

# Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP)

[INSERT GRANTEE NAME]

**Updated:** [INSERT MOST RECENT REVISED DATE]

*This template is designed to serve as a guide for developing a basic COOP. It is only as useful as the information that is populated and how well it is trained. Customize any aspects of the plan to best meet the needs of your organization to continue operations during and after an emergency.*

**Instructions:**

- Page 1 – Replace “INSERT GRANTEE NAME” with the name of your grant.
- Page 1 – Update the “INSERT MOST RECENT REVISED DATE” with the last date the plan was completed or updated.
- Page 2 – The table of contents field can be automatically updated by selecting “Table of Contents” and clicking “Update Table.”
- Page 2 – Select the footer and replace “INSERT GRANTEE NAME” with the name of your grant.
- The remainder of the template provides descriptions of each section and tables that can be easily populated with information from your organization. Customize the tables and content to best suit your needs.
- Delete this text box once the plan is complete.

## Table of Contents

<b>Point of Contact and Approval</b> .....	3
<b>Introduction and Purpose</b> .....	4
<b>Key Staff and Responsibilities</b> .....	5
<b>Order of Succession:</b> .....	5
<b>Delegation of Authority:</b> .....	5
<b>COOP Planning Team:</b> .....	6
<b>COOP Relocation Team:</b> .....	6
<b>COOP Support Team:</b> .....	7
<b>Mission Essential Functions</b> .....	8
<b>Facilities Continuity (Primary and Alternate)</b> .....	9
<b>Communications:</b> .....	10
<b>Vital Records Management:</b> .....	10
<b>Essential Equipment - Needed at Alternate Site:</b> .....	11
<b>Key Contacts and Local Resources:</b> .....	12
<b>Devolution of Control and Direction</b> .....	13
<b>Reconstitution</b> .....	14
<b>Test, Train, and Exercise (TT&amp;E)</b> .....	15
<b>Attachments</b> .....	16

## Point of Contact and Approval

**COOP Points of Contact:**

Name	Title	Contact Information (cell phone, email)

**Mission statement:**

**Approved by:**

**Date:**

## Introduction and Purpose

*This template is designed as a guideline for developing a basic COOP. The template should be modified to meet individual grantee needs and requirements. Supplemental materials (e.g., contact information, Memorandums of Understanding/Agreement (MOU/MOAs), evacuation maps, alternative facilities information, etc.) should be included, as needed.*

An effective COOP will address emergencies from an all-hazards approach to allow the entity to protect its assets and people while providing an effective mechanism for determining how to resume services following a disaster. Continuity planning facilitates performing essential functions during situations that may disrupt normal operations. The goal of continuity planning is to reduce the consequence of any disruptive event to a manageable level, but specific objectives of a particular grantee's continuity plan may vary depending on its mission, functions, capabilities, and overall continuity strategy. In general, continuity plans are designed to:

- a. Minimize loss of life, injury, and property damage.
- b. Mitigate the duration, severity, or pervasiveness of disruptions that do occur.
- c. Achieve the timely and orderly resumption of essential functions and the return to normal operations.
- d. Protect essential facilities, equipment, records, and assets, including cash instruments such as bus passes, gas cards, etc.
- e. Be executable with or without warning.
- f. Meet the operational requirements of the respective grantee. Continuity plans may need to be operational within minutes of activation, depending on the essential function or service, but certainly should be operational no later than 12 hours after activation.
- g. Meet the sustainment needs of the respective grantee. A grantee may need to plan for sustained continuity operations for up to 30-days or longer, depending on resources, support relationships, and the respective continuity strategy adopted.
- h. Ensure the continuous performance of essential functions and operations during an emergency, including those such as pandemic influenza that require additional considerations beyond traditional continuity planning.
- i. Provide an integrated and coordinated continuity framework that considers other relevant organizational, governmental, and private sector continuity plans and procedures.

This basic COOP template has been developed in accordance with the National Security Presidential Directive 51 and the Homeland Security Presidential Directive 20 (May 2007). The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), in coordination with non-federal partners, have developed Continuity Guidance Circular 1 (CGC 1 Jan. 21, 2009), Continuity Guidance for Non-Federal Entities. The purpose of this guidance document is to provide direction for developing continuity plans for non-federal entities. FEMA has also produced the COOP Template Instructions, which provide instructions for developing a COOP according to DHS Headquarters COOP Guidance Document, dated April 2004.

