



PRIORITY ACTIONS TO LEAD YOUR MUNICIPALITY THROUGH A PANDEMIC



PREPAREDNESS



RESPONSE



RECOVERY

This tool will help you to:

- Identify key objectives to influenza pandemic preparedness, response, and recovery
- Use this toolkit to reduce deaths and to manage at a municipal level

Who will implement this tool:

- The mayor
- Members of the *municipal leadership team*

OVERVIEW

In this tool are a set of key objectives that correspond to the preparedness, response, and recovery stages of a pandemic. These objectives and the actions taken to achieve them will lessen the impact of a severe pandemic on your municipality. Whenever appropriate, we will refer you to other tools in the toolkit that will help you achieve these goals, and, ultimately, protect and provide for your municipality.

There are several aspects of pandemic planning that should be part of all preparedness, response, and recovery actions. These general principles apply to the use of all the tools in this toolkit.

MULTISECTOR IMPACT REQUIRES MULTISECTOR PREPAREDNESS, RESPONSE, AND RECOVERY

While the direct result of the disease is illness and death, a series of cascading indirect impacts will result in significant challenges to all sectors of society. At the peak of the pandemic, up to 40% of all workers will be absent from work, due to illness, caring for another, child care responsibilities, or fear of going to work. Imagine trying to get your job done on a day when almost half of your employees are out of work! Then, imagine what will happen with municipal services such as garbage collection and road repair, banking and other commercial enterprises, and all goods that rely on production, transport, delivery, and repairs for resupply. Once essential goods and services are in short supply, municipal leaders will need to determine how to allocate them.

INTEGRATION WITH NATIONAL EMERGENCY PLANS

Most countries have national level pandemic plans in place, while very few have municipal level plans. This toolkit is designed to provide you with the guidance and resources to build a multisector municipal plan. *It is very important that municipal plans reflect national level planning and that all municipal response activities are consistent with the national strategic objectives, laws, and policies.* If you do not already have a copy of your country's National Pandemic Response Plan, contact your Ministry of Health or look for it on their website. Information is also available from the Pan American Health Organization at www.paho.org. Your country may also have an Emergency Communication Plan that you should follow.



National, district, and municipal level plans are likely to exist for general disaster response. Municipal level disaster committees and plans are a foundation on which you can build your pandemic response plan, and a disaster committee may well become the multisector municipal leadership team that you need for your pandemic response.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Any response you lead to ensure the health and safety of your community must be in line with both your country's and your municipality's existing laws and regulations, which have been enacted to prevent diseases and to provide a response to those that threaten the well-being of the population. Such existing laws, policies, programs, and appropriated funds must be considered as you plan and implement a municipal level response during a severe influenza pandemic. Having a keen understanding of this legal framework is pivotal to ensuring an efficient response during crises and emergencies. Municipal preparedness includes identifying and addressing any gaps in this legal framework for response.

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

The recent outbreaks of A/H1N1 underscore the need for public officials to get involved in communicating messages that inform the public, stakeholders, and the media without frightening, and to educate without provoking alarm or indifference. Effective communication requires leadership and discipline. Listening and conversing frequently with your constituents (including your vulnerable populations, businesses, volunteers, religious leaders, and public sector personnel) will help you to understand their needs. Their perceptions are key to your implementing a successful response. Well-planned and coordinated communication during crises and emergencies will help you implement needed interventions to protect people's health, food security, and livelihoods. Also of critical importance is understanding how information is managed and shared at all levels of government, within and across agencies, as well as within sectors. An official flow-of-information map should already exist to ensure that the appropriate information is communicated to alert the population of potential hazards and risks that affect their welfare.

RESPONSE IN PROPORTION TO THE LOCAL SITUATION

During an influenza pandemic, some parts of the world will be affected earlier than others, and some will have higher death rates from the illness. Some people will have a very mild reaction to the disease and others will die quickly from the same disease. Variability and change over time are part of any pandemic. The World Health Organization and national governments will be constantly monitoring the situation. Some responses will be determined at the national level, but many will be determined at the local level. Therefore, municipal governments must assess the local situation continually and respond accordingly.

