



**KC RICE-SLICE '16
REGIONAL INTER-AGENCY CONTINUITY EXERCISE
Full Scale Continuity Exercise After-Action Report**

**Kansas City and
Greater St. Louis
Federal Executive Board**

September 21, 2016

The After-Action Report/Improvement Plan (AAR/IP) aligns exercise objectives with preparedness doctrine to include the National Preparedness Goal and related frameworks and guidance. Exercise information required for preparedness reporting and trend analysis is included; users are encouraged to add additional sections as needed to support their own organizational needs.



HANDLING INSTRUCTIONS

1. The title of this document is the KC RICE-SLICE '16 Regional Inter-Agency Continuity Exercise After Action Report (AAR).
2. The information gathered in this AAR is UNCLASSIFIED. The control of information is based more on public sensitivity regarding the nature of the exercise than on the actual exercise content.
3. All exercise participants should use appropriate guidelines to ensure the proper control of information within their areas of expertise and protect this material in accordance with current agency-specific directives.
4. Public release of exercise materials to third parties is at the discretion of the Greater Kansas City Federal Executive Board and the Greater St. Louis Federal Executive Board.
5. For more information, please consult the exercise points of contact (POCs).

EXERCISE OVERVIEW

Exercise Name	KC RICE-SLICE '16
Exercise Dates	July 27, 2016
Scope	KC RICE-SLICE '16 was designed as full scale exercise and will be followed by a Hot Wash. The exercise will start at 0800 and will wrap up with an all-agency Hot Wash that will commence at 1330.
Mission Area(s)	Prevention, Protection, Mitigation, and Response
Core Capabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk Management for Protection Programs and Activities • Long-term Vulnerability Reduction • Operational Communications • Planning
Objectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Demonstrate the ability to conduct the ability to implement agency Continuity plan by moving from Phase I (Readiness & Preparation) to Phase II (Activation) to Phase III (Continuity Operations). 2. Demonstrate the ability to conduct Essential Functions during a Continuity activation event. 3. Demonstrate the ability to begin reconstitution planning. 4. Demonstrate the ability to incorporate telework during a Continuity event.
Threat or Hazard	Tornado
Scenario	The National Weather Service (NWS) issues in the afternoon of Tuesday, 26 July 2016 a tornado watch for a wide swath of the central U.S. including the metropolitan areas of Kansas City and St. Louis. The Federal Executive Boards (FEB) in Kansas City and St. Louis added to the weather service's notice. They issued a notice to their members to be watchful of the deteriorating weather Tuesday evening and on into Wednesday morning.
Sponsor	Kansas City and Greater St. Louis Federal Executive Boards Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Region VII
Participating Organizations	See Appendix B for a full list of participating agencies

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Continuity exercise, KC RICE-SLICE '16, demonstrated the ability to activate an agency Continuity of Operations Plans (COOP) and evaluate continuity plans and reconstitution procedures. The purpose of this exercise was to test the Federal community's ability to activate, mobilize and commence initial emergency Continuity of Operations under guidance outlined in Federal Executive Board (FEB) Federal Continuity Directive FCD-1, federal statutes, Executive Orders, and Agency plans in response to severe emergency that affects the Kansas City metropolitan area.

KC RICE-SLICE '16 established an environment for players to exercise their continuity plans and procedures. The exercise focused primarily on the activation of the participating agencies' Continuity of Operations Plan(s) from their continuity facilities in response to a severe emergency that affects the Kansas City and St. Louis metropolitan areas. The exercise also heavily examine the ability to conduct Mission Essential Functions (MEF) from an alternate work location, conduct MEFs in an IT-constraint environment, and reconstitution procedures

The exercise, conducted from multiple agency exercise locations in Kansas City and St. Louis areas, began at 8:00 am and concluded at 12:00 pm (CDT). Both FEBs sent out a pre-exercise message using their Emergency Notification Systems (ENS) the day before.

Overall, KC RICE-SLICE '16 successfully provided a learning environment that presented an opportunity for agencies to review their continuity plans and procedures, interact with other agencies, and reinforce the need for robust continuity planning, training, and exercises. This report will analyze the exercise results, identify strengths to be maintained and built upon, identify potential areas for further improvement, and support development of corrective actions.

This exercise established a learning environment for all participants, analyze the exercise results, identify strengths to be maintained and built upon, identify potential areas for further improvement, and support development of corrective actions.

