



Crisis Planning and Management:

A Guidebook for State Administering Agencies

A guidebook for State Administering Agencies (SAAs) to effectively plan for and work through crisis events, to include the functional aspects of crisis leadership, continuity planning, grants management, collaboration and communication.

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- Brian K. Harte, PhD
- Bernard A. Jones, DSc.
- Rebecca A. Rouse, DM

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Foreword

The COVID-19 pandemic launched a long-term worldwide crisis that left many government agencies within criminal justice systems feeling unprepared for crisis response and recovery. With rapidly changing information came rapidly changing environments. During a crisis, the need for collaboration, communication and support is at an all-time high. Being prepared with formal crisis management planning is key to keeping people safe and maintaining operations. There are 56 State Administering Agencies (SAAs) in all 50 states, territories and Washington DC. These agencies, at a minimum, are responsible for administering federal criminal justice funding, conducting coordinated statewide transparent strategic planning efforts, and supporting state and local criminal justice systems within their state.

The SAAs are a critical component to a state's criminal justice system and are often at the forefront of providing support and resources to agencies and communities in need. Although the structure of each SAA varies by state, these agencies are well-equipped in planning strategically, understanding the needs of their states' criminal justice systems, collaborating with various stakeholders and managing resource allocation efforts. Because of the unique position of the SAA at the state level, its impact on a state's entire criminal justice system and its responsibility over significant funding streams, effective strategic planning before a crisis as well as the thoughtful evaluation of the response afterwards should be strengths of any SAA. This Guidebook will discuss the details of how to plan for, respond to and recover from a crisis.

The Crisis Management Guidebook was developed to provide SAAs with guidelines to effectively plan for and work through crisis events ranging from small to large scale. It discusses the functional aspects of crisis leadership, the importance of continuity planning, funding, grants management, collaboration, resource sharing, partnership building and communication. The SAA, having tremendous experience in strategic planning and stakeholder engagement, will greatly assist the efforts in crisis management. Additionally, having strong crisis management planning skills will positively impact the SAA's strategic planning process pre- and post-crisis.

This Guidebook is also useful for a whole-community audience, including federal, state, local, tribal, U.S. territories and government entities, as well as community-based organizations and private sector partners responsible for Continuity of Operations (COOP) planning.

This Guidebook establishes the foundation for a successful crisis management program within the SAA or any agency in the public or private sector. Competent and effective crisis management is required for agencies and organizations to adequately respond to and recover from a broad spectrum of natural and human-made disaster events. It is incumbent for agencies such as the SAA to develop and enhance their crisis management capabilities.



How to Use This SAA Crisis Management Guidebook

This Guidebook is developed to help SAA staff better understand the process of crisis management at SAA internal offices. It is presented in an easy-to-read format allowing both novice and experienced crisis management planners to navigate the various parts of the process. It is designed to allow the user to review the entire document at once, or to skip to sections that may be of importance to them. Additionally, SAA staff may have different directives from their department or Governor's Office that they should follow; this Guidebook should not replace those directives. It should serve as an additional resource based on best practices during a time of preparing for or responding to a crisis. Given the differing breadth and scope of SAAs' responsibilities across the nation, this Guidebook includes a broad spectrum of information and practices, some of which may or may not be applicable to each agency.

What Is the Definition of a Crisis?

There are numerous definitions of "crisis." This guidebook defines crisis as "a sudden, urgent, unexpected occurrence or event, causing an impact requiring immediate action." Crisis events are not uncommon. They are woven into the fabric of everyday life. People, organizations, and communities deal with crises on a regular basis. As stated by Lerbinger, "Crises have become more numerous, visible, and disastrous, and organizations have no choice but to accept crises as an inescapable reality that must factor into their planning and decision-making."¹ Therefore, it is imperative that SAAs, like most organizations,

examine their crisis management capabilities and plan for maximum preparedness and planning before a crisis occurs.

Types of Crises

There are many different types of crisis events that could potentially impact the SAA. Overall, crises fall into three broad categories:

Creeping Crises: These are foreshadowed by a series of events that SAA executives and decision makers do not view as part of a pattern.

Slow-Burning Crises: These are events that give some warning but have not yet caused any actual impact or damage to SAAs.

Abrupt Crises: In these, the impact and damage from a crisis event has already occurred. They may seem to get worse the longer it takes the SAA to mobilize, react, and respond.

Creeping crises are harder to detect as a minor crisis can become a large crisis. Appropriate crisis management measures can often prevent or minimize the damage from creeping crises.

Characteristics of creeping crises include:

- Inadequate preparation for partial or complete business interruption.
- Insufficient measures to protect life and property in the event of an emergency impacting the agency.
- Ineffective two-way communication with all critical stakeholders and audiences, both internal and external to the SAA.



Slow-burning crises are those that provide some warning but, if not adequately responded to, will slowly escalate to a full crisis. Effective crisis management helps identify the early warning signs and ensure that a slow-burning crisis, while still impactful, can be adequately addressed with minimal impact to the SAA.

Examples of slow-burning crises include:

- Cyber-attacks on the agency or general internet activism
- Possible lawsuits against the agency or vital SAA partner entities
- Possible discrimination complaints against the agency or essential SAA partner entities
- Impact on the agency brand or reputation
- SAA regulatory compliance issues (e.g., safety, finances, record keeping, etc.)
- Major operational decisions that may distress stakeholders internally and externally
- State and local government actions that negatively impact the agency's operations
- Governmental investigations involving the agency and any of its employees
- Racial, civil, or labor unrest near the agency's internal offices
- Sudden management changes, either voluntary or involuntary.

Without an effective crisis management program or process, abrupt crises are the most challenging type to address. Unfortunately, many abrupt crisis events have resulted in organizations going out of business or suffering a profound impact on their brand.

Examples of abrupt crises impacting the SAA could include:

- Serious on-site accidents at the office
- Criminal activity at an SAA site location committed by an employee
- A lawsuit rendered against the SAA with no advance notice
- Severe weather and other natural disasters impacting an office
- Human-made disasters (e.g., active-shooter, terrorism)
- The loss of a site location or workplace
- Perceptions of significant impropriety at the SAA damaging its reputation and resulting in legal liability.

What is Crisis Management?

What is the definition of "crisis management?" Crisis management consists of well-documented plans and procedures that allow an agency to avoid crisis events and to respond appropriately

when they do occur. Crisis management is a holistic approach incorporating crisis prevention, crisis planning, crisis training and crisis response and recovery. It helps organizations articulate how

they identify and respond effectively to threats. It involves communication, public relations and coordination with internal and external stakeholders.

Organizations, both within the private sector and the public sector, should understand the importance of crisis management.

For example, firefighting is a form of crisis management. The firefighter's objective is to manage the fire or "manage the crisis." Crisis management includes crisis prevention and preplanning, not merely crisis response. Following the firefighter analogy, fire inspectors dramatically impact the number and severity of fires by determining their origin, and then laying the groundwork to prevent future fires. But their work often goes unnoticed. It is a similar dynamic with other crisis prevention efforts.

Since no predefined formula exists for all possible crisis events, crisis management combines art and science. The "art" of crisis management focuses on crisis leadership and human interaction while the "science" focuses on the necessary prevention, planning, response and training elements that make up the crisis management process. The number and variety of crises that may impact the SAA internally are almost limitless. SAAs can use this Guidebook to prepare for crisis events using a proven set of best practices, knowledge and tools and to articulate a course of action to follow forwarding off crises and mitigating their impacts.

A few key terms that will appear throughout this Guidebook are defined here for clarity.

After Action Review – The collection, contemplation, and discussion with stakeholders of any observations made during an exercise or real-world event.

Continuity of Operations (COOP) Planning – A specific type of crisis planning that involves an effort within individual executive departments and agencies to ensure that Mission Essential Functions (MEFs) continue to be performed during a wide range of emergencies, including localized acts of nature, accidents and technological or attack-related emergencies (FEMA).

Crisis – A sudden, urgent, unexpected occurrence or event, causing an impact requiring immediate action.

Crisis management – The ability to avoid crisis events and to respond appropriately with well-documented plans and procedures.

Mission Essential Function (MEF) – A department or agency function that must be continued after a disruption of normal activity.

Stakeholder – Someone internal or external to an organization with a vested interest or "stake" in its operations.

State Administering Agency (SAA) – The agency responsible for administering federal criminal justice funding, conducting coordinated statewide transparent strategic planning efforts, and supporting state and local criminal justice systems within their state.

Chapter 1 – Crisis Management Leadership and Stakeholder Engagement

Chapter 1 of this Guidebook outlines the actors involved in the crisis management process. In addition to leadership, there are several stakeholders, both internal and external, who play important roles in crisis management. This chapter also provides an overview of crisis communication and messaging and highlights potential staff and office considerations to make during a crisis.

Crisis Leadership

How do we define a “crisis management leader?” Crisis management leaders are typically viewed as highly specialized employees who possess both technical expertise and teamwork skills. During emergencies and crises, the demand for skilled crisis management leaders is great.

Based on research conducted at Pepperdine University, experts in crisis management completed a survey to identify the characteristics and attributes of an effective crisis management leader.² Participants included experienced management leaders with many years of crisis and continuity management leadership experience. They represented various crisis respondents, including law enforcement, security, corporate aviation and governmental agency crisis managers.

The survey results indicate at least 14 different characteristics that an effective leader in a crisis should possess. Characteristics are outlined in Figure 1.

As part of the study, survey respondents most frequently mentioned the following leadership characteristics:

- Training and preparedness
- Listening skills
- Decision-making skills

These three factors are among the primary or core factors that correlate with crisis management leader effectiveness. A secondary list of effective leader characteristics includes open-mindedness, solution/problem analysis and critical-thinking skills, and communication skills.

Many of these 14 characteristics can be taught and developed through supplemental training or continuing education. In the event of a crisis, the investment will prove to be well-justified.

Crisis Management and SAA Senior Executives

How involved should senior leadership at the SAA be in encouraging crisis management for the organization? Crisis management is effective when every employee has a role, including, and importantly, senior executives. It is critical that SAA senior leadership, as top spokespeople for the agency, drive the organization’s commitment to crisis management. One strategy is for senior SAA executives to form a crisis management team (CMT).

Figure 1: Effective Leadership Characteristics

Coordinated	An effective crisis management leader has coordination skills. Additionally, they should have experience, knowledge, and training to get individuals to function together as a single unit.
Decisive decision maker	An effective crisis management leader should be able to make the right decisions during crisis events.
Experienced	Crisis management leaders should have plenty of experience to draw upon. The value of experience is shown as a critical factor for effective leadership.
Goal-oriented	Effective crisis management leaders have enhanced goal-setting abilities.
The ability to communicate	Crisis management leaders provide and solicit critical information, engage in two-way communication, and interact in open and honest ways with others. They can communicate successfully, with few misunderstandings, in a wide variety of contexts and situations.
The ability to facilitate	Influential leaders are not dictators. Instead, they can get the most out of team members by facilitating input from others, creating a situation in which the team collaboratively makes decisions, fosters teamwork, and creates a sense of cohesion among all team members.
The ability to handle stress	Influential leaders can manage stress during crisis events where emotional and mental stability are traits of ineffective leaders.
The ability to listen	Leaders must be active listeners, capable of digesting a large amount of information and different perspectives. Influential leaders practice and train to listen and exert active effort to understand, process, and evaluate others' input.
Open-minded	An effective crisis management leader is open to differing viewpoints and perspectives and willing to "think outside the box."
The ability to be responsible/accountable	A practical leader is accountable and takes responsibility for the resolution of a crisis. An effective leader supports team ownership of the crisis response and protects the team from inappropriate external interference.
The ability to prioritize	An effective leader recognizes and retains a clear sense of priorities during crisis events and consults with essential stakeholders in the process.
The ability to critically think	Influential leaders are innately critical thinkers and problem solvers.
The capacity to adapt	The ability to adapt and quickly recognize changes within a crisis is an essential trait of ineffective crisis management leaders. Counter to this, ineffective traits are inflexibility, rigidity, and an inability to adapt.
Trained and prepared	To be an effective crisis management leader, they must be prepared for the role by possessing a thorough knowledge of contingency and recovery plans and processes.



