

City of Newark, NJ Communities Of Faith Reentry/Recovery Plan

Revised: **May 28, 2020**



Overview
Pages 1-4

Reentry Phases
Pages
5-7

Detailed
Recovery Plan
Pages
8-12

Revised MAY 26, 2020

Created by:

**Reopening and Recovery Plan for Faith & Houses of
Worship Committee**

in Concert with The City of Newark

Mayor's Office of Clergy Affairs

Preparation & Reentry

This document is being provided for general consideration to assist communities of faith with best practices that include CDC suggested guidelines purposed to keep staff and congregations safe. We acknowledge that there are many faiths with varying traditions in our gathering for worship. However, at our core, all agree upon one common goal: keeping people safe and reducing the risks in the spread of COVID-19. This may include scaling back and possibly eliminating non-essential practices to promote safety.

NOTE: This guide is not intended to infringe on rights protected by the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution or any other federal law, including the Religious Freedom Restoration Act of 1993 (RFRA).

Committee Slogan **“Faith AND Wisdom”**

Mayor Baraka and the City of Newark will introduce a color-coding system using RED, YELLOW and GREEN purposed to inform citizens of high, moderate and low-risk locations and activities. BLUE will be used to represent our ‘new normal’.

- Signage around the city in high/moderate/low-risk areas
- Signage around the city detailing high/moderate/low-risk activities or behaviors
- Standard communication means will alert residents of high/moderate/low-risk areas or activities.

The City of Newark is taking a phased approach for using CDC guidelines. The plan includes 4 phases with 2-week intervals for reentry is as follows:

Phase 1: June 1- June 14, 2020

Phase 2: June 15- June 28, 2020

Phase 3: June 29 - July 12, 2020

Phase 4: July 13- July 26, 2020

Note to Communities of Faith

Color-Codes – The City of Newark, New Jersey will institute color-coded signage, with red being the highest risk area, yellow more moderate, and green the lowest risk area to help citizens make an informed decision regarding the activity. Businesses, restaurants, parks, and other public places will display color-coded signage. While houses of worship are not directed by The City of Newark to display color-code signage, faith-based leaders should use the color code of their respective neighborhood and surroundings to inform their reentry planning, as well as communicate the meaning of the codes to congregants to support their ability to make the most informed decisions about their personal safety.

As a result, the communities of faith strongly encourage congregants to be tested. Newark has sites as of May 28, 2020 as follows:

Testing for all Newark residents is available at the following locations on Tuesdays through Saturdays, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.:

Ann Street School

30 Ann Street
Call 973-988-5511
Walk-up only

Sharpe James/Kenneth A. Gibson Recreation and Aquatic Center

226 Rome Street
Call 862-257-0718
Walk-up only

Boylan Street Recreation Center

916 South Orange Avenue
Call 862-257-0718
Walk-up only

Branch Brook Park Roller Skating Rink

Park Avenue entrance
Call 973-988-5511
Walk-up and drive-through

Reopening and Recovery Plan for Faith & Houses of Worship Coordination

Cityplex 12

360-394 Springfield Avenue

Call 862-257-0718 or email covidtesting@sunrisegoc.com

Walk-up and drive-through

155 Mt. Pleasant Avenue

Call 862-257-0718 or email covidtesting@sunrisegoc.com

Walk-up only

Mary Eliza Mahoney Health Center

394 University Avenue

Call 800.734.7083

For congregants outside of Newark:

- Community-based testing sites - These sites are open to all New Jerseyans, including asymptomatic individuals. Where resources are strained, testing will be prioritized for asymptomatic health care workers and first responders, personnel in congregate living settings, and New Jerseyans who have been in close contact with an individual who has tested positive for COVID-19.
- Local testing sites - These sites may be restricted to residents of a specific county, municipality, or first responders. Some also require an appointment and/or prescription from a healthcare provider.
- Pharmacy testing sites - The State has authorized the more than 18,000 licensed pharmacists in New Jersey to administer FDA-approved or authorized

COVID-19 tests to their customers without a prescription. Testing is available at participating pharmacies including CVS, Rite-Aid, and Walmart. Please check with your local pharmacist as testing is not available at all locations and may require an appointment or online registration. For more information, CVS, Rite-Aid, and Walmart have set up websites where you can book an appointment and find testing locations.