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ANALYSIS OF CORE CAPABILITIES

Objective 1

Demonstrate the ability to conduct the ability to implement agency Continuity plan by moving from Phase I (Readiness & Preparation) to Phase II (Activation) to Phase III (Continuity Operations).

Strengths

The capability level can be attributed to the following strengths:

- Important of ENS and maintaining Emergency Contact Lists
- Good input from leadership and communication from the top down for employees.
- Effective communication and accountability throughout the exercise.

Areas for Improvement

The following areas require improvement to achieve the full capability level:

- Some agencies seemed well prepared for the exercise especially on performing MEFs, however, there is room for improvement in training staff on ways around limited communication and accountability.
- Protocols needed for contacting staff emergency contacts.

Reference: D/As COOP Plans (Delegations of Authority and Orders of Successions)

Analysis: Integrate leadership coordination and communication in exercise play.

Core Capability

Risk Management for Protection Programs and Activities

Strength: Execute COOP plan

- Maintain Mission Essential Functions
- Assesses potential threats to project/program completion

Areas for Improvement

The following areas require improvement to achieve the full capability level:

Area for Improvement: Begin/maintain a COOP dialogue to encourage leadership and staff in understanding the COOP plan and responsibilities.

Reference: D/As COOP Plans and FEMAs training on gaining leadership support.

Analysis: Planning for a COOP event is multi-faceted, agency oriented and needs to be ongoing.

Objective 2

Demonstrate the ability to conduct Essential Functions during a Continuity activation event.

Strengths

The capability level can be attributed to the following strengths:

- Telework as an option
- Ability to access key internal electronic systems
- Up to date contact lists for internal and external customers

Areas for Improvement

The following areas require improvement to achieve the full capability level:

- Availability of exercise participants and some Senior Leadership on leave.
- No requirements to take laptops home for non-teleworkers and telework staff only brings laptops home when they know they will telework the next day.
- Communications and network access will be difficult if numerous cell towers are inoperative due to heavy reliance on air cards and mobile hot spots.

Reference: None

Analysis: Not all leaderships are trained in responsibilities.

Objective 3

Demonstrate the ability to begin Reconstitution planning.

Strengths

The capability level can be attributed to the following strengths:

- The Reconstitution Team was activated and coordinated with the Field Offices to act on damage assessment injects to begin working to reconstituting the requests that were injected. This process was effective and will continue to grow
- The importance of developing policies and practices
- The importance of understanding how COOP comes into play in an hazardous incident

Areas for Improvement

The following areas require improvement to achieve the full capability level:

- Designate a Reconstitution Manager in the Continuity Plan
- Reconstitution is somewhat challenging for some agencies as much of the acquired replacement assess would be handled by managing Field Office. Need to include Field Offices in future exercises.

Reference: FEMA's COOP Training (i.e. Reconstitution Planning Workshop or Independent Study Course -545: Reconstitution Planning Course)

Analysis: Continue training and educating individuals on COOP.

Objective 4

Demonstrate the ability to incorporate telework during a Continuity event.

Strengths

The capability level can be attributed to the following strengths:

- Some agencies telework on a full time basis. The exercise focused on key office Administrative staff capability to carry out normal functions from their residence.
- Staff were able to communicate via conference call and email.
- All staff, for the most part, knew what to do when at their telework site, such as they were all accounted for, even those on travel, and they all were able to access main system networks

Areas for Improvement

The following areas require improvement to achieve the full capability level:

- Some agencies have the difficulty that the event will occur yet there is no requirement for office staff to take their computers home daily.
- Connectivity issues will be problematic if cell towers are damaged, as some agencies use air cards or mobile hot spots.
- Some agencies have issues with employees taking their government issued laptops home daily, so this could be an issue in an unexpected COOP situation.
- There is too much reliance on IT and telework. Some agencies are now cloud based for IT. This is good because there are no servers to clean-up yet is also a problem because without an internet connection the capability is useless

Reference: FEMA's COOP Training (i.e. Reconstitution Planning Workshop or Independent Study Course -545: Reconstitution Planning Course)

Analysis: Continue training and educating individuals on COOP.

APPENDIX A: IMPROVEMENT PLAN

This IP has been developed specifically for Agency's as a result of Kansas City and St. Louis Hot-Washes conducted on July 27, 2016.