Forming an SAA Internal Office Crisis Management Team

How can the SAA form a crisis management team? After reviewing and implementing the actions in this Guidebook, the SAA should assemble its CMT, based on the importance of efficient coordination, communication and decision-making in a crisis.

Just like any team, the members will have specific roles and responsibilities. As previously mentioned, participation by senior leadership is mandatory as their active involvement will ensure that positive outcomes are achievable during the response to and recovery from a crisis. Additional vital members of the SAA crisis management team include members from the following departments: human resources(HR), information technology (IT), risk management, legal, business continuity and disaster recovery. It is important to note that many team members may need to take on additional roles and responsibilities during a crisis.

The list below includes SAA staff members who can serve as part of a CMT. It is important to also draw from previous crisis events to identify which SAA staff members were integral to the organization's response and recovery. CMTs will look different for each SAA, depending on the size of the agency and the level of direction or involvement from other state departments.

SAA CMT Leader—Role description: A senior official at the SAA with authority to make decisions that will impact the SAA prior, during, and after a crisis event. The SAA CMT Leader will interface with all SAA CMT members and coordinate internal and external communications with the SAA Communications CMT member & the SAA Public Relations CMT member. Additional

responsibilities include:

Determining what resources may be needed for working with other local government departments to develop a plan. This may involve a countywide collaborative approach, depending on the SAA's external partners and stakeholders, ensuring that all resources are in place during all phases of crisis management.

SAA Alternate CMT Leader—Role description: A senior official who serves as the backup and alternate CMT Leader.

SAA HR CMT Member—Role description: An employee with human resources experience who provides required HR guidance and support and required legal guidance and support during any crisis where employees are impacted.

SAA Operations CMT Member—Role description: An employee who works with all team members to assess the impact on SAA operations due to the crisis event. Additional responsibilities include:

Determining how the SAA would operate for an extended period if a crisis event impacted an SAA internal office location.

Determining an alternate arrangement for the SAA so they can continue to conduct official business.

Establishing the storage and maintenance of vital SAA records, which are essential to the ongoing operation of the SAA.

SAA IT CMT Member—Role description: An employee with expertise in IT who implements the SAA disaster recovery plan to ensure IT, network, and infrastructure remain operational during a crisis so the SAA can continue its operations using these vital components.



SAA Communications CMT Member—Role description: An employee who assists with the proper delivery of crisis communications, both internal and external, to the SAA. This team member will have knowledge and access to a diverse set of communication tools and communication mediums.

SAA Finance CMT Member—Role description: The finance team member will coordinate and collaborate with the crisis management team leader on addressing all financial resource needs. During crisis events, financial resources are essential to the response.

Each SAA CMT member is crucial to ensuring an appropriate and efficient response on behalf of the SAA. As mentioned previously, each member must also be involved during the preparedness phase to ensure that they understand their roles when a crisis arises and are ready to assist with a response.

Critical Crisis Management SAA Stakeholders

As with any organization, the SAA cannot function without continued collaboration and support from its stakeholders. A stakeholder is someone internal or external to an organization with a vested interest or “stake” in its work. The importance of stakeholders within crisis management is vital. Virtually no modern administrative entity—public or private—manages crises and emergencies entirely in-house. For the SAA, partners with whom they operate daily may include the Governor’s or territorial leaders’ offices, state and local criminal justice programs and subrecipients, logistical or transportation providers, health or law enforcement entities, or other local, state, and federal agencies.

Important stakeholders may include:

- Administrative Office of the Courts (State and Local)
- Board of State and Community Corrections
- Criminal Justice Coordinating Councils
- Criminal Justice Information Authority
- Department of Behavioral Health
- Department of Commerce
- Department of Corrections
- Department of Finance and Administration
- Department of Justice
- Department of Law & Public Safety
- Department of Public Health
- Department of the Attorney General
- District Attorneys Council
- Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
- Local Judicial Departments
- Local Police Departments
- Local Sheriff Departments
- Office of Highway Safety and Justice Programs
- Office of Justice Programs
- Office of Policy Management
- State Criminal Justice Associations
- State Governor’s offices
- State Office of Emergency Management (OEMs)
- Local Offices of Emergency Management
- State Police Departments

Stakeholder mapping

Different types of stakeholders require different forms of engagement. One-size engagement does not fit all.

The mapping process should consider type of stakeholder, relative importance and influence, level of standard engagement, how transitioning to continuity operations will affect engagement, and any other parameters deemed important by the SAA. Stakeholder mapping serves as a useful tool to begin the engagement process and allows an agency to develop an engagement plan that works best for them. This assures the best use of resources by not over-communicating with groups that do not require the same level of attention as others and by making sure to engage with higher interest and influence groups in greater depth.

Stakeholder mapping begins by grouping stakeholders into four categories:

Low Interest & Low Influence

For stakeholders with low interest and low influence, one-way communication of essential information will likely be sufficient in most instances.

Low Interest & High Influence

Despite low interest in regular communication, this group is important to monitor regularly, inform of critical information and anticipate their interests or needs.

High Interest & Low Influence

This group may not be as influential as other stakeholders but are highly interested so they still require regular, robust, two-way communication.

High Interest & High Influence (these are your KEY stakeholders)

This group requires regular, robust, two-way communication and more resources to engage with effectively.

Benefits to Stakeholder Mapping:

- Stakeholder mapping ensures an inclusive engagement process by considering ALL potential stakeholders, regardless of the level of interest or influence.
- Mapping can save time and resources long-term by helping an agency determine the best engagement method(s) moving forward effectively.
- Mapping can help identify gaps in the types of stakeholders being considered.
- Stakeholder mapping can promote new opportunities with organizations and people that were not previously engaged.

Challenges to Stakeholder Mapping:

- While stakeholder mapping considers different communication per group, it does not necessarily consider different communication needs for individuals separate from the group.
- Stakeholder mapping is not a one-time process and should be revisited annually.
- Stakeholder mapping can be time-intensive for those agencies with a short deadline to submit strategic plans.

Collaboration in Crisis

In crisis situations, SAAs may work with first responders, firefighters, law enforcement, or medical personnel, utility providers, emergency transportation or supply representatives, and other organizations with whom partnerships must be rapidly developed and maintained.

SAAs may coordinate emergency response plans, office security initiatives, safety inspections, or countless other activities with state agencies that specialize in such oversight. These collaborations may include active threat training, incident command orientation, hazard and threat identification, conducting risk assessments or vulnerability analyses, and largescale catastrophic scenario-based exercises, among other functions.

These specialized capabilities are often spearheaded and managed by state or local emergency managers or law enforcement bodies. It is key that SAAs create and cultivate relationships with these experts in advance of a crisis. As the saying goes, “don’t wait to exchange business cards on the scene of a disaster.”

Additionally, state and territorial agencies may have in-house emergency planners and resource managers who can assist with crisis planning and resource acquisition. SAAs can also reach out to their peer agencies and Governor’s Offices or territorial leaders for guidance, templates, equipment, training, lessons learned, and best practices for developing resilience as an agency.

Each state and territory has an Office of Emergency Management that may be collocated with their homeland security entity. These agencies provide an abundance of resources to agencies in public, private, civic and nonprofit sectors, offering templates, training, processes

and introductions to prospective partners. SAAs can reach out to these offices for assistance with internal or external plan development and resource management.

It is not uncommon for organizations to neglect emergency, safety, and security planning, given the many competing demands for their time and attention. Oftentimes, agencies believe the local, state or federal governments will provide uncoordinated capabilities and plug gaps in an organization’s plans, arriving during or after a crisis. Such avoidance is a dangerous oversight, especially when assumptions are employed in lieu of SAAs crisis preparedness. Through communications with partner institutions and agencies, SAAs can also learn what expectations these partners may have of their offices and respective services.

Crisis Communications & Crisis Messaging

Crisis communication is the foundation for effective crisis response and its importance cannot be understated. Communication and messaging from the SAA can be an important source of information for the public and critical stakeholders. For decades, interest in organizational crisis has created research findings and best practice observations by practitioners in crisis management and crisis communication.

As a best practice, the Communications CMT should develop crisis-specific messages targeted toward different stakeholder groups. Different stakeholder audiences need different messaging and information depending on their roles.

Lastly, the cadence for issuing messages is essential. The SAA should be careful not to give messages before they are needed, which may

unnecessarily raise concerns with a stakeholder audience and amplify the effects of the crisis.

Internal Communications

While every office should have a policy in place specifying individuals who are authorized to speak on the record, every staff member of the SAA should be reminded of that policy when a crisis arises. It is also important however, to emphasize that internal audiences are as crucial as external audiences during a crisis. During the crisis communications planning process, it is vital to formulate "internal" critical messages for employees and others close to the SAA.

Below are tips for preparing SAA internal stakeholders to help in crisis response:

1. Develop critical messages about simple crisis situations for everyone to understand, remember, and use in their day-to-day affairs.
2. Brief all SAA employees about what is happening and keep them informed regularly.
3. Provide ways SAA internal audiences can ask questions and receive rapid responses. SAA employees can be encouraged to use either communication method without fear of reprisal. It is also important to remember that individual staff members may have been directly impacted by the event. Open communication with them, with due respect to privacy considerations, is also a critical component of internal crisis communication.

Ultimately, the successful implementation of an internal communications program at the SAA will help articulate essential messages and enhance overall communications.

External Communications

In most instances, external communications for the Agency will be handled by or at least in coordination with the Governor's communications office. There are however, important steps that the SAA should take, and documents the SAA should create, **before** the inevitable crisis, that will be of great assistance to whomever is communicating on behalf of the Agency.

1. A BRIEF explanation of what the State Administering Agency's function
2. A CONCISE explanation of the funds for which the Agency has responsibility and to whom those funds are administered
3. A SPECIFIC explanation of how those funds are being helpful in this particular crisis

Items one and two should be drafted prior to any emergency need, and with the full recognition that the officer responsible for communicating with the public may not fully understand the role of the SAA. By drafting items one and two before the occurrence of a crisis, the third item, an explanation of how funds are being leveraged in this instance, should take little time.

For example, while the recent tornados that tore through several Kentucky towns were not directly "criminal justice" related events, Byrne JAG funds could be used for overtime pay for the necessary role law enforcement needed to play in rescue and recovery efforts. That is important information for the public to know about the SSA and the importance of Byrne JAG funds.

How should the SAA handle the media in a crisis? Best practices include the following:

The SAA must determine how to issue important crisis response information, and possible options could include:

- A news release issued through a paid news service
- A news release issued to an in-house list of specific journalists
- A news conference, where required

The SAA should utilize its website and social media accounts to address communication and awareness of crisis events

- The SAA should communicate directly to stakeholders via email where appropriate and required.

Tips and tools for operating in remote conditions

Crises may require staff to work remotely away from the office. The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted both the challenges and benefits to remote working conditions for most of the world.