Some of the actions that can reduce deaths in a pandemic carry with them negative consequences for the population. For example, cancelling events and closing schools and businesses to limit the spread of the illness can result in large economic losses and should be reserved for circumstances in which the benefit of using them is greater than the harm they may cause. You need to be prepared to customize your response to the actual situation you are dealing with, balancing the response activities with the impact you experience.



PREPAREDNESS: WHAT YOU CAN DO BEFORE THE PANDEMIC

The tools cited and described throughout this section will be especially helpful to you as you prepare ahead of time to prevent excess harm and to respond once the pandemic strikes.

The information in these tools can also help you prepare, respond to, and recover from disasters of all kinds, not just a pandemic. By getting started now, you can be in a better position to reduce the harm that can be caused by any disaster.

BE INFORMED OF THE POTENTIAL IMPACT

Make sure you have a clear understanding of what a pandemic is and of how it will affect your municipality.

Use Tool 2, *Presentation on the Threat of a Severe Influenza Pandemic*, and Tool 7, *Food Security in a Pandemic*, to train all of the members of your municipal leadership team and key responders. Use Tool 3, *Pandemic Health Impact Projection Tool*, and its *User Guide* to estimate the number of influenza cases and deaths that may occur in your municipality.

Be informed. Review your municipal and national plans. Get to know the roles and responsibilities of key government authorities at the national level. Knowing ahead of time how your country will respond at a national level during a pandemic will help you better prepare your municipality. Most importantly, you will be able to determine what help your national government might be able to provide you and the role it will play in ensuring that your municipality has access to the resources it will need. You should also review any existing emergency communications plans and be prepared to disseminate information to your community in keeping with the guidelines they provide.

ORGANIZE A DISASTER RESPONSE TEAM AND INITIATE PLANNING

Use Tool 15, *Disaster Management in a Pandemic* to help you organize a multisector disaster response team. Your pandemic response team should include, at a minimum, executive leadership (that is, the mayor or someone designated by the mayor), members of any pre-existing disaster committee, and others to include representatives from each of the following sectors:

- Public safety and security
- Public health and medical services
- Public works
- Food security
- Business and commerce
- Finance
- Logistics and transportation
- Communications spokesperson(s)
- Telecommunications and IT



The team's first task should be to review your country's national pandemic plan, if one is available. In addition, the team should review national and/or municipal general disaster plans.

As you assemble your team, be sure to clarify the roles and responsibilities of key authorities.

Next, identify the key personnel responsible for each of the technical areas, or sectors, covered by the toolkit (for example, health). Have these key personnel develop concrete operational plans (i.e., continuity of government and continuity of operations plans) for each technical area based on a clear understanding of the potential impact of a pandemic on your municipality.

Review Tool 16, *Maintenance of Essential Services* and have each of the sectors in your municipality follow the steps outlined within it to create continuity of government and continuity of operations plans.

Finally, create preparedness programs for infection control and **social distancing** policies (See Tool 4, *Non-Pharmaceutical Interventions (NPIs): Actions to Limit the Spread of the Pandemic in Your Municipality*), and begin to raise awareness in your community about these (See Tool 2, *Presentation on the Threat of a Severe Influenza Pandemic*).

DETERMINE WHO WILL BE MOST AT RISK

For you and your team to be able to take any action—and to, ultimately, be able to reduce the number of deaths caused by influenza and by other diseases, acts of violence, or starvation—it will be essential for you or your municipal leadership team to have a clear sense of (1) those people in your municipality who are likely to be affected most by a pandemic and (2) the resources you have available to respond to that impact.

To learn how to identify your most vulnerable populations and determine how you will need to prepare, review Tool 8, *Classification of Food Security Risk Locations* and Tool 9, *Identification of People Most at Risk of Food Insecurity*.