## Key Staff and Responsibilities

Continuity of leadership is critical to ensure the continuity of essential functions. Grantees should provide a clear line of succession in the absence of existing leadership and the necessary delegations of authority to ensure that succeeding leadership has the legal and other authorities to carry out their duties.

### Order of Succession:

Orders of succession are an essential part of a grantee's COOP to ensure that grantee staff know who assumes the authority and responsibility of the grantee's leadership if that leadership is incapacitated or becomes otherwise unavailable during a continuity situation. Orders should be of sufficient depth to ensure that the organization can manage and direct its essential functions and operations throughout any emergency.

Order of Succession	Name	Title	Contact Information (cell phone, email)
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			

### Delegation of Authority:

To ensure a rapid response to any emergency requiring the implementation of its continuity plan, a grantee should delegate authorities to make policy determinations and other decisions at the field, satellite, and other organizational levels, as appropriate. It is vital to clearly establish delegations of authority so that all grantee staff know who has the right to make key decisions during a continuity situation. Generally, a predetermined delegation of authority will take effect when normal channels of direction and control are disrupted and lapse when those channels are reestablished.

Identify three people that will have authority for each of the following categories:

- a. Policy decisions
- b. Re-delegate functions or activities
- c. Ability to enter into contracts or agreements
- d. Leave or travel approval
- e. Purchasing authorization

Delegation	Name	Title	Contact Information (cell phone, email)

**COOP Planning Team:**

The COOP Planning Team leads the planning efforts of grantee operations from several days to weeks in the future.

Order of Succession	Name	Title	Contact Information (cell phone, email)
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			

**COOP Relocation Team:**

The COOP Relocation Team will go to the alternate site and prepare it for the operation of essential functions. This team should be made up of employees with key roles and responsibilities.

Role	Name	Title	Contact Information (cell phone, email)

**COOP Support Team:**

The COOP Support Team serves as supplemental staff and will be awaiting assignments. Team members may work from home or stay home until told where to report.

<b>Role</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Contact Information (cell phone, email)</b>

## Mission Essential Functions

Mission essential functions are the functions that enable grantees to provide vital services and sustain an economic base during an emergency.

Identifying and prioritizing mission essential functions is a prerequisite for continuity planning because they establish the planning parameters that drive a grantee's efforts in all other planning and preparedness areas. Resources and staff will likely be limited during an event that disrupts normal activities, preventing the grantee from performing all its normal functions or services and necessitating the activation of continuity plans. Therefore, a subset of those functions determined to be critical activities are defined as the grantee's essential functions. These essential functions are then used to identify supporting tasks and resources that should be included in the grantee's continuity planning process.

Identify what needs to be done during the emergency and what can be suspended. It is helpful to list all your department services, tasks, or products that you provide and place them in three categories:

1. Must be done during the emergency to sustain operations
2. Can be suspended for a day to a week
3. Can be suspended for a week to a month

You will only provide your efforts in that first category during the emergency. As the situation stabilizes over time, you will start to include tasks from the 2nd category and then the 3<sup>rd</sup> category.

Category	Essential Function	Staff Responsible



## Facilities Continuity (Primary and Alternate)

Facilities are the locations where essential functions are performed by leadership and staff. Grantees should have adequate, separate locations to ensure the execution of their functions. Physical dispersion should allow for easy transfer of function responsibility in the event of a problem in one location.

As part of continuity planning, you should identify continuity facilities, alternate uses for existing facilities, and, as appropriate, virtual office options, including telework. Risk assessments should be conducted on these facilities to provide reliable and comprehensive data to inform risk mitigation decisions that will allow grantees to protect assets, systems, networks, and functions while determining the likely causes and impacts of any disruption. The alternate site should not be in the same hazard zone as the primary site.

The alternate site may be a branch office of your primary site and one with which you have existing arrangements to share office space or other suitable space that will enable grantees to perform essential functions.