The challenges of working remotely

Many SAAs are now quite familiar with the rationale and protocols involved with remote work management. When the COVID-19 pandemic compelled many offices, SAAs, like many others, experienced the need to be adaptable and flexible. Yet their mission of supporting courts, law enforcement, corrections and other critical functions of national and state criminal justice systems was one that could not be sidelined for years, months or, in many cases, even days. Supporting judicial, correctional, and law

enforcement processes to incorporate strict health guidance, social distancing, and other layers of personal protection—while still observing and providing for individual civil liberty protections—is a tall order.

Add to these unanticipated contingencies the complexities of working with external agencies who have also found themselves in a foreign environment. In largescale crises and emergencies or disasters, partners and stakeholders alike will need to remain agile and adaptable and may eventually operate in less than synchronous ways when coordinating communications, operations, or exchanges of information or funds. SAAs should expect the unexpected from stakeholders and partners who must accommodate their own tasks and missions and make adjustments that support their internal priorities.

Conversely, the collective experience of remote workers has uncovered advantages in this expansion of the traditional workplace. Remote employees spend less time commuting and can often work around family schedules or personal appointments versus taking entire days off for these activities. Conferences, seminars, and training are now often available virtually, saving time and money for organizers, attendees and sponsoring organizations. The necessity for remote work has also compelled the rapid advancement of collaborative technologies such as Zoom, Microsoft Teams, and Adobe Classroom—most of which are free to users.

Another consideration is the possibility of disruption in the nontraditional remote site. In the event of the pandemic, many workers had children attending school remotely as well. In the same crisis, workers may have had to care for ill relatives

or family members with needs during working hours. In still other scenarios, workers who are too isolated can miss the social interaction of the workplace and suffer from the seclusion of a quarantine.

Approaching remote work positively

When transitioning to online, virtual communications, it is essential to remember an individual's ability to concentrate is reduced with this type of engagement. Shorter sessions with smaller groups are preferred to long-form, large-group settings so that stakeholders can maintain concentration and interest, interact with one another and the organizers in a productive manner, and gain the proper insight on subjects as opposed to gleaning only the base-line knowledge.³ There are many good ideas available through a basic internet search and a few of these are highlighted in this Guidebook.

Share documents with teammates

Use collaborative programs to share documents permitting real-time collaboration or community access to team efforts. Document sharing software offers intuitive options for tracking draft versions and changes and permitting access to stakeholders and partners can improve progress when drafting strategies, plans, reports, and other initiatives, reducing consecutive reviews of a document or agreement that often extend for months.

Schedule and conduct meetings and expectations

When operating in conditions that can leave people feeling untethered, inject some control into the group's environment. Routine meetings with published agendas can be useful in prioritizing the day's efforts, updating the team or partnership

on progress, and checking in with each other on a personal level. Meetings with internal stakeholders and external partners can all contribute to the progress and oversight of collaborative missions.

Tools for remote work

The SAA office and personnel must be supported by adequate infrastructure to work remotely with stakeholders and partners. This means connectivity must be stable and collaborative platforms must be robust and secure. Protocols for security must be employed, such as meeting passwords, waiting rooms for attendees who are individually permitted in a virtual meeting room, and written guidance as to what data or information may be shared via email or taken home. Computer and network security software and procedural standards should be communicated and enforced to protect vulnerable information. The SAA must also be familiar with and disseminate any guidance from other appropriate state agencies who oversee the use of computer networks, equipment, software, internet platforms and related technologies.

Electronic systems must be carefully and continually monitored to ensure the appropriate parties have access to conduct their duties while protecting against any intentional or unintentional breach of sensitive data.

Protecting data

Because SAA offices engage with multiple organizations, it may be reasonable to assume data connected with these relationships are maintained by SAAs for a variety of official reasons. It may also mean safeguarding such data is particularly critical, especially when employees are working in remote environments with less

oversight and more potential for laxity or network vulnerabilities.

States and territories may have governing policies on protective measures necessary to guard against security breaches or losses of sensitive data. If such policies are broad, discretionary, or nonexistent, there are some fundamental steps SAAs can take to protect the integrity of their data collection and maintenance processes.⁴

Cybersecurity Policy Topics to Address

1. Secure wi-fi networks
2. Password protocols
3. Two-factor authentication
4. Encryption software
5. Firewalls, antivirus software, anti-malware

Staff Wellness

A crisis is a stressful time for all involved. In addition to ensuring the successful function of the SAA's work, staff wellness should be a top priority.

Some methods to prioritize staff wellness include:

- Listening to staff concerns and holding debriefing meetings, when necessary
- Providing transparent communication
- During times of increased workloads, minimizing meetings or communicating via email
- Recognizing and rewarding staff efforts
- If offered by the office, reminding staff of resources accessible through the Employee Assistance Program.

Chapter 1 Notes

Chapter 2 – Phases of Crisis Management

Chapter 2 of this Guidebook dives deep into the concept of crisis management. Multiple components make up the standard framework for crisis management adopted by public or private sector organizations and entities. Crisis management structure, best practices, and planning tools are provided here, including additional information on essential crisis management tasks and objectives. Finally, this chapter presents the operational purpose of crisis management and planning, along with the importance of crisis management for organizations and communities.

Crisis Prevention

As mentioned earlier, crisis management is as much like fire prevention as it is firefighting. Just as the resources needed to prevent a fire pale in comparison to those required to fight one, the resources necessary to prevent a crisis are far less than those required once a crisis has broken out. Crisis management planning at the SAA begins with creating a comprehensive list of vulnerabilities. One of the most cost-effective ways to anticipate the types of crises the SAA may face is to conduct a vulnerability audit.

Ideally, in a vulnerability audit, every functional area of the SAA is examined to identify anything that could lead to a significant business interruption and reputation damage. The magnitude of the vulnerability audit can vary depending on the SAA's preferences and needs. Two such options include:

Crisis Documentation Audit

- A review of existing crisis preparedness and response, such as crisis communications plans, emergency response policies, disaster plans, etc. The audit also includes the creation of a written evaluation and recommendations for improvement.

Executive Team Vulnerability Audit

- A one-day exercise in which the SAA's executive team conducts a series of scenario-based discussions to uncover and begin to address organizational vulnerabilities that could escalate to crises. This audit includes a post-session, written summary of findings and recommendations for improvement.

The information collected in the vulnerability audit process is used to create an operational manual that will guide the SAA through their planning processes.

Once an organization has undergone a vulnerability audit, operational and other weaknesses can be corrected, and crises prevented before they happen. Response time for a crisis is dramatically enhanced. If a crisis does occur, the cost to the organization is typically significantly reduced.

Crisis Management Planning

After the vulnerability audit is complete, the next step is the creation of the SAA crisis management plan. Why is writing the crisis management plan essential? A written, tested, and actionable crisis management plan helps to avoid organizational chaos during and after a crisis. Responsibilities, protocols, actions, messages, and more must be spelled out in the SAA crisis management plan. Additionally, the SAA crisis management plan must be documented, circulated, and reviewed to ensure consensus and must be updated as necessary to ensure that it is current.

This Guidebook provides sample templates of several crisis management plan formats to follow. However, it is important not to use the simple “fill in the blanks” approach to creating the initial SAA crisis management plan. Creating a crisis management plan is a significant undertaking and requires critical thinking from the SAA CMT. The Guidebook articulates the vital and required elements of effective crisis management planning within the remainder of this chapter. Additionally, the bonus chapter at the end of this guidebook will outline the components of Continuity of Operations (COOP) planning, a different and equally effective planning tool for crisis management.

Evaluating The Existing SAA Crisis Management Plan

A few vital questions that the SAA should consider asking when evaluating its existing crisis management plans include:

- Does the plan identify the agency’s CMT members by position, not merely by name, as well as delineate their responsibilities?
- Is the agency plan current, regularly updated based on changes in the SAA, and are vulnerability brainstorming sessions periodically conducted?
- Was the agency crisis management plan prepared based on a comprehensive vulnerability audit?
- Does the agency plan contain draft messages ready to help them respond to the types of crises they are most likely to face?
- Does the agency plan consider the “ripple effect” of crises that may start outside the SAA but still affect the organization?
- Does the agency conduct training and simulations for the people who will be implementing the plan?
- Do all agency personnel critical to implementing the plan have a backup when they are not available?
- Does the agency plan take into consideration the need to communicate with both internal and external stakeholders?

Crisis Management Plan Components

Essential Components of the SAA Crisis Management Plan:

1. Table of Contents/Index

2. Introductory Statements

An introduction, statement of the purpose, scope, relevant policies, and goals of the plan will help keep the SAA on track in determining what to include as part of the plan.

3. Documentation

The plan should contain a section for the SAA CMT to keep detailed logs of actions taken during a crisis. For example, facts related to the crisis, decisions made, steps taken, and justification for any deviations from the policy should be recorded. Detailed records of media contacts and all information released to the media should also be included.

4. SAA Emergency Operations Center

An Emergency Operations Center (EOC) provides a location for use by the SAA CMT and must be documented within the plan. Vital information regarding the EOC includes location, location details, available communications infrastructure, operational procedures, and alternate EOC locations. It is essential to articulate that the SAA EOC can also function as a virtual EOC where and when required.

5. SAA Crisis Management Team (CMT)

The makeup of the CMT team is discussed in chapter 1.

6. Alternate Team Members

The SAA crisis management plan must include an alternate for each CMT member and their contact information.

7. Crisis Procedures and Statements for Each Scenario

Based on the completed vulnerability audit, a section detailing different crisis scenarios in the plan should exist and contain procedures for internal and external communications instructions. Relevant instructions are to be developed in advance to be used for a wide variety of scenarios to which the SAA is perceived to be vulnerable. The SAA CMT should regularly review statements to determine if they require revision and if statements for other scenarios should be developed.

8. SAA Crisis Spokespersons

SAA crisis spokespersons are those individuals, within each team, who are authorized to speak for the SAA in times of crisis. A member of SAA senior leadership should be one of the spokespersons, but not necessarily the primary spokesperson. The decision about who should speak and represent the SAA after a crisis is vital to consider and should be identified beforehand.

There are all types and forms of internal and external communications regarding crisis communication, including on-camera, public meetings, employee meetings, etc. All stakeholders, internal and external, are capable of misunderstanding or misinterpreting information about SAA — as is the media— and it is the SAA crisis spokesperson's responsibility to minimize the chances of that happening.

9. Crisis Communications Processes & Protocols

The initial crisis-related news can be received at all levels of the SAA. An internal SAA crisis communication "call tree" should be established and distributed to SAA employees, describing precisely what to do and whom to call if there appears to be a potential crisis. Emergency contact lists provide a valuable communications tool for the SAA to utilize in times of crisis.

10. SAA Stakeholder Section

An important question to continue to consider is 'who are the stakeholders that matter to the SAA?' As discussed previously, the SAA starts with subrecipients, funders, state/local/community partners and the media. Since the SAA must answer to local, state, and federal regulatory agencies, each would also be deemed an essential stakeholder at a time of crisis.

The SAA must include all these audiences in the SAA management crisis plan, organized by type of stakeholder.

11. Crisis Communications Methods/Options

The crisis communication plan section should contain complete email listings and phone numbers to facilitate rapid communication and backup communications options keep various SAA stakeholders informed in times of crisis. The SAA must consider these factors in advance and build them into the SAA plan to ensure rapid communication during crises to be effective and efficient.