ASSESS YOUR RESOURCES AND PLAN TO ADDRESS GAPS

Ask representatives from all of the sectors in your municipality to conduct an inventory of your municipality's essential resources. Among others, these include:

- Food stocks
- Medical resources, such as:
 - trained personnel
 - medications for non-pandemic illnesses
 - hospital beds
 - outpatient facilities
 - locations where makeshift hospitals could be set up
- Drinking water or water purification supplies
- Fuel for vehicles, generators, heating, and other types of equipment
- Communications needs, such as materials and channels, for information dissemination



Pay attention to resources that are produced locally, as well as the people who most depend on resupply to the area. Be prepared to organize and implement programs to mobilize the resources and personnel needed to deal with all impacts of a pandemic, from maintaining calm to managing dead bodies. Tool 15, *Disaster Management in a Pandemic*, can help you identify key areas to be assessed, while Tool 18, *Management of Dead Bodies*, suggests specific supplies you may need for one aspect of preparedness.

Tool 11, *Distribution of Emergency Food During an Influenza Pandemic*, can help you to assess your municipality's food stocks and fill existing gaps through the collection and storage of emergency food rations.

By increasing food availability in your municipality, and improving food access and utilization before a pandemic hits, you can potentially reduce the amount of emergency food assistance needed by your population. Refer to Tool 7, *Food Security in a Pandemic*, for measures to reduce potential food security problems.

Address gaps in household resources using Tool 10, *Household Food Security Preparedness*. This tool will help to raise awareness in your community about clear steps that households can take to maintain their access to food, income, and trading opportunities—before and during the pandemic. Neighborhood and community groups can help to fill any gaps that may exist if municipal sectors are overwhelmed. To familiarize yourself with what is required to organize these groups, use Tool 17, *Volunteer Coordination*.

Tool 15, *Disaster Management in a Pandemic*, and Tool 16, *Maintenance of Essential Services*, can help you to assess your healthcare and other needed resources. Tool 3, *Pandemic Health Impact Projection Tool* and Tool 5, *Triage: Prioritizing Care to Reduce Deaths*, will help your health sector in assessing resources needed to provide care to pandemic and non-pandemic patients. Use Tool 6, *Training for Community Health Responders (Sections I–III)*, to increase your capacity to provide household care and assistance.

Make sure to be prepared as to how you will get critical information to and from the people of your municipality during a time of crisis. Use Tools 12–14, in the section on *Crisis and Emergency Risk Communications* to help you advance all of your initiatives by communicating effectively with the community.

ASSESS RESOURCES—IMMEDIATE ACTIONS

1. Organize a planning and response team.
2. Stay informed. Make sure that you and your team understand your country's national pandemic plan, including communications guidance, and the potential impact of a pandemic on your municipality.
3. Assess the expected health impact and your available resources.
4. Assess your municipality's areas of vulnerability in terms of health and food security.
5. Conduct an inventory of food and other resources.
6. Determine the status of supply chains.
7. Address the gaps in your municipality's preparedness that you and your team have uncovered.
8. Identify spokespeople and channels for communicating with your community.



RESPONSE: WHAT YOU CAN DO DURING THE PANDEMIC

UPDATE YOUR INFORMATION

Find out what the World Health Organization and your government are saying about the influenza pandemic and their efforts to help. See the *Resources* section for trusted websites.

Gain a clear understanding of how the disease is affecting your municipality in sectors such as health, water, food, and governance. Use the most current information to recalculate your impact projections.

Determine the health status of your population, and estimate the likely impact of the pandemic as it evolves. Intensify your efforts to train all the health responders your municipality will need. For more information, see Tool 3, *Pandemic Health Impact Projection Tool*; Tool 2, *Presentation on the Threat of a Severe Influenza Pandemic*; Tool 6, *Training for Community Health Responders* (Sessions I-III); and Tool 17, *Volunteer Coordination*.

Use the news media and other communications channels to request the public's cooperation in keeping the municipality informed about neighborhood conditions. For more information, see Tool 14, *News Media Communication*.

Reassess the condition of the most vulnerable populations in your municipality, and verify the status of their sources of food and income as well as your community's stored emergency food stocks. For more information, see Tool 9, *Identification of People Most at Risk of Food Insecurity*, and Tool 11, *Distribution of Emergency Food During an Influenza Pandemic*.

