

Religious Services Guidelines to Maximize Public Health and Economic Reactivation

(from Utah Leads Together 2.0 Phased Guidelines Version 4.8)

- Seating arrangements should be made such that a 6-foot distance is maintained between each household group
- Limit the number of people in a confined area to enable adequate 6-foot distancing at all times between each household group
- See Appendix B for additional considerations
- Places of worship consider filling each seat or standing space as long as:
 - o physical distancing is still promoted and maintained wherever feasible at the venue
 - o face coverings are worn by individuals when physical distancing is not feasible
 - o attendance is tracked and seating assignments, or designated sitting/standing areas, are utilized to assist with contact tracing efforts
 - o extra hygiene and sanitization practices in place, for example:
- Dedicated individuals for sanitizing high-touch areas

Appendix B: Considerations for Faith Groups Returning to In-Person Religious Services

Governor Herbert recognizes the importance of faith groups during these difficult times. Under the Orange (Moderate Risk) and Yellow (Low Risk) Utah COVID-19 Health Risk Status Phased Guidelines, faith groups are able to hold in-person religious services of any size as long as a distance of at least six feet is maintained between household groups. This six-foot distance requirement is the only limit imposed by the Phased Guidelines on the number of people permitted to participate in an in-person religious service.

The following are provided as considerations for faith groups and individuals returning to in-person religious services. These considerations were prepared in consultation with a working group of faith leaders representing the rich diversity of faiths in Utah. These considerations are also consistent with ongoing messaging from the Utah Department of Health and are consistent with the best available medical science.

These considerations are not binding on any faith group and should not be construed as an attempt to regulate religious practices. They are provided as information so that individuals can make decisions to protect themselves and others from COVID-19. Each faith group will decide for itself when to resume in-person religious services.

- Consideration for higher-risk individuals:
 - o Limit participation in any in-person gatherings, including religious services, of any number of people outside your household group.
 - o Higher-risk individuals include:
 - Older adults as defined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention here
 - People of any age with the following conditions are at increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19:
 - Chronic kidney disease
 - COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease)
 - Immunocompromised state (weakened immune system) from solid organ transplant
 - Obesity (body mass index [BMI] of 30 or higher)

- Serious heart conditions, such as heart failure, coronary artery disease, or cardiomyopathies
- Sickle cell disease
- Type 2 diabetes mellitus
- Children who are medically complex, who have neurologic, genetic, metabolic conditions, or who have congenital heart disease
- Considerations for all individuals participating in an in-person religious service:
 - o Wear a face covering when you cannot maintain a distance of six feet from other individuals from a different household.
 - o Do not shake hands with, or otherwise touch, an individual who is not a member of your household group.
 - o Avoid high-touch surfaces.
 - o Disinfect high-touch surfaces frequently.
 - o Wash your hands frequently.
 - o Wear a face mask and perform hand hygiene when preparing food to be consumed by individuals from a different household.
 - o Avoid group meals that are not part of the religious service.
- Considerations for faith group leaders organizing an in-person religious service:
 - o Implement measures to prevent individuals from congregating in lobbies or meeting areas where a 6-foot distance between household groups is difficult to maintain.
 - o Post signage to remind individuals to maintain physical distancing when in common areas.
 - o Set an established window of time or provide separate entrances for higher-risk individuals to enter and exit without pressure from crowds.
 - o Provide multiple meeting schedules to accommodate smaller gatherings where physical distancing guidelines can be followed.
 - o Provide streamed services to households that prefer to participate virtually.