of Allah and the prophethood of Mohammad. Their holy book, the Quran/Koran speaks of caring for the poor, a day of judgment, and the afterlife. Islam is comprised of two major sects, Sunnis (the majority) and Shiites, and several other smaller sects. The religion is called Islam. ("Islamic" is an adjective; adherents are called Muslim.)

This Tip Sheet was written in collaboration with:
Islamic Circle of North American-Relief, Islamic Relief USA and the University of Southern California-Center for Religion and Civic Culture.

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Indicators of religious and cultural competence in any setting include:

- Showing knowledge of, and respect for, all faith community's beliefs, customs and traditions in your actions and conversations, and communication with the community.
- Understanding how one's own background affects interactions with others.
- Not assuming all members of a cultural/religious group have exactly the same beliefs and practices.
- Demonstrating in your actions and written correspondence knowledge of and respect for the beliefs of others.
- Approaching each individual/family/community without any preconceptions.
- Helping individuals/families/communities that are outside the mainstream culture/religious group learn how to use and influence the system developed by the mainstream culture/religious group and government.
- Acknowledging how an individual's or community's past experiences with cultural/religious insensitivity and ignorance affect their interactions with government and other faith communities.
- Eliminating cultural/religious/ethnic insensitivity, ignorance and biases from policies and practices.
- Building on the strengths and resources of each person and family and their community[21]

It would be easy to assume from this *Guide* that religious literacy refers to Christians being literate and competent when working with non-Christian faith communities. That is categorically not the case. It is as critical that those working with Christian faith communities have a working knowledge of the beliefs, traditions, sacred texts, heroes, history, and mission of the Christian faith communities that one wishes to engage, as it is with the Buddhist, Hindu, Native American, Taoist, Sikh, or Zoroastrian faith communities one wishes to engage.

It would be a significant mistake, for example, to not know the differences between a Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints stake or ward, and the local Roman Catholic Church parish, or Methodist, or Lutheran church. Finding the information necessary to become religiously literate is relatively easy; absorbing that knowledge in a way that it enriches an encounter with a faith community is not. It is even more challenging because it must be done for each faith community one hopes to work with. One option is to work with "guides" from within the community to help turn religious literacy into religious competency—to help turn knowledge into behaviors and programs.

[21] Indicators of Cultural Competence, Adapted from the National Maternal Child Health Resource Center On Cultural Competency for Children with Special Health Care Needs And Their Families; Austin, TX. Used by permission.

The goal of religious and cultural literacy and competency is not the promotion of a specific religion or religion in general. It is to help citizens, in this case government agency staff and elected officials, participate fully in social, political, and economic life in a nation in which religion matters. More specifically, religious literacy and competency are about helping navigate successfully the turbulent waters that are the faith communities that flourish in your jurisdiction, and that lead significant numbers of the local population. Religious literacy and competency are a bridge of respect and understanding to the communities one wishes to engage in the jurisdiction's effort to build a more disaster resilient community. Books that may help in one's quest for religious literacy are listed in Appendix A.

II. Developing Competent Engagement & Sustainable Partnerships

Strengthening partnerships between government and faith communities requires competence in negotiating intergroup as well as interpersonal relationships. Knowledge of the specific faith community's traditions, beliefs, customs, rituals, mission, role in the larger community, and financial strength, as well as its history with, and expectations of government are critical to building strong, effective and lasting partnerships for effective delivery of everyday services, and to enhance recovery in times of disaster.

The federal and local government understands the importance of actively and effectively engaging faith communities in helping the community prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters, including public health emergencies. This has been articulated by a number of federal officials such as DHS Secretary Napolitano during her visit to Alabama following devastating storms and tornadoes in 2011,[22] and by President Bush's DHS Secretary Chertoff.[23] The importance is also underscored in Centers for Disease Control and Prevention documents[24] and the U.S. National Strategy for Homeland Security (October 2007).

The interest and intent are there, but what are the best strategies for successfully partnering with the diverse and complex entities that make up faith communities?

At the federal, as well as state and local levels, officials know the difficulty of reaching out to, and successfully engaging those residents who rarely get involved in conversations about local planning, budgeting, the environment, traffic, and emergency preparedness and response issues to name just a few topics. Often a relatively small number of individuals attend or actively participate in public meetings or, hearings, or other public engagement events. Cities and counties can also find it challenging to involve immigrants and members of traditionally under-served communities in local decision-making. Other residents—whatever their demographic profiles—may have little knowledge of, or interest in local government, and rarely participate in local civic and political life.

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[22] "Napolitano Visits Hackleberg, Alabama" (http://stormhope.org/news/napolitano-visits-hackleberg-alabama)

[23] Secretary Chertoff was quoted as saying, "Faith-based and community organizations undertake a surprisingly large, varied and demanding set of activities with extraordinary effectiveness. We want to do everything we can to integrate them into our planning and our execution before, during, and after emergencies."

[24] See, for example, "Public Health Preparedness Capabilities—National Standards for State and Local Planning." Capability One"

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There is no single strategy that will change these dynamics, as they are based on multiple and complex real life conditions, needs and issues.

However, difficulty is not a sufficient reason to forgo outreach. Reaching out to, and actively and honestly engaging clergy, religious leadership, and congregations is one powerful tool that could go a long way to bring under-represented and under-served populations into public engagement and planning efforts beyond disaster response and recovery.

A good first step is to develop an outreach strategy for public involvement efforts that includes a clergy and congregational component. For instance, if the goal is to attract under-represented and under-served populations, identify those congregations and faith communities that include and serve these groups and solicit their help through an interfaith alliance, or their regional judicatory. Similarly, if the goal is to plan an event to better inform and involve residents, a recruitment message to all religious leaders and congregations in the target population areas can help reach this objective. A simple tactic might be to prepare an announcement for weekly bulletins or websites and email it to all the faith communities in the target area.

In some areas, a ministerial alliance, a local religious federation, the local diocese or judicatory, or interfaith collaborative may be a bridge to a large number of local clergy, religious leaders, and congregations. However, these groups may represent only a limited number of local religious leaders and congregations. Outreach will need to include multiple sources including denominations, alliances, networks, and non-denominational and other congregations unaffiliated with any particular judicatory body. This is another aspect of religious literacy.

Working with religious leaders and congregations to support public engagement can extend well beyond communication alone. Congregations are often residents who are used to coming together with each other in a familiar and supportive place. As appropriate, such customary gathering places in a community can be sites for community conversations and other public forums. Meeting in familiar surroundings may also encourage individuals to participate, and may also be seen as a sign of respect for the community by the government agency.

Local officials will not be able to meet with every congregation to solicit public ideas and recommendations. However, engaging residents through religious leaders and congregations is an important element of a well-rounded public engagement strategy.[25]

[25] *A Local Official's Guide to Working with Clergy and Congregations,* pp. 6-7

Guidelines for sustainable engagement include:

- Ensure that "engagement" has an impact on policy and is not just a public relations exercise.
- Provide cultural competence training for elected officials, first responders, emergency managers, and emergency planners. This should include training in faith literacy, specifically, understanding the needs of faith communities in emergencies.
- Educate emergency preparedness and response staff in the unique roles faith communities and their leaders can perform in emergencies, such as caregivers, shelter management, spiritual support, community knowledge and understanding.
- Help emergency preparedness and response staff recognize and avoid potential hazards of disregarding the faith-related needs of individuals and communities in crisis through on the job educational programs.
- Compile resource directories and databases of faith-based service provider capacity to help emergency preparedness and response staff gain a better understanding of the value of these groups as a partner and resource in emergency planning and response.
- Build on going points of contact within faith communities of a particular area to ensure breadth and depth of contact.
- Ensure that any strategy for long-term recovery following a disaster includes engagement of faith leaders and communities. This includes, but is not limited to, Long-Term Recovery Groups (LTRGs), disaster case management outreach, community assessment and resourcing of unmet needs.

Strategies for building successful government/faith community partnerships include:

- Have the appropriate government representative make first contact with a faith community. Because congregations and neighborhood residents view religious leaders as both community and neighborhood leaders, selecting the appropriate representative to make first contact is important. If the outreach is to a large denomination, a specific large or influential congregation, or important demographic group on a city or county level, it may be appropriate or necessary to have the senior elected official (mayor, county judge or county commissioner, etc.) make the first contact. He or she should request that the religious leader meet with the elected official's representative for a specific purpose. If it is a neighborhood level meeting it might be good to have the alderman, council member, or county commissioner make the first contact or attend the meeting.
- Show respect for and knowledge of the beliefs and significant traditions of the faith community. It is not important that the government representative be of that specific faith to be a good representative to that faith; it is only necessary to show knowledge of and respect for its tenets, customs, and history. Demonstrate religious, cultural and ethnic competency and understanding.
- Understand the role and significance of the faith community in the community/neighborhood it serves.
- Understand that every faith community has its own history, outreach missions, challenges, goals and objectives. To not understand and acknowledge these important facts is to ignore those things that will scuttle an engagement strategy and goals.

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- Understand that while a faith community is often eager to step up and help, it will almost always need training, education, ongoing support and attention, and in specific cases some level funding support. Going to a faith community or a specific congregation without a detailed plan to support the program will be viewed as disingenuous and disregarded.
- Show cultural, religious, and ethnic competence and sensitivity in all government/faith community encounters.
- Understand that while most, if not all, faith communities are open to partnering with government in service to the community, not all faith communities are open to working in an interfaith environment. Know which are which before you engage a specific faith community.
- Know the organizational and operational structure of the faith community you are engaging. Some denominations or faith/religious communities may be structured from the top down with the judicatory, diocese, or federation providing strong theological leadership, while the local congregation, synagogue, temple or mosque is autonomous when it comes to specific programs and community outreach. Be aware of and understand the organizational and operational structure of the faith communities you plan to engage. If you are not sure, ask.
- Be open to working with all faith groups.
- Allow faith groups to define their own leadership and who should represent them.

One richly rewarding and effective way to ensure robust and sustainable networks and coalitions with faith communities is to help expand their capabilities and build their capacities. Here are some recommendations:

- Increase emergency preparedness and response training opportunities for local faith-based organizations.
- Increase cultural competence training for faith communities, government agency staff, elected officials, first responders and emergency managers to improve communication and understanding during the various phases of a disaster.
- Compile resource directories and databases of faith community service providers including their capacity to help faith communities network with each other to enhance emergency planning and response.
- Create an emergency response plan primer to detail government emergency response structure, plans, responsibilities, and funding sources to help faith communities better understand the emergency management structure and process and to help minimize misunderstandings between government and faith communities during a disaster.
- Provide opportunities for faith communities to engage directly with FEMA to better understand FEMA—its roles, responsibilities, and reimbursement requirements.
- Offer educational and information sharing opportunities by establishing listservs, newsletters, websites, topical presentations, and networking opportunities that will encourage communication and collaboration.
- Increase the communication and coordination between faith community disaster relief agencies to increase local affiliate staff's knowledge of pre-existing agreements and partnerships, and establish more effective communication between the larger NVOAD members.