UPDATE INFORMATION—IMMEDIATE ACTIONS

1. Check your national and international information sources for up-to-date information.
2. Make sure that all responders receive training on the threat of the influenza pandemic.
3. Convene your disaster response team, and ask for sector-specific updates.
4. Reassess the populations most at risk in your municipality based on updated information.
5. Update your inventory of food and other resources.
6. Assess the health status of your population and the municipality's capacity to continue providing access to healthcare for both pandemic and non-pandemic illnesses.
7. Facilitate two-way communications with your community in order to keep track of local conditions.

IMPLEMENT YOUR PANDEMIC RESPONSE PLANS

When disasters of any kind strike, the ability of a municipality to respond well is often linked to two factors: (1) the presence of strong leadership and (2) the level of coordination among the various responding sectors. The same is true in the case of a pandemic.

Whether it is the mayor, a municipal leadership team, or the head of a disaster response team, it is important to clearly identify who is in charge and who has the authority to allocate resources and make policy decisions that will affect the lives of the people in your municipality.

Use Tool 15, *Disaster Management in a Pandemic*, to guide your response planning.

Once the pandemic begins to impact your municipality, you and your disaster response team will need to focus on accomplishing the following *goals simultaneously*.

IMPLEMENT PLANS—IMMEDIATE ACTIONS

1. Open an emergency operations center.
2. Convene your disaster response team.
3. Activate all personnel with sector responsibilities.
4. Review Tool 15, *Disaster Management in a Pandemic*.
5. Provide, as needed, emergency pandemic training to the representatives of each of your municipality's sectors.

LIMIT THE SPREAD OF THE DISEASE

The key to getting through a pandemic is to limit the spread of the illness in your own municipality. Tool 4, *Non-Pharmaceutical Interventions (NPIs): Actions to Limit the Spread of the Pandemic in Your Municipality*, will provide guidance on how, when and why to do this.

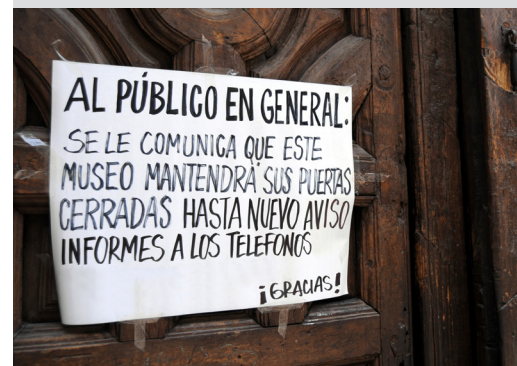
The Spanish Influenza pandemic in 1918 proved that there are actions municipalities can take early on to significantly reduce the number of deaths and the negative social and economic impacts of a pandemic. The measures needed to reduce the spread of the illness can, however, result in inconveniences to many and great hardships for some.

Some disasters are accompanied by outbreaks of communicable diseases. In the case of an influenza pandemic, the illness itself is the disaster.

Health officials who work at the national level in your country and in your municipality should advise you on how to best protect your population and prevent the spread of communicable diseases in your area. Protecting your population and preventing the spread of influenza and other communicable diseases will involve educating the public on how to avoid getting sick. However, it may also require the institution of public policies to help keep people away from each other to further limit the spread of the disease. These may include social distancing policies, such as:

- closing schools for several weeks;
- cancelling public gatherings and meetings;
- requiring sick people to stay at home (isolation); and
- requiring those who may have been exposed to the illness to stay away from people (quarantine) until it is determined whether they have the illness.

Although you will not need to know the scientific basis for taking these public health measures, you *will* need—as an executive leader or member of your municipal governing body—to be able to support others in carrying out these measures effectively. To do this, you may need additional law enforcement personnel.



