

**JEFFERSON COUNTY
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

WORKSHOP AGENDA REQUEST

TO: Board of County Commissioners

FROM: Willie Bence - Director, Department of Emergency Management and Shawn Frederick - Director, Central Services.

DATE: May 19, 2025

SUBJECT: WORKSHOP re: Continuity of Operations Planning

STATEMENT OF ISSUE:

A Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) is a plan that outlines ways in which a business, agency, or jurisdiction can maintain critical operations during a crisis or disruption, like a natural disaster. While many Jefferson County departments have taken steps to ensure continuity planning within their respective departments, the County as a whole does not have an overarching plan or continuity program in place. A COOP is essential for recovery from disasters, both natural and man-made, as well as resilience during potential economic turbulence and loss of funding.

ANALYSIS:

An informal committee has been assembled to discuss a County-wide continuity plan. A process has been drafted for the Board's consideration that would include all Jefferson County departments in a planning effort to develop a viable COOP. This includes a Hazard Vulnerability Analysis (HVA) to understand the County's unique threats and hazards; identification and prioritization of essential services; identification and implementation of recovery strategies and timelines.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Currently, changes at the federal level have had significant impacts to grants and other funding mechanisms for critical local programs, while the possibility of a recession that could impact County operations looms. A Continuity plan can help ease these impacts by pre-identifying essential services and programming and developing mechanisms to manage funding impacts.

The COOP planning process will be conducted in-house. The total staff time necessary to complete the COOP is TBD.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Board hold a workshop to consider, approve, and provide support for the COOP planning process.

REVIEWED BY:


Mark McCauley, County Administrator

Date 5/7/25



Jefferson County

Department of Emergency Management

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COOP/COG Planning Proposal Version 2.2 - April 29th, 2025

Definitions:

Continuity of Operations Planning

An effort within individual departments and agencies to ensure the continued performance of minimum essential functions during a wide range of potential emergencies. Essentially, it is the capability of maintaining the business of government under all eventualities. This is accomplished through the development of plans, comprehensive procedures, and provision for alternative facilities, personnel, resources, interoperable communications, and vital records/databases.

Continuity of Government Planning

The preservation, maintenance, or reconstitution of the institution of government. It is the ability to carry out an organization's constitutional responsibilities. This is accomplished through succession of leadership, the pre-delegation of emergency authority and active command and control

This effort will primarily focus on COOP planning and maintaining government operations.

Goals of a Continuity Plan:

- Provide vital or "mission critical" services
- Exercise civil authority
- Maintain safety of the general public
- Sustain economic base during an emergency

Another additional goal of this planning process, as determined by the COOP planning team, is employee education and awareness around the expectations of them during an emergency.

Step 1 - Board of County Commissioner Workshop - approximately mid-May

- Willie and Shawn to present to BOCC on COOP goals, planning process, and potentially Hazard Vulnerability Analysis (HVA)
- Purpose is to answer questions on COOP planning from Board, receive buy-in, and to establish a top-down directive for all departments to participate in COOP planning process

Step 2 - Presentation at Electeds/Directors Coordination Meeting - date TBD

- Willie to present HVA previously completed during the Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP) and Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP) process.
- This serves as a review of hazards in the area (both natural and man-made) to better understand how critical functions can be impacted.
- Department heads will have the opportunity to ask questions and provide context or feedback as to how county operations may be impacted based on the reviewed hazards.
- At this meeting, Willie and Shawn will also outline the COOP planning process and upcoming surveys/questionnaires soliciting data for the COOP plan.

Step 3/Activity 1 - Essential Function Identification and Ranking

- Essential functions are those organizational functions and activities that must be continued under any and all circumstances.
- Departments will be asked to list functions under their department that meet the above criteria, and assign them a value based on the below "resumption time objective" (RTOs) based on the standards developed by the California Office of Emergency Services:
 - A – Emergency response functions (0-2 hours)
 - B – High impact on public health or safety (up to 24 hours)
 - C – High impact on public safety and health, or on department critical operations (up to 72 hours)
 - D – Moderate impact on public safety, health, or critical departmental operations (1-3 weeks)
 - E – Low impact (3 weeks or longer)
 - F - Minor to no impact/optional (can be paused indefinitely)
- Additionally, departments can be asked to identify which programs are legally mandated (RCW and/or WAC), which programs are necessary to justify or receive funding, and any other justifications for maintaining programs that may be relevant
- Willie will lead on this process.

Step4/Activity 2 - Mission Critical Systems/Equipment

- Based on the essential functions identified above, what resources are required to continue those functions adequately? This can include:
 - Facilities or work sites
 - Communication systems
 - Key personnel
 - Records and databases
 - Vendors
 - Other supporting agencies or departments
- Because this can be a large task, this can be broken up to start with the highest level essential functions first and work through the remainder as time/resources allow.
- Willie and Shawn can co-lead this process.

Step 5/Activity 3 - Line of Succession/Delegation of Authority and Essential Personnel

- This survey should have departments identify lines of succession to key positions within the organization.
 - The lines of succession should be of sufficient depth to ensure the organization's ability to manage and direct its essential functions and operations (at least three positions deep).
 - Succession should include decision-making authorities including policy, fiscal, etc. but at minimum, should include department-head backups.
 - This can also include key or particularly important positions at the department level (i.e. secondary managers or financial staff) at the department's discretion.
 - Many departments already have this in place, or plans that simply need updating.
- Departments will also be asked to identify all essential personnel within their department, based on the previous surveys, that would be required to perform emergency work or maintain critical operations after an incident (i.e. for tier A, B, or C critical functions).
- Judy Shepard to assist with identifying funding sources for essential personnel.
- Sarah to lead this process(?)

Step 6/Activity 4 - Review and Recovery Strategy

- With functions, essential resources, and potential hazards identified, we can now develop strategies for recovery, including:
 - Alternate facilities - locations to resume essential functions should existing facilities (i.e. the courthouse) be impacted.
 - Systems and equipment - acquiring and deploying backup or new critical resources
 - Records and databases - implementing backups of critical records should on-site storage be impacted
- Shawn to lead this process, with support from Willie and each department head.

Step 7 - Plan Review and Compilation

- The Planning Team should meet to review data collected after each questionnaire, but one final review should occur as the data is collated into a cohesive COOP plan. The Planning Team should review data collected to discrepancies, opportunities for further discussion, and areas for review/improvement during a future plan update.
- The Plan should then be prepared to review and signature before the BOCC.

Step 8 - Training and Information sharing

- Training for staff on hazards/emergency scenarios, expectations for them as a County employee, and potential continuity operations.
- This can occur at the departmental-level, or during broader County-wide trainings.
- Willie to lead this process, with support from Sarah and each department head.