



THE I.O.U. EMERGENCY RESPONSE FRAMEWORK

Created by Grant Goodman, Associate Director, for Mazon Canada Winter 2021

Intended for internal use and released for transparency

This rapid response framework was developed in December 2021 to aid in effectively mobilizing emergency Omicron funding to areas of greatest need. The framework requires a three-step process for fund disbursement: Identification, Outreach, and Unconditional Support (I.O.U). The guiding intent in developing this IOU framework was to create a transparent and equitable system by which Mazon honours the trust placed in us by our donors and our front-line partners, while rising to the urgent demands of a looming crisis.

IDENTIFICATION:

Even in an emergency, the Identification phase requires that we stop and listen. We need to respond, not just react. Here, we read news coverage, discuss amongst ourselves, and consult with key stakeholders. From these conversations, questions arise and patterns emerge. Put into conversation with Mazon's database of partner program details (which includes methods of service provision, communities served, revenues vs. Expenses, level of reliance on volunteers, food sourcing, and more). From here, we identify potential areas of vulnerability.

Identification phase notes (Omicron):

What Public health measures have been put into effect in the various Provinces and territories? What demographic groups / communities should we conclude are thusly are impacted? What organizations in Mazon's network are serving these groups? If no existing partner is serving a group or community in significant need, who should we be reaching out to?

Key Questions:

Where are restaurants closed?

Organizations that rely heavily on food donations / food rescue from local businesses will likely be facing a budgetary shortfall – particularly the smaller ones with tight revenue over expenditure in 2020. These orgs will be most severely impacted, and are likely not carrying significant cash on hand to fill the gap.

Where are schools closed?

Self explanatory. Support should probably go to organizations with a proven record of quickly adapting their services under remote learning conditions + organizations that serve families and parents (in the absence of paid leave, these families will likely be struggling).

Where are the most prescriptive lockdown orders in effect?

Where are the case counts highest?

Seniors were particularly vulnerable during the first wave of the pandemic. Though most are vaccinated and boosted, we should check in with organizations serving seniors that have previously experienced a surge in demand tied to case count.

OUTREACH:

In the outreach phase, the insights generated in Identification are used to generate a list of high risk communities, regions, or program-types. Organizations are then contacted directly – we ask about what they’re experiencing “on the ground.” We ask “do you need help.”

Outreach should ideally involve three distinct approaches – executed simultaneously.

Approach 1: Directed to longstanding Mazon partners that serve communities / demographics recognized as high-risk in *IDENTIFICATION* phase (assumptive support)

Approach 2: Directed to organizations OUTSIDE of Mazon’s network that provide for communities / demographics recognized as high-risk in *IDENTIFICATION* phase + in regions not served by existing Mazon partners.

Approach 3: Directed to organizations in Mazon’s network serving communities that may be high risk (inconclusive, or floating questions following the investigation in *IDENTIFICATION* phase. Note: The *IDENTIFICATION* phase may involve a limited round of direct outreach, and still leave critical questions unanswered moving into the *OUTREACH* phase proper)

UNCONDITIONAL SUPPORT:

Once information on partner needs has been gathered through the outreach phase, unrestricted support will be rolled out according to greatest need* with limited reporting requirements and no impact on future YTD funding.

*It can be safely assumed that, in a moment of crisis, almost everyone we speak to during the *OUTREACH* phase will be in great need. Heartbreakingly, our resources are finite. As such, it now falls to us to make our best determination of Greatest Need with the information available. Determining greatest need involves reckoning with a swarm of questions, many of them listed below. The answers to each of these questions should be weighed against one another, as well as any other intangible or anecdotal factors unearthed during *OUTREACH*.

Some notes about determining need:

How precarious is the organization’s financial situation? (ex. Say Organization A and Organization B are serving the same at-risk community. The programs offered by these organizations are similar in almost every way, but Organization A is holding two-years funding in reserve whereas Organization B only has enough to cover 2 months. In this instance, priority would be given to Organization B. This scarcity principle should be paramount among the factors considered when determining Greatest Need)

Are the challenges being faced by a given organization remediable financially? (ex. if Organization C is struggling to adapt their drop-in program to a delivery model due to a massive volunteer shortage, an emergency grant from Mazon might not provide meaningful relief.

Where non-financial support can be offered, it should be offered – ex. An email blast to Mazon donors in the program’s city inviting them to volunteer)

Does the organization have a proven track record of adaptation? (eg. Ultimately, the goal of the IOU framework is to provide relief to the communities hit hardest in a crisis. As such, we should consider prioritizing organizations with a proven track record of adapting their services OVER organizations with loose plans adapting their services, and without this relevant experience.