- Consider outreach efforts by local chapters of the NVOAD members to local unaffiliated faith groups to help build local capacity and widen the geographic service delivery range to target vulnerable areas.
- Provide dedicated funding sources to faith communities to directly increase service capacity.
- Clarify faith-based organization eligibility for Department of Homeland Security funding and allow application for Small Business Administration loans for operating losses sustained during a disaster.
- Streamline the reimbursement process for faith groups to make it easier for them to apply for funds to cover response costs and decrease state matching requirements for block grants to help fund recovery efforts.
- Create a high level commission comprised of senior ranking members of FEMA, American Red Cross, and NVOAD to improve FEMA coordination with local faith communities.[26]

III. Engaging Faith Communities in Disaster Preparedness and Response

Up to this point, the *Guide* has been general in scope. It has discussed the evolving religious landscape in America and the resulting need for cultural and religious literacy and competency. It has detailed the unique role that faith communities can play in disaster preparedness and response, the resources and leadership faith communities can bring to disaster response, and a number of strategies that government can employ to successfully engage faith communities. The objective has been to help build strong, sustainable, and effective partnerships between government and faith communities leading to more disaster resilient communities.

It is important to examine two areas in which faith communities can play a highly visible and effective role in local government's emergency response planning. These two areas are; 1) Community Emergency Response Communications (CERC) and 2) Disaster response operations.

This section will focus on the specific resources and point of view that faith communities can bring to the planning table regarding these two topics.

Community Emergency Response Communications—CERC plans are a required Target Capability in the Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG), Public Health Emergency Preparedness (PHEP) and Hospital Preparedness Program (HPP) grant guidance, and as Urban Areas Security Initiative (UASI) and Regional Catastrophic Preparedness Grant (RCPG) goals. Communicating with the community in times of crisis is one of the most important government activities. It also has the potential to be one of the activities most fraught with potential misunderstanding, confusion, and in the public's eye, doubt and concern.

[26] Homeland Security Document

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The case study on Houston presented here serves to illustrate both the challenge and some of the solutions presented by a multi-cultural, multi-religious community. The challenge is how does government speak to the "whole community" in times of crisis? Many times large portions of a jurisdiction feels left out, and isolated by the broad, sweeping information that government issues during a crisis. This only serves to worsen the relationship between government and those with a history of marginalization.

Faith communities can be an important resource for CERC planning and implementation. CERC is a very real, and in some ways, relatively easy area of emergency preparedness and response in which government and faith communities can work together to develop concrete plans that will have potential for good during a crisis. It is a strong indication of government's genuine interest in working with the "whole community" as it works with individual faith communities and neighborhoods across a jurisdiction. CERC is also an area for which faith communities are uniquely qualified and motivated to join with local government to achieve.

For emergency managers and public health preparedness managers looking to engage with faith communities, the development of CERC plans that speak to the whole community may be a good place to begin the discussion.

CASE STUDY: Houston HHS Bureau of Public Health Preparedness

In focus groups conducted by the Houston Department of Health and Human Services (HDHHS) Bureau of Public Health Preparedness, faith communities, community-based organizations, and residents from underserved, disabled, immigrant, homeless, vulnerable, linguistically isolated, limited English proficiency, and refugee populations following Hurricane Ike, some of the most frequently and loudly expressed discontent with the City's response to Hurricane Ike focused on what the participants felt was the lack of timely or useful information from government, the lack of trust they had in the information they did get, and the sense that the information they received did not apply to them or address their concerns.

This same concern was voiced over and over by these same groups during community-wide discussions held by the Houston Bureau of Public Health Preparedness from late 2010 through mid-2012. While the initial goal of these meetings was to discuss ways to build partnerships between these groups and the Bureau of Public Health Preparedness and the Office of Emergency Management, nothing could move forward until the need for a detailed, religiously and culturally literate CERC plan was acknowledged, and a plan and team to develop it was created.

One of the specific concerns coming from the immigrant and refugee populations was the need for elected officials to communicate with them in more appropriate and effective ways. At this writing the work continues on the development of more culturally and religiously literate CERC plans.

It is worth noting that the discussions about the CERC plans have challenged HDHHS Bureau of Public Health Preparedness to examine its Point of Dispensing (POD) plans and mass immunization clinic plans. While the plans always included PODs and clinics in neighborhoods across the city with signage in many languages, supported by translators when needed, HDHHS has moved with a very real sense of urgency to enlist faith communities and other neighborhood based non-profits and NGOs to take "ownership" of and manage these front line medical counter-measure dispensing facilities. The initial response from the community has been overwhelming with them recommending changes in the plans, and recruiting and training volunteers to manage the PODs. HDHHS has developed and implemented a training plan with the help of local faith, immigrant and refugee communities that is being conducted with these and other groups by HDHHS staff and Regional MRC volunteers.

Disaster Response Operations—an extension of the CERC planning discussion is the possible role of faith communities and faith-based organizations in real-time disaster operations.

Obviously, faith communities are not first responders or emergency responders in the traditional official definition. However, faith communities can play a useful role as part of official government operations response during the response phase of a crisis.

In several cities across the country with either strong disaster interfaith organizations or networks, or active regional or local VOAD chapters these organizations have been recruited to be a part of the Joint Information Center (JIC). From their position in the JIC the faith community representative can see first- hand what decisions are being made, what the messaging will be, and have some impact in ensuring the message speaks to the whole community ways that will be heard, understood, and trusted. This would imply and encourage the existence of a jurisdiction-wide faith community network and coalition that would facilitate communication between the JIC and individual communities.

This level of participation requires work long before the next disaster occurs. Clear goals, objectives, policies and procedures would need to be written and entrenched in those individuals who will serve in that role. The specific individuals participating at the JIC would need to be trained for that position, and they would need to participate in any exercises conducted where a JIC is exercised. These same individuals (one for each operational period and at least one back-up) would also need to understand NIMS and Incident Command structures and procedures as taught in FEMA NIMS training programs to be a fully participant in that operational capacity.

IV. Review

- Religious literacy and competency are essential tools in developing sustainable partnerships between government agencies and faith communities.
- Engaging faith communities provides many challenges to government because there is no single strategy to employ.
- One goal of engaging faith communities in emergency preparedness and response efforts before a disaster should be to expand both their capacity and capability to respond.
- Faith communities bring unique and valuable resources and knowledge of the community to whole community preparedness and response planning.
- Faith communities can serve a much needed role in providing timely, accurate, trusted information to their community members in religiously, linguistically, and culturally competent ways government cannot before, during, and after a disaster.
- CERC plans can be a starting point for emergency managers and public health preparedness managers to engage faith communities in discussion.
- Faith communities' participation in an emergency response JIC can be beneficial to all, but roles and responsibilities need to be clearly defined and training needs to take place prior to disaster.

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Chapter Five

OUTREACH & FAITH COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP BEST PRACTICES

I. Guidelines for Outreach

Lessons learned from Hurricane Katrina and other disasters have revealed the need for federal, state, and local agencies to foster partnerships with faith communities. Faith communities, acting as non-profit, non-governmental agencies, are often some of the first on the scene and are essential to our nation's short and long-term recovery efforts.

Following Hurricane Katrina in 2005, the White House along with a number of federal agencies conducted a thorough self-examination of the federal and local response and published the *Federal Response to Hurricane Katrina: Lessons Learned* (February 2006). Some of the key lessons learned involved the government's relationship with faith communities:

- Often, [faith-based organizations and] other non-governmental organizations are the quickest means of providing local relief, but perhaps most importantly, they provide a compassionate, human face to relief efforts.
- The government lacks coordination with these organizations, and faith-based and community groups should be more effectively integrated into disaster response plans as valued and necessary partners.

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) also commissioned the Homeland Security Institute (HSI) to conduct a study to learn from the experience of faith groups, to recognize the roles played by these organizations, and to provide DHS with an understanding that will enable government to work more effectively with these organizations in future disasters. The resulting year-long study, *Heralding Unheard Voices: The Role of Faith-Based and Nongovernmental Organizations [NGOs] During Disaster* (published in December 2006) found:

- FBOs and NGOs had a significant beneficial impact during and after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. …across the entire affected region… [T]he scale of their response was unprecedented. In many communities, they were the sole or lead provider of services for days or weeks. They made life-and-death differences in people's lives. They gave food to the hungry and vulnerable. They reduced suffering, facilitated restoration of infrastructure, and lessened the economic impact of the hurricanes by donating services and material resources.
- FBOs and NGOs faced significant limitations and challenges in performing these services: inadequate government planning, overlooked service needs, inadequate coordination and integration, problems with access and credentialing, inadequate training and experience, costs, unanticipated needs for long-term services, and waste management and sanitation.

FBOs and NGOs had a significant beneficial impact during and after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. … across the entire affected region… [T]he scale of their response was unprecedented. In many communities, they were the sole or lead provider of services for days or weeks. They made life-and-death differences in people's lives. They gave food to the hungry and vulnerable. They reduced suffering, facilitated restoration of infrastructure, and lessened the economic impact of the hurricanes by donating services and material resources.

The relationships of these grassroots organizations with...emergency management, are some of the most critical components to the resilience of that community...these relationships have a significant impact on the ability of a community to bounce back as quickly as possible and thoroughly recover following a disaster.

- Organizations adapted and developed effective practices to deal with these limitations and challenges….through specialization, partnering, and preserving family unity.

HSI's study recommended that the government:

- Encourage best practices for the engagement of faith-based and community organizations including faith communities both before, and in the aftermath, of a disaster.
- Address overlooked services such as routine transportation, children's services, and pop-up shelters, in response and recovery planning through these partnerships.
- Investigate including FBOs and NGOs, particularly local ones, in planning, coordination, integration, training and exercises.
- Resolve some of these challenges mentioned above.

Other research on community resilience and ready communities reveals that the relationships among faith-based and community organizations, and the relationships of these grassroots organizations with other key elements of a community, including emergency management, are some of the most critical components to the resilience of that community. In other words, these relationships have a significant impact on the ability of a community to bounce back as quickly as possible and thoroughly recover following a disaster.[27]

Governments, government agencies, and faith groups share the goal of maintaining a healthy society that works for everyone. Their achievement of this goal can be enhanced by increasing the effectiveness of their engagement with each other in emergency preparedness and response.

The paragraphs above express commonly held goals and sentiments, but they do not address the specifics of how to achieve those goals. While it is simply not possible to provide a one-size-fits-all plan, what follows are some guidelines on how to establish and maintain vital coalitions and partnerships with faith communities to help build more disaster resilient communities.

Work with Existing Interfaith/Interreligious/Multi-faith Coalitions and Networks

If you are a local emergency manager or public health preparedness manager reading this guide, you may be thinking, "How in the world am I going to make any of this happen? My staff is too small. I have no budget for these activities. With all the other grant deliverables, exercises, and priorities I have, where do I find the time or resources to do this? I know it is important, but I just don't see how I can make it happen." Reaching out to and partnering with the faith communities in your jurisdiction is possible, and there are partners whom with you can work. If you can work in partnership, you will find it will reduce your work load, and strengthen your ability to meet NRF and grant deliverables and target capabilities, as well as local goals and objectives.