- Private testing sites - To access testing at these sites, you must contact your doctor or healthcare provider.

REENTRY/RECOVERY PLAN RECOMMENDED PHASES

Online Virtual Services will be used through-out the recommended phases to ensure everyone wishing to participate will have an opportunity to do so.

Phase 1: June 1 to 14, 2020

- Virtual Worship Services (outside of the building) and Telephone Conferencing are the best-known methods currently to prevent infection and to avoid exposure to COVID-19, however, re-defining safe engagement is being established for congregant care, health, and well-being before re-opening (a work in progress).
- Cleaning: Entire facility cleaning needs to be done by an external vendor using CDC guidelines to prepare the sanctuary for re-use (to include furniture re-arranging to maximize space) with maintenance thereafter by appropriate custodial staff and/or external vendors.
- Deep cleaning using a professional service is essential and based upon availability, cleaning supplies, gloves, masks, hand sanitizer dispensers, etc.. need to be ordered immediately. Some have advised the purchases of ultra-violet lighting, scanning thermometers
- Insurance companies will be contacted to determine the needs to minimize exposure and liability.
- Signage to be placed conspicuously both inside and outside Houses of Worship to include directions to adhere to guidelines and inside the restrooms for the best hygiene practices must be designed and ordered.
- Consideration for children, families, and individuals being required to adhere to CDC guidelines must be contemplated carefully before attending services. Posting it on web-sites is suggested and via text and email. Training of all members is required in advance to ensure a willingness to adhere to safety measures with the appropriate expectations before gatherings.
- All ministries' functions must be reviewed, re-defined, and/or retooled following CDC guidelines to include but not be limited to no touching and/or passing of materials along with the practicing of social distancing, wearing a mask, and using hand sanitizer as often as needed. Changes must be approved by their respective leadership.
- For monetary donations, banking applications (i.e.: Cash Ap, Giveify, Zelle) for online giving needs to be established before services resume to minimize touching and passing. Contact your local banking institution. Mailing of donations is also recommended at this time. Houses of worship should communicate a secure address. In addition, offering boxes can be placed at building exits provided, at the designated drop-off times with supervision, and social distancing protocol will be used. Social distancing - *Social Distancing: Socially distancing sanctuary & pulpit seating as well as any required furniture rearrangements need to be situated per building space.

Reopening and Recovery Plan for Faith & Houses of Worship Coordination

**Note: Excerpt taken from CDC guidelines:*

What is social distancing? Social distancing also called “physical distancing,” means keeping space between yourself and other people outside of your home. To practice social or physical distancing:

- *Stay at least 6 feet (about 2 arms’ length) from other people*
- *Do not gather in groups*
- *Stay out of crowded places and avoid mass gatherings*
- *CDC Tips for social distancing*
- *Stay at least 6 feet away from others.*
- *Cover your mouth and nose with a cloth face covering when around others*
- *Keep at least 6 feet between yourself and others, even when you wear a face covering.*