Core Capability	Issue/Area for Improvement	Corrective Action	Capability Element ¹
Risk Management for Protection Programs and Activities	1. Getting people engaged 2. Relocating to COOP/Alternate Facilities	1. Plan Organizational Initiatives that outlines the process for setting security goals; identifying assets, systems, networks, and mission essential functions. 2. Include Business Impact Analysis frameworks in COOP plans.	Planning
Long-term Vulnerability Reduction	Updating COOP plans	1. Provide strategic leadership and overarching policy direction for the continuity program.	Planning
Operational Communications	Communications will be key in during an actual activation and for personnel accountability	1. Established and test procedures for activation, operation, and deactivation of primary and COOP facilities. Document results and corrective actions addressed. 2. Develop and maintain a plan to initiate, receive, and/or relay notifications to all personnel.	Planning and Training
Planning	The need to have senior staff involvement for successful exercise	1. Have Leadership promote and ensure continual connection (e.g., ongoing standing meetings, webinars, and teleconferences) and use continuous quality improvement process to define and redefine information-sharing needs. 2. Have leadership provide support for policy and security change processes so all employees feel equipped with the necessary training to react correctly	Organization

¹ Capability Elements are: Planning, Organization, Equipment, Training, or Exercise.

		to a situation.	
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APPENDIX B: AGENCY'S FEEDBACK FORM

Kansas City

Agency Specific Objectives

A. General Observations

- The exercise afforded the Agency the ability to test our abilities to function under trying conditions while still executing our mission. Granted this was not an actual relocating exercise, it did generate serious actions and /or reactions.
- In general, the exercise went well and staff were able to perform MEFs without any difficulty while at their telework sites. There was also good cooperation from the staff in our agency in the exercise with effective communication and accountability.
- All Regional offices (within the Region 6) received and responded to injects. The layout allowed some time issues with giving proper thought and decision making into injects, but they were handled as they came in without delay by all the locations.
- The exercise went well.
- The piece of the exercise where we checked our access to key internal electronic systems is important and should continue to be a part of future exercises.
- Need to review documents periodically.
- We need a better understanding of our role (as compared to the contractors on site)
- What is our MEF?
- We need to better recognized stakeholders - HQ, congressional, employees.
- Some participants question at beginning if the exercise was applicable or reasonable.
- The group reacted quickly, calmly, and professionally on all injects.
- The group did grasp the second, and third order effects from events and decisions.
- The use of a large simulation cell seemed to work real well and introduced a new sense of realism.
- The exercise did uncover how the issues of file retrieval, fixing damaged files and gathering up debris will be something that might delay the recovery time line.
- The agency needs to develop some sort of method to track business during the emergency across all of the ERG.
- An agency completed the KC RICE-SLICE '16 applicable objectives successfully. Lessons Learned were noted, but overall the exercise was a success.
- The agency's alternate site is used daily as a training room. It took 3 – 4 hours of preparation before the exercise to make it ready for use as the COOP site. Access to data drops was limited.
- Staff were able to communicate via conference call and email.
- Since most of our team telework on a full time basis, the exercise focused on key office Administrative staff capability to carry out normal functions from their residence. The exercise went well and most functions can be successfully completed while teleworking. The difficulty that will occur is there is no requirement for office staff to take their computers home daily and connectivity issues will be problematic if cell towers are damaged, as we use air cards or mobile hot spots.

B. Structure and Flow

- Well planned out materials and exercise. The MSEL really helped with control of the exercise.
- The structure was organized per past exercises, so everyone in the office at the time of the exercise was already familiar with the steps to take when evacuating. The structure and flow of the exercise worked well.
- The exercise had some inconsistencies throughout the MSEL and PowerPoint that had to be adjusted for the exercise play. The flow was consistent and generated discussion. It however did not allow ample time to adequately plan, respond and recover appropriately. Some additional data to play into ESF's and Reconstitution would have been great and is recommended for the next exercise.
- The phone tree worked well.
- The COOP exercise was expertly executed.
- Some events were not relevant to the time line (i.e. Reconstitution items within 1-2 of the event notification).
- Several items did not apply to us.
- It flowed well.
- The exercise needs to be longer
- Maybe in the future there could be some simulated news broadcasts talking about the scenario
- In the future there probably should be more space in the MSEL allocated to MEFs and less to general
- The jammed MSEL in the early hour's best reflects the initial chaos which would occur in a disaster.
- The work needs to be more evenly distributed across the ERG.
- The structure and flow of the exercise worked well.
- Agency specific injects allow us to tailor our scenarios specific to our agency.

