

WES Reopening Plan

Fall 2021

(Updated October 24, 2021)

WES VALUES

The WES Reopening Plan is grounded in our ethical values and our commitment to not leave our most vulnerable members of our community behind. We do not want to make them choose between their safety and their community. Our return to in-person operations has been gradual and informed by scientific data as well as our values. It is our goal to at a minimum meet, and regularly exceed, CDC and local guidelines as we look out for one another and for those who may be more vulnerable than ourselves.

We plan to maintain the accessibility of online activities. Some members Zoom in to Platform and to their Deepening Circles and other activities from very far away or prefer to log in from home due to mobility concerns. We value these members and want to make sure WES continues to be a home for them.

OVERVIEW

As of October 24, 2021, the DC metro area is currently in the High transmission risk level and trending towards the Medium transmission risk level. However, given what we know now about the effectiveness of universal masking and the impact of vaccinations, we are modifying our reopening plan to more closely reflect the [recent guidance from the Unitarian Universalist Association](#) (UUA).

WES also continues to rely on the [COVID Act Now website information for the Washington, D.C. metro area](#) to guide our plans (more on COVID Act Now below). In particular, we are tracking the number of daily new cases per 100,000, the infection rate, and the positive test rate for the D.C. metro area.*

For the current risk level (High), WES will be using the following guidelines:

1. INDOOR GATHERINGS

We will offer indoor gatherings, for small (up to 15 people) and medium (16 to 50 people) sized groups of vaccine eligible people, with well-fitted masks, physical distancing of at least 6 feet between members of different households, reduced room occupancy, air purification, no singing, and no food or drinks.

a. EXAMPLE: SUNDAY PLATFORM

We are moving towards offering a hybrid platform experience on Sunday mornings as technology comes online and additional volunteers join the team. We will have a reservations system in place to allow for equity in attendance and social distancing in the WES building.

b. EXAMPLE: SMALL CLOSED GROUP (I.E. DEEPENING CIRCLE GROUP)

A **small, closed group** is a group of 15 or fewer participants with consistent, stable membership. Closed groups are not advertised as being open for drop-in. While new participants may be added to closed groups from time to time, this would be by prior arrangement and would not be spontaneous. Closed groups are a special case because the participants will be familiar with each other and the necessary mechanics of contact tracing, because the participants will have built trust to care for one another and therefore will report symptoms and stay home in the case of any sign of illness, and because these groups are small and any exposure would be limited to a few people. Even with these caveats, closed groups should exercise caution and consideration, and should not meet in person if any of their members are uncomfortable with the COVID risks.

c. EXAMPLE: SMALL OPEN GROUP (I.E. BIOLOGY READING GROUP)

Small open groups are advertised to allow for new participants to drop in. Group leaders should take steps to collect contact information from all participants to allow for contact tracing as needed.

2. OUTDOOR GATHERINGS

We will require well-fitted masks at all large outdoor events (more than 50 people), and for any outdoor event where unvaccinated children or other vulnerable people are included. Masks are welcome to be worn at any outdoor event.

Food and beverages are permitted at outdoor events, but care should be taken to reduce crowding around serving areas and to provide spaces for social distancing during eating and drinking. Serving strategies should take special care for food safety, such as requiring covers over food, using hand sanitizer or hand washing before and after serving, using tongs and/or gloves, and placing food containers on clean surfaces. Food that is prepared with pre-set portions is preferable to communal dishes. Contributors of shared dishes must assist with clean up and taking away of leftovers. Although not required, WES recommends "bring your own" style events, rather than sharing communal food.

3. GROUP SIZE DEFINITIONS

Small Gathering: 15 or fewer people

Medium Gathering: 16 - 50 people

Large Gathering: more than 50 people

4. SEEK AND CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES

As most children cannot yet be vaccinated, we may hold SEEK activities and multi-age programs outdoors. If children need to be inside the WES building, we will ensure they are meeting in areas with good ventilation with air purification, masking, physically distancing, and reduced room occupancy.

5. REGISTRATION AND CONTACT TRACING REQUIREMENTS

Attendees will be asked to pre-register for indoor events (including platform), outdoor activities, and SEEK classes. The registration form will ask about individuals' vaccination status. Individuals are not required to be vaccinated to participate in most WES events, but we will be collecting this data on

vaccination status of attendees so we have information about our risk level at our events. Once attendees arrive, they will be asked to sign in for contact tracing purposes.

Next Steps:

When we reach the Medium transmission risk zone, the WES Reopening Taskforce, in conjunction with WES staff and leadership, will evaluate our community risk and suggest modifications at that time. Currently we do not plan to re-introduce food, drink, and singing at indoor events until the DC metro area is in the Low transmission risk level (Green), according to COVID Act Now data.

If the DC metro area returns to the Very High or Severe transmission risk level, WES may need to suspend some in-person gatherings.

About COVID Act Now:

Committed to the use of scientific data in addition to our values, WES will continue to use the information, key metrics and risk levels defined on the COVID Act Now website. An independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit founded by volunteers in March 2020, COVID Act Now works with the Georgetown University Center for Global Health Science and Security, Stanford University Clinical Excellence Research Center, and Harvard Global Health Institute.

*The Washington metro area includes 25 counties in DC, Maryland, Virginia and West Virginia, including District of Columbia (DC), Alexandria Co. (VA), Arlington Co. (VA), Calvert Co. (MD), Charles Co. (MD), Clarke Co (VA), Culpeper Co. (VA), Fairfax Co. (VA), Fairfax City (VA), Falls Church City (VA), Fauquier Co. (VA), Frederick Co. (MD), Fredericksburg City (VA), Jefferson Co. (WV), Loudoun Co. (VA), Madison Co. (VA), Manassas Co. (VA), Manassas Park City (VA), Montgomery Co. (MD), Prince George’s Co. (MD), Prince William Co. (VA), Rappahannock Co. (VA), Spotsylvania Co. (VA), Stafford Co. (VA), Warren Co. (VA).

RISK LEVEL	DAILY NEW CASES (per 100,000)	INFECTION RATE	POSITIVE TEST RATE
SEVERE	Over 75		
VERY HIGH	25 - 75	Over 1.4	Over 20%
HIGH	10 - 25	1.1 - 1.4	10 - 20%
MEDIUM	1 - 10	0.9 - 1.1	3 - 10%
LOW	Under 1	Under 0.9	Under 3%