[27] *Building Community Resilience: A Summary of Case Studies from Charleston, Gulfport, and Memphis*, April 2010 http://www.resilientus.org/library/CARRi_Research_Report_9_Craig_Colten_1276602180.pdf

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One of the key recommendations of the recent USC Center for Religion and Civic Culture report on the state of government-faith communities partnerships is to engage existing religious networks within a jurisdiction. These networks may be ecumenical, operate only within a single faith, or be multi-faith. Each of these networks provides a critical part of reaching the whole faith landscape.[28] These groups already exist in communities and are already doing some of the things you want to do to build more disaster resilient communities.

It is significantly easier to work with existing networks than to go door-to-door to engage congregations one at a time. Working with the existing networks and coalitions will significantly reduce, though not eliminate, the need of government have individual engagement with each organization. There will still be a need to approach some of the non-denominational congregations, as well as ethnic, immigrant or refugee faith communities individually.

What are some of the coalitions or networks to engage in this effort? One of the most useful coalitions to approach might be the local or regional VOAD chapter. Many, but not all, faith communities are members of the local VOAD chapter. This however, often depends on the dynamics and strength of the local VOAD chapter itself. This may mean the local diocese or judicatory, local chapter of a national communal organization, representing many houses of worship, or it may be an individual faith community, large mega-church, or non-denominational faith community. These faith community members of the local VOAD already understand the need for working with others in the community to prepare for, respond to, and recover from a disaster. By their involvement with VOAD they have made it clear that they are committed to building working partnerships across religious and cultural lines, and to using their resources and experience to help build a more disaster resilient community.

Other groups that can serve as intermediaries are interfaith/interreligious/multi-faith groups or coalitions, faith-based human services organizations, and local dioceses, judicatories, and associations. These groups are most likely already engaged in inter-group or inter-faith dialogue, provision of health and human services, or other programs. They have a network of contacts, and they have enough trust among their members to work together for some common goals. Working with government to develop a more disaster resilient community can be one more program they work on together.

Whether you begin your outreach to local faith communities through a liaison, intermediary, or by reaching out to the local judicatory or individual faith communities there are some steps that will help ensure the success of your efforts.

TIP

It is significantly easier to work with existing networks than to go door-to-door to engage congregations one at a time. Working with the existing networks and coalitions will significantly reduce, though not eliminate, the need of government have individual engagement with each organization. There will still need to approach some of the non-denominational congregations, as well as ethnic, immigrant or refugee faith communities individually.

[28] From Farrag, Hebah, Brie Loskota, and Richard Flory. *Faithful Action: Working with Religious Groups in Disaster Planning, Response and Recovery.* Rep. Los Angeles: Center for Religion and Civic Culture, USC, 2012. Print.

TIP

One key element in a sustainable and robust relationship is having clear, definable, measureable goals and objectives.

Utilize Surveys, Focus Groups and Open Discussions

There is an old fundraising adage: "Ask someone for money and they will give you advice. Ask someone for advice they will give you money."

While government emergency managers are probably not going to ask religious leaders for money, they are going to ask them for something of equal or greater value: their resources and their social capital. If emergency managers are going to ask local faith communities to share something this valuable it seems logical that they ought to first ask for their advice. Government needs local faith communities to share with them, in an open and straight-forward manner, what is missing in the current emergency preparedness and response plan, what are community needs, what is their experience in past government interactions, and what do they need and expect going forward.

While these focus groups and conversations need to be open and forthright they also need to be moderated by reasonable expectations on both sides.

As part of this open dialogue and engagement with faith communities it might be very helpful if government were to share with its partners the existing emergency management plan, discuss the National Response Framework (NRF), grant requirements and target capabilities, and most importantly, funding sources and how that funding is spent. Government needs to trust its partners to be intelligent and committed to the community in a way that sharing this information in some detail will help them develop a realistic understanding of the existing plans and of the challenges in meeting federal and state guidelines and deliverables which come with the funding. It will make for a better partnership. For example, imagine the potential impact on the discussion if local faith communities understood that the local emergency management agency or public health preparedness agency received about $2.00 per person to develop and implement the jurisdiction's emergency response plans, training exercises, purchase equipment, and pay staff.

Have Clear Definable Goals and Objectives

It cannot be overemphasized how important it is that any real partnerships with faith communities begin with open conversations about needs, resources, past relationships and expectations between the faith communities and government. This is a first step in building trust, and in understanding each other, respective goals, mission, funding, and expectations. Only after having this conversation can one begin to discuss specific programs, activities, and the nature and scope of the relationship with the faith communities.

One key element in a sustainable and robust relationship is having clear, definable, measureable goals and objectives. Yet all too often government is so eager to engage a faith community that it does not employ the same business practices that it does in its day-to-day work with other jurisdictions, or its business community partners. It begins the conversation with such a broad stroke approach that neither it nor the potential partners know what is being asked. This lack of clear objectives can sound to the faith

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community like government is asking them to do its job, rather than requesting their help in tackling a specific goal or challenge for which that faith community has the right resources and experience. It also makes these efforts seem as though their intended purpose is to convene a group, rather than have the convening be a part of a meaning process that produces specified results.

Chapter Six discusses some specific areas of emergency preparedness and/or response for which faith communities have resources and skills; and in which they can play a unique role in a jurisdiction's emergency management plan. Beginning an outreach effort by asking one or more faith communities to work with local government in achieving a specific goal related to CERC, or mass fatality, or sheltering, for instance, is a sensible, smart way to begin the dialogue.

Engaging Faith Communities in Developing Response Plans

Developing the jurisdiction's emergency response plan, including public health emergency plans, is the legal responsibility of government. This includes developing the public policies and laws that might be needed to implement that emergency response plan.

The problem for faith communities is that more often than not, the development of these plans and the supporting public policy is completed solely by local emergency managers and public health preparedness managers. Rather than being about efficiency, the lack of public engagement on these plans is viewed as secretive or intentionally exclusionary. To potential partners like local faith communities, this approach may be one of the barriers than inhibits partnership with government.

Thus it is important to engage faith communities in developing a jurisdiction's emergency response plan, and include their input on public policies that support that plan.

Capitalize on Opportunities to Educate

Capitalizing on pivotal, teachable moments is a key to successful engagement. Local jurisdictions should consider mailer campaigns that would be timed specifically to a recent disaster, or upcoming preparedness event that makes people more aware of potential disasters that can affect them. These mailers should detail activities than can been done to increase the ability to deal with a disaster. For example, the population of an area affected by a blackout has firsthand experience about how unprepared they are to live without electricity. This presents a window of opportunity for agencies to inform the population about disaster preparation. Informational mailers, targeted by languages spoken, could then be disseminated through the membership of each congregation, their community, and religious networks. The opening of these cognitive windows is important for creating connections and enhancing action. Other approaches for such engagement include creating shopping lists for disaster preparation kits that could be distributed through congregations.

The local jurisdiction and faith communities can partner on a yearlong series of preparedness messages that would appear in the faith community's weekly bulletin and/or on the congregational website.

Government and faith communities can also partner to hold large community-wide preparedness fairs, interfaith/interreligious/multi-faith network seminars, or local congregational events. Local government can provide disaster and preparedness education during other congregational or community events like health fairs, beginning of school events, bake sales, and other fundraising events.

These events can provide good partnership as well as great educational opportunities. They also provide a safe and open opportunity for residents of the community to interact with government.

Reduce Barriers to Involvement of Faith Communities[29]

Barriers to congregational involvement, such as ordinances and zoning issues, also need to be addressed. Local congregations can find themselves in violation of local building and safety codes—and the costs of complying with local code ordinances can be prohibitive. The ability of congregations to be active in a disaster is sometimes predicated on their ability to have thriving social ministries before the disaster, yet many of them cannot adequately develop such programs because of code restrictions related to costly facility upgrades. For example, researchers interacted with one church that hoped to complete a $100,000 kitchen renovation in order to increase the capacity of their feeding program. Because of code requirements for overall building upgrades that were unrelated to the kitchen the renovations would have required a $2 million investment. As a result, the church decided against the upgrade, which in turn, has limited its capacity to the provision of canteen services in a disaster.

Following a 2007 tornado in New York City's boroughs of Brooklyn and Queens, Mennonite Disaster Services was unable to provide free roof tarps and roof repairs to low-income families because the city building code required that only licensed NYC contractors who completed an engineering study of each structure could perform these tasks. Many families did not have the insurance or funding to meet that standard and the good will and free labor of a long-standing nationally recognized organization with expertise in home repair was thwarted. For this reason, faith communities may hesitate to share information about the work they are performing or about damage to their own facilities as they may be fearful of finding unreasonable administrative or financial burdens in the repair process.

[29] Adapted from *Faithful Action: Working with Religious groups in Disaster Planning, Response and Recovery.*

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Public agencies must be aware of barriers to involvement so that they can work to mitigate them, and if necessary adjust their expectations of congregational involvement. Public agencies need to find ways to ease the burden that congregations carry to create and maintain their social ministries at a capacity or skill level that can be mobilized in a disaster. In the end, the fact that a congregation has a good kitchen means that they can be much more easily incorporated into a local disaster response plan.

While reducing barriers created by ordinances and building codes is important, it is critical that faith communities wishing to participate in sheltering, mass feeding, mass care, child care, and food distribution understand and the Americans with Disabilities Act Functional Access requirements. FEMA guidelines state that shelter planning must ensure shelters are accessible, and this may be a requirement for congregations who wish to use their house of worship in an official shelter facility. This issue is a great example of why it is so important that the engagement process between government and faith communities begin with open and frank discussions about all the issues and requirements that drive and limit the potential partnership.

Build Capabilities and Capacity

Chapter Two discussed the unique role that faith communities can play in disaster preparedness and response. Part of that discussion centered on the special resources and knowledge of the community that faith communities have as a result of the closeness they have to the community they serve. Chapter Two pointed out that local faith communities and religious leaders have a deep understanding of the religious, linguistic, and cultural make-up of their community in ways that are both broader and deeper than government. This knowledge is extremely useful in developing response plans, and in providing situational awareness during a response. Many faith communities also have years of experience in running human services and health care programs, including clothing and food distribution programs.

What many faith communities lack is the capacity and capabilities specific to disaster response and recovery. They also lack the specific knowledge of, and language of the disaster response professionals making it difficult for government and its religious community partners to communicate, especially during a disaster response.

If local governments are planning a sustainable disaster engagement outreach with local faith communities those efforts must include programs that help build capacity and capabilities within those communities. This might mean working with religious leaders to learn the FEMA National Incident Management System and the Incident Command Structure, or how to recruit and train community members to become disaster responders, provide mass feeding training, or connect them with FEMA to learn the financial disaster recovery system. One area government can be of real service to their faith partners is in the area of how to access FEMA disaster reimbursement funds and programs.