12. Summary Section

As part of the SAA crisis management plan, there should be a summary section where CMT members can record the results of all crises "post-mortems" conducted after a crisis to critique the plan and its strengths and weaknesses.

Keeping the SAA Crisis Management Plan Current

It is important to understand that the crisis management plan is a “living document” and is never truly “completed.” Many factors can make the SAA crisis management plan outdated, such as agency changes in the following areas:

- personnel
- vendors, suppliers, and other business partners
- strategies
- media contacts
- laws and regulations affecting the SAA

As a best practice, the SAA must consider updating the crisis management plan contact list at least twice annually and the rest of the plan annually.

Crisis Recovery

A well-thought-out, well-tested, and well-executed crisis management plan is key for the SAA in surviving a crisis. All crises have the potential to cause damage in some form; to employee morale, customer loyalty, market share, or stakeholder value. Sound crisis management planning allows the SAA to minimize the damage.

How the SAA responds to a crisis will provide an indelible image in stakeholders’ minds post-crisis. It is vital to remember that the public and the SAA’s stakeholders will often judge the SAA more harshly on how they handle a crisis than on the crisis itself. The more crisis preparedness the SAA does, the less crisis recovery it will have to do after the crisis has ended.

Below are high-level crisis recovery steps which the SAA should follow.

1. Determine the damage

The first step is to gauge the actual damage caused by the crisis. Communicate with the stakeholders, especially key ones. Ask them about their attitudes and perspectives on the crisis and how the SAA handled it. “Perceived” damage is not as significant as the actual damage.

2. Conduct a post-crisis analysis

The second step in crisis recovery is to gauge the SAA’s performance in responding to the crisis. This helps the agency determine what it did wrong or any weaknesses in the crisis response process in an effort to be better prepared next time. The post-crisis analysis involves assembling the SAA CMT to review its performance and the overall response and recovery process.

Questions to ask are:

- Where did it hold up?
- Where was it weak?
- Where did the team measure up?
- Where are improvements needed?

While the post-crisis analysis process determines recommendations that support the development of specific post-situation corrective actions, it may also reveal lessons learned to share with the internal stakeholders at the agency. The SAA should maintain a lessons-learned database as a means of sharing post-situation lessons.

The types of “lessons learned” information the agency should retain include:

Knowledge

Knowledge of experience, positive or negative, is derived from actual incidents and those derived from observations and historical study of operations, training and situations.

Best Practices

Good, peer-validated techniques, procedures, good ideas, or solutions that work and are solidly grounded in actual operations, training and situation experience.

Good Stories

Exemplary but non-peer-validated initiatives with success in specific environments may provide helpful information to other SAA elements.

Practice Note

A brief description of the innovative practices, procedures, methods, programs, or tactics to adapt to changing conditions or overcome an obstacle or challenge.

3. Create a Post-Crisis Analysis and Improvement Plan Report (including an Executive Summary)

The information gathered in the Post-Crisis Analysis and Improvement Plan Report is confidential and proprietary to the agency. The report should be protected, handled, transmitted, and stored with the appropriate security measures utilized. The purpose of the report is to analyze the results of the SAA’s crisis response, identify strengths, identify potential areas for improvement, and support the development of corrective actions. It should

be drafted after the SAA CMT has conducted the crisis “post-mortem” discussion/meeting.

The report should summarize what has occurred and answer basic questions, including:

- What happened?
- Why did it happen?
- When did it happen?
- Where did it happen (to include other areas affected)?
- How did it happen?
- What were the company’s objectives (and why)?
- Who were the company’s stakeholders?
- What tactics were employed?
- What were the results?

In general, the significant strengths and primary areas for improvement should be limited to three each to ensure the Executive Summary is high level and concise. Several opportunities for improvement in the SAA’s ability to respond must be identified within the report.

4. Complete a vulnerability audit

The fourth step in crisis recovery is to review and determine what the SAA can do to avoid another crisis. This means completing a vulnerability audit. Completing a vulnerability audit will adequately prepare the SAA as part of its post-crisis analysis.

Crisis response should always have an interactive (two-way) communication component. Communicating with SAA stakeholders does not stop when a crisis is over. It is just as essential to communicate after the

crisis as during the crisis and SAAs can enjoy a high level of goodwill with critical stakeholders by communicating post-crisis.

After Action Reviews (AAR)

An After Action Review (AAR) is the collection, contemplation, and discussion with stakeholders of any observations made during an exercise or real-world event. The participating parties or impacted personnel share their observations, recommendations, and any modifications made to adapt to changing or unexpected conditions or scenarios. The AAR can occur immediately after an incident with participants and observers gathering their experiences, insights and perspectives.

Examples of situations benefiting from an AAR include a kitchen fire in the office break space, or the SAA team being sent home during a power outage and navigating severe weather on their commutes. In either case, personnel can be gathered or queried remotely and asked to candidly share their experiences to be recorded, collated, and evaluated in terms of recommended actions to be taken in advance of, or during, future crises.

Alternately, the AAR may be conducted more formally and include a wider circle of personnel. A large venue or virtual platform may be arranged to expand the opportunity to contribute to the review or simply listen. It is important that individuals and teams record their observations and insights soon after the crisis or event to ensure the most comprehensive collection of details. The formal, larger review is often hosted or attended by senior leaders who are debriefed on any actions taken during the crisis, gaps in the response, any identified lack of resources, or best practices that

should be incorporated into crisis planning and future response activities.

Whether the review is conducted quickly and immediately after an event or more formally a few weeks later, producing a report is critical for the dissemination of the information gathered during the review and for aiding planners in revising or refining relevant plans and procedures. The AAR is the formal documentation of best practices, lessons, accommodations, vulnerabilities, challenges, and gaps in procedures being tested as drawn from a real-world event or planned exercise. Additionally, it should include recommendations for improvements related to procedures, resourcing, equipment, management, planning or any other areas where gaps or vulnerabilities are observed. Successes related to standard procedures, use of resources, the value of past training, and more should also be included in the observations and recommendations sections of the AAR.

It is important to note that an AAR is not intended to evaluate individual performances or competencies. An organization that uses the AAR for these purposes may unintentionally promote a fear in participants of being candid and honest in their own self reflections and analysis. The AAR is also not intended to assess blame for anyone's part in the crisis or its expansion. It should be approached positively with the goal of programming the team for success in the future.

In addition to producing a formal report and updating and re-testing crisis action plans, influencing the organization's culture encouraging mindfulness, reflection, analysis, and critical thinking during a crisis is another important outcome of any AAR process. The idea is not to

promote second guessing by persons involved in an incident, but to expand each team member's and stakeholder's capacity to take in information, consider its merits, develop courses of action, and make the best possible decision – quickly and capably. This desired culture shift is also one reason dissemination of the AAR findings is so important.

There are countless AAR formats available. Figure 2 shows a simplified version of an AAR, which can be tailored to any level of crisis or for any AAR purpose.

Crisis Training

Any crisis management plan is only as good as its execution, and that requires training. There are many reasons to conduct crisis training, most importantly how crisis training will impact the staff at the SAA. Training helps ensure agency staff will do what they should when they should. Training also prepares the team to carry out duties they might typically not be expected to and may be unfamiliar with. Lastly, not all SAA staff are involved in crisis preparedness or planning, and training can help convince agency staff that crisis management is essential. Adopting orientation and refresher training for all SAA employees, coordinated through the Human Resources department and mandated by SAA leadership, is a training best practice to consider when developing this strategy.

Two types of crisis management training exist and are critical parts of the crisis management planning process:

Training the “plan”

- SAA operational and crisis communications team members go over the crisis management plan. This comprehensive review of the plan will invariably elicit questions and suggestions for improvements. From both a communication and operational perspective, this can be an invaluable exercise as a written plan based on certain assumptions can then be enhanced to meet the needs of the SAA. It also provides “quality control” for the agency's crisis management plan.

All-staff training

- Every employee is a crisis manager for the agency; therefore, it is necessary to train all agency employees.
- Training should cover basic principles of crisis management, stress how important each employee is to the process, explain essential policies related to crisis response, and inform each employee of their role during certain types of crises.
- When conducting this type of training, the SAA CMT members should welcome questions from staff. This serves as an opportunity to leverage awareness of the SAA line personnel and will help improve the crisis management plan.

Conducting Crisis Drills

It is important to note that training is not enough. Proper training without practice weakens the ability for the SAA to perform when a crisis occurs. Conducting crisis drills will help the SAA learn and commit to the crisis management process. A crisis management plan for which the staff is not trained is like a fire evacuation plan with no fire drills. All

the SAA potential participants in crisis response need to be formally trained in the basic tenets of the crisis management plan. Standard exercises and simulations should be conducted to test and refine the SAA staff's newly acquired skills and repeated periodically to keep those skills sharp.

Whether the SAA crisis management plan is produced in-house or by an outside agency, conducting realistic simulations of crises that could affect the SAA accomplishes many things:

- Drills help ensure employees can effectively implement them and have the necessary skills to respond effectively to unanticipated emergencies.
- Drills help determine if the crisis management plan elements and strategies are appropriate when plan creation is still in the forming phase.
- Drills help ensure that the SAA CMT can carry out the actions defined in the crisis management plan.

Chapter 2 Notes

Figure 2: Sample AAR Outline**Incident or event “title”****Background on event or incident.**

- Timeline of main milestones with dates and places, as possible.
- Agencies and individuals involved.
- Terms and acronyms explained.
- Purpose of event if it was a planned test or exercise.
- Cause for event/incident if it was a humanmade, natural, or technological cause.

Observations, Comments, and Recommendations

- These elements can be collected from participants, stakeholders, and other relevant parties in the hours and days after a crisis is resolved.
- In the formal report, they can be listed as grouped into categories created by the AAR team or author.
- All collected observations may be reported, or groupings of similar items might be reported instead.

Findings

- These are the results that are reported after the various data is analyzed including observations, comments and recommendations.
- The analyst of the reported information should consider whether there are trends or indicators in the information, from which to draw additional recommendations or conclusions.
- The individual contributors of observations might not be aware they are one of many to mention a gap or issue.
- For example, if four of 100 observations mention a certain action was not clearly communicated to them and this issue was submitted by disparate team members, the AAR author can mention the widespread occurrence of certain failures in communication.
- Just as the AAR is not intended to lay blame anywhere, it has no use if poor results to a crisis are excused, ignored or buried.

Chapter 3 – Finance and Grants Management in Crisis

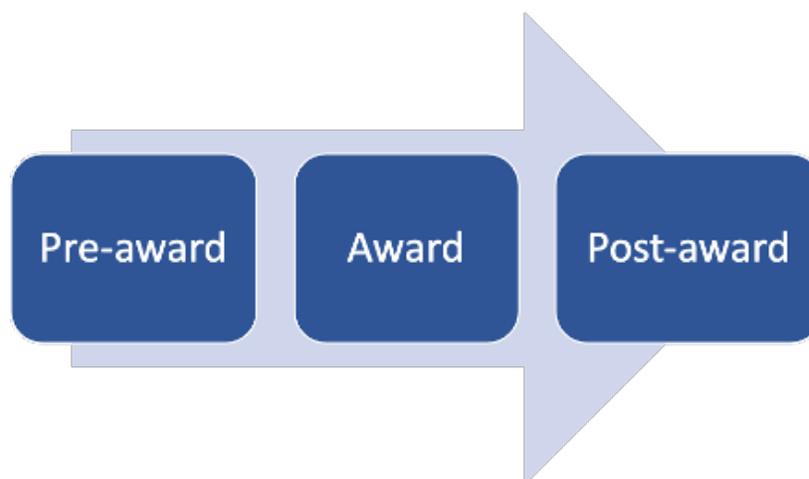
The role of the SAA is unique and is fully intertwined with grants management. While SAAs differ from jurisdiction to jurisdiction, SAA offices are responsible for administering and establishing a plan for dozens of funding streams, conducting cross-system strategic planning, analyzing crime trends, designing and implementing programs, awarding subawards to local governments, and evaluating program effectiveness. Grants management is an important aspect of the SAA's role, and it is a function that is especially important during a crisis. Put simply, grants management is the complicated process of administering grants, fulfilling their requirements to include everything from the application process to implementation and evaluation of a grant. This process can get even more complicated in times of crisis.