Site	Name	Address	Point of Contact
Primary			
Alternate			

When determining the need to move to an alternate facility, consider the following:

- Does staff need to operate on-site, off-site, or remotely?
- Does the alternate site have adequate infrastructure to conduct operations (i.e., Internet access, phone access, restrooms, etc.)?
- Do you have staff who can serve in other capacities? If so, how many and what are the skill sets?
- What is the number of staff needed at the alternate site after the emergency for the first category of the prioritized core functions?
- What is the number of staff needed at the alternate site after the emergency for the second category of the prioritized core functions?
- What is the number of staff needed at the alternate site after the emergency for the third category of the prioritized core functions?
- Who provides IT support at the alternate site?

## Communications:

The ability to communicate is critical to daily operations and absolutely essential in a crisis. All entities should identify the communication requirements needed to perform their essential functions during both routine and continuity conditions. This may include the Internet, two-way radio, telephone, etc.

Methods of Communications	Responsible to Initiate	Timeline
Primary:		
Alternate:		
Tertiary:		

## Vital Records Management:

“Vital records” refers to information systems and applications, electronic and hardcopy documents, references, and records needed to support essential functions during a continuity situation. A critical element of a viable continuity plan and program includes the identification, protection, and availability of electronic and hardcopy documents, references, records, information systems, and data management software and equipment (including classified and other sensitive data) needed to support essential functions during a continuity situation. Staff should have access to and be able to use these records and systems to perform essential functions and reconstitute back to normal operations. Grantees should pre-position and regularly update duplicate vital records to ensure the performance of essential functions.

**A vital records program should be incorporated into the overall COOP, and it needs a clear authority to include the following:**

- Policies
- Authorities
- Procedures

**Grantees should conduct vital records and database risk assessment to:**

- Identify the risks involved if vital records are retained in their current locations and media, as well as the difficulty of reconstituting those records if they are destroyed.
- Identify offsite storage locations and requirements.
- Determine if alternative storage media is available.
- Determine requirements to duplicate records and provide alternate storage locations to provide readily available vital records under all conditions.

**A vital records plan packet should be developed and maintained. The packet should include:**

- A hard copy or electronic list of key grantee staff and disaster points of contact with up-to-date telephone numbers.
- A vital records inventory with the precise locations of vital records.
- Updates to the vital records.
- Necessary keys or access codes.
- Continuity-facility locations.
- Access requirements and lists of sources and equipment necessary to access the records (this may include hardware and software, Internet access, and/or dedicated telephone lines).
- Lists of records-recovery experts and vendors.
- A copy of the grantee’s COOP.

Vital Record	Description	Form (Electronic or Hard Copy)	Data Backup or Storage Locations

**Essential Equipment - Needed at Alternate Site:**

This is a list of office equipment necessary to conduct your essential mission functions and must either be already located at the alternate site or be portable and transported there as you leave your office. If it is not possible or convenient to pre-position or move equipment, list a location where it can be used or acquired.

Key On-Site Supplies & Equipment	Point of Contact/Alternate Point of Contact	Pre-Positioned At Alternate Site (Y/N)

**Key Contacts and Local Resources:**

Identify resources necessary for continuing operations and can strengthen your response to emergencies (i.e., police, fire station, hospitals, utilities, vendors, etc.).

Resource	Phone	Address

## Devolution of Control and Direction

Devolution is the capability to transfer statutory authority and responsibility for essential functions from a grantee's primary operating staff and facilities to other organization employees and facilities to sustain that operational capability for an extended period.

Devolution planning supports overall continuity planning and addresses the full spectrum of threats and all-hazards emergency events that may render a grantee's leadership or staff unavailable to support or incapable of supporting the execution of the grantee's essential functions from either its primary location or its alternate location(s). Grantees should develop a devolution option for continuity to address how those organizations will identify and conduct their essential functions during an increased threat situation or in the aftermath of a catastrophic emergency.