Build Knowledge within Agencies and Elected Officials

Public agencies tend to not fully understand how faith communities are structured and what the broader landscape looks like. In addition, they consider faith-based work as a set of activities, rather than as a distinct discipline. Often those activities are done for the sake of outreach itself resulting in one-and-done events that produce few lasting results and undermine later partnership efforts.

If public agencies are expected to be responsible for faith community engagement, whether disaster-focused or otherwise, they need a more formal training regimen focused on understanding the faith landscape in their particular areas. Public agencies and their staff cannot be expected to operate effectively without formal training in religious literacy, on working with faith communities, and in understanding community demographics, religious beliefs, rituals practices, gender issues, and cultural and linguistic sensitivity issues. Without a baseline of religious competency, public agencies could waste resources and frustrate partners.

To raise the level of religious and cultural literacy and competency among government agency staff and elected officials, training programs must be developed, and individuals must be assigned to this position if real literacy and competency are to be achieved.

After this, a faith-based liaison—a new position of great importance—must go through a mandatory training, preferably in partnership with other groups, that would include a landscape analysis of the territory for which they are responsible.

One suggestion is to create a manual on risk communication and faith-based engagement best practices, one that includes a primer on faith communities, their practices, engagement tactics, and mass care and sheltering needs and requirements. This document and its companion *Religious Literacy Primer for Disasters, Crises, and Public Health Emergencies* would be useful resources in this regard.

An important way to build knowledge about faith communities within public agencies is to harness the network of faith-based organizations and liaisons within each government agency. One approach would be to develop a roundtable that includes interfaith/interreligious/multi-faith networks and liaisons from all government agencies. This roundtable could serve as a place where discussions can occur around faith communities' geographies and outreach techniques. A professional interagency faith-based initiatives roundtable should be created by both geography and discipline. For example, emergency organizations working on disaster response should have a roundtable, those working specifically with faith-based actors should have a separate forum, and those involved in disaster work in a specific geographical location should also have a forum. The roundtables should be focused on knowledge-sharing, relationship building and identifying best practices that help in alleviating congregational stress caused by overwhelming information, building disaster capacity and capabilities, determining goals and objectives, as well as fine tuning outreach efforts.

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The purpose of these roundtable discussions would be to share information between agencies and the faith communities, propose programs and activities, define goals and objectives, understand mutual expectations, and demonstrate religious and cultural competence.

Partner with Faith-Based and Community Organizations in the Delivery of Programs and Services

Collaborative and multi-sector approaches are increasingly recognized as effective strategies to address community needs. This suggests the possibility for imaginative partnerships between local agencies and businesses, community-based organizations, and also religious leaders and congregations. With local agencies facing diminished revenues and staff resources, developing partnerships can be a timely and cost-saving measure. The human resources and facilities available through religious leaders and congregations—and the trust and legitimacy congregations may bring to partnerships with local agencies—can be uniquely important attributes of program and service delivery.

Congregations can also be sources of volunteers for a range of local agency-related roles, from museum docents to city hall greeters. However, more formal ongoing relationships between local agencies and religious leaders and congregations have even more to offer. Some examples include:

- Emergency preparedness and response, including using congregational facilities as sites for emergency shelters, food distribution and medical centers after a disaster.
- Social services, such as contracts for congregations to operate day labor centers, support services for prisoner reentry programs, or tutoring and mentoring in low-income communities.

Collaborations benefit from clear roles relating to work responsibilities and decision-making, as does a healthy respect for the need to maintain a boundary between public agencies and religion. Partnerships should also be assessed for effectiveness on a regular basis. Within appropriately established parameters, the advantages of such partnerships to residents in need, to local agencies, to congregations, and to a more participatory community culture, can be significant.

Develop and Maintain a Database of Congregations, Faith-based Organizations, and Religious Leadership in Your Community

Developing and maintaining an up-to-date database of all local religious leaders helps local officials forge relationships with the broadest possible range of local congregations and members of faith communities. Elected officials and staff may already be familiar with some—perhaps due to personal relationships, the congregations they attend, or due to certain religious leaders' more active participation in the community's civic and political life.

When compiling such a list, keep these points in mind:

- An existing list of religious leaders from another source may not be complete (if gathered from a newspaper or provided by local clergy association, for example).
- An interfaith/interreligious/multi-faith group in the community may have organized around a particular issue, or may have historically represented only certain religions or denominations.
- Many congregations and other faith-based organizations are not found on mainstream media lists; smaller congregations, including those with substantial ethnic minority and/or immigrant congregants may not be listed.

Such databases should include accurate names and religious leader titles. They should also include leaders and congregations that are sponsored or hosted within a larger congregation or are satellite congregations. The responsibility and process for compiling, organizing and updating the database should be clear from the beginning. For instance, determine what information should be included, how it is going to be organized, and who will be responsible for its development and maintenance. Also clarify ownership of the list (if compiled with others) and determine who will have access to it.

Establish and Maintain Relationships with Local Religious Leaders

The development of relationships with religious leaders and knowing how to communicate respectfully with them is singularly important to working effectively with local faith communities. The relationship between local agencies and local religious leaders and their membership base should be understood as a two-way street; the relationship should benefit all involved. This is respectful of the role of the religious leader and the congregation in the community, offering leaders and congregations a greater understanding of local government and access to local community leaders on matters of common interest. It also provides a venue for open discussion of critical issues for both faith communities and elected officials and government agencies and staff.

Activities to develop relationships should be both formal and informal. These might include hosting an annual leadership breakfast or a gathering of leaders (convened by a senior local official) in city or county offices, regular communication to the members of the database, attendance (by city or agency officials) at meetings of local ministerial alliance or interfaith groups, individual meetings with leaders, attending worship services and festivals at individual congregations, and other regularly scheduled contacts.

In some cases, local officials may want to meet regularly with groups of religious leaders to discuss a specific issue or a number of issues over time. These can be opportunities for mutual education and joint planning and problem solving. Share the agenda setting process with participating religious leaders, have good facilitation, and make certain that meeting purposes are clear to all. Consider a regular schedule of meetings with a range of formats, and with time for religious leaders and local officials to get to know one another.

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Inviting all representatives of all religious groups within the jurisdiction will help avoid perceptions that these meetings "belong" to only one group or religious denomination. Whatever the form or format of the meetings, establishing ongoing relationships with the largest number of local religious leaders is essential, and should take place, whenever possible, prior to initiating joint efforts. An effective network of religious leaders, once developed, will support ongoing communications and broad working relationships between the religious leaders and local agencies.

Elements of Effective Working Relationships with Religious Leaders and Congregations

A public agency's use of language should reflect a high level of understanding of the beliefs, traditions, customs of individual faiths and faith traditions, and show respect for the diversity of religious faiths within the community.

For instance, the term "congregation" is an inclusive term for most faiths and reinforces the central and membership role of congregants. Congregation is a term most often used in Christian and Jewish communities, and may not be appropriate when speaking about Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim, Native American, or other religious groups. When engaging a specific faith community it is extremely important that those representing government use the proper term for the house of worship or community itself. For example, it is NOT acceptable to refer to a synagogue, mosque, or temple as a church, and vice versa.

"Clergy" is often thought of as a generic term referring to ordained religious leaders of any rank. It may be appropriate to talk in general terms about "clergy" of a particular faith, but it is crucial that when referring to the "clergy" of a specific faith that the correct term be used. Congregations may have designations such as pastor, minister, brother/sister, or deacon, but not everyone who fills these roles is necessarily ordained clergy. Using accurate language for clergy titles such as rabbi, father, reverend, imam, and bishop is important; some clergy may use two titles, often depending on the formality of the situation. Changing practices of congregations, faith communities and religious groups—such as the inclusion of women as members of the clergy in some denominations—may create uncertainty about clergy titles. It is appropriate to ask questions to clarify these matters. A congregation's website may also provide useful information.

Knowing the names and dates of a denomination's or religion's holy days and sacred texts is easy and very important. It is never a good idea to schedule an event for religious leaders on a religious holy day or holiday. It is not seen as good form to schedule an event that you specifically invite a religious group to on their Sabbath, holy day, or day of communal prayer.

Likewise it is important to consider religious dietary laws and practices when inviting diverse members of the community to an event. Inviting Hindus to an event without a vegetarian option, or inviting Muslim imams or Jewish rabbis to an event where pork is served, demonstrates low levels of religious literacy and competency.

The term “religious traditions” refers to the historic contributions of religious leaders, texts and institutions to the formation of society’s values, law, and history. If a reference is made to a particular text, then the specific source or sources should be identified, such as the Christian Bible, Islamic Qur’an, Jewish Tanakh, etc. It will also demonstrate the agency’s investment in local agency-religious leader relationships, even among those leaders who may not yet be involved. As with any sector of the community, certain religious leaders and congregations will be more involved and known to local officials. Others will be less so. The focused efforts of local elected officials and staff to reach beyond those already involved will greatly expand the possibility of effective partnerships with a greater breadth of congregations.

When initiating or developing relationships with religious leaders personally addressed communication from a local official to that specific invitee is a sign of respect and professional courtesy. Elected officials play an important role in affirming the value of relationships with faith communities, religious leaders, and congregations. Elected officials may, in some cases, be the ones to initiate contact with religious leaders at the request of a city agency. Local agency staff will typically maintain and grow the relationship, doing such things as developing and maintaining the religious leaders database, congregational information, ensuring ongoing communications, setting program and initiative goals and objectives, preparing joint meetings or programs, and fostering religious leaders or congregation involvement in local engagement or service delivery activities.

Providing staff with the training, education and information to broaden their expertise in this area can be helpful.

Attend Worship Services, Festivals, and Other Events

Attending worship services can contribute to successful partnerships with religious leaders and congregations. As feasible and appropriate, this is a respectful act that emphasizes the relationship rather than a specific end. Attending a service is an opportunity to better understand the traditions and practices of the congregations visited. It can also establish or deepen relationships with the clergy of the congregation, with lay leadership, and with individual congregants. While attendance by local officials at worship services will likely be welcome, there are protocols that may be helpful to keep in mind.

- Logistics: As each situation is unique, contact the appropriate religious leader in advance of a visit. Follow up with a phone call or e-mail to confirm attendance.

- Speaking/Introductions: If the goal is to be introduced or to share information, ask the religious leader contact whether the worship service or some other forum would be the most appropriate.

- At the service: If asked to say a few words, the local agency representative should briefly introduce himself or herself and succinctly share appropriate information with the congregants. He/she may also wish to invite individuals to speak with him/her after the service.

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- Protocols: To show respect for the faith traditions of the congregation being visited as well as one's own personal beliefs, seek advice on what a visitor should do or not do during the service. Such advice may relate to such practices as standing, kneeling, songs, prayer, and so on. Religious leaders will be pleased to provide guidance about the appropriate role and practices of guests. In order to generate a broad range of working relationships, local officials should visit a number of congregations. Design a matrix that begins with leaders the agency knows and includes some the agency does not. Develop the matrix to ensure visits to a set of congregations that is diverse by denomination, neighborhoods (or other geography), and demographics.