Chapter 3 of this Guidebook provides an overview of the grants management role of the SAA as well as outlines factors an SAA should consider during a crisis when they may receive new crisis-related funding streams while still managing existing grants. This chapter also includes the grant management cycle and considerations for thoughtful distribution of funds during a crisis.

Stages of Grants Management

The grant cycle includes setting up the grant, reviewing applications, selecting subrecipients, disbursing grant funds, and evaluating and tracking outcomes.⁵ These actions can prove difficult during a crisis, and grant applicants and subrecipients look to the SAA's office for guidance. Additionally, the life cycle of a grant (Figure 3) includes three phases: pre-award, award and post-award. During a crisis, flexibility and communication are needed at each phase. And while the SAA may be dealing with a crisis, it is important for SAAs to recognize that the subrecipients may be experiencing crisis as well.

Figure 3: Grant Life Cycle



Pre-award Phase

The pre-award phase includes the planning and development of the funding priorities, releasing the grant solicitation, and accepting and reviewing applications. For an SAA, strategic planning is a key step in this phase. While priorities may have been identified during a strategic planning process, a crisis may lead the office to rethink priorities and pivot if necessary.

A crisis and potential shifting priorities may call for the SAA to reengage with stakeholders. During a time of crisis, identifying the needs of stakeholders is more important than ever. There are various ways to identify needs including needs assessments, stakeholder surveys, focus groups and planning boards. As mentioned earlier, during a strategic planning process for grants administration, the SAA engages with a variety of stakeholders who may include law enforcement, judges, defense, prosecutors, behavioral health, state and local leaders and community-based organizations. Utilizing previous stakeholder groups in a time of crisis will help start the crisis planning process more efficiently. In addition to reengaging stakeholders, depending on the crisis, it may be necessary to communicate with other stakeholders including emergency management and public health. Communication with all stakeholders helps gauge needs and determine any shift in funding priorities.

A crisis may call for the SAA to pivot the grant application process itself and to consider streamlining the grants application process to allow for greater flexibility.

Factors and questions to consider when streamlining the process may include:

- Is it necessary to extend the application deadline?
- Will application materials remain the same or change? For instance, less documentation, reduction in the length and complexity of application, etc.
- Does the organization have the capacity to answer application-related questions electronically? Should applicants expect a delay in response?
- Will there be a delay in grant decision making?
- If the crisis affects the mail, there may need to be more flexibility to receive application materials via email or an online application process may be offered or encouraged.
- If the agency relies on paper, the office may consider shifting to a fully electronic system where documents are scanned as they are received and placed in a network folder for remote access by grant staff and Board members, if applicable.

As much as possible, keeping an open line of communication with applicants is essential. Proactive communication may reduce the amount of back and forth between the office and applicants and may lessen workloads on SAA staff. The SAA may consider using social media or the agency's website to communicate any pertinent changes or updates to the application process.

Award Phase

During the award phase, the SAA awards the grant, works with the awardee on a final agreement and contract and begins distributing funds. While this stage is the shortest in the grant life cycle, delays due to crisis may still arise. In addition to delays in making funding decisions, a crisis may lead to delays in agreements and contracts as well as disbursement of awards. Communication between the SAA and awardees remains important during this phase.

Additional factors to consider include:

- Method of communication.
- Continued communication regarding timing of and delays to funding decisions.
- Realistic budget discussions recognizing that a crisis may have implications related to grants activities and expenditures.
- How will grant decision making be conducted if a Board is involved?
- Will grant applicants be invited to attend virtual Board meetings?
- Does the State's Open Meetings Act allow for virtual meetings? If not, how and when will the Board convene to make funding decisions?

Post-award Phase

During the post-award phase, the SAA provides support and oversight on funding usage and program implementation, and tracks and monitors grant deliverables and outcomes. Just as in the other phases, a crisis may call for greater communication and flexibility.

Factors to consider include:

- Extending deadlines for progress reports
- If audits or site visits are conducted in person, changes in written policies may include shifting to virtual
- Communicating any changes to reporting requirements
- Allowing for flexibility, as necessary, to the scope of work and budget
- Allowing for no-cost extensions
- Providing technical assistance and resources related to grants management
- Allowing flexibility regarding requirements related to spending, reporting, timelines, outcomes, and allocations
- Review of all SAA policies to include flexibility during a crisis.

It is important to communicate transparently and proactively. To the extent possible, asking subrecipients about their situation and listening to their needs may create a smoother grants management process during a crisis. This is the time for SAAs to reach out to subrecipients to let them know what changes the office is making to the grants process. If it is not realistic to reach out individually, subrecipients may be contacted by survey or through email correspondence.

Finally, high levels of communication should remain within the SAA's office. Everyone in the office should be aware of any changes to processes and use consistent messaging.

If the agency is making substantial changes to any phases in the grant's life cycle, it should be communicated through various means such as:

- Email
- Website
- Social media
- Traditional media
- Press releases.

Thoughtful financial distribution

A crisis may have many financial implications for an SAA's office, leading to funding deficits or new crisis-related grants to administer. This underlines the importance of sound grants management as well as strategies to ensure grants are administered efficiently and effectively.

If the office is facing a deficit because of the crisis, it is important to communicate any changes to office operations to subrecipients. The SAA's office will likely be in close contact with state officials, and it may be necessary to shift and leverage other types of funding. The SAA must be careful to avoid supplanting. Supplanting is to deliberately reduce state or local funds because of the existence of federal funds. For example, when state funds are appropriated for a stated purpose and federal funds are awarded for that same purpose, the state replaces its state funds with federal funds, thereby reducing the total amount available for the stated purpose.⁶ It is important to pay attention to all the requirements and conditions related to funding sources as some types of funding may allow for addressing budget shortfalls.

This is also a time for SAAs to consider leveraging other types of funding, through a collaborative funding model such as braided or blended funding. Braided funding refers to combining two or more sources of funding to support a program or activity. With braided funding, each funding source retains its identity and tracking and reporting of each source remain separate. Checking with reporting requirements for each type of funding source is essential to determine if collaborative funding is appropriate. Keeping an open line of communication between stakeholders may also help in identifying potential funding streams. If utilizing a collaborative funding model, the SAA must document and track everything.

Phases to developing a collaborative funding model include:

- Identify the vision and the partners
- Define the program
- Explore financing options
- Develop the coordinated financing plan
- Implement, track and improve.

Managing new funding sources

As a grant-making body, crisis response funds may come through the SAA's office. It is important not only to plan for the funding but to understand the funding and its requirements. Coordination and communication are essential.

In 2020, as part of COVID-19 relief, the federal government allocated nearly \$850 million through the Coronavirus Emergency Supplemental Funding (CESF) program. The money was administered through the SAA offices and states were allowed a large amount of flexibility related to how to

administer the funds. Some states relied on the governor's office to identify funding priorities. Others relied on pre-existing networks such as advisory councils or local criminal justice planning boards to determine priorities. Many states worked with other agencies and stakeholders to coordinate. For example, FEMA reimbursed many pandemic-related expenses such as personal protective equipment and sanitation so CESP could be used for other purposes. As in the case of CESP, a crisis may necessitate the SAA's office to set up a new grant in a short amount of time.

- Factors and tips related to quickly administering a new grant include:
- Relying on pre-existing networks to determine priorities or announce the new grant
- Relying on previous grant processes
- Communicating with all relevant stakeholders, including the governor's office and other state offices
- Understanding grant parameters
- Understanding grant requirements, including issues related to reporting and potential supplanting
- Simplifying application process
- Streamlining review process

- Communicating quickly and efficiently with grant staff
- Determining who will be involved in the decision-making process.

Data and thinking ahead

Grants management during a crisis might mean moving forward before having all the information or time the SAA would normally have, or without knowing the final outcome. However, data is still an essential component of the grants management and the SAA's office.

While the SAA may allow for a level of flexibility with subrecipients, reporting is still a vital component of grants management. During a crisis, programmatic scopes and client services may change at the subgrantee level; therefore, it is important the SAA convey communication expectations to determine if reporting requirements need modification. If the office supported new programs through emergency funding, data is important moving forward to determine continued funding. Additionally, during times of tightened budgets, data and outcome reporting may provide the SAA's office with information needed to fund the most efficient and effective programs and activities.

Chapter 3 Notes

—Bonus Chapter—

Chapter 4 – Continuity of Operations (COOP) Planning for SAA Internal Offices

For those agencies interested in a more complex and comprehensive crisis management approach, formal Continuity of Operations (COOP) planning offers many advantages. COOP planning involves an all-hazards approach and facilitates mission essential functions for government, non-profit entities, and businesses during a wide range of emergencies. Additionally, key elements of a continuity program and the necessity for a whole-community approach in COOP construction and planning are key. Many state and local agencies will utilize a COOP plan as a gold standard for crisis management. It is, therefore, important that the SAA understands what a COOP plan is and how to develop one, should that be a need for their agency. In Chapter 2, a crisis management plan was discussed. COOP planning is a type of crisis management planning that can be utilized separately or in addition to a crisis management plan. It is important to understand the agency's needs, directives and practices before determining which type of crisis management plan is needed internally.

Chapter 4 describes COOP planning legislative underpinnings, components, partners, tasks and objectives. It discusses the operational purpose of continuity planning as well as the strategic importance of COOP planning for organizations and communities to establish the foundation for a successful continuity program within an agency or organization. Thus, COOP planning is necessary to work through a wide spectrum of natural and human-made events from the Readiness and Preparedness phases through the Reconstitution phase. This chapter provides a sound and systematic approach for COOP planning preparedness and readiness— from plan development through plan testing, training and exercise activities. Additionally, it references a body of existing resources provided by FEMA and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) with additional government agency plans, templates and checklists. Ultimately, this chapter provides SAAs with a roadmap for collaboration, resource sharing and knowledge dissemination as it relates to the COOP approach.

Chapter 4 provides an overview of COOP planning components.

- 1) Essential participants
- 2) Order of succession
- 3) Delegation of authority
- 4) Devolution of control and direction
- 5) Vital records management
- 6) Communication plans
- 7) Return to work phases
- 8) Workplace protocols
- 9) Test, training and exercises
- 10) Technology planning

Additionally, this chapter emphasizes the importance of capability building toward forging a comprehensive, integrated national security program. The keys to the successful implementation of COOP plans are the identification, prioritization, and documentation of agency Mission Essential Functions

(MEFs). MEFs are a set of department or agency functions that must be continued after a disruption of normal activity. Examples of agency and organization MEFs may include, but are not limited to, transportation for employees or evacuees, maintaining communications with internal and external audiences, technology and data/records security, and facility usage.⁷

It is also important to note that Continuity of Leadership is an essential part of successful COOP implementation and deployment. Thus, SAAs should be well-versed in COOP terminology, directives, partners, tasks, and goals in support of the development of their respective state COOP plans.

