

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**#19-17**

**PROTECTING OUR COMMUNITIES: AN EMERGENCY PLANNING WORKSHOP  
FOR FAITH LEADERS**

*FEMA Region II, NYC Emergency Management and the NYC Center for Faith and Community Partnerships hosted an emergency planning workshop for faith leaders at Brooklyn Borough Hall*

On Tuesday, April 4, 2017, FEMA Region II, the NYC Emergency Management Department and the NYC Center for Faith and Community Partnerships hosted over 100 New York City faith leaders during a day-long emergency planning workshop to give community leaders a better understanding of the government resources available to them. Speakers of the event included NYC Emergency Management Commissioner Joseph Esposito, Center for Faith and Community Partnerships Executive Director Jonathan Soto, FEMA Acting Regional Administrator Michael Byrne, Department of Homeland Security Center for Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships Reverend Jamie Johnson, and FEMA Region II Branch Supervisor Terry Winters.

“We turn to our houses of worship and our faith leaders in times of emergency, so it’s critical for our faith institutions and communities to be ready,” **said NYC Emergency Management Commissioner Joseph Esposito**. “Emergencies large and small start and end at the community level, and by working together we can help ensure New Yorkers are prepared for unexpected hazards.”

The workshop included a panel discussion titled *Faith Leaders’ Role in Emergencies*, which focused on the challenges of providing a welcoming and inclusive environment while also prioritizing the safety and protection of congregants. Panelists for this discussion included Kavita Pawria-Sanchez, Assistant Commissioner for the Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs, Reverend Brady Funn III from the Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies and David Pollock from the Jewish Community Relations Council. Building upon this theme Dr. Debbie Almontaser from the Muslim Community Network spoke on the role of faith leaders in mobilizing communities to prepare for emergencies.

The faith leaders also participated in an interactive exercise to create a community emergency plan using the [Community Emergency Planning Toolkit](#).

The workshop also included training in how to prepare for and respond to an active shooter emergency. Joe Tardick, Protective Security Advisor for the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, guided the room on basic steps in preparing faith institutions for security threats. Then, NYPD Detective Juan Maldonado presented on best practices in preparing for active shooter incidents – such as stocking buildings with medical triage kits, identifying parishioners with law enforcement or medical triage backgrounds, and training staff on the run, hide, fight method for surviving active shooter events. FEMA Region II Branch Supervisor Terry Winters closed the

event by leading participants through an active shooter exercise that allowed leaders to practice decision-making to improve their responses to a hypothetical emergency.

For more information on resources available to faith and community groups visit:

[NYC.gov/EmergencyManagement](http://NYC.gov/EmergencyManagement) and [READY.gov](http://READY.gov)

-30-

**MEDIA CONTACT:** Nancy Silvestri/Justin Bennett (718) 422-4888

**STAY CONNECTED:** Twitter: @NotifyNYC (emergency notifications)  
@nycoem (emergency preparedness info)  
Facebook: /NYCemergencymanagement