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COVID-19 Response

The following guidelines are subject to change, pending updated guidance from public health and governmental agencies

PHASES TWO & THREE

- PART 2 Guidelines for the Resumption of Parish Ministries – Phases II and III
- PART 3 Guidelines for the Resumption of Parish Operations



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PART 2

Guidelines for the Resumption of Parish Ministries – Phases II and III

- I. Overview
- II. General Directives – Phases II and III
- III. Ministry Risk Profile Tool- Phases II and III
- IV. Scoring of Risk Profile – Phases II and III
- V. Monitoring Conditions in the Community

I. Overview

In response to the State of Maryland's three-stage recovery plan addressing the COVID-19 pandemic, the Archdiocese of Baltimore established a three-phase recovery plan specific to parish operations. For purposes of this guidance document, the **Resumption of Parish Ministries**, the objective is to have parishes move into each respective phase simultaneously, or as closely as possible, at the same time the State and respective location jurisdictions move through each stage of the State plan. It is anticipated that some parishes will not be prepared to progress through the phases at exactly the same rate as the State will progress through its stages. It is more important that a parish move into the progression of the Archdiocesan phases only as the parish is prepared to do so. However, in no case should a parish progress through the Archdiocesan phase in advance of the State or local jurisdiction progressing to the next respective stage of reopening.

During the period of stay-at-home orders, a few essential ministries, such as food pantries, are permitted to operate with the implementation of safety precautions, including adherence to physical distancing requirements and the use of personal protective equipment (PPEs). After the Governor lifted the statewide stay-at-home order, some local jurisdictions followed the Governor's lead, while others maintained local stay-at-home orders. As jurisdictions either followed the Governor's order, or eventually lift their respective orders, each jurisdiction moves into Stage 1 of the State Recovery plan. As each jurisdiction migrates into Stage 1 of the State plan, parishes, if prepared, are allowed to move into Phase I of the Archdiocesan plan following the Guidelines for the Resumption of Parish Ministries COVID-19 Recovery.

In Phase I of the plan, parishes are to continue to operate ministries virtually. The two exceptions allowing for in-person gatherings in Phase I include "personal meetings" and "small group gatherings" up to the state-mandated crowd limit.

II. General Directives

As each ministry begins the process of in-person activities and meetings, it is imperative that the ministry leadership and parish ensure all Federal, State and local health and regulatory guidance is adhered to in order to ensure the in-person meetings and activities are conducted in compliance with the respective guidance. This includes but is not limited to the number of participants, use of personal protection equipment, personal hygiene and overall sanitation of the facilities where the in-person activities will be held.

As a parish moves into Phase II of the parish plan and until further notice, it is critical that each ministry have in place the administrative practice of taking attendance and maintaining the list of attendees for no less than 60 days after the date of the meeting or event. This measure is required in the event there is an exposure of the COVID-19 at one of the activities and thereby requiring the location to work with local health officials for contact tracing.

III. Ministry Risk Profile Tool

This document has been prepared to provide guidance to parishes on how to proceed into Phase II and eventually on to Phase III of the Archdiocesan plan for reopening of parish ministries. The core of this guidance document is a **Ministry Risk Profile Tool** which uses a risk matrix scoring system to evaluate each ministry to determine whether that ministry is to resume during Phase II or Phase III of the Archdiocesan recovery plan. A copy of the Ministry Risk Profile Tool is included with this document as an appendix. This tool will also be made available online as an Excel file to allow for ease of use by parishes.

Given the variety of ministries along with the unique characteristic of each ministry, it is not practical to attempt to take all ministries and unilaterally place them in either Phase II or Phase III for implementation without having an appreciable understanding of the ministry. Also, a parish ministry in Parish A, while having the same or similar ministry name, may function and operate very differently at Parish B. It is for this reason a Ministry Risk Profile Tool has been created. The tool is comprised of eight risk factors. Each of these risk factors is then scored for the particular ministry on a rating system ranging from low-risk (0) to high-risk (3).

The eight risk factors are as follows: age of participants, duration of the activity, number of participants, venue of the activity, nature of the activity, management of the ministry, travel requirements and participant demographics. For each of these risk factors, there is a brief statement of presumption for each. As an example, the presumption for age is the younger the participants, the less likely those involved will be able to adhere to social distancing and personal protection equipment requirements. For this reason, the younger the age group involved, the higher the risk presented by this ministry.