The Need for COOP

Human-made and natural disaster events require coordination, allocation and deployment of necessary funds, equipment and resources. COOP planning provides SAAs a mechanism to accurately, succinctly and comprehensively communicate action plans necessary to maintain essential functions throughout a crisis. Disruptions to the delivery of essential services are likely to occur. However, interoperability is crucial to maintain operational effectiveness throughout a crisis. Therefore, continuity planning must be conducted to restore necessary services as quickly and as efficiently as possible.

COOP planning will assist in mitigation through recovery efforts by providing plans that meet the immediate needs of any crisis. However, COOP plans should also be scalable, flexible, and adaptable to meet the needs of organizations and agencies as the crisis unfolds.⁸ A common framework and terminology for COOP operations

assists users in understanding the phases of COOP planning and the coordination efforts necessary for successful COOP implementation.

Purpose of COOP

Catastrophic events like the attack on the World Trade Center in 2001, Hurricane Sandy in 2012, the Boston Marathon bombing in 2013, and the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020-21, have promulgated the need for comprehensive continuity planning to effectively manage emergency situations. Events of this nature can strike any place and at any time and pose a significant risk to human lives, as well as a substantial financial risk to local and state economies. They can also impede or significantly disrupt the safe and effective delivery of operations throughout agencies, organizations, departments, and units. FEMA and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) recognize that, for the successful implementation and delivery of actionable steps to be taken during a crisis, a comprehensive structure is needed to support all aspects of continuity of operations planning. This includes the integration of strategies and tactics to ensure continuity of operations exists. Thus, preparedness through COOP planning is a key ingredient for successfully managing such events.

COOP plans assist agencies and organizations in minimizing interruptions in valuable services throughout crisis events by preparing them to respond and recover from critical incidents of any size, scope or complexity. Thus, COOP plans are instrumental in managing short-term, near-term and long-term crises that can be both harmful and dangerous.

Local communities are often impacted by crisis events with consequences ranging from moderate to severe. Moreover, the frequency that events occur may necessitate additional coordination of resources and services to ensure continuity of operations can be sustained. Thus, continuity planning must occur across community, state, territorial, tribal and federal levels to ensure that there is agreement in how incidents will be handled, what entities are responsible for the coordination of services, and what supports are in place to assist during all phases of a crisis. This requires a common operating picture and

a unified, coordinated operational approach. Most importantly, COOP planning emphasizes the importance of maintaining mission essential functions (MEFs), meeting organizational objectives, and leveraging existing resources to sustain continuous and effective continuity of operations.

It is necessary to determine what MEFs— critical activities and services—must be maintained and to provide the necessary support to ensure their continuity. Figure 4 below provides examples of some mission types and supporting activities for MEFs that differ across a variety of industries.

Figure 4: Missions and Supporting Activities⁹

Missions – Mission Essential Functions	Supporting Activities – Primary Business Functions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain transportation infrastructure Provide medical care Fight fires Provide safe water supply Perform health inspections Issue driver’s licenses Teach students Arrest suspects Investigate crimes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manage human resources Provide IT support Provide agency security Provide travel services Manage agency facilities Manage organization records Maintain service vehicles Perform legal reviews

Figure 4 illustrates the identification of organizational missions. Any organization, regardless of its size, scope, or complexity will have agency, department, division and/or unit activities that support the main entities’ MEFs. Both public and private partners are involved in designing mission essential functions. Thus, while some MEFs may be consistent throughout all industries, others may be more specific to the industry itself. It is important for SAAs to recognize

the importance of appropriately designed MEFs and the activities that support them.

COOP Legislation and Supporting Systems

The FEMA reports that COOP plans are essential during any crisis, including hazards, threats and events.¹⁰ Incidents may evolve quickly, and key stakeholders must adjust rapidly to ever-changing and uncertain conditions. Recognizing this need, the federal government has enacted several

policies, initiatives and directives to assist in managing the continuity of operations process. SAAs play a vital role in interpreting these policies and disseminating needed resources to their states in support of COOP planning and execution.

SAAs should be cognizant of the purpose and goals of federal directives, policies and guides, as well as the intersections between national continuity policy planning and state authority. A list of relevant federal directives can be found in Appendix A. These resources are essential in forging comprehensive and effective COOP plans

that align squarely and intersect effectively with national, state, and localized mission essential functions.

Developing a COOP Plan

COOP planning should be intentional, methodical, comprehensive, logical and practical. In developing COOP plans, it is also important to consider the viewpoints of various stakeholders that are directly impacted by the plan itself. To this end, developing a COOP plan requires the observance of 10 essential steps.

Figure 5: COOP Essential Steps¹¹

Step	COOP Essential Steps	Required
1	Designate the COOP Planning Team	✓
2	Develop a basis for planning and programs	✓
3	Develop planning assumptions	✓
4	Determine COOP Activation	✓
5	Develop COOP Team plan	✓
6	Develop incident specific procedures for priority hazards, threats and events	✓
7	Coordinate with external entities	✓
8	Provide education and training to staff	✓
9	Implement the COOP	✓
10	Conduct on-going reviews	✓

Step 1 – Designate the COOP Planning Team

The first step in COOP planning requires the identification of the specific operating units and the organizational roles to be assigned, and their responsibilities.

Step 2 – Develop a basis for planning and programs

The second step in COOP planning ensures a review of primary essential functions and mission

essential functions as guidelines for successful planning for divisions, departments, units, and programs.

Step 3 – Develop planning assumptions

The third step of COOP planning requires the development of specific plan assumptions. Assumptions are presuppositions regarding the deployment of certain aspects of the plan. Assumptions should align with expectations

for plan deployment during a crisis. To develop assumptions, it is important to ask key plan stakeholders to consider the following questions:

- What timeframes must be adhered to?
- What resources are available?
- What are the organizational/agency priorities?
- Who is responsible for what?¹²

Step 4 – Determine COOP activation

As a review, COOP activation requires adherence to the four phases of Continuity Operations, including, 1.) Readiness and Preparedness, 2.) Activation and Relocation, 3.) Continuity of Operations and 4.) Reconstitution, respectively.¹³ COOP activation is a critical piece in maintaining continuity of operations with minimal delays and disruptions.

Step 5 – Develop the COOP plan

Step 5 requires the development of the COOP plan itself through identifying COOP plan needs. In developing the plan, agencies and organizations should obtain already developed comparable plans from their agency or state government and if nothing has been developed there, similar sized industry specific agencies and organizations. Next, a review of the COOP plan should be conducted by key stakeholders responsible for developing the plans. This review will assist in starting a conversation regarding primary mission essential functions for the agency or organization and establishing priorities needed to accomplish plan goals.

Defining the roles and delineations of key players involved in COOP plan development are important aspects of successful COOP planning and implementation. COOP plan developers

should meet regularly and establish dates for the start and end of the project. Meetings should also be held with key plan stakeholders to have a consensus on planning needs. It is important to note that plan development should include information from all divisions, departments, and units affected by the plan. Additionally, orders of succession are an important consideration in COOP plan development.

A draft plan should be constructed by agency heads and disseminated through all layers of the agency/organization to ensure the plan meets its desired goals. Feedback should be collected on the viability of the COOP plan and input should be applied to strengthen the plan through adjustments and necessary changes. Additionally, procedures for the maintenance of vital records and database storage should also be discussed in COOP planning.

Step 6 – Develop Incident Specific Procedures

Step 6 involves the identification of essential functions as a starting point for policy and procedure development. An all-hazards, whole-community approach should be used to identify and respond to potential threats. Identifying specific procedures to address and prioritize certain risks, hazards, threats and events is also necessary at this stage. COOP planning should foster a whole-community approach and interweave mutual aid agreements, memoranda of understandings, memoranda of agreement and supportive assets supporting the plan.

Step 7 – Coordinate with External Entities

The maintenance of continuous operations throughout a crisis will likely require dependence on internal and external resources. Thus, Step 7

requires the coordination of operational processes and services with external entities such as but not limited to vendors, external stakeholders and cooperative partners.

Step 8 – Provide Educational and Training to Staff

Step 8 involves providing education and training opportunities to staff on emergency operations in the event of a crisis. In addition to agency and organizational operations, this training should also include elements of personal preparedness as well as community preparedness.

Step 9 – Implementing the COOP Plan

In Steps 1-8, planning considerations, elements of a viable COOP plan, interoperable communications, vital records and database storage, the identification of essential functions, delegations of authority, and training and exercises have been described. Step 9 details the incident-specific

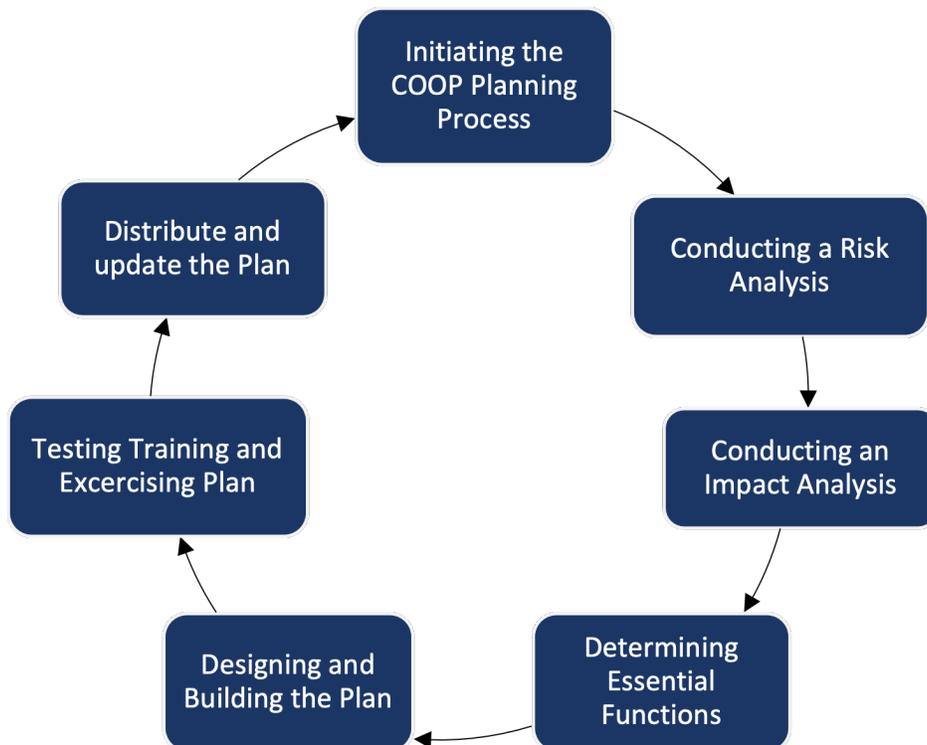
procedures used in response to a crisis event given the steps previously described. The procedures should support a whole-community approach to incident management.

Step 10 – Conduct Ongoing Review of COOP

Step 10 recognizes the need for ongoing review and corrective action support and a review of COOP plan performance. Performance reviews of the COOP plan should be conducted regularly to test the resiliency of the COOP plan and its appropriateness toward maintaining continuity of operations with minimal disruptions.

In support of COOP plan activation is the COOP planning model. The COOP planning model provides a comprehensive method for organizing the planning process in a cyclic fashion through the following practical steps. This model is illustrated in Figure 6.

