

Disaster Preparedness, Response, Recovery
City Based Project*

Congregations can provide the cities with access to vast resources of people, sites and donations. This is especially the case at the time of a disaster, when individuals are motivated to help each other. Congregations are known for their spontaneous role as the site where people gravitate for help and where support can be garnered.

Until now congregational disaster response has been almost exclusively spontaneous and post-incident.

In 2002, Rabbi Jay Miller, as consultant for the Peninsula Community Foundation, initiated the framework for network clergy which resulted in the historic formation of the nation's first association of all clergy in a region, the Peninsula Clergy Network (PCN). This designed capacity for networking clergy can serve any geographic clergy contingent or civic institution to achieve comprehensive coordination and partnerships within the religion sector congregations and their vast "Congregation Based Resources" (CBR).

Rabbi Miller, in conjunction with the California Institute for Local Government (ILG) provided consultations which confirmed that the methodologies for engaging all clergy and congregations are applicable in any geographic area. The consultations supported the Riverside mayor and Westchester County, NY, Office of Senior Services, in engaging the full range of congregations in responding to critical community issues. In 2010, Rabbi Miller co-authored "A Local Official's Guide to Working with Clergy and Congregations," with the ILG, the publisher of the "Guide."

Consultation provides institutions cities with the broad capacity for:

- Systematic response to congregations that reach out to you.
- The identification and engagement of congregations to access and direct Congregation Based Resources (CBR), which support specific needs to better serve emergency management.
- The establishment of mechanisms by which congregations are coordinated among themselves.
- The comprehensive designation of congregational roles in serving to access individuals and neighborhoods within the community to achieve increased preparedness, response and recovery.

This project is designed to provide the dual outcomes of initial substantive congregational disaster preparedness and response "actions" and a structured, sustained city relationship with the congregations.

The PCN Project is based on two initial substantive congregational actions: the worship evacuation drill and the congregant signup for the city and county Alert system. The worship evacuation drill was a key component of the PCN city pilot of the Disaster Preparedness, Response, Recovery Plan.

The Drill provides congregational leadership with the opportunity to highlight (1) the congregations commitment to disaster preparedness and its formal relationship with the city; (2) the importance of personal preparedness by every congregant, their family and friend; (3) extends congregant safety in the event an incident should occur during worship or other congregational event. It also is a key to campaign for congregant sign-up for city and county Alert.

This Project provides agencies with the capacity for achieving a range of options including:

The formation of a database of all clergy and congregations

City and Fire Department outreach to clergy

Designation of the Agency Representative Team (ART) of Fire, Police, City Manager, OES, Red Cross, etc.

Designation of Congregational Representative Team (CRT), with regular meetings

Designation of an ART liaison to the CRT

Joint meetings with CRT and ART

CRT development of the congregational united effort focused on the Worship Drill

Signup for the city and county Alert systems

Debrief and next steps with CRT and ART

Ongoing meetings of CRT

*This model is also adapted to the "Small Cities Shared Project" and "Large City Sub-Area Project"