As for conducting the risk assessment of each ministry, each parish should establish a consistent and objective process to ensure all ministries are evaluated fairly and given the same level of consideration through the evaluation process. It is suggested that no less than two individuals complete the evaluations, although, if available, having additional individuals evaluating ministries would be beneficial. The process can either be conducted where each evaluator does a review independently and then all evaluators work together to reach a consensus. Or the evaluation can be done as a group assessment with the evaluators coming to an agreement on the ratings and completing one risk assessment form.

Once those completing the tool for each ministry have come to an agreement on scoring of each of the eight risk profile characteristics, then it is simply a matter of totaling the score. Now that a total score has been established by the reviewers, it is time to take that score and evaluate where the ministry falls within the established risk matrix guidelines.

While this Ministry Risk Profile Tool has been developed to allow parishes to evaluate ministries on a comprehensive basis, this tool can also be used to evaluate single events or activities

IV. Scoring of Ministry Risk Profile Tool

The scoring of a ministry risk profile can run from 0, representing the lowest-risk ministry up to a score of 24, representing the highest-risk ministry. Again, the risk consideration for this assessment is relative to the possible exposure to and spreading of the virus resulting from the resumption of a particular ministry.

As a reminder, a parish may determine it is not ready to proceed to the next Phase when announced by the State. The parish can elect to delay moving forward with restarting ministries. However, parishes should not move ahead of the State process of entering future phases of the recovery program before the State or local jurisdiction has initiated the corresponding phase.

As a parish evaluates the scores, use the table below to determine in which Phase of the parish recovery plan a ministry may resume, at the earliest, based upon the risk profile score for that ministry.

Archdiocese of Baltimore Ministry Risk Profile Risk Assessment Scoring Matrix	
Ministry Risk Profile Score	State Recovery Stage for Reinstatement
0-7	Ministry can occur simultaneously with State or local jurisdiction moving into Stage 1
8-10	Ministry can occur simultaneously with State or local jurisdiction moving into Stage 2
11-13	Ministry can begin two weeks after State or local jurisdiction moving to Stage 2
14-15	Ministry can begin four weeks after State or local jurisdiction moving to Stage 2
16-18	Ministry can begin simultaneously with State or local jurisdiction moving to Stage 3
19-21	Ministry can begin two weeks after State or local jurisdiction moving to Stage 3
22-24	Ministry can begin four weeks after State or local jurisdiction moving to Stage 3

After the parish has completed the risk assessment tool and scoring of each ministry, the parish is to then notify the leadership of each ministry, advise them how to determine which Phase of the parish recovery plan each ministry can resume. It is critical once this determination is made that the ministry leadership begin to make the necessary arrangements in order to ensure the ministry can be carried out in a safe and healthy manner through adhering to all Federal, State and local governmental and health guidance. Lastly, if the response to COVID-19 is altered moving into the future, it may be necessary to return to this document and revise the guidance as currently provided.

V. Monitoring Conditions in the Community

As previously stated in the Phase I guidance document, it is important that as parishes work through the process of returning ministries to in-person meetings and activities, whether that be in Stage 2 or Stage 3 of the State’s recovery plan, the parish must closely monitor the community at-large. Considerations such as an outbreak at a business in town, the community hospital operating at full capacity or the lack of basic needs being met in a community, may necessitate a parish needing to temporarily suspend a ministry previously authorized to move forward or to delay the resumption of some ministries in a future phase until such time as the community has reached an improved level of recovery.



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PART 3

Guidelines for the Resumption of Parish Operations

- I. Overview
- II. General Directives – Phases II and III
- III. Review, Assessment and Application of Primary Objectives
- IV. Monitoring Conditions in the Community

I. I. Overview

In response to the State of Maryland's three-stage recovery plan addressing the COVID-19 pandemic, the Archdiocese of Baltimore established a three-phase recovery plan specific to parish operations. For purposes of this guidance document, the **Resumption of Parish Operations**, the objective is to align the timing at which parishes move into each respective Archdiocesan phase as closely as possible to the timing at which State and respective local jurisdictions move through each stage of the State plan. It is anticipated that some parishes will not be prepared to progress through the Archdiocesan phases at exactly the same rate as the State will progress through its stages. It is more important that a parish move into the progression of the Archdiocesan phases only as the parish is prepared to do so. However, in no case should a parish progress through the Archdiocesan phase in advance of the State or local jurisdiction progressing to the next respective stage of reopening.