At a minimum, a devolution plan should:

1. Include the following elements of a viable continuity of operations capability: program plans and procedures, budgeting and acquisitions, essential functions, orders of succession, delegations of authority, continuity communications, vital records management, human capital, TT&E, and reconstitution operations.
2. Identify prioritized essential functions for devolution, define tasks that support those essential functions, and determine the necessary resources to facilitate those functions' immediate and seamless transfer to the devolution site.
3. Include a roster that identifies fully equipped and trained staff who will be stationed at the designated devolution site and have the authority to perform essential functions and activities when the devolution option of the continuity plan is activated.
4. Identify what would likely activate or "trigger" the devolution option.
5. Specify how and when the direction and control of grantee operations will be transferred to and from the devolution site.
6. List the necessary resources (e.g., equipment and materials) to facilitate the performance of essential functions at the devolution site.
7. Establish and maintain reliable processes and procedures for acquiring the resources necessary to continue essential functions and to sustain those operations for extended periods.
8. Establish and maintain a capability to restore or reconstitute authorities to their pre-event status upon termination of devolution.

Devolution plans, responsibilities, and capabilities should include all elements of continuity planning, including tests, annual training of devolution staff, and exercises to ensure devolution capabilities are prepared and capable of performing a grantee's essential functions.

*\*The Devolution Plan should be included as an attachment to the COOP.*

## Reconstitution

Reconstitution is the process by which surviving and/or replacement grantee staff resume normal operations from the original or replacement primary operating facility. Reconstitution embodies the ability of a grantee to recover from an event that disrupts normal operations and consolidates the necessary resources so that the grantee can resume its operations as a fully functional entity.

Grantees should identify and outline a plan to return to normal operations once organization heads or their successors determine that reconstitution operations for resuming normal business operations can be initiated. Grantees should:

1. Provide an executable plan for transitioning back to the efficient normal operational status from the continuity of operations status once a threat or disruption has passed.
2. Coordinate and preplan options for reconstitution regardless of the level of disruption that originally prompted the implementation of its COOP. These options should include moving operations from the continuity or devolution location to either the original operating facility or, if necessary, to a new operating facility.
3. Outline the necessary procedures, whether under a standard continuity of operations scenario or a devolution scenario, for conducting a smooth transition from the relocation site to a new facility.

Implementation actions associated with reconstitution include:

1. Informing all staff and participants that the actual emergency or the threat of an emergency no longer exists and instructing staff and participants on how to resume normal operations.
2. Supervising either an orderly return to the normal operating facility, a move to another temporary facility, or a new permanent operating facility.
3. Verifying that all systems, communications, and other required capabilities are available and operational, and that the grantee is fully capable of accomplishing all essential functions and operations at the new or restored facility.
4. Conducting an after-action review of the effectiveness of the COOPs and procedures, identifying areas for improvement by reviewing and documenting these in the grantee's CAP and then developing a remedial action plan as soon as possible after the reconstitution.
5. Identifying which (if any) records were affected by the incident and working to ensure an effective transition or recovery of vital records and databases and other records that had not been designated as vital records as part of the overall reconstitution effort.

*\*The Reconstitution Plan should be included as an attachment to the COOP.*

## Test, Train, and Exercise (TT&E)

The COOP should be updated at least quarterly or when your staff changes roles or responsibilities. All employees should be trained on COOP contents and participate in annual tabletop exercises or drills. The hardcopy and electronic copies of the COOP should be available to all employees.

An effective TT&E program is necessary to prepare and validate the grantee's continuity capabilities and program to perform essential functions during any emergency. This requires the identification, training, and preparedness of staff capable of performing their continuity responsibilities and implementing procedures to support the continuation of essential functions.

The training and exercises will provide an annual opportunity for continuity staff to demonstrate their familiarity with continuity plans and procedures and to demonstrate the grantee's capability to continue its essential functions.

An annual exercise incorporating the deliberate and preplanned movement of continuity staff to an alternative facility or other continuity location should also be considered.

Training Type	Topics Covered	Date Completed

## Attachments

- Applicable MOU/MOA
- Reconstitution Plan
- Devolution Plan
- Maps
- Staff Rosters
- Participant Rosters (Note: As these rosters continually change, grantees need not include them permanently in this plan but should be able to construct one immediately upon COOP implementation.)
- Vendors
- Resource Lists
- Other Documents