

Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP)

A COOP refers to the internal efforts a grantee must take to ensure the capability exists to continue essential functions in response to a broad spectrum of emergencies or operational interruptions. Operational interruptions may include renovation, preventative maintenance, fire, mechanical failure of HVAC or other building systems, inclement weather or other acts of nature, pandemic, threatened or actual attacks, and other events that may interrupt activity and telecommunications due to malfunction or cyber-attack.

A COOP sets forth a concept of operations, identifies essential functions, and outlines four potential phases of operations:

- Readiness and Preparedness
- Activation and Relocation
- Alternate Facility Operations
- Reconstitution

The primary goal of a COOP is to ensure that a viable capability exists to continue essential functions across a wide range of incidents with the potential that the primary facility is rendered inaccessible or unusable.

The objectives of this plan include the following:

- Ensure grantees can perform their mission essential functions.
- Reduce the loss of life and minimize property damage and loss.
- Reduce or mitigate disruptions to operations.
- Ensure grantees have facilities where they can continue to perform their mission essential functions during a continuity event.
- Protect essential facilities, equipment, records, and other assets in the event of a disruption.
- Ensure and validate the plan through testing and training.

If the grantee has a parent organization, the parent organization's plan may extend down to the grantee's level. If so, the parent organization's plan may be submitted, provided it clearly articulates the specific actions required of the grantee. Conversely, if applicable, the grantee's plan may extend upward as part of the grantee's parent organization's plan.

A helpful resource can be located on the Vermont Council on Rural Development's website, which includes a six-minute video entitled *Creating Your Nonprofit Continuity Plan in 5 Simple Steps*. Please see [Create Your Nonprofit Continuity Plan in 5 Simple Steps | vtrural.org](https://vtrural.org) for more information.

A sample template is available which grantees may use to ensure that all COOP elements are considered. Use of this specific template is NOT required; however, the COOP must minimally address the objectives listed above.