The Guidelines for the Resumption of Parish Operations Phase I was an extensive packet of materials designed to serve two primary functions. First, the document provided guidance on immediate steps to take to properly resume adequate operations during Phase I, including the continuation of minimal operations as was allowed under the Governor's stay-at-home order, as well as to expand administrative support for conducting the sacramental and liturgical activities called for under the Sacramental and Liturgical Guidance issued by the Archdiocese for Phase I. Secondly, the document provided extensive guidance to parishes on steps to complete in order to lead the parish through administrative preparations in anticipation of the additional phases of the recovery plan.

The administrative guidance for preparing a parish to move through the additional phases of recovery was divided into ensuring three primary objectives were addressed. The three objectives are as follows:

- Establishing policies and procedures specific to the parish that address modifications or changes in work processes and office layout necessary to limit the potential spread of the virus;
- Returning facility systems and equipment to full function; and
- Addressing the timing and readiness of the associates abilities and willingness to return to an in-person status to conduct their job duties.

II. General Directives

This administrative guidance document for Phases 2 and 3 has been designed largely to serve as a compliance checklist. It is hoped that each parish carefully evaluated the guidance provided in the Phase I guidance document and has established a strong administrative foundation from which the parish can continue to expand its reach. Implementation of the protocols may change over time, including times when parishes may need to slow progress or even roll back certain actions if either within the parish or within the greater community there is a spike in the number of COVID-19 cases.

It is advised the parish review the protocols as detailed in the Phase I Guidance Document and establish a plan for continued implementation based on its unique circumstances. Please consult an Archdiocesan representative should help be needed in this important process or send an inquiry to riskmanagement@archbalt.org.

III. Review, Assessment and Application of Primary Objectives

Prior to advancing further into the recovery process, each parish must do an objective self-assessment to ensure it is meeting the foundational activities of completing minimal operations and supporting the resumed level of liturgical and sacramental activity of the parish as called for in the Phase I Liturgical and Sacramental Guidance document. If there are gaps in operational support, the parish needs to address those gaps. Once the parish has reached the necessary level of operations to meet the requirements of Phase I guidance documents, it is time for the parish to move forward to Phase II and then ultimately Phase III.

As part of this guidance document, there are three checklists which each parish is to complete; these relate to the three major objectives parishes were to address and prepare for in order to move forward in the recovery process. These essential objectives are as follow:

- Establishing Modified Policies and Procedures
- Preparing the Facilities
- Staffing Considerations

As the parish completes these checklists, the responses must include consideration for the level of adherence to guidance issued by Federal, State and local health authorities regarding appropriate and safe levels of staffing, occupancy and other best practices. To ensure the parish is following up-to-date guidance, each parish needs to regularly review guidance issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Maryland State Department of Health and local county health departments. As guidance from these agencies changes, whether this be new practices, relaxation of existing practices or discontinuance of practices, it is the parish's responsibility to remain current with such guidance and practices.

As the result of completing the checklist, if a parish is compliant with each of the enumerated guidance items, the parish is prepared to move forward in the re-opening process if allowed by the State and the parish's local jurisdiction. Parishes must remain cautious and move carefully through the process of reopening. If a parish determines there are key considerations for its plan that have not been addressed, the parish is to address those items prior to moving forward.

IV. Monitoring Conditions in the Community

In closing, it is extremely important that as parishes work through the process of returning to parish operations, whether that be in Stage 2 or Stage 3 of the State's recovery plan, the parish must closely monitor the community at-large. Considerations such as an outbreak at a business in town, the community hospital operating at full capacity or the lack of basic needs being met in a community, may necessitate a parish needing to temporarily reduce operations from levels previously authorized or to delay the planned expansion of parish operations until such time as the community has reached an improved level of recovery.



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