Congregant meetings and media, as well as direct information sharing by religious leaders, can help local agencies "spread the word" about emergency preparedness planning and opportunities for involvement in local commissions or other public engagement opportunities. Many congregations have both print and electronic options for outreach through monthly newsletters, weekly worship bulletins, emails, and websites. Other possibilities include announcements during worship services, as well as congregant meetings organized around different age groups or, in some cases, nationality or ethnicity of members.

Local officials may request, through religious leaders or staff, that public sector news and notices of interest to congregants be disseminated as appropriate. As time and resources allow, direct presentations to specific groups of congregants can be a very effective and targeted form of outreach. For instance, an effort to provide emergency preparedness information to non- English speakers might include a focus on congregations with these populations, perhaps with translated notices made available at appropriate services or meetings.

Religious leaders, speaking formally or informally with their congregants, can be an invaluable means of reaching community residents. As trusted communicators, their endorsement of local plans for a floodplain evacuation, for example, may be more effective than a public service announcement.[30]

II. Tips and Best Practices for Effective Partnerships with Faith Communities

Despite the importance of culturally competent crisis response, a recent survey of National Association of School Psychologists (NCSP) practitioners (Allen, et al., 2004) found that there is limited awareness among school psychologists of how multiple factors and student diversity influence the provision of crisis intervention services. In actuality, culture influences what type of threat or event is perceived as traumatic, how individuals interpret the meaning of crisis, and how individuals and communities express traumatic reactions (Young, 1997). These factors, along with the scenarios listed above, illustrate the importance of considering culture in crisis response. With the growing religious, linguistic and cultural diversity of communities it is increasingly important that emergency preparedness and response planners, including public health, fire, police, EMS, Medical Reserve Corps, CERT Team members and

[30] See *A Local Official's Guide to Working with Clergy and Congregations* (2010)

others involved in disaster preparedness planning and response not only be culturally knowledgeable and competent, but must engage the whole community in developing culturally sensitive, and culturally effective plans.

How do faith communities play a role in disaster response and recovery? Minimally, faith communities will come out to offer help. Government must begin planning on how best to partner with each group, utilize their special skills, expertise and traditions to help the whole community respond to and recover from the disaster.

Local government may discover that one or more faith communities may step forward to lead the volunteer effort. It is important to note that these groups must be willing to work side-by-side with all other denominations or religious communities. It is critical that all local and national government rules for diversity in the workplace be upheld during a disaster, even where volunteers are concerned. Therefore, knowing the community, having good religious and cultural knowledge, and working with the breadth of the jurisdiction's faith communities will help to avoid a potentially serious public relations disaster.

Engaging faith communities in local, state and federal government's effort to help the whole community, prepare for, respond to and recover from a disaster *before* disaster strikes is a crucial element in government meeting its obligation to protect the community. Here are some things to keep in mind as one engages faith communities, as well as ethnically, culturally and linguistically isolated, and under-served and under-represented communities:

- Always convey respect and good will by dressing appropriately, participating in access rituals, and saying "please" and "thank you" (Athey & Moody-Williams, 2003; Sandoval & Lewis, 2002; Young, 1997). Keep in mind that cultural conventions can vary significantly.
- Be aware of cultural social status and gender conventions when engaging religious leaders and a faith community's members.
- Be sure to understand who plays a significant role in the community's structure, by asking the leaders to describe their faith community, neighborhood, or cultural community structure.
- Ask community leaders to describe their expectations of government, specifically in disaster preparedness and response planning, and to describe what they need from government to be of assistance to them.
- Speak to community leaders truthfully about what government's responsibility is during a disaster, and what is within local government's capacity to do to lend assistance.
- Acknowledge the agency's limitations and differences. These may include the inability to speak or understand the language, as well as confusion over certain customs, rituals, or spiritual understandings. Try to convey your sincere desire to learn about these customs to be able to more effectively offer support (Young, 1997).
- Ask community leaders what their community needs most from local government in a disaster.

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- Work with a wide spectrum of faith communities to organize culturally appropriate commemorations and anniversary activities, as well as informational handouts to explain these rituals and customs to the greater community (Athey & Moody-Williams, 2003).
- Work with faith communities' leaders to develop a system to ensure access to services, food, water, crisis counseling.
- Work with leaders of the faith communities to design specific strategies to reach the unengaged, under-served, and linguistically and culturally isolated, as well as those whose traditions discourage seeking help in an emergency.
- Develop a network of community "guides" or "cultural brokers" to give credibility and gravitas to government's message, and to assist in disseminating that message in their community.

Other best practices for building robust, trusted, open and sustainable partnerships with faith communities include:

- Genuine openness and readiness on the part of government to listen what the faith communities are saying are basic requirements for trusted partnerships. Individual government workers may find that setting aside personal bias and belief systems while listening may be a challenge.
- Government agency staff must create an atmosphere where faith communities are willing to speak honestly (but not in an adversarial spirit), based on beliefs and values, about their experiences and perceptions of life in the U.S. and about the government's handling of issues that affect faith communities. Faith communities can offer an important critique of government policy and delivery from the perspective of their beliefs, values and experiences. It is important that government agency staff do not create an atmosphere where faith communities approach engagement as a turf-defending exercise.
- Government must be willing to speak honestly about what it hears. Not everything that faith communities say can be accepted without critique and evaluation. The government has to make choices and judgments, often based on a wider view than the faith communities have. Government should be willing to share this wider understanding of issues, as is appropriate.
- Patience and forbearance on everyone's part and a willingness to collaborate when appropriate will maintain goodwill and a sense of a common mission. Faith communities should not come with demands that they expect to be met without question.
- Government should not see the faith communities merely as a means of delivering policy or free labor to address government's gaps in service. Faith communities often have particular expertise to bring to the discussion.
- A willingness on everyone's part to see engagement as an "us and us" process rather than an "us and them" also reflects a sense of a common mission. Government is a group of "us" tasked with governing in a way that enables all people to live fruitful lives. Approaching the roundtable or other discussions with an adversarial mindset is counterproductive.

- It is important for government to understand the diversity of the faith communities, which are neither monolithic nor homogeneous. Each faith community is different from the others. There is often much diversity within faith communities, in terms of belief and practice as well as of ethnicity and various social indicators. A singular faith "voice" does not exist.
- In light of the above, it is vital that the government be sensitive to the challenges of finding representative authority or voices from the faith communities. The government should pursue an intentionally inclusive and level playing field for engagement, while not insisting on too-specific representation models, such as those based solely on political influence or sheer numbers; for faith communities, one size never fits all.
- It is essential for the government to keep the channels of communication open with all the faith communities, but it is critical that this engagement respect the authority and process of judicatory bodies and the complex reality of those faith communities (more than half of U.S. congregations) do not operate with centralized judicatories. Also, feedback on the results of engagement will help faith communities feel that their views are being heard, while also helping shape their input for government policy-making and so on.
- Engagement may be formal or informal. The more fruitful path to engagement is likely to be the less formal meetings between government and representatives of faith communities.[31]

III. Strengthening the Capacity of Faith Communities to Manage Their Own Assets for Disaster Response

This section of Chapter Five focuses on strengthening the capacity of faith communities to manage their own assets during disaster response and creating day-to-day programs to improve disaster resilience. In order to build this capacity, local and state government agency staff will need to work with faith communities to help them develop. Working with community and faith-based organizations to develop their internal capacity can make them stronger, better, and more resilient partners. Local emergency managers and public health preparedness mangers and their staffs are the subject matter experts that can link their faith community partners to the resources, training, and programs needed to strengthen their capacity to manage their assets for emergency preparedness and response. In fact, this effort to help build across the board resilience within faith communities and congregations may be the most effective strategy government agency staff can employ to build trust and true working partnerships with the majority of faith communities within their jurisdiction.

What follows is a list of actions that government preparedness agencies can use with congregations/faith communities to build both institutional resilience for themselves and community resilience for their congregations and the neighborhoods and communities they serve.

[31] From *Working Together: Co-operation between Government and Faith Communities*

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- Develop a disaster care plan for all religious leaders. This is should be done long before any other preparedness and response planning can be done. It may seem out of place, and counter-intuitive, especially to religious leaders, but the reality is that religious leaders may not prioritize their own self-care—especially in times of disaster or crisis. Congregations MUST help their clergy/religious leaders develop a disaster care and recovery plan. This is necessary so their religious leaders can fulfill their critical leadership and spiritual support role. Religious leaders often work long hours under extreme stress trying to meet the needs of their community, resulting in increased stress on themselves, their health, and their families. Many become seriously ill, sacrifice their families, or leave the clergy or area altogether. The importance of developing a disaster religious leader support and care plan cannot be understated, especially in smaller faith communities. The plan should include mandatory rest periods, schedules for others to cover some day-to-day leadership duties, relief from attending board and committee meetings, and other accommodations to his/her schedule that will help maintain good health and allow the leader to continue to serve the community when they are needed the most.
- Perform a physical plant and human resource assessment to determine current capacity to respond to and recover from a disaster.
- Develop a congregational emergency response plan. This plan should include specific plans for the physical plant, staff return to work, religious leader roles, religious school schedule, disaster notification phone tree plans, shelter and feeding plans (if any), worship service plans, etc. Each plan should have clear operational and contact details, and that those details should be regularly updated and the responsibilities of the contact person reviewed so that they are mutually understood.
- Develop a skills inventory of the congregation.
- Develop a congregational (clergy, non-clergy program staff, operations staff) continuity of operations plan.
- Develop a missions, social justice, and social service program continuity of operations plan.
- Develop a congregational emergency response plan for:
  - Natural disasters such as flooding, a tornado, hurricane, or snowstorm
  - Human-caused disasters such as explosions or fatal car accidents
  - Pandemic or other contagious disease outbreaks
  - Bio-terrorism events
  - School shootings
- Develop a disaster financial resilience plan. It should answer the question, “How will the congregation operate if it cannot raise funds in the normal way for a month, two months, six months, or one year?”
- Develop a congregational disaster outreach plan—what will be done, and who will do it?
- Meet with local faith communities to explore what congregational resources can be accessed in the event of a community-wide disaster. Develop MOUs or other instruments, and operational plans to make these resources easily accessible during a disaster or public health emergency.
- Develop, with the appropriate local government agency, a written plan to provide those services, resources, and people.
- Sign a Memorandum of Understanding, or similar document clearly listing roles and responsibilities for each party.

TIP

Sign a Memorandum of Understanding, or similar document clearly listing roles and responsibilities for each party.