LIMIT THE SPREAD—IMMEDIATE ACTIONS

1. Review the various non-pharmaceutical interventions available to you (Tool 4, *Non-Pharmaceutical Interventions (NPIs): Actions to Limit the Spread of the Pandemic in Your Municipality*) and determine which of these you will need to implement in your municipality.
2. Provide information to the public to explain why social distancing is needed. Include in this information instructions for how the public can practice social distancing.
3. Enact any legislation or policies necessary to prevent public gatherings and events, to close schools and, if needed, to enforce isolation and quarantine.
4. Ensure that household isolation and quarantine measures are carried out.
5. Plan for a way to distribute food and other goods directly to families and individuals to prevent people from gathering around distribution points.

KEEP THE GOVERNMENT RUNNING

An influenza pandemic will have a devastating impact on your municipality's workforce. It will affect the workers who need to continue providing *essential services* to the people of your municipality, including those who (1) work in sanitation and waste disposal, (2) maintain the potable water supply for your municipality, (3) maintain your gas and electric services, and (4) transport goods. They will either be sick, unable to go to work due to disruptions in transportation systems, or unwilling to go to work due to fear of contracting the disease.

Poor sanitation and/or a lack of clean water will lead to other serious diseases (such as malaria, Chagas disease, dengue, and cholera). These diseases can cause as many deaths as influenza itself, and possibly more. Power outages could impact safe food storage, causing large amounts of food in the municipality to go bad. Service outages could also impact the ability of people to cook food safely.

When a pandemic hits, more people than ever will need healthcare services, yet fewer healthcare personnel than ever will be available to take care of them. In fact, at the peak of the pandemic, you will experience up to 40% of all workers unable to work, either because they are sick, because they are caring for a family member who is sick, or because they are afraid to come to work.

These same factors will result in high rates of worker absenteeism across all the sectors as well as delays or interruptions in the delivery of supplies to your municipality. You will need to secure and protect critical goods, and ensure the continuation of essential services. Your challenge will be to identify those services that *must be* continued, even at the height of the pandemic. See Tool 16, *Maintenance of Essential Services*.

KEEP GOVERNMENT RUNNING—IMMEDIATE ACTIONS

1. Ensure that basic services and goods will continue to be provided to people in your municipality.
2. Determine your municipality's need for additional staff to maintain essential services. If you will use volunteers, provide them with the emergency training they need.
3. Identify vulnerabilities in critical goods and services and develop a plan to address these.

After the pandemic is over, those municipalities that were able to keep their public well-informed and willing to support family- and community-level response strategies are very likely to see lower rates of death and suffering.

COMMUNICATE WITH THE PUBLIC TO PREVENT PANIC

When large groups of people are afraid of becoming sick, lack their basic needs, and feel a sense of suffering and despair, they are likely to respond in ways that can cause more panic and even more deaths. A calm and cooperative public, on the other hand, will work with municipal authorities to keep themselves and others in their community as safe as possible. Effective communications are crucial to keeping the public calm and aware of the actions they should be taking.

To keep the people of your municipality calm, you will need to understand—before the pandemic—the specific challenges that your population will face and how to best communicate with them during a time of crisis. Knowing this ahead of time will also help you develop a plan for how you will get information to households during a pandemic or other disaster—a successful plan will help you save lives.

In addition to strong leadership, preventing public panic will require anticipating the negative behaviors that some residents are likely to demonstrate (such as stealing and looting).

Finally, to help keep the people of your municipality calm, they will need to know that you can ensure their physical safety and that you can protect the key resources and services they need.

PREVENT PANIC—IMMEDIATE ACTIONS

1. Review the *Crisis and Emergency Risk Communications* section, Tools 12–14.
2. Create and plan the dissemination of key messages to the public. These messages will include up-to-date, accurate information about how people can protect themselves, the status of food supplies, and how they can secure access to healthcare services.
3. Be sure to include health messages offering guidance as to what people should do if they get sick and need care.
4. Find ways to give assurance to people in urban areas (who are most likely to see interruptions in the supply chain) that food will soon be as available to them as it is to those in rural areas. Provide them with whatever facts you can to give them the confidence they need to stay where they are.
5. Leverage communications to let people know that essential goods and resources are protected. Effective messages disseminated among the population will help to prevent looting and other acts of hostility or violence.



