

A MORE The Jewish PERFECT Partnership UNION for Democracy

Launching Your Community Preparedness Working Group

INTRODUCTION

As Jewish organizations look to support their communities through a contentious election season, they might consider convening and empowering a dedicated group of community leaders to oversee this work. Community Preparedness Working Groups are a powerful tool to activate the right people in your organization to lead your preparation efforts.

WHAT IS A COMMUNITY PREPAREDNESS WORKING GROUP?

A Community Preparedness Working Group (CPWG) is a team of leaders from your organization charged with preparing your staff and constituents to weather a variety of threats to democracy that may impact your community. Thanks to a CPWG, your community can be better equipped to handle challenges during the election season and feel more confident doing so.

WHAT DOES A CPWG DO?

While every CPWG will be different, generally speaking, CPWGs share four main goals:

1. **Understanding potential election-related threats facing your community**
2. **Committing to uphold democratic principles**
3. **Building and activating key relationships**
4. **Keeping your community safe, calm, informed, and engaged**

The Equip toolkit has excellent background information, resources, and ideas for action to get your CPWG started on each of these goals.

We recommend that your CPWG convene regularly – typically weekly or every other week for 60-90 minutes between now and the inauguration, but this may vary to fit your needs.

Productive meetings may include:

- Opening with a reminder about the CPWG's **goals and roles**.
- A short **educational briefing** about a particular election-related threat or development from an election official, democracy professional, community partner, or similar expert.
- **Updates and discussion** from CPWG members about their areas of responsibility.
- A meaningful amount of time to discuss specific **potential scenarios** and identify your community's related strengths, resources, opportunities, and needs.
- Identifying and assigning **clear action steps** to accomplish by the next meeting.

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WHO SHOULD BE IN MY CPWG?

Strong CPWGs bring together diverse and credible voices from your community to inform a robust and representative decision-making process. The most effective CPWGs stay small enough to be nimble and action-oriented, but large enough to accommodate different perspectives and expertises – we recommend 5-9 people. Your CPWG may benefit from including decision-makers who can drive expeditious action from internal and external partners.

Potential members may include:

- Executive staff
- Clergy
- Professional staff
- Board members
- Community members
- Representatives from partner organizations

Valuable skills that may be represented on the CPWG include:

- Jewish religious practice and values
- Security
- Technology
- Communications
- Education
- Human relations/interfaith/intergroup outreach
- Social/mental health/pastoral care
- Legal expertise

We recommend members of the CPWG lead specific areas of responsibility – ideally, the group would come to consensus on these roles.

Potential areas of responsibility may include:

- Administration (record keeping and meeting scheduling)
- Physical security
- Cybersecurity
- Communications
- Partnerships and external outreach
- Community support and care