Figure 6: COOP Planning¹⁴



Necessary COOP Plan Components

The successful deployment of COOP plans requires thoughtful and strategic development, maintenance, and training activities and exercises. While some disruptions should be expected, when successful, COOP planning allows users to return to a state of normal operations as quickly and as efficiently as possible. The SAA will assist in ensuring that COOP planning promotes safety, continuous performance of mission essential functions, protect essential equipment, records and other assets, reduce disruptions, and restore operations to their normal state.

Operationally, COOP plans should include:

- a description of essential functions
- orders of succession
- delegations of authority
- continuity facilities
- vital records management
- communications continuity and interoperability
- human capital management
- a plan for reconstitution
- tests and training exercises¹⁵

Each one of these concepts is necessary to ensure consistency, preparedness and readiness in COOP planning. Additionally, the integration of these themes into COOP planning provides a clearly articulated and logical plan to serve as a roadmap for managing critical incidents using COOP plans.

Essential Elements of COOP Programs

Within agencies, organizations, and departments themselves, there are a variety of relationships between both internal and external partners that support effective COOP plan deployment. External partners will often include stakeholders, vendors and other community partners that support the COOP planning and implementation. In viewing the development of an effective COOP program as a process, the following concepts are essential in planning and practice.

Descriptions of Essential Functions

Each agency or organization must determine its essential functions and ensure congruence between its priorities and essential functions. The identification and prioritization of essential functions should include an analysis of “what is” and “what is not” an essential function. Tasks deemed not to be essential functions should be deferred during a crisis incident until more personnel and or additional resources become available. “To determine whether a function is essential, consider whether it is statutory mandated, vital to the agency’s mission, critical to maintain safety (e.g., food service inspections) and/or necessary to the performance of other agency functions (e.g., maintaining/accessing databases to process payroll).”¹⁶ Plan templates can assist to effectively determine essential functions. A variety of key stakeholders must be included in developing and determining agency and organization essential functions to ensure that COOP plan goals are comprehensive, logical and achievable. COOP plans should also be viewed as living documents and be updated as needed. At a minimum, they should be reviewed annually.

Orders of Succession

Orders of succession are an important consideration for contingency planning in COOP programs. Orders of succession delineate the sequence of succession of personnel in the event of the absence of a key participant in COOP plan implementation. Crisis events may result in the loss of human lives, equipment, finances and other resources. Identifying roles for personnel to perform in the event of an emergency is crucial to a successful COOP deployment. Individuals will often serve in acting roles when needed in support of mission essential functions. Thus, clear lines of succession are necessary to ensure the continuation of needed leadership during a crisis event in the absence of one or more specific individuals. When developing orders of succession, it is important to focus on job roles, and not individuals. Orders of succession are formal and sequential listings of organization positions that identify who is authorized to assume a specific leadership role should the leader become incapacitated or unable to perform essential duties.¹⁷ These orders establish a pre-defined and formalized structure for succession prior to a crisis occurring. Thus, orders of succession support not only COOP planning, but should be integrated into common practices within day-to-day operations.

Delegations of Authority

Organizations and agencies should have an established and documented plan for delegation of authority for department heads and other individuals in supporting leadership roles. This plan should be deployed when necessary, during times of crisis. Plans should include procedures for triggering conditions that would necessitate the

delegation of authority, should be comprehensive, and consider position-holding authority and limitations of delegation(s).

Delegations of authority ensure a smooth transition of leadership and authority during times of crisis. The ability to quickly and appropriately delegate authority in a dynamic environment is essential to provide the leadership and direction needed to manage a crisis event. Delegation of authority supplements the orders of succession process and leaders must have not only the title of the role designated, but also the authority and responsibility assigned to that role. If the primary person is unable to fulfil the job duties for an essential position for an extended amount of time, the duties of that position should be transferred to an individual in another position. Delegations of authority should identify, by position, who has the authority to make policy determinations and decisions. In hierarchical leadership structures, organizational charts are great resources to quickly align position titles with primary and secondary responsibilities in preparation for a crisis. However, it should be noted that this does not preclude the opportunity to delegate authority under certain circumstances when necessary. These changes should be expected and will take effect when normal operations have been disrupted. Delegation of authority within COOP planning assists in facilitating readiness of personnel and enhances their readiness during times of crisis.

The delegation of authority process begins with identifying essential staff members to whom responsibilities and authority will be transferred to, or from, during a crisis. Delegating control of resources, equipment and personnel may be necessary to maintain continuity of operations.

Additionally, delegation of authority planning provides a succinct and well-organized process for transferring responsibilities. It also aids in eliminating confusion regarding leadership authority, responsibilities and control. Since the direction of an agency or organization is established by their respective mission statements, leadership direction should support mission essential functions, before, during and after a crisis event.

Continuity Facilities

When geographic areas are impacted by crisis events, alternate facilities may be needed to sustain operations throughout the duration of the event. Continuity facilities or “alternate facilities” refer to locations other than the primary site where business is typically conducted. Examples of these facilities may include other physical locations, mobile facilities, telecommuting or work from anywhere solutions. As a case example, during the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic, many businesses, organizations and agencies allowed their employees to work from home due to the need to maintain social distancing requirements and limit the transmission of the virus. As the duration of a crisis event extends over time, the transition to long-term solutions is necessary to maintain and sustain operations.

Vital Records Management

Record keeping is an essential function of any business or organization. The need to secure, store, maintain, protect and preserve vital records is an organizational priority. Vital records management should be incorporated into COOP planning to ensure that access to vital records

is available to authorized key personnel and location(s) of vital records are known.

Vital records should be viewed as any record needed to service external or internal customers. These records may have either a physical or electronic footprint. They may also require backup to ensure they are free from harm and damage.

A record can be defined as “any book, paper, map, photograph, machine-readable, or other documentary material, regardless of physical form or characteristics.”¹⁸

While there are a variety of vital records, in relation to COOP planning, common examples of these records may include, but are not limited to:

- orders of succession
- staffing assignments
- vital records inventories
- legal records
- payroll and retirement records
- equipment inventories
- insurance records
- contracts¹⁹

Vital records management is necessary to preserve records by ensuring physical and electronic copies of needed information are secure, protected, maintained and available to meet operational responsibilities.

Communications, Continuity and Interoperability

As discussed in previous chapters, effective communications are imperative during a crisis. The ability to effectively gather, interpret, and

communicate information accurately, concisely and in a timely manner requires a strategic approach to communications. Effective communications are crucial during a crisis to deliver the necessary information required to save lives and mitigate potential losses. Communication must be clear, non-ambiguous and precise for information to be clearly conveyed, received and understood.

Continuity in communications during emergency and crisis situations requires bi-directional communications with a variety of stakeholders. These communications may include, but are not limited to, communications with 1.) elected officials, 2.) community leaders, 3.) news media, 4.) incident command, 5.) regulators, 6.) suppliers, 7.) customers, and 8.) the public.²⁰ Effective communications afford the ability to gather information and first-hand accounts that are necessary to maintain a common operating picture through the duration of an event.

Communication plans should be comprehensive and identify all necessary critical and redundant communication systems available for usage.

Human Capital Management

Human capital management describes the “skills, knowledge, innovativeness, energy, and enthusiasm that its people choose to invest in their work.”²¹ FEMA (2004) provides that human capital management enables entities to invest in the training and development of employees while building skills and competencies that will increase individual employee flexibility. Additionally, human capital management considers the need for alternate assignments supporting MEFs for all employees.²²

All employees are valuable to their respective organizations and agencies. Likewise, all employees play an essential role in ensuring safe and efficient operations supporting MEFs. During a crisis, everyone in their respective environments must be appropriately trained, and fully acknowledge the role(s) they must perform. Additionally, in times of crisis, non-emergency employees may be assigned to perform specific roles necessary to maintain the health, safety and welfare of others. To harness this talent, organizations and agencies should initiate workgroups to assist during times of crisis. Expertise from a variety of areas may be drawn together through workgroups to best facilitate decision-making in a crisis. Additionally, human capital management planning should include protocols for identifying and assisting special needs employees.²³

During crises, employees must take on new roles and responsibilities in maintaining MEFs. Thus, employees should be well trained in their primary roles and cross-trained in the performance or direct support of essential functions.

Testing, Training and Exercises (TT&E)

Testing, training and exercises (TT&E) are critical activities needed to ensure all parties’ readiness and preparedness in the COOP plan design, development and execution. COOP plan participants will need to practice how procedures will be carried out and relevant policies, within a mock crisis environment. Plan participants will also need to perform their designated role(s) in a simulated crisis environment that provides an opportunity for them to demonstrate critical decision-making and crisis response skills.

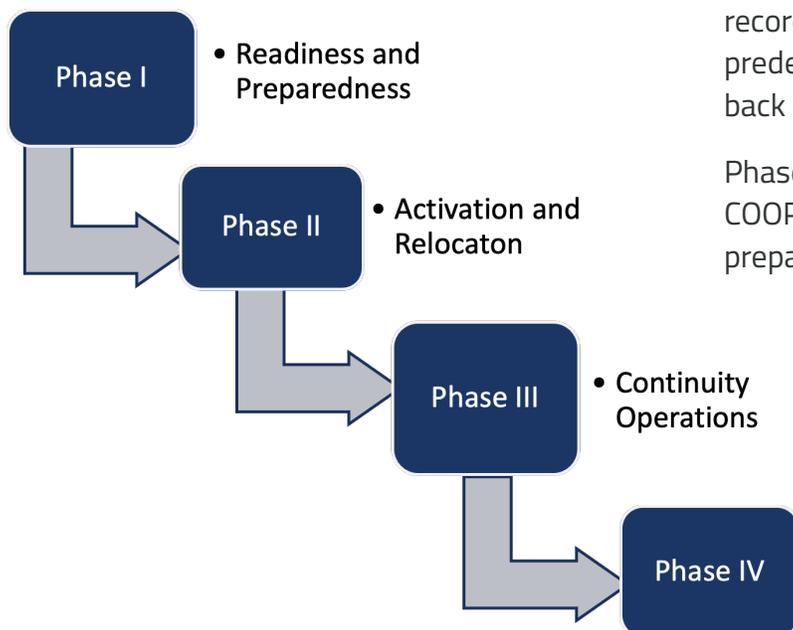
Designated personnel responsible for performing essential roles in support of the COOP plan must be knowledgeable and competent regarding all aspects of the COOP plan.

The CDC provides guidance regarding the monthly, quarterly, annual or as required TT&E requirements to assist in this preparedness and readiness process. Appendix B presents the CDC’s (2020) TT&E schedules for determining training intervals for specific tasks in support of COOP plan execution and may be used as a resource to assist any agency or organization to maintain continuity in meeting TT&E requirements while categorizing and documenting specific task completion intervals for tasks required.²⁴

Stages of COOP Activation

There are four phases in COOP plan activation as illustrated in Figure 7.

Figure 7: COOP Plan Activation Phases²⁵



Phase I – Readiness and Preparedness

The Readiness and Preparedness phase requires SAAs to help ensure the continuous performance of agency or organization MEFs. It is not a matter of if a crisis will occur, but when it will occur. Crises may strike at any point in time, with or without warning. Thus, a high level of readiness must be maintained at all times. COOP planning is instrumental in ensuring that agencies and organizations have existing infrastructure elements in place to address issues that may result in potential obstacles to successful COOP implementation.

Phase II – Activation and Relocation

The Activation and Relocation phase emphasizes the activation of plans, procedures and schedules needed to successfully transfer activities and operations. Since damage and destruction may occur at the primary site of operations, activities may be transferred to alternate locations to ensure continuity of operations are maintained, as well as for the safety and well-being of personnel, records, and equipment. Alternate sites should be predetermined, and the operation should move back to the primary site when it is safe.