- Develop and implement a plan to provide emergency and disaster preparedness training for the members of the faith communities.
- Develop a communications plan and specific communications channels between local emergency management and public health officials and the faith communities be used only during a disaster.
- Become an active participant in your city's programs to eliminate or mitigate disparities in education, wealth, health, education, access to health care, food deserts, and other public health and public safety issues.
- Invite a faith community's clergy, lay leaders, and key staff to participate in free National Incident Management System and Incident Command training programs—this will help in building an understanding of the roles and responsibilities of local and state government, and help ensure clear and effective communication between the community and government in the event of a disaster.
- Build disaster preparedness and response partnerships with neighboring faith communities to better serve the community.
- Develop a resource sharing system with neighboring faith communities and community-based organizations.
- If a faith community wants to provide sheltering during a disaster, encourage them to become an American Red Cross approved shelter and receive American Red Cross shelter training.
- Develop a plan to include trained faith communities in community-wide emergency response exercises with your local emergency management or public health agency.
- Include preparedness information in your weekly bulletin and on your website.
- Help faith communities develop an emergency phone list and other social media technology tools so religious leaders can locate and communicate with community members, and so community members can notify clergy and leadership of their whereabouts and needs.
- Determine what facilities and human resources are available during disasters, as assistance centers, dorms for volunteers, shelters and warehouses and sign whatever legal instruments are needed to ensure those resources are available during a disaster.
- Develop a system with faith partners to offer short-term recovery services - home clean-up, child-care, and food services. Following a disaster, many relief agencies are looking for congregations and other organizations to provide teams of volunteers and respond to emerging clean-up and recovery needs.
- Encourage volunteering to support existing programs. Volunteers should affiliate with an organization before a disaster, such as their denomination's or faith community's recovery agencies and their local operations, as well as local programs of the Salvation Army and the American Red Cross.
- Develop a Disaster Chaplaincy Corps. Trained chaplains can volunteer with local providers as appropriate.[32]
- Support Unmet Needs Roundtables. Local Unmet Needs Committees or Roundtables bring together donors and casework agencies to financially assist those impacted by a disaster, provide emergency assistance, and ensure victims' long-term recovery when all other means of assistance are no longer available. Congregations should fundraise early on to help support the ongoing unmet needs of disaster victims.

[32] NDIN offers Disaster Chaplaincy training and services for faith communities throughout the U.S. and supports local disaster chaplain or spiritual care providers.

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- Help local non-governmental agencies. Social service organizations are often neglected during disasters, as media attention focuses on relief efforts. Existing social service programs need the support of faith communities in the immediate aftermath of a disaster.

IV. Leveraging Government Assets and Funding to Build Resilience

One of the barriers to lasting, effective partnerships between government and faith communities is the issue of funding. It has already been acknowledged that many faith communities' core tenets include participation in the larger community response to suffering caused by a disaster. As volunteers, they are many times some of the first to respond and the last to go home.

When a governmental agency seeks to have local faith communities or their respective national emergency response arms become part of the jurisdiction's written emergency preparedness and response plan, the issue of fiscal responsibility will always arise. Even if not verbalized, the issue should be addressed. When a governmental agency seeks access to a faith community's resources there are costs to the faith community, and these costs should be discussed and a plan put in place for addressing them.

There are three ways this discussion can be addressed:

1. If the partnership is developed to support an ongoing program it may require some funding from government for the faith communities to provide the needed people, services, space or other support.
2. If the partnership revolves around the faith communities developing or supporting specific preparedness activities, training, or development of disaster response facilities then government should plan to provide some level of financial support to achieve a mandated target capability or goal it has requested a faith community to provide.
3. If the partnership is disaster related, e.g. a faith community stands up a shelter, or is requested to provide food or other support to the impacted community under the local emergency Response Plan, and it meets FEMA guidelines, local government should make that known to the faith communities and help them receive the federal or state reimbursement they are entitled to receive.

Stated another way, if government asks faith communities for help, and it involves a cost to the faith community, then government has the obligation to provide the appropriate funding. No government agency would approach Chevron or Microsoft for help and not expect to pay for the assistance. No less respect should be shown to the value faith communities bring to the community, especially in times of disaster. That said, it is also the responsibility of the faith communities to understand what is being asked of them, what their real costs are, and to ask for fair and reasonable compensation if appropriate. Faith communities that are funded should have to meet the paperwork requirements that secular agencies have to meet to receive funding. A model similar to "Immediate Services Period" Grants could be used, where the documentation is different in the acute and immediate phases than later, and funding can be retroactive.

TIP

When a governmental agency seeks access to a faith community's resources there are costs to the faith community, and these costs should be discussed and a plan put in place for addressing them.

The same is true for training. If a government agency seeks to have a number of faith communities participate in the city-wide POD plan it is incumbent on the agency to provide both initial and on-going training to the community if the plan is to be operational and successful when needed.

It is also incumbent upon government to help the faith communities understand its' own funding streams and the rules and deliverables that come with them so there are no misunderstandings or mistrust around financial issues. This includes funding sources such as EMPG, UASI, PHEP, HPP, RCPC grants and other sources to ensure that faith communities can understand the limitations of funds available, how those funds must be spent, deliverables and contract requirements related to the funding, and that all funding sources are diminishing yearly.

Grants and general funding almost never meet the needs of the preparedness and response agencies. The idea of using what limited funds are available to engage faith communities may not, on the surface, seem practical or sensible. It becomes both sensible and practical only if one truly understands the increase in resources made available by building robust, sustainable partnerships with local faith communities. Government agency staff need to understand what advantages are gained in meeting preparedness and response planning goals by working closely with motivated, trained, and active faith communities.

V. Review

- Government should work to strengthen the capacity of faith communities to manage their own assets.
- Government assets and funding are often needed to build the capacity of faith communities and to carry out activities as part of a partnership plan.
- Best practices for successful engagement of faith communities include:

  – Work with existing interfaith/interreligious/multi-faith coalitions and networks.
  – Utilize surveys, focus groups and open discussions.
  – Have clear definable goals and objectives.
  – Engage faith communities in developing response plans.
  – Capitalize on opportunities to educate.
  – Reduce barriers to involvement of faith communities.
  – Build capabilities and capacity.
  – Build knowledge within agencies and elected officials
  – Partner with faith-based and community organizations in the delivery of programs and services.
  – Develop and maintain a database of congregations, faith-based organizations, and religious leadership in your community.
  – Establish and maintain relationships with local religious leaders.
  – Attend worship services, festivals, and other events.

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Chapter Six

FAITH COMMUNITIES' RESPONSE TO DISASTER

Chapters Two, Three and Four discuss the unique role faith communities can play as active partners with government in developing and activating emergency preparedness and response plans. Briefly, that discussion focused on the resources, physical space, human resources, and ability to provide spiritual care and comfort, and leadership. Each of those individual chapters delves into the resources, viewpoints, special understanding of their community, and leadership that faith communities can bring to emergency preparedness and response discussions, and to the streets in the aftermath of a disaster. Chapter Five discussed general principles and best practices for how to engage faith communities, and how to build robust, effective, sustainable partnerships, alliances, networks and coalitions.

Chapter Six lists 11 specific areas in which faith communities can have a direct impact on developing preparedness and response plans and strategies that will impact specific faith communities and the whole community in ways that meet the goals of expressed in PPD-8, and both Department of Homeland Security and Health and Human Services grant target capabilities, and build more resilient communities.

I. Preparedness Planning

For more than ten years, FEMA, state government, and local offices of emergency management have spent billions of dollars and tens of thousands of hours communicating the "Make a Plan, Build a Kit, Stay Informed" message. Surveys at the local and national level indicate that approximately 20 percent of Americans have taken that advice. Many jurisdictions have developed their own preparedness messages and programs to encourage individuals to get prepared. Television networks in hurricane prone locations preach the preparedness gospel, and offer their own printed versions of disaster plans and disaster kit shopping lists. Cities like Houston even have disaster education programs directed at fourth and seventh graders. Yet, the numbers of people who have taken the message to heart, and actually taken adequate steps is not sufficient to build a disaster resilient community.

This *Guide* has described some of the attributes of faith communities that make them excellent partners for government in disaster preparedness and response. Preparedness planning is one of those areas for which faith communities can play a very special role.

Faith communities should to be engaged in preparedness in these areas:

- Make sure that the physical structure (building/campus) and staff are prepared and have an emergency response plan for the community membership and facility.
- Determine what a faith community can and is prepared to do during a response, e.g. should the house of worship be a shelter, food and clothing distribution center, etc.?
- Make emergency response plans based on effective use of facilities, human and financial resources.
- Help spread the local jurisdiction's preparedness message as a part of daily and weekly teachings in a culturally sensitive way that reflects the socio-economic makeup of the community.
  - It does not make sense to preach about a 3-7 day emergency kit when the community has trouble putting food on the table every week.
  - Telling people to buy a gallon of water per person for 3-7 days is expensive. Suggesting that people fill used, washed gallon milk jugs with water makes sense to those who are financially strapped.
- Develop emergency communication plans for their community, in partnership with local emergency management officials.
- Use the vision and moral leadership of religious leaders to build a culture of preparedness within the community's members.

II. Response Planning

Does the community's official Emergency Response Plan include community specific or culturally and religiously literate, competent, and sensitive elements in it? Does the community emergency shelter plan account for religious and cultural needs just like it does for those who have access and functional needs? Has the emergency response planning team engaged members of the whole community to ensure that all response plans are culturally and religiously appropriate and help ensure that all elements of the community can return to normal as quickly as possible?

Response plans such as sheltering, mass care, mass fatality, and family assistance centers are all areas that can benefit from the inclusion of faith communities being involved in the planning.

Emergency planners have only to look at the outcome of *Communities Actively Living Independently* and *Free v. City and County of Los Angeles* to understand the importance of working with the whole community when planning shelters, and other mass care type facilities and responses to a disaster. *Communities Actively Living Independently* and *Free v. City and County of Los Angeles* found that emergency planners had failed to include representatives of the disabled community in their shelter and mass care planning.

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Just as it is necessary to include representatives of the disabled community in planning for shelters and mass care facilities, it is equally important to include faith communities in planning the jurisdiction's emergency response plans. They can provide a deep understanding of the community's demographics and its needs and strengths. Religious leadership can provide religious and cultural literacy and competency in discussions of how the local jurisdiction will respond and what services and programs will provide in the aftermath of a disaster.

III. Disaster Chaplaincy and Spiritual/Emotional Care

During disasters, a diverse cross-section of people will seek spiritual care. Faith communities and faith-based chaplaincy organizations have skills and training with which to reach out to those who are suffering, and to offer comfort, care, and spiritual support. Chaplaincy skills are not reserved for, or limited to, religious leaders or clergy. Many lay people, seminary students and some clergy are trained, and have experience in providing spiritual support as chaplains, in the aftermath of a disaster.

Engaging faith communities to develop a well-organized, multi-faith, possibly inter-faith, chaplaincy network makes good disaster response sense. People will need spiritual and emotional support. Faith communities and other organizations have the trained individuals ready to do what they are trained to do. Most jurisdictions do not have the disaster response behavioral or mental health resources they need to respond to a disaster of any size. When you add up all the elements it makes sense for local and state government to reach out to those groups that can provide chaplaincy support and include them in the jurisdiction's health and human services annex, or in their Emergency Support Function (ESF) 8 plans on public health and medical services.

This is an area of low hanging fruit in a strategic plan to engage faith communities as partners in disaster preparedness and response. It can serve as a first step in opening up a more wide ranging discussion with local faith communities on a number of other subjects.