Phase 2: June 15 to 28, 2020

- It is strongly recommended the plan of re-opening be submitted to the Mayor’s Office of Clergy Affairs to help ensure guidelines are followed for the safety of the people.
- Low Capacity: Reentry of 10 (ten) people using the CDC social distancing requirements and the wearing of masks. Reservations to attend services is strongly suggested not to exceed a 10 (ten) person capacity. The ten include the Faith-Leader, Worship Team, Technical Team, Ministry Support Team, Members, Visitors including all bodies occupying the sanctuary. Multiple services may be established as needed by the Faith-Leader to best meet the established need.
- Service guidelines will include social distancing (entering, existing and during the service, the wearing of masks, frequenting the usage of hand wipes and/or hand sanitizer, CDC recommended cleaning before, between and after services with minimal touching of surfaces, no touching of people, no passing of materials i.e. no bulletins, Bibles, sign-up sheets, pens, notes, hymnal or any type hand-outs. Movement once inside will be limited. Before and after services will not allow congregating and prompt entering and exiting is required.
- Bathrooms will service one person at a time or more individuals providing social distancing can still be achieved.
- Non-essential services will be canceled or postponed and all meetings will take place virtually as well as counseling.
- Signage will be placed conspicuously both inside and outside Houses of Worship to provide needed directions to adhere to guidelines and inside the restrooms for the best hygiene practices. Faith rituals such as communion and baptism will be modified to meet all imposed CDC guidelines. Provide care & development for the children and provide family accessibility for testing.
- No ancillary services will be in effect.
- Virtual Worship Services and Telephone Conferencing options will still be used to accommodate those still preferring home worshipping.

Reopening and Recovery Plan for Faith & Houses of Worship Coordination

Phase 3: June 29 to July 12, 2020

Low capacity reentry up to 25 or as bound by the guidelines by the City of Newark. Phase two guidelines still apply.

Parking lot services will only be permitted provided congregants remain inside of a motor vehicle wearing masks, with no running engines and windows rolled down. Cars must be 6 feet apart. No tent services will be allowed. Congregants must remain inside of their vehicle at all times. The ability to have a sound system powerful enough to project for all to hear is required.

Phase 4: July 13 to 26, 2020 Faith-based operations, processes, and procedures will be adhered to at the “New Norm”. (The new norm means still practicing social distancing as per CDC guidelines and sanitization as required). This also means the number of services may need to increase to accommodate congregants wishing to return to the building while continuing virtual services as a means. Phase two guidelines still apply. Note: A maximum service capacity will be determined, communicated in advance, and adhered to for safety based using social distancing. Services may be added if desired to accommodate those members wishing to attend once capacity has been reached. Members will either elect their preferred service times or the Houses of Worship will be filled on a first come first serve basis (contingent upon capacity and ministry size).

IMPORTANT: These phases are designed in response to the committee’s charge to develop a progressive re-entry plan using 14-15 day increments as a guide. However, these phases represent a “BEST CASE” scenarios and may be adjusted based on the daily health information provided to city officials, and will change if there is an increase in new infections.

Components and Recommendations for Implementing Reentry Phases

Below are components recommended for inclusion in the re-entry plans of houses of worship with strategic recommendations based on the input of the diverse traditions of committee members:

1. ONLINE SERVICES

- To ensure that the communities of faith continue to provide safe worship opportunities for all members, visitors, and ministry supporters, all are encouraged to continue to stream services using online media of choice.
- All individuals who are 65 and above or who have an underlying at-risk health condition will retain full membership status if they choose to watch virtual services and/or participate via conference calls, regardless of any stage of the re-entry plan. (i.e. same privilege as “sick and shut-in”).
- Online options should remain the primary option for worship until all precautionary measures have been executed. Faith-based leadership should view all re-entry phases and timelines (i.e. 14-day increments) as a minimal guide and demonstrate a willingness to extend timelines to ensure the safety of their most-at-risk populations.

2. FACILITIES

- There will be a cleaning of the entire facility (e.g. shampooing carpets, sanitizing bathrooms, wudu stations, doorknobs, light switches, and microphones) by an external vendor.
- Houses of worship will perform any necessary preventative maintenance on equipment such as boilers, water fountains, and HVAC.
- There will be a regular ordering of cleaning supplies. The first delivery of cleaning supplies will be available in the houses of worship before reopening.
- CDC guidance will be used in preparing the sanctuary for re-use. For guidance, use the following: <https://tinyurl.com/cdcccleanguidelines>.
- Cleaning, once the use of the building has resumed, will be maintained by current custodial staff (if appropriate) or an external vendor until the current custodial staff can resume.

3. IN-PERSON WORSHIP SERVICES

- Worship Services will resume when there is determined within the city of Newark that there is a significant decline in the number of new infections. This means that phases and timelines presented by the taskforce may change if there is an increase in new infections.

