

How to Start a Grassroots Pandemic Planning Organization

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[PandemicPrep.Org](#)

Step 1 - Gather a few interested people together

1. Likely sources are from:
 - a. Local Public Health Departments
 - b. Health Care Community
 - c. Education (especially Universities)
 - d. Business Community (BC/DR professionals or other interested individuals)
 - e. Non-profits such as [American Red Cross](#), Lion's Club, etc.
 - f. Small Business people eager to help make a difference and get to know people.
 - g. Other interested parties

The most important trait of potential members is a belief that pandemics are a threat that needs to be dealt with through proper planning and preparation.

Step 2 - Plan a simple event

1. Pick a date and location
 - a) Try to find a larger corporation or government agency willing to help with facility and costs.
 - b) Solicit advice and support in arranging speakers. Maybe ask sponsoring organization to supply one speaker if they can address a relevant topic.
2. Approach one or more speakers on pandemic-related topics:
 - a. Pandemic 101 – Healthcare worker, Public Health official or professors are excellent resources for this.
 - b. Corporate Briefing – What is a local corporation doing to prepare for a pandemic?
 - c. Subject matter experts: These should be experts in one area, such as legal issues, HR issues, Work from Home issues, crisis communications, healthcare issues, etc.

Step 3 - Publicize the event

1. Develop a list of contacts with e-mail addresses you think will be interested in the subject matter.
2. Ask professional networking groups to distribute your invitation to their membership.
3. Approach Chambers of Commerce to distribute your invitation.
4. Solicit local support from newspapers and online media.

Step 4 - Getting Financial Support

1. Consult with multiple sources
 - a) State Government
 - b) Local Public Health Departments
 - c) Businesses
 - d) Healthcare grants
 - e) Non-profit funds
 - f) Sell vendor tables for each event (\$200 is the amount we charged)

Note: PandemicPrep.Org received its funding in the beginning from local public health departments, who bought in early to the need for pandemic planning in the community. We also had State support when needed. Later, we did get corporate support for some events.

Step 5 - The first event

1. Plan it on a Thursday or Friday to help maximize attendance.
2. Have original committee take flyers and information to other organizations about 2 months prior.
3. Have name tags so people get to know each other.
4. Serve refreshments and have breaks for networking if conference is 3 hours or longer.
5. Ask participants to complete an evaluation so you get feedback from the group.
6. Have a sign up table to get ACCURATE and up-to-date contact information.
7. Ask for specific volunteers at each conference to help coordinate specific future events, planning, and needs.
8. Gather materials into folders or packets with an agenda for the day.
9. Try to stick closely to the agenda so that it gives the appearance of being organized.

Step 6 – Next Steps

1. Begin a spreadsheet or database to collect information (names, companies, e-mail addresses, etc.) on people that attend, show interest in attending, or are prospective future attendees.
2. Write a mission statement. Determine purpose of group and structure.
3. Do you want to apply for non-profit status? Do you want to have a board? officers? Name for your new organization?
4. Decide on frequency of events and any other activities you want to participate in.
 - a. Conferences
 - b. Webinars
 - c. Speak at Professional Groups and Chambers of Commerce
5. Do you want to have a unique website for your organization? If you want, you may be able to use a section of the PandemicPrep.Org website.
6. Prepare a budget of expected income and expenses.
7. Finally, review www.PandemicPrep.Org website to get additional ideas on possible services to provide to your community.

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