C. Agencies Preparation for the Exercise

- The agency was well prepared.
- The agency seemed to be well prepared for the exercise especially on performing MEFs, however, there is room for improvement in training staff on ways around limited communication and accountability.
- The Lead Controller added content into the MSEL to enhance the reconstitution effort and need for disaster contracting services. This helped create more realism for the participants. I created a damage assessment reporting tool that was used and now adopted as the standard for conducting rapid damage assessments. A participant briefing, controller/evaluator brief and a local final planning meeting was conducted.
- The agency was prepared for the exercise and managed it well.
- The COOP exercise was expertly executed.
- Most participants felt our preparedness was mediocre.
- Rely on interaction with contractors
- Agency was somewhat prepared.
- Need to ensure plan of succession is complete to include the ability to adapt whenever the next person in line may not be available.

- This year the agency did conduct some initial training prior to the exercise. That training was orientated towards the exercise. In the future training probably should focus some on the basics.
- There wasn't much advance notice.
- Good Regional support.

D. Agencies Participation in the Exercise

- Good input for leadership and communication from the top down for employees.
- Participation was great, however, we had fewer people participating than recent years due to trainings and a few people being out of the office.
- WPS/GETS were tested and satisfactory. SAT phones were tested satisfactory. A complete accountability test was initiated with a total response of 85%. Participation was great for the exercise. The ROB had a total of 16 personnel at the ERS. The Field Offices each had 5-8 personnel creating a total of 45-55 participants.
- Good participation; all senior level management attended.
- Overall things went well. The players seemed to be engaged. Frequently they were thinking ahead of the MSEL. That means they grasped the issues before injects hit them.
- Available staff were able to fully participate in the exercise.
- Participants were enthusiastic and made honest efforts to test injects. At one point our IT person had to make a request to headquarters for help. They were not part of the exercise but provided the help and an explanation of some complications that could occur had this been a real event.

E. Agencies Strengths Observed

- Good communication and execution of plan.
- All staff, for the most part, knew what to do when at their telework site, such as they were all accounted for, even those on travel, and they all were able to access main system networks.
- The right players were at the table. Two key business lines were missing due to conflicts ahead of time, the continuity team were able to identify who was responsible and take action. If something came up for the missing lines it was controlled and simulated after they quickly identified who is responsible
- There were great operational communications from the field offices and the regional office. Information was quickly disseminated creating a good sense of situational awareness
- The Reconstitution Team was activated and coordinated with the Field Offices to act on damage assessment injects to begin working to reconstituting the requests that were injected. This process was effective and will continue to grow.
- The ability to telecommute is a strength.
- The COOP exercise was expertly executed.
- Our agency presence is small, contractor onsite, notification tools in place, other emergency plans in place, and succession plan in place.
- They did properly follow the orders of succession and delegation of authority.

- Agency personnel did realize impact of events and decisions.
- There was a great deal of cross talk across the agency.
- Use of a large simulation cell helped introduce a stronger sense of reality.
- Agency personnel were providing in depth answers to injects.
- Maintain communication and successfully access pertinent systems and data.
- Telework makes continuity easier to achieve. There is no urgent need to find an alternate COOP facility.

F. Agencies Weaknesses Observed

- Hard to really identify since no relocation happened.
- A few staff member had a little trouble with the phone tree process, which may require a little training. Also, I noticed that a few staff member dread taking their government issued laptops home, so this could be an issue in an unexpected COOP situation.
- Operational Coordination was lacking due to a non-existent ICS structure and basic NIMS principles.
- There is too much reliance on IT and Teleworking strategies. Agency is cloud based for IT, good there are no servers to clean-up... Bad in the sense that without an Internet connection the capability is useless.
- There were some process tweaks and functionality aspects that need to be fixed and worked into the plan during the next update.
- The ability to telework is much greater when staff brings home their laptops. However, staff only brings lap tops home when they KNOW they will telework the next day. The majority of the time, the lap tops are left in the office. If an event was to actually occur, it is likely that most of the staff would not have their laptops with them and this would greatly reduce the ability for the employee to function outside their office. The agency has limited ability to access programs via a non-government issued computer. Many of the staff do NOT have work phones.
- The only downside was the limited number of staff participating in the exercise due to travel and vacation schedules. We should exercise again when we have a larger number or all staff in the office.
- Exercise infrequency, identification of required communication to include some secure communications, and not all members of the ERG has GETS/WPS cards.
- Use of telework might help them out, pending power loss is minimized.
- Some teams realized they did not have adequate communications capability for their work at the alternate site.
- The increase of personnel due to the exercise did strain, but did not break the communications and IT structure at the alternate site.
- To increase readiness we need to rotate people through the ERG and/or increase the size of ERG. A real world event will force them to grow past the first 25 anyway.
- Some people said that they had difficulty getting the emergency notification system to register their acknowledgement of the call.
- Due to travel, some staff were not able to participate.
- Access to a headquarters back up of our Y drive for critical files could take about 10 hours to complete. Improvement coming in the next several months.
- No satellite phone availability.

