

## COOP Preparedness Educating Personnel



Agency COOP Planning Team

### Do your agency personnel know what to expect and how to react?

As the planning phases of the COOP developmental process nears completion, agency planning teams should begin discussing how to educate their employees on the plan and their responsibilities. The educating or training phase in COOP plan development is a crucial step in ensuring successful plan implementation during a real event.

When planning your strategy for training your agency's personnel, consider the following. COOP training should not address the competencies required for "normal" tasks and operations. The purpose of the training is to prepare agency personnel to institute emergency operations at an alternate facility, to use equipment and procedures and to work with individuals with whom they have little contact during normal day-to-day operations.

The following are some of the major topics to address when educating your agency personnel:

- Definition of COOP
- Essential elements of COOP
- Criteria or "triggers" for a COOP event
- Major operational elements of the specific organization's COOP
- Maintenance of COOP plans

While educating and training your personnel is extremely important, the training format that your agency chooses to utilize can be molded around the intended audience. Depending on how your agency has designated essential functions and essential personnel in its COOP plan, education and training can be designed to address both essential and non-essential personnel. Consideration should be given to cross-training some personnel though. Cross training will ensure that the team is prepared to deal with the usual demands that may arise when essential functions must be continued with a reduced staff.

When determining training needs, consider the policies and procedures that require implementation and the tasks to be performed as part of continuing essential functions. Develop and conduct training based on the actual training needs.

Some general suggestions on COOP education and training methods are listed below:

- Orientations are usually the first type of training conducted. They are typically presented as briefings. Orientations are a good way to:
  - Introduce the general concepts of the COOP plan
  - Announce staff assignments, roles and responsibilities
  - Present general procedures
- Blended training methods encompass a deliberate blend of hands-on activities, seminars, orientations, workshops, online or interactive programs, briefings and lectures.



Agency Personnel

### Checking in with the COOP Planning and Oversight Committee

On March 13, 2007, the [Planning and Oversight Committee](#) held their second off-site conference for the Continuity of Operations (COOP) planning initiative. Once again the committee was thrilled at the steady progress being made by the various participating agencies. The main focus of the conference was to review the Phase II deliverables and identify any "best practice" agency models, common issues, or questions from the participating agencies. Phase II of the COOP planning process had been predicted to be the most challenging, due to the information technology sections. Despite the complexity of Phase II, agencies were able to successfully complete the various annex's and/or provide detailed lists of needs associated with information technology. The critical thinking on this topic by the agency COOP coordinators has enabled the committee to continue moving forward and remain on target and focused on completion of the county project. As the agencies continue their positive and aggressive move forward in completing Phase III, the Planning and Oversight Committee remains highly optimistic in the quality of the final product as well as maintaining the strategic planning timeline. The COOP Planning and Oversight Committee members would like to thank each of the agencies for their hard work and dedication to this process – you are the ones who continue to breathe life into this initiative.