HELP FAMILIES MEET THEIR FOOD AND NUTRITION NEEDS

The global health impact of a pandemic may create a cascading effect on workforces, transportation systems, and supply chains. This impact in other areas of the world may result in your municipality experiencing a food crisis even before the influenza virus causes severe health problems. See Tool 7, *Food Security in a Pandemic*, for an overview of the potential impacts on municipal food supplies and ways to address them.

Once the pandemic arrives, you can help reduce possible food emergencies by monitoring food security at the local level. To best protect the community you will want to immediately update information about vulnerable populations and current food stocks. Use Tool 9, *Identification of People Most at Risk of Food Insecurity*.

If you determine that you need additional food stocks, work with private sector providers and any humanitarian agencies present in the municipality to secure essential nutritious food for emergency distribution. Use Tool 11, *Distribution of Emergency Food During an Influenza Pandemic*.

History shows that famine has occurred when a significant amount of food is committed for sale outside a region that is experiencing shortages. Restricting the export of locally produced foods is a measure that must be taken if local populations are suffering from hunger. Households may have less money to purchase food due to work absenteeism or illness. If food prices drastically increase, many staple food items may be out of reach for poor and newly vulnerable groups. Implementing price freezes on *staple* and *nutritious* food items important to local diets can help to keep food accessible during a pandemic wave.

An important component of maintaining municipal food security will be to help households help themselves. Use all available communication channels to spread the critical messages below that will help to protect household food security and livelihoods. Tool 10, *Household Food Security Preparedness* offers detailed guidance.

FOOD

- Eat food that will spoil first, for example, fresh vegetables and meat.
- If you have a lot of fresh food on hand, use traditional food preservation methods to prevent this food from spoiling.
- Try to regulate the food you eat each day so that what you have on hand will last 6–12 weeks, but do not threaten daily nutritional needs of any family member.
- Organize exchanges among neighbors using social distancing measures so that you are able to increase the variety of foods you eat.
- Do not hoard more food than your household needs. Hoarding puts other households at risk of hunger and suffering.

WATER

- Collect and store water in covered containers in case water supplies become scarce.
- Do not store water in containers that have been used to store nonfood products.
- Buy household bleach, purification tablets, or iodine so that you can purify water if your sources become contaminated.

MONEY

- Only spend cash on items that are absolutely necessary to keep your household healthy for 6–12 weeks. Food, water, cooking fuel, and medical supplies are priorities.



HELP FAMILIES MEET THEIR FOOD AND NUTRITION NEEDS— IMMEDIATE ACTIONS

1. If food supplies are limited in the municipality:
 - Communicate to central government and key organizations in the area your need for assistance.
 - Engage local food producing and processing industries.
 - Restrict the export of locally produced food crops necessary to feed the people in the municipality.
2. Provide transportation support that allows producers to get products to market or community food warehouses.
3. Implement price freezes on staple and nutritious food items if prices increase enough to be unaffordable to people on limited incomes.
4. Distribute emergency food rations once the pandemic has impacted households' ability to obtain enough food to meet their daily needs.
 - Prioritize who will receive food transfers based on your updated assessment.
 - Establish small decentralized drop off points or home deliveries.
5. Use Tools 12–14 on *Crisis and Emergency Risk Communications* to help spread critical messages that will help protect food security and livelihoods.

ALLOCATE SCARCE RESOURCES

During a pandemic, you can expect many basic goods and resources to be in short supply. Deciding how to best allocate goods and resources will require a strong leader or municipal leadership team with the authority to make very difficult decisions.

In many areas, the supply of basic goods, resources, and services simply will not be sufficient to meet the needs of your population. For example, your municipality may face shortages in:

- the number of doctors and nurses who are available to help;
- medical supplies (first aid and prescription and non-prescription medications);
- food; and
- gasoline and utilities.

Although these shortages will affect your municipality at the family and individual level, they will also have an impact on the workers who are responsible for *responding* during the disaster.