- Since the Regional Administrator and both Deputies were in headquarters for meetings, no GETS cards were available.
- No requirement to take laptops home daily for non-teleworkers.

Conclusion

A. Agencies Takeaways

- Continue to update plan as a best practice, and continue the good communication.
- Our main take away from this exercise is to encourage our staff to take laptops home every night and for their convenience help find alternate ways for them to access agency intranet to execute MEF.
- Operational coordination and communications are key to successful response and recovery. The ability to conduct operations lingers on a single point of failure with the IT infrastructure that has to be mitigated against.
- The lack of work phones and non-access to email and work programs on non-government computers will hinder this agency's ability to provide continuity of work in an emergency situation.
- Add public relations and IT to COOP; update emergency contact information; update succession letter to include cell numbers; training for COOP coordinator; and conduct the exercise with contractors.
- Overall RICE/SLICE was a positive event which positively contributed to the overall agency emergency readiness level.
- Protocols for contacting staff emergency contacts.
- Additional GETS cards would be beneficial.
- Communication and teamwork were excellent.
- Communication and network access will be difficult if numerous cell towers are inoperative because we rely on air cards and mobile hot spots.

B. COOP training or assistance needed to strengthen the exercise

- Agency will provide NIMS and ICS training and start working toward utilizing ICS for command and control. Recommending that Field Office personnel take the G-557 Damage Assessment Workshop course to get formalized training on conducting damage assessments.
- We need to practice devolution to another region especially since we have a new grants development and management system.
- Increase frequency of exercise; annual review of the COOP with all employees; and COOP training for COOP coordinator.
- More classes should be offered.
- Regional employees should have a better understanding of what COOP is and what the expectations are when the plan is activated.

C. Additional Comments

- Overall it was a good exercise. I look forward to helping develop further exercises.

St. Louis

Agency Specific Objectives

A. General Observations

- Implementation or propping up our COOP site is something that we are good at. We have the benefit of having our COOP site and secondary COOP sites as current use facilities. We have system access, equipment, and space that is pretty much ready to go. We have very good capabilities with accounting for personnel, conducting MEF and identifying strengths and/or weaknesses.
- Some minor real world incidents affected play.
- Not enough agency participation.

B. Structure and Flow

- This year the participants stated they would have preferred more agency specific actions. We are aware the SLICE team knows this and has gone to great lengths to add more agency specific injects. Next year we would like to concentrate more on SLICE prep, so that we can take advantage of agency specific situation injects, and hope to exercise more specific capabilities. A good chunk of the injects tend to be activities that would be handled or coordinated by our Field Office and rest outside of our control.
- Exercise communications worked well.

C. Agencies Preparation for the Exercise

- Reconstitution is somewhat of a challenging concept as much of the acquired replacement assets (office equipment, office space, vehicles, etc.) would be handled by our managing Field Office, along with many other injects. We would like to include this Field Office in our future exercises, however, coordination schedules may be quite challenging.
- Telework agreements in place and approved by management.
- Emailed Reconstitution template to all attendees.

D. Agencies participation in the exercise

- Participation is a key part of maintaining and developing the COOP. We see new issues and discover additional concerns that we have not thought of or planned for, so the SLICE is a great tool for identifying issues. We know that implementing the COOP and continuing MEF is very basic and straight forward. The real challenge gets to be dealing with the issues that come up after you are up and running, requesting support, dealing with personnel issues, and potential loss of life depending on the size and severity of the emergency.
- Staff was limited and some senior leaders were on leave

E. Agencies Strengths Observed

- As stated throughout, implementing our COOP, working from the COOP location and continuing with our MEF's are things we are good at. Agency's mission on the front lines of national security involves comprehensive emergency preparedness supported by ongoing training and experienced workforce.
- Communication systems, redundant electronic systems, redundant mission-critical functions
- Leadership working together in collaboration.
- ISO accredited lab able to devolve.
- Remote IT database access.
- Telework
- Alternate Facility (hot).