Phases I and II constitute the early phases of COOP planning, including the preparedness and preparation stages in anticipation of a crisis event.

Phase III – Continuity of Operations

The Continuity of Operations phase requires full execution of all essential operations at alternate sites or facilities. The commencement of these activities requires the complete relocation of personnel, vital records, assets and equipment. This is necessary to continue



operations with minimal disruptions while operating from an alternate location. This location should present a low threat or threat-free environment.

Phase IV – Reconstitution

The Reconstitution phase involves terminating operations at the alternate facility or site and the return of normal operations. At this stage, the crisis has subsided, and normal operations may resume at the preferred location. That is, at the original location if viable, or a suitable alternate location has been established to return to normal operations.

Stages III and IV are instrumental in executing full-scale operational MEFs at alternate sites and facilities. Continuity of operations continues to be sustained in off-site locations until the crisis has devolved to the point where normal operations can continue at the readiness and preparedness level. SAAs should be well versed in these phases to understand how COOP preparedness sets the stage for continuity of operations through each of the various stages.

Chapter 4 Notes

Appendices

Appendix A: Federal Directives

Federal Executive Branch Continuity of Operations (FDC 1)

"Presidential Policy Directive 40 (PPD-40), National Continuity Policy, directs the Secretary of Homeland Security through the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to coordinate the implementation, execution, and assessment of continuity activities among executive departments and agencies (D/As). Specifically, the Administrator of FEMA is directed to develop and promulgate Federal Continuity Directives to establish continuity program and planning requirements for executive departments and agencies. This Federal Continuity Directive 1 (FCD-1) implements this requirement by establishing the framework, requirements, and processes to support the development of D/As' continuity programs and by specifying and defining elements of a continuity plan. These required elements include delineation of essential functions; succession to office and delegations of authority; safekeeping of and access to essential records; continuity locations; continuity communications; human resources planning; devolution of essential functions; reconstitution; and program validation through testing, training, and exercises (TT&E)." (Emphasis added.)²⁶

Federal Executive Branch Mission Essential Functions and Primary Mission Essential Function Identification Process (FDC 2)

"Federal Continuity Directive-2 (FCD-2) implements the requirements of FCD-1, Annex B (Essential Functions), and provides direction and guidance to Federal Executive Branch Departments and Agencies (D/As) to assist in validation of Mission Essential Functions (MEFs) and Primary Mission Essential Functions (PMEFs). The update and validation of essential functions includes conducting a comprehensive Business Process Analysis (BPA) to understand those processes necessary to the performance of organizational functions and requirements. It also includes conducting a Business Impact Analysis (BIA) to identify potential impacts on the performance of essential functions and the consequences of failure to sustain them. Further, it requires the application of organization-wide risk analysis to inform decision making and strengthen operations through effective risk management. FCD-2 outlines requirements and provides checklists and resources to assist D/As in identifying and assessing their essential functions through a risk-based process and in identifying candidate PMEfs that support the National Essential Functions (NEFs). This FCD provides guidance for conducting a BPA and BIA to identify essential function relationships, dependencies, time sensitivities, threats, vulnerabilities, consequences, and mitigation strategies related to the performance of the MEFs and PMEfs. This FCD also provides direction on the formalized process for submitting D/As' candidate PMEfs in support of the NEFs." (Emphasis added.)²⁷

Continuity Guidance Circular 1 (CGC 1)

“This guidance document provides direction to non-federal entities for developing continuity plans and programs. Continuity planning facilitates the performance of essential functions during all-hazards emergencies or other situations that may disrupt normal operations. By continuing the performance of essential functions through a catastrophic emergency, the State, local, territorial, and tribal governments (non-Federal Governments entities or NFGs) support the ability of the Federal Government to perform National Essential Functions (NEFs), continue Enduring Constitutional Government, and ensure that essential services are provided to the Nation’s citizens. A comprehensive and integrated continuity capability will enhance the credibility of our national security posture and enable a more rapid and effective response to, and recovery from, a national emergency.” (Emphasis added.)²⁸

Continuity Guidance Circular 2 (CGC 2)

“Continuity Guidance Circular 2 (CGC 2) provides planning guidance and a methodology to assist non Federal government organizations in identifying and ensuring continued performance of their mission essential functions.” (Emphasis added.)²⁹

CGC 2 benefits organizations by providing processes and procedures to assist with successful COOP plan development and implementation, including:

- Guidance on the development of localized plans and procedures that delineate essential functions;
- Specifying succession of office and emergency delegation of authority procedures;
- The safekeeping and access to essential records and databases;
- Identifying alternate operating strategies during an emergency;
- Human resource planning;
- Validation of capabilities through testing, training, and exercise (TT&E) programs;
- Devolution of control and direction; and
- Reconstitution.



Appendix B: Testing, Training and Exercise Capabilities Tables

Continuity Testing, Training, and Exercise (TT&E Requirements)	Monthly, Quarterly, Annually, or As Required
Test and validate equipment to ensure internal and external interoperability and viability of communications systems	
Test alert, notification and activation procedures for all designated continuity personnel	
Test primary and backup infrastructure system and services designated continuity facilities	
Test capabilities to identify and perform essential functions	
Test plans for recovering vital records, critical information systems, services and data	
Test and exercise required physical security capabilities at designated continuity facilities	
Test performance of essential functions internal and external interdependencies	
Train designated continuity personnel on roles and responsibilities	
Conduct continuity awareness briefings or orientation for the entire workforce	
Train organization leadership on the essential functions	
Train all personnel on all reconstitution plans and procedures	
Allow opportunities for designated continuity personnel to demonstrate familiarity with continuity plans and procedures and demonstrate organization's capability to continue essential functions	
Conduct exercise incorporating deliberate, preplanned movement of continuity personnel to continuity facilities	
Conduct assessment of organization's continuity TT&E programs and continuity plans and programs	
Reports findings of all annual assessments as directed to FEMA	
Conduct successor training for all personnel designated to assume authority and responsibility within the organization in the event of organization leader are unavailable	



Continuity TT&E Requirements	Monthly	Quarterly	Annually	As Required
Train continuity personnel on roles and responsibilities			✓	
Conduct continuity awareness briefings or orientation for the entire workforce			✓	
Train organization’s leadership on essential functions			✓	
Allow opportunities for continuity personnel to demonstrate familiarity with continuity plans and procedures and demonstrate organization’s capability to continue essential functions			✓	
Conduct assessment of organization’s continuity TT&E programs and continuity plans and programs			✓	
Report findings of all annual assessments to the (insert office/position title)			✓	
Conduct successor training for all organization personnel who assume the authority and responsibility of the organization’s leadership if that leadership is incapacitated or becomes unavailable during a continuity situation			✓	
Training on the identification, protection, and readiness availability of electronics and hardcopy documents, references, records, information systems, and data management software and equipment needed to support essential functions during a continuity situation for all staff involved in Essential Records maintenance			✓	

Source: [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), 2020.



Appendix C: Crisis Management Planning Tools & Templates

FEMA Preparedness Toolkits

<https://pretoolkit.fema.gov/web/em-toolkits>

FEMA: Principals' Strategic Priority: Operational Coordination and Communications

<https://pretoolkit.fema.gov/web/em-toolkits/operational-coordination-and-communications>

FEMA: Principals' Strategic Priority: Public Health and Healthcare Emergencies

<https://pretoolkit.fema.gov/web/em-toolkits/public-health-and-healthcare-emergencies>

FEMA: Continuity Planning for Pandemics and Widespread Infectious Diseases

https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/2020-07/fema_brochure-pandemic-ncp_082918_0.pdf

FEMA: Telework: An Essential Component of Continuity Planning Brochure

https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/2020-07/fema_brochure-telework-ncp_082918_0.pdf

Continuity Plan Template and Instructions for Non-Federal Entities and Community-Based Organizations

https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/2020-10/non-federal-continuity-plan-template_083118.pdf

FEMA: Developing and Maintaining Emergency Operations Plans

<https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/2020-07/developing-maintaining-emergency-operations-plans.pdf>

Appendix D: Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP)

Documentation and Templates

HSEEP Overview*

Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program

"Exercises are a vital component of national preparedness — they provide the whole community with the opportunity to shape planning, assess and validate capabilities, and address areas for improvement. HSEEP provides a set of guiding principles for exercise and evaluation programs and a common approach to exercise program management, design and development, conduct, evaluation, and improvement planning."

Website: <https://www.fema.gov/emergency-managers/national-preparedness/exercises/hseep>



HSEEP Information Sheet:

<https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/2020-04/HSEEP-Information-Sheet-20200203.pdf>

HSEEP Frequently Asked Questions 2020:

<https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/2020-04/HSEEP-Frequently-Asked-Questions-feb2020.pdf>

Appendix E: Planning Resources

Plan 1 – Continuity of Operations Plan Template and Instructions for Federal Departments and Agencies

https://www.fema.gov/pdf/about/org/ncp/coop/continuity_plan_federal_d_a.pdf

Source: Federal Emergency Management Agency, 2011

Plan 2 – Continuity of Operations Peer Planning Worksheet

https://s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/uasi-jtti/wp-content/uploads/sites/26/2018/11/20085607/COOP_PPW_Exercise_Worksheet_06-16-17.pdf

Source: Houston USAI, 2017

Plan 3 – Continuity Plan Template

<https://discover.pbcgov.org>

Source: Palm Beach County, Florida, 2019

Plan 4 – Continuity of Operations (COOP) Worksheets

<http://memama.maryland.gov>

Source: Maryland Emergency Management Agency, 2013

Plan 5 – Continuity of Operations (COOP) Planning Workbook

<http://www.harfordcountyhealth.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/COOP-Workbook1.pdf>

Source: Harford County Health Department, Harford County, Maryland, 2007

Covid-19 Resources

American Bar Association COVID-19 Resources

https://www.americanbar.org/groups/legal_aid_indigent_defense/resources/covid-19-resources/

Prison Policy Initiatives – COVID-19 and the Criminal Justice System

<https://www.prisonpolicy.org/virus/index.html>



United States Courts - Judiciary Preparedness for Coronavirus (COVID-19)

<https://www.uscourts.gov/news/2020/03/12/judiciary-preparedness-coronavirus-covid-19>

United States Courts - Coronavirus (COVID-19): Response and Recovery

<https://www.uscourts.gov/news/2020/07/02/coronavirus-covid-19-response-and-recovery>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) - Workplaces and Businesses Plan, Prepare, and Respond

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/workplaces-businesses/index.html>

Court Orders and Updates During COVID-19 Pandemic

<https://www.uscourts.gov/about-federal-courts/court-website-links/court-orders-and-updates-during-covid19-pandemic>

United States Department of Labor - Occupational Safety and Health Administration - Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Guidance

<https://www.osha.gov/coronavirus>

USA Gov – COVID-19

<https://www.usa.gov/coronavirus>

The United States Department of Justice - Statement by the Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights Leading a Coordinated Civil Rights Response to Coronavirus (COVID-19)

<https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/statement-principal-deputy-assistant-attorney-general-civil-rights-leading-coordinated-civil>

PDF Version: <https://www.justice.gov/opa/press-release/file/1384651/download>

OSHA (2021). Protecting Workers: Guidance on Mitigating and Preventing

<https://www.osha.gov/coronavirus/safework>

Prison Policy (2021). Prison Policy Initiative COVID-19 resources

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