Reopening and Recovery Plan for Faith & Houses of Worship Coordination

- In-person services should resume in a scaffolded manner to ensure the safety of all members. Scaffolding participation is defined as starting with as minimal a group as possible, and building to a determined capacity, guided by CDC recommendations, such as using 36 sq. feet per person based on the square footage of seating area only (not total worship space), allow families in the same household to be seated together. Note: CDC guidelines are readily available for review. Below is a sample of what scaffolding could potentially include:
 - Faith-based leader and online production personnel (1-5 persons)
 - Faith-based leader and a delegation of 10 or less, including productional personnel, officials, singers, musicians
 - General gathering of less than 25 (Demographics: under the age of 65 with no underlying health at-risk health conditions.
 - General gathering of all members, using social distancing protocols. Note: If full “on-roll” membership cannot attend due to the recommended social distancing, considerations MAY be made for an additional in-person worship service provided that the necessary cleaning can occur between those services.

NOTE: Be sure to reference the phases as outlined by the City to make responsible decisions on how scaffolding looks in your congregation.

- In Islamic traditions, Masjids will limit access to the five daily prayers and weekly Jummah service.
- Members and visitors are required to wear masks and gloves upon entering a house of worship. Houses of worship should order extra supplies to provide these items to those who not have them to limit refusal of entry. Faith-based leaders are strongly encouraged to wear masks or incorporate some form of precaution, i.e. installing a plexiglass enclosure.
- As a social distancing practice, a person must occupy the pulpit lectern alone (where possible) and provide social distancing with praise and worship singers in a designated space with the frequent use of hand sanitizer each time something is being touched.
- Education on sanitization will be provided to congregations to ensure that there is an understanding of these “best practices” prior to reentry. Faith-based leaders will incorporate this messaging into their communications and interactions with congregants.
- (For traditions which utilize choral singing) Choirs will be postponed temporarily. The praise and worship team will provide music with proper social distancing and limited team members. Praise Team members should use protective measures (shield mask, a form of mouth covering). Each praise team member should have their own unique microphone, which is not to be shared without having gone through the cleaning protocol.
- Chairs in the pulpit will be removed (where applicable) at least temporarily to ensure social distancing in transitioning from music ministry to preaching. Proper social distancing (in accordance with CDC guidelines) is a requirement at all times regardless of the size of the building being used for worship.

Reopening and Recovery Plan for Faith & Houses of Worship Coordination

Depending on the size of the membership/meeting space, the pastor needs to decide for everyone's safety on the capacity using social distancing (36 Square

Feet) even if it means adding services and/or remaining virtual to keep safety measures a priority

- Members will be encouraged to utilize social distancing when leaving in-person worship services. Considerations for entrance/exit, directional pathways should be made to ensure that social distancing can be achieved.
4. RECOMMENDED POSTPONEMENTS (AKA "Until further notice...")
- Meet and Greet portions of services will be removed to ensure social distancing and no-contact.
 - Monthly programs/bulletins will be emailed. Paper copies will be made available upon request ONLY to limit physical contact. In those cases, bulletins will be placed on the chairs prior to the start of the in-person worship service.
 - In Christian traditions, worship aids, prayer books, hymnals, religious texts, and other bulletins, books, or items passed or shared among congregants, will be limited. The house of worship will attempt to make as much of this available using electronic means. Members are encouraged to bring their personal Bible and hymnals.
 - In Islamic traditions, members will be encouraged to bring their individual prayer mats/musallah, copies of the Quran, and prayer booklets for individual use when coming for salaah/prayer.
 - Café-like services (breakfast, fellowship, etc.) will not occur to ensure the safety of membership. If there is food offered at any event, it will be either pre-packaged in boxes or bags.
 - The kitchen will be closed to limit the amount of spacing needing to be cleaned often.
 - "Children's church" will be suspended for now. When this aspect of the church's worship return, there should be specific guidelines communicated to families to ensure the safety of their children.
 - Where practiced, the physical administration of the "right hand of fellowship". Alternative: "Welcome package will be provided, posting pics and a short bio on social media outlets (if desired).
5. PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES
- Consideration for children, families, and individuals being required to adhere to CDC guidelines must be contemplated carefully before attending services. Posting it on web-sites is suggested and via text and email. Training of all members is required in advance to ensure a willingness to adhere to safety measures with the appropriate expectations before gatherings.
 - Signage will be placed at ALL entry points telling staff, members, and guests not to enter if they feel sick or have tested positive for COVID-19 until they have been cleared by a medical professional. Signage for best hygiene practices will be placed in all bathrooms.