F. Agencies Weaknesses Observed

- We found staffing the exercise to be challenging as the date and time conflicted with other agency obligations. Despite this though, the experience helps us to identify a few specific additions needed to improve our COOP such a local short term reconstitution plan.
- Needed a detailed plan MOU for purchases.
- Senior leaders on leave.
- SOP development.
- Designate Reconstitution Manager.
- Reconstitution challenges, who's in charge, need to designate someone.

Conclusion

A. Agencies Takeaways

- As mentioned, we will look to develop and address certain actions required in reconstitution operations. Additionally, we will clarify roles and responsibilities at the local and Field Office levels in our COOP. Finally we will dedicate additional preparation time for the next SLICE to enhance the experience and strengthen our response.

B. COOP training or assistance needed to strengthen the exercise

- We could use training on COOP development so that our plan could implement additional best practices.

C. Additional Comments

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APPENDIX C: PARTICIPANT'S FEEDBACK FORM

Kansas City

1. What is your assessment of the exercise design and conduct?

Questions	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat	Moderately	Agree	Strongly Agree
I have more knowledge of Continuity of Operations Plan(s) and my role during continuity activation	0%	10%	14%	48%	29%
I was prepared for the exercise	5%	5%	14%	38%	38%
The exercise affected my understanding of Continuity of Operations Plan(s) and my role during continuity activation	5%	5%	33%	38%	19%
Exercise objectives were clearly understood	0%	0%	19%	52%	29%
Exercise met the stated objectives	0%	0%	24%	57%	19%
Exercise materials and information provided before and during the exercise were helpful	0%	0%	24%	33%	43%
Amount of time allocated for this exercise was appropriate	0%	0%	19%	52%	29%
Exercise was well organized	0%	0%	10%	48%	43%
Off-Site Exercise Execution – Exercise action items were successfully received in a timely and accurate manner	0%	0%	19%	52%	29%

2. Considering all of the expectations you may have had about the exercise, to what extent has the exercise met your expectations?

Falls Short (1)	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Exceed (10)
0%	0%	0%	0%	10%	19%	14%	19%	19%	19%

3. What is the most significant thing that you learned from the exercise?

- Technology allowed for sharing of information, good communications and coordination among players at venues. Everyone knew who had the role and responsibility for specific mission essential functions.
- Need to ask GSA how our lease would be affected if the facility were to be damaged beyond repair.

- Preparedness and back up planning.
 - Need minor COOP updates.
 - Nail down back-up plan.
 - Need to update delegation memo with phone #s and give to Contractor POC.
 - That I have an important role which has been avoided in our COOP plan.
 - Need new continuity site.
 - Communication.
 - That we need to have an employee discussion on the importance of keeping ENS information updated and accurate. That is important to have alternative methods to communicate with all levels of the organization, (cell phone, personal emails, and landlines).
 - More work needs to be done on exercise execution.
 - Telework is not a full solution for COOP because equipment may be destroyed or unavailable for employees who had already reported to the impacted duty station.
 - Our COOP plan needs to be updated to address a few areas that were highlighted in this exercise.
 - Have open communication and working resources to accomplish task needed.
 - IT issues can be handled remotely.
4. What deficiencies in your Continuity of Operations Plan(s) or Continuity planning did you identify?
- NIMS/ICS lacking, more interoperability methods needed, more functional ERS needed.
 - Need to find out if purchase limits can be increased during an emergency situation on purchase cards and travel cards. Need to specify steps to take to obtain replacement laptops. Do we want to insist on employees taking their laptops home each evening? Is the Director specifically named as the sole media POC? Need to identify any lab activities needing alternate arrangements. Need to specify how we would contact customers who would not get service. Need to specify what to do about incoming deliveries - need to find out from UPS/FedEx/USPS what they would allow/require under a COOP scenario.
 - If a real unexpected emergency existed, we would not have a laptop at our telework location, nor a means to access our servers.
 - Off-site location may need to be updated.
 - What is our essential role?
 - Need to update delegation memo with phone #s and give to Contractor POC.
 - We need to identify people to perform certain roles. Need a better idea of roles for us, Contractors, property owner.
 - Contact by other than cell phone.
 - How much we will rely on our M&O.
 - That we do not have enough information regarding number of teleworkers, contact information for our agency's primary location and PIO information.
 - Format
 - We are greatly dependent on agency intranet website and other websites. If we do not have access to these resources, we may be less effective.