One point of caution: religious leaders may be challenged to support and offer an open environment with respect to religious diversity, social diversity, and unfamiliar cultural and mass care settings to all who are in need of support. Two excellent resources to help those who wish to provide this kind of multi-faith, interfaith spiritual support are the Disaster Chaplaincy training classes offered nationally by National Disaster Interfaith Network, and the NVOAD publication, *Light Our Way*. Both the NDIN training and the NVOAD guide provide instruction, and serve as a field guide for those individuals who wish to offer support to any and all people needing that support in the aftermath of a disaster regardless of religious faith or cultural background.

IV. Mass Fatality Planning

Mass fatality events include two distinct types of disasters: mass casualty/mass fatality events (e.g., shootings, car accidents, building collapse, hurricane and wild fires) and events related to a pandemic disease outbreak or a bio-terrorist attack when the numbers of deaths could be beyond comprehension. In either case, faith communities will be called upon, by their members, to play a major role in understanding and recovering from the disaster. Government, on the other hand, is tasked with the public health, public safety, mortuary planning, and public messaging role in such a horrific event. This is truly one area in which government must engage the faith communities to ensure that all community wide mass fatality plans are inclusive and respectful of the beliefs, rituals, burial traditions, and cultures within the community, while still meeting public health and public safety requirements. This is not to say that every tradition can be accommodated in such a disaster. It is especially important, at such times, that government and faith communities have a strong and open relationship so they are able to talk about and understand the emotional and public health issues, and can communicate the required solution to their followers if such a situation was to ever occur.

This is also an area where government can act as a leader to the faith communities to help them begin their own planning for how their community or congregation will prepare for such an event. The demands on religious leaders in a community-wide mass fatality event will be extraordinary. Most religious leaders are not prepared in seminary or by past life experience to meet the demands of a catastrophic mass fatality event.

As has been discussed earlier, in times of crisis, large numbers of the public turn to their religious leaders for comfort, spiritual guidance and support, understanding of the event, and care. Should large numbers of the community need that kind of support, usually provided one on one, the stresses on religious leaders will be enormous. Emergency and public health preparedness managers can help the faith communities understand the challenge, and help them begin to plan for such an event. In places that have regular disasters like wild fires, hurricanes, earthquakes, and such, this is particularly important.

One other area in which emergency managers can provide guidance to faith communities is in continuity of operations planning. Even more specifically, there is a need to make plans to continue operations and services when the community cannot hold regular worship services, where the religious leader cannot meet one-on-one with community members in need, or when normal fundraising cannot be continued because public health or public safety prevents large gatherings.

This last discussion may be a very good topic for a first meeting between the local jurisdiction and a faith community or group of faith communities. It shows concern for the faith community's needs, helps local emergency management lay out the serious consequences of a possible disaster, and gets both parties talking about how to solve a common problem. It may also provide a good opportunity for emergency managers an opportunity to learn about the community, its beliefs, it rituals, and its concerns during a disaster in a non-confrontational setting.

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V. Family Assistance Centers (FACs)

While Family Assistance Centers are an element of a well-developed Mass Fatality Plan, FACs are a unique emergency response component. The FAC focuses not on physical structures, or infrastructure, but on providing a "road back from the disaster" to those who have experienced the loss of a loved one. The FAC is an area of emergency response planning that would benefit greatly from the input of the faith communities within a jurisdiction. Faith communities must be directly involved in the planning, staffing, and the operation of FACs in a mass fatality disaster. This is one way to ensure that all FACs are culturally and religiously sensitive and supportive of the whole community. There are excellent examples of well-planned FACs in Houston, TX, Joplin, MO, Michigan, and Rhode Island.

VI. Shelter Operations Planning

In many communities all disaster shelter operations are led and mobilized by the local chapter of the American Red Cross. However, there may be situations that require local government to establish refuges of last resort, or temporary or longer term shelters. In that case local government may want to engage faith communities in the operation of those refuges or shelters. That engagement might be asking for space within a house of worship or congregation, people to operate the shelter, or other resources to which the faith communities might have access. The important thing here is to begin the planning long before the disaster strikes so that everyone understands their role, obligations, challenges and funding or reimbursement requirements. In addition to providing operational assistance, faith communities can provide culturally and religiously appropriate and sensitive mass care and sheltering guidelines. These might include, but are not limited to, information about sleeping arrangements, provision of medical care, prayer time and space, and dietary requirements. It is important to avoid, as much as possible, the pop-up shelter phenomenon where individual faith communities stand up shelters to serve their community or neighborhood because they feel government did not provide what is needed. This can cause or reinforce long held feelings of abandonment or lack of service or concern in some communities. Pop-up shelters also present issues of safety, funding, adequate resources, ability to access, and ADA compliance.

VII. Points of Dispensing (PODs)

Points of Dispensing are used to dispense everything from emergency food, water and ice, to breathing protection during a wild fire, vaccines, medical counter-measures during a bio-terrorist event, and antidotes to chemical spills during a disaster. Because PODs are generally used in events affecting the whole community, it is important that plans for the activation of PODs locate PODs across the entire community and reflect the make-up of the community they are designed to serve. PODs can be set up indoors or outdoors depending on the event. Again, this is an ideal area of emergency planning and response to engage faith communities. It is important that engagement begin long before disaster strikes. This is also a great venue for government to work with local and even neighborhood faith communities to solve a problem by sharing their expertise, knowledge and skills. Many local faith communities already know how to dispense food and clothing from their programs to underserved populations. Planning for PODs opens up a communications line between the faith communities and local government for future responses and day-to-day needs.

Most large jurisdictions have extensive POD plans for the dispensing of medical countermeasures, immunizations, and commodities like food and water in the aftermath of a disaster. Many jurisdictions like Chicago, Houston, Los Angeles, and New York have POD plans for medical counter-measure dispensing that place PODs across the whole community. While these steps are positive, the challenge in all of these plans is resolving the question of who will operate each POD. Will it be city/county employees, volunteers from the neighborhood, or a faith community's volunteers? Because there can be distrust of government, especially in the dispensing of drugs and medical counter-measures among certain populations, it is important that POD staff represent the community they serve to the extent possible. The point of PODs is to ensure that the entire community receives the medical counter-measure, the vaccination, or the commodity they need to survive the disaster. Having PODs staffed by local volunteers and those from faith communities alongside staff from the jurisdiction is a necessity, and a wonderful way to build a preparedness culture.

VIII. Community Emergency Response Communications

Communication by government to community at the time of a disaster is crucial to the well-being of the entire community. When questioned about the information they received from local government in the aftermath of Hurricanes Rita and Ike, most local faith communities, especially those representing under-served, minority or linguistically isolated communities, said they had little or no idea where to get accurate and timely information about what was going on, what services were being offered or where to get gas or food. [33]

[33] See De Vita, Carol J. and Fredrica D. Kramer. *The Role of Faith-Based and Community Organizations in Providing Relief and Recovery Services after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita*.

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Developing a community specific, appropriate and sensitive emergency communication plan is essential if the whole community is to receive the right information in a timely manner. For these plans to be effective they must be developed in advance of a disaster. By developing strong and effective communications plans and contact lists with various sectors of the community, it can be ensured that both the government agency and the faith communities within a geographical area know where to go for timely, accurate and important disaster recovery related information.

It is not simply a matter of translation, but of creating communications and messaging that is meaningful and correct for the community it is meant to inform. The City of Houston Department of Health and Human Services, Bureau of Public Health Preparedness has developed extensive communication plans to reach residents of the city that come from 119 countries, and represent 109 religious groups. Multnomah County Public Health in Oregon has developed excellent pictographs and linguistic outreach products for use by emergency and public health managers to help those for whom English is not their primary language navigate medical counter-measure PODs, disaster shelters, and immunization clinics.

IX. Long-term Recovery Planning

While government is not generally responsible for funding, planning, organizing or managing the long-term recovery process, it is important for local government to be engaged in the planning and organizing of a Long-term Recovery Committee and process. Engaging faith communities in developing this plan indicates to the community that government sees this role as important, and appreciates the guidance and resources that government can provide.

X. Planning and Conducting Community-wide Memorial, Healing and Disaster Commemoration Services and Events

Following disasters it is crucial and yet sometimes very difficult to engage faith communities in community-wide ceremonies in ways that reflect religious and cultural diversity without allowing majority faiths to dominate the events. In fact, some communities choose not to hold these events because of these challenges.

If recent events have taught us anything it is that in the aftermath of community-wide disasters or tragedies there is a need for, and a desire on the part of the community to come together to celebrate life, and to memorialize, remember, and in some cases mourn, those that were most severely impacted by the tragedy. The recent events in Aurora, CO, and Oak Creek, WI demonstrate the desire of the community to come together to honor heroes, remember the deceased and wounded, and to heal collective wounds. In these and other cases in the much too recent past, it is not just those immediately affected that must come together, but the entire community.

These events of healing and remembrance can serve as a powerful moments for shared grief, sorrow, healing, and unity. They also pose the risk of isolating certain individuals or groups and creating fractures if not organized to in a way that involves the whole community as opposed to simply inviting their attendance.

Increasingly, it is the local government that is expected to organize or at least validate these events. At the very least, local government is expected to facilitate the operational needs of the event such as location, traffic control, security, and to provide if not active, then at least tacit support.

If government agencies and/or elected officials are to be involved in such important ceremonies, these ceremonies must be open and welcoming to all residents of the community, and be respectful of all religious groups as well as people of no religious affiliation. Ceremonies such as these require the very highest levels of cultural and religious literacy and competency if they are truly to provide healing for the entire community.

XI. Volunteer Management

Volunteer management can be one of the most rewarding, frustrating, and difficult areas of engagement between local and state government and faith communities. One of the near certainties in a disaster is that local and national faith communities, their congregations, as well as their emergency response organizations will show up to help in any way they can. Not only will these communities provide significant human resources, but in many cases provide valuable and unique expertise and skills not usually available within a local or state jurisdiction. Examples of these resources include: Adventist Community Services provides materials and donations management to long-term recovery efforts; Baptist Children and Family Services of Texas provides medical and functional needs access sheltering skills; Mennonite Disaster Services specializes in roofing repairs and replacement, and installing blue tarps; and Salvation Army provides emergency food and sheltering resources.

The following discussion of volunteer issues relates only to general, non-professional, non-medical volunteers for whom a license is required to perform their assigned duties.

The challenge, as it is with all volunteer services and management, centers on how local or state government successfully manages the surge in volunteers.

- How does local government organize and manage the surge in volunteer forces?
- How does government ensure that volunteers have a meaningful experience, do useful work, and that volunteers are trained, thanked and acknowledged appropriately?
- How does local government access and plan for the use of services that can be provided by faith communities?
- How does local government coordinate the many offers of “help” it receives during a disaster response?
- How does local government ensure that every group that wants to volunteer gets to volunteer in a meaningful and productive way?