Initially, most leaders tend to think of the people who are sick as those who need resources the most. However, the indirect effects of the pandemic on all sectors of your municipality will make it critical for you to also consider those who are responsible for bringing needed goods and services to the people of your municipality.

Example: You receive one shipment of food, potable water, antiviral medications, or gasoline. You will need to guide your distribution according to set priorities, so that these can be used to support the well-being of the entire municipality and reduce the number of deaths. This means that, in addition to making sure that patients receive the care they need, workers or volunteers who provide support to families, or whose jobs or activities are considered essential to the functioning of your municipality, also receive priority. These workers and volunteers include those who provide law enforcement and other public safety functions, the utility workers who keep electricity running, and the information technology experts who keep the computers working. (See Tool 16, Maintenance of Essential Services.)

You will need to work with all of the sectors in your municipality to develop a list of personnel to have priority for available resources. Then, you will need to prioritize who, among them, will receive the available resources when there is not enough for even the most essential workers. You or your municipal leadership team will need to accomplish all of this in a way that the public can understand and accept. Use Tool 12, *Fundamentals of Communication During Crises and Emergencies*, to guide you in delivering this information in an understandable and timely manner. By communicating effectively, you will also help to ensure a calm and supportive public.

To help maximize the use of scarce health resources and assist your health sector in planning for the care of the many people who will be sick and dying, turn to Tool 5, *Triage: Prioritizing Care to Reduce Deaths* and Tool 6, *Training for Community Health Responders (Sessions I-III)*.

ALLOCATE SCARCE RESOURCES—IMMEDIATE ACTIONS

1. Develop policies and a process to prioritize the distribution of essential goods and services across all sectors.
2. Task your health sector with clinical triage and establish a plan for continued access to healthcare services at the family and community level.
3. Regularly monitor vulnerable families and individuals.
4. Communicate with local business leaders and networks of families (without congregating them) to determine which business activities generate the goods and services needed by others, and to determine who can loan cash, fuel, and other goods.

RECOVERY: WHAT YOU CAN DO AFTER THE PANDEMIC

GET LIFE AND COMMERCE BACK TO NORMAL

Once the pandemic is over, recovery efforts will be needed to bring life and commerce back to normal as soon as possible.

The recovery period of a pandemic helps communities strengthen and sustain all of the efforts that were undertaken during the preparedness and response stages. However, you may find that people in your municipality are reluctant to resume their usual activities. Parents may fear sending their children back to school, particularly to those that may have served as makeshift hospitals. People may still worry about close contact with others. Having your communications staff or volunteers work with the health sector on messages that can promote recovery can help you move forward during this phase.

After several severe pandemic waves, the tendency may be to analyze the situation simply in terms of needs and deficiencies, because both will certainly be immense. Yet a municipality must rely on an inventory of remaining assets and capacities if it is to find the power to regenerate itself. Initially, communities should determine what they can do immediately, without external assistance, using all existing skills, resources, and technical experience. Some recovery efforts may require more resources than a municipality has available. The team must then be prepared to communicate the priorities of the municipality to national and regional government, international agencies, and other sources of external support as soon as assistance becomes available.

Depending on the severity of impact, recovery operations may be implemented over a longer period—from soon after the pandemic is over, until one or two years later. (See Tool 19, *Recovery and Resilience*.)

RECOVERY—IMMEDIATE ACTIONS

1. Ask your health sector representatives to inform you when it is safe to resume normal activities. Have your communications sector prepare public messages.
2. Keep the public updated on all aspects of the pandemic and encourage them to resume activities when it is safe to do so.
3. Reestablish a sense of security. Reduce public fear and levels of grief.
4. Continue surveillance of the most vulnerable part of your population.
5. Strengthen and sustain relief activities. Help the groups of people that have been most affected by the pandemic to obtain short-term income and basic items such as water, food, shelter, medicines, and clothing.
6. Provide the necessary support to rebuild or to strengthen the capacity of your healthcare system.
7. Provide local preparedness and response training for future pandemic waves or other disasters.
8. Improve on pre-disaster living conditions and overall well-being.