- Building security after an event, what to do with staff who normally work in a laboratory when the building is not available, what to do with frozen material in extended power outages, replacement cost estimates, shipping concerns, and minimum building requirements.
 - Was not sure of who all should be included on various correspondence.
5. What would you like to see done differently in future exercises?
- More coordination at the Field Office level. A more in-depth participant list at venues released for personnel information.
 - We need to have participation from all ERG members.
 - More realistic scenario. Most of the scenario would not happen in the first 4 hours after event.
 - More short term focus rather than longer term issues.
 - I think in a real emergency the chain of command communication would be essential. As a SISI I assume my ACD and section chief would communicate with the front office and I would receive tasks/communications from my ACD and Section Chief. I think we need to mimic the true communication structure.
 - It needs to be longer.
 - I would like more involvement from senior leaders (i.e. ACDs and SEAT members) because that would be a more likely scenario as we transition from OEP to COOP.
 - A meeting held prior to exercise to provide adequate information on what is expected and should be provided or completed during the exercise.
6. Off-Site Agencies: Please provide additional comments that you may have on the off-site exercise execution and your ability to communicate with the exercise staff and on-site agency representatives:
- Coordination and communications methods should be reviewed for process improvement.
 - Feedback/Lessons learned.
 - Things went well.
 - We had no issues communicating with the staff, internally or externally.
 - Everything that was needed from my telework location was operational and functioned accordingly.
 - Exercise went well from remotely connected location in Denver to Kansas City remote IT personal.
7. What type of COOP training or assistance would strengthen weaknesses found during the exercise?
- NIMS/ICS training would benefit the organization. Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) training is needed for refresher.
 - Maybe real-time contacts made with support partners such as GSA, APHIS, UPS, Portland Field Office, etc.
 - Regional COOP training.
 - Understanding of Roles and Responsibilities.
 - More details on damage. Do we have communications? Do we have IT services?

- I think testing the actual scenario where we did not have network and communication access in the buildings. I think having no email or communication ability inside our buildings would be a good test for our communication during a tragic event.
- More time needed to train employees.
- Regular exercise and internal COOP audits/updates.
- No actual phone contact from management or other involved personnel to advise or provide better guidance on how to proceed or what to expect in the exercise.
- Update of issues as they occur by mail or text if available. Other locations may have additional capabilities that could assist.

8. Additional Comments

- Overall it was good exercise, participants from our agency stated it was one of the best ones they had partaken in.
- I think we need to have more information on expectations. Are you expecting an answer from us on scenarios that are sent to us that do not apply to our division or section? As an example we got a question about how to account for lost files. I think that would be a records issue and not something our section would be the primary focus on answering in a real event. We may have to provide RP codes for them to sweep, but that would be the extent of it.
- Great scenario
- Can provide more detail and coherent comments once I have had time to reflect and process the exercise that was completed.

St. Louis

1. What is your assessment of the exercise design and conduct?

Questions	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat	Moderately	Agree	Strongly Agree
I have more knowledge of Continuity of Operations Plan(s) and my role during continuity activation	0%	11%	0%	56%	33%
I was prepared for the exercise	0%	6%	0%	56%	39%
The exercise affected my understanding of Continuity of Operations Plan(s) and my role during continuity activation	6%	0%	6%	56%	33%
Exercise objectives were clearly understood	6%	0%	6%	56%	33%
Exercise met the stated objectives	6%	0%	6%	56%	33%
Exercise materials and information provided before and during the exercise were helpful	6%	0%	11%	56%	28%
Amount of time allocated for this exercise was appropriate	6%	0%	0%	61%	33%
Exercise was well organized	6%	0%	11%	44%	39%
Off-Site Exercise Execution – Exercise action items were successfully received in a timely and accurate manner	0%	0%	11%	39%	50%

2. Considering all of the expectations you may have had about the exercise, to what extent has the exercise met your expectations?