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Some additional questions that can impact the effectiveness of volunteers, and need to be part of any general volunteer plan might be:

- What agency, (government or non-profit) will be responsible for volunteer recruiting, coordinating, training, and data management?
- Will volunteers need to be credentialed?
- Will local government require a background check for volunteers?
- Will food, water, and refreshments be supplied to volunteers during their shift?
- How will volunteers be told about volunteer opportunities, the sign-up process, and other process requirements?

There are a multitude of opportunities for significant volunteer efforts to help the community recover from a disaster. Two critical elements of this process are good planning and good partners. Faith communities can be such partners.

Good planning needs to answer the questions posed above. Good planning might also include having a volunteer coordinator or volunteer coordinating agency. This individual or group would be the one responsible for recruiting, managing, and keeping records of those who volunteer.

Successfully managing untold numbers of eager volunteers is critical to a successful emergency response. While many residents may judge local government on its ability to return services and life to normal as quickly as possible, many more will judge local government's emergency response plan and execution on whether or not they had a good volunteer experience. There are many approaches to the volunteer issue, but whatever the plan, it must be part of a more expansive outreach program to the jurisdiction's faith communities. If it is not, they will be there doing what they always do in a way that may not be smoothly coordinated with government efforts.

XII. Review

- There are a number of areas that provide good partnership opportunities for faith communities and emergency management and public health preparedness agencies in their joint efforts to build more disaster resilient communities. These areas include:

  – Preparedness planning.
  – Disaster response.
  – Mass fatality.
  – Family assistance centers.
  – Shelter and mass care operations.
  – Points of dispensing and mass immunization clinics.
  – Crisis and emergency risk communication.
  – Long-term recovery and unmet needs.
  – Community-wide memorial and healing ceremonies.
  – Volunteer management.
  – Disaster chaplaincy/emotional and spiritual care.

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Chapter Seven

CONCLUSION

President Bush's 2001 Executive Order establishing the Faith-Based and Community Initiative called for a "…comprehensive effort to enlist, equip, enable, empower, and expand the work of faith-based and other community organizations…."[34] The White House 2008 report, *The Quiet Revolution*, states, "…[B]uilding the capacity of community- and faith-based organizations enlarges America's supply of compassion. As the capabilities of nonprofits grow, their ability to solve community problems and meet needs expand…. Government solves more of society's toughest problems by engaging every willing partner, including faith-based and secular nonprofits, large, sophisticated nonprofits, and informal networks of private volunteers."[35]

In order to build effective partnerships with faith communities, government entities must provide training and funding resources that are not only useful and relevant for faith groups but are flexible enough that they can be shaped to fit the needs of unique organizations.

The Quiet Revolution states:

> *Organizations vary as much as people—each with its own distinct strengths and weaknesses, organizational culture and unique needs. As anyone engaged in social services knows well, growing the capabilities of America's nonprofits to solve real-world problems requires a multi-dimensional strategy."*
>
> *Many nonprofits already have the capacity for effective partnership with government but simply need to better understand the Federal grants process. Others are eager for government funds to expand their work but require organizational growth before they would be capable of managing those funds. Some groups are open to collaboration with government agencies but have no interest in public dollars. Still others, while welcoming new knowledge and resources to expand their capabilities, prefer to work without ties to government.*

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Faith-Based Center, under Presidents George W. Bush and Barack Obama, has hosted a number of regional workshops across the country entitled, "Partnerships in Emergency Preparedness: A Faith-Based & Community Initiatives Workshop." These events have drawn hundreds of attendees representing both local government agencies engaged in disaster preparedness and response and faith groups willing to work in partnership with them. These events are designed to equip these organizations with the resources, knowledge, and skills critical to effectively engage disaster response and recovery efforts in partnership with local government.

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[34] Executive Order 13199; January 29, 2001

[35] *The Quiet Revolution: The President's Faith-Based and Community Initiative: A Seven-Year Progress Report* (The White House, February 2008).

These workshops, as well as a variety of other government initiatives at the state and local level, are an important step toward building partnerships with faith communities. Not only does government need to improve its religious literacy and competency in working with faith-based organizations, it also needs to enable its community partners with the appropriate tools, knowledge, and resources to carry out their many roles during the disaster lifecycle. Conducting joint training sessions and workshops is an effective way to build additional capacity within faith community organizations and also get their early buy-in on response planning. Engaging religious leaders in the planning stages has the positive effect in making them become government's best advocate in promoting the plan to their followers.

In addition to training and direct funding through grants and contracts, government must eliminate policy barriers to faith-based engagement and promote non-government sources of support, such as philanthropy and volunteerism. Examples may include recent government efforts to engage smaller, less experienced nonprofits, and changes in tax policy to promote increased charitable giving and volunteerism. In addition, nearly all 50 states, as well as the U.S. Congress, have passed some variation of a "Good Samaritan" law to allow volunteers to freely donate their time or rescue an injured party without fear of frivolous litigation due to an unintentional accident.

Reducing policy barriers to action and increasing direct and indirect funding sources to faith communities further contribute to enabling and empowering these groups to carry out their disaster-related missions in coordination with government. While challenges are many, these actions can work to break down silos, encourage communication, and extend the reach of local government beyond its current staff and budget; making it easier for the whole community to recover more quickly after a disaster. The resulting partnerships between government and faith communities can be synergistic. By combining both partners' unique combination of knowledge, financial resources, mission, and skillset, not only is the reach of each extended but new possibilities for engagement and community recovery are created that can have a very real positive impact on the lives of individuals affected by disaster.

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Appendix A

WORKS REFERENCED AND ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

I. Books

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Novak, Philip. *The World's Wisdom: Sacred Texts of the World's Religions*. [San Francisco, Calif.]: HarperSanFrancisco, 1994. Print.

Prothero, Stephen R. *Religious Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know--and Doesn't*. [San Francisco]: HarperSanFrancisco, 2008. Print.

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II. Whitepapers and Reports

A Local Official's Guide to Working with Clergy and Congregations. Sacramento, CA: Institute for Local Government, 2010. Print.

A Whole Community Approach to Emergency Management: Principles, Themes, and Pathways for Action. Washington, D. C.: U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Federal Emergency Management Agency, 2011. Print.

De Vita, Carol J. and Fredrica D. Kramer. *The Role of Faith-Based and Community Organizations in Providing Relief and Recovery Services after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2008. Print.

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Working Together: Co-operation Between Government and Faith Communities. United Kingdom Home Office Faith Communities Unit, February 2004.

III. Internet Resources

Gallup Surveys on Religion in America:
http://www.gallup.com/poll/147887/americans-continue-believe-god.aspx

FEMA Training Courses:
http://training.fema.gov/

National VOAD Membership Directory:
http://nvoad.org/members

NDIN Disaster Tip Sheets for Faith Community Partners:
http://www.n-din.org/ndin_resources/ndin_tips_sheets_partners.php

NDIN Disaster Tip Sheets for U.S. Religious Leaders:
http://www.n-din.org/ndin_resources/ndin_tips_sheets_v1208.php

NDIN Directory of Disaster Interfaith and Chaplaincy Organizations:
http://www.n-din.org/ndin_forms/directory_list.php.

Pew Research, Religion and Public Life Project Reports:
http://religions.pewforum.org/reports

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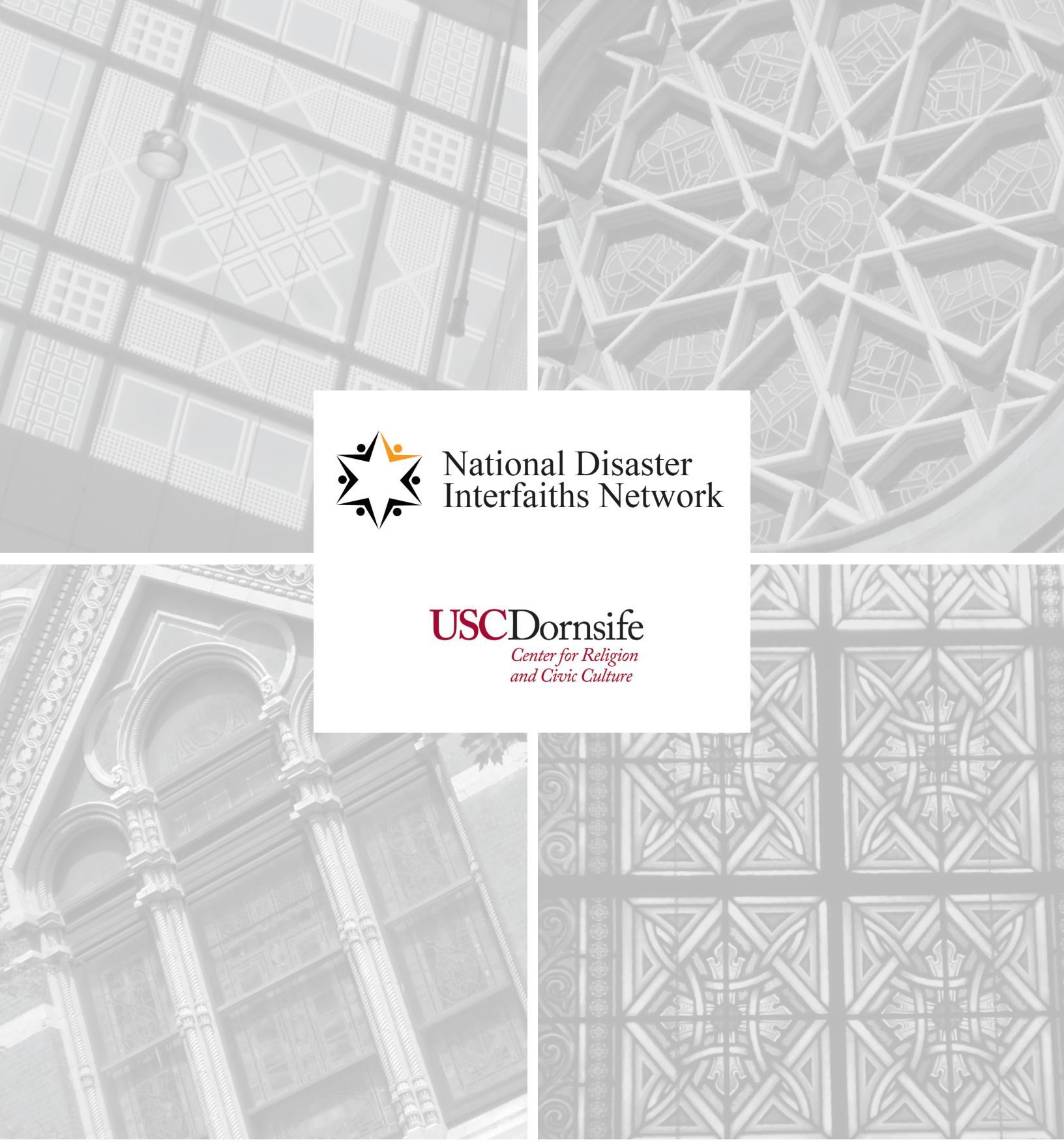

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