Reopening and Recovery Plan for Faith & Houses of Worship Coordination

- Ensure 6 feet between individuals or family units of the same households during services. This can be done by (1) space and mark seating, (2) alternating rows, (3) removing chairs to ensure that there is 6 feet spacing.
- Mark individual standing spots in elevators, in prayer spaces, and anywhere people might congregate or queue up, for proper social distancing.
- When there are multiple services, there will be cleaning between each service, with a focus on disinfecting high-contact surfaces.
- Hand sanitizers will be placed in high-contact locations, including bathrooms, fellowship hall, entry, exit.
- Non-touch garbage cans will be placed in houses of worship (if possible).
- Doors may be left open to reduce the need to touch doorknobs if safe and appropriate to do so. Alternative: The door attendant(s) will open doors for all entrants. Staff, members, and guests will be encouraged to sanitize their hands before entering the building/sanctuary by ushers and greeters.
- In preparation for all ceremonial practices, rubber gloves should be worn.
- To adhere to CDC guidelines, “no touching and/or passing” is a priority especially in ceremonial practices.
- (In traditions serving the Lord’s Supper, AKA Eucharist, Holy Communion) Ensure that there is no contact in the distribution of communion. We will continue to use pre-made “All in One” communion items. (the use of disposable is strongly recommended).
- To avoid the spread of the virus, it is recommended that traditions that practice full immersion baptism will suspend practice until such a time where the curve has flattened. Suggested alternative: Prepared basins of water will be used to pour over the heads of candidates, with social distancing measures in place.

6. NON-WORSHIP GATHERINGS

- It is recommended that ALL non-essential in-person gatherings are postponed throughout all phases of re-entry until such a time as there is a significant decrease in new infections. It is understood that *Essential* will vary based upon tradition and specific congregations.
- Rehearsals & pre-recordings will be postponed in the early phases to reduce risks.
- All board, auxiliary, and committee meetings should be conducted virtually.
- Bible studies, to the extent possible, should be held virtually to reduce the number of in-person interactions. It is understood that some houses of worship may have mid-week in-person worship.
- Pastoral counseling and support conferences should be held virtually
- Sick visits should be limited, if not suspended, increased use of telephone or video options to ensure the safety of the sick as well as those who provide

Reopening and Recovery Plan for Faith & Houses of Worship Coordination

pastoral care. Faith-based leaders should remain from home and hospital visits, except for certain compassionate care situations, such as the end of life.

- Funeral services will remain governed by state regulations, until such a time as those regulations are lifted.
- Baby dedications and weddings will resume initially as private ceremonies, 10 or fewer persons with appropriate social distancing, until such a time as those stipulations are lifted. If these events occur, full cleaning should occur prior to any in-person worship service.

Note: Some examples and religious rituals may be faith-tradition specific.

7. COLLECTIONS

- Electronic giving will continue through general online giving applications. Examples include Givelify, Zelle, Paypal, GoFundme, Cashapp. Each house of worship will determine the option that best meets its needs.
- Giving will conclude service with baskets and/or drop boxes at the entrance and/or exit points so members can give as they leave to support social distancing. If you prefer not to participate in this preference of electronic giving, mailing it to the house of worship is an option. *Each house of worship shall provide the physical address to where funds are to be sent. Members are encouraged to mail checks or money orders as opposed to cash should they choose to exercise this option.*
- Where practiced in the tradition, physical offering “marches” and movement during service will be postponed.