Falls Short (1)	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Exceed (10)
6%	0%	0%	0%	11%	6%	11%	33%	11%	22%

3. What is the most significant thing that you learned from the exercise?

- Our COOP plan needs to be updated to address a few areas that were highlighted in this exercise.
- Telework is not a full solution for COOP because equipment may be destroyed or unavailable for employees who had already reported to the impacted duty station.
- More work needs to be done on exercise execution.

- We need to have an employee discussion on the importance of keeping ENS information updated and accurate. That is important to have alternative methods to communicate with all levels of the organization, (cell phone, personal emails, and land lines).
 - Nail down back-up plan.
 - Need minor COOP updates.
 - Good participation; all senior level management attended.
 - Communication.
 - Need new continuity site.
 - Preparedness and back-up planning.
 - Have open communication and working resources to accomplish task needed.
 - IT issues can be handled remotely.
 - That I have an important role which has been avoided in our COOP plan.
 - Technology allowed for sharing of information, good communications and coordination among players at venues. Everyone knew who had the role and responsibility for specific mission essential functions.
 - Need to ask GSA how our lease would be affected if the facility were to be damaged beyond repair.
 - Knowing who the key players when it comes to communication, especially in the early stage of the disaster recovery plan. When you identify the POCs early on, it will alleviate the burden of knowing who to reach out to for support and resource procurement.
 - Information that needs to be added to our COOP plan.
4. What deficiencies in your Continuity of Operations Plan(s) or Continuity planning did you identify?
- NIMS/ICS lacking, more interoperability methods needed, more functional ERS needed.
 - There are no deficiencies that I've seen from NBC's plan. The response we've received based on the scenario injects, covers all aspects of the FCDs.
 - Need to find out if purchase limits can be increased during an emergency situation on purchase cards and travel cards. Need to specify steps to take to obtain replacement laptops. Do we want to insist on employees taking their laptops home each evening? Is the Director specifically named as the sole media POC? Need to identify any lab activities needing alternate arrangements. Need to specify how we would contact customers who would not get service. Need to specify what to do about incoming deliveries - need to find out from UPS/FedEx/USPS what they would allow/require under a COOP scenario.
 - If a real unexpected emergency existed, we would not have a laptop at our telework location, nor a means to access our servers.
 - Off-site location may need to be updated.
 - What is our essential role?
 - Need to update delegation memo with phone #'s.
 - We need to identify people to perform certain roles. Need a better idea of roles for us, Honeywell, CenterPoint (property owner).
 - Contact by other than cell phone.
 - How much we will rely on our M&O.
 - Format
 - Was not sure of who all should be included on various correspondence.

- We are greatly dependent on USCIS Connect and other websites. If we do not have access to these resources, we may be less effective.
 - That we do not have enough information regarding number of teleworkers, contact information for our Lee's Summit location and PIO information.
 - Building security after an event, what to do with staff who normally work in a laboratory when the building is not available, what to do with frozen material in extended power outages, replacement cost estimates, shipping concerns, and minimum building requirements.
 - Contact information.
5. What would you like to see done differently in future exercises?
- More coordination at the Field Office level. A more in-depth participant list at venues released for personnel information.
 - NBC have done an actual deployment of their ERGs for this year. Perhaps in the next exercise, we can simulate a network outage during a file retrieval exercise where critical system are inaccessible, to test NBC's capability to manually retrieve critical files without the reliance on system tracking.
 - We need to have participation from all ERG members.
 - More realistic scenario. Most of the scenario would not have happened in the first 4 hours after event.
 - More short term focus rather than longer term issues.
 - In a real emergency the chain of command communication would be essential. As a SISI I assume my ACD and section chief would communicate with the front office and I would receive tasks/communications from my ACD and Section Chief. I think we need to mimic the true communication structure.
 - It needs to be longer.
 - Would like more involvement from senior leaders (i.e. ACDs and SEAT members) because that would be a more likely scenario as we transition from OEP to COOP.
 - Nothing, this met our needs.
 - A meeting held prior to exercise to provide adequate information on what is expected and should be provided or completed during the exercise.
 - Lab independent exercise.
6. Off-Site Agencies: Please provide additional comments that you may have on the off-site exercise execution and your ability to communicate with the exercise staff and on-site agency representatives:
- Coordination and communications methods should be reviewed for process improvement
 - Feedback/Lessons learned.
 - Things went well.
 - We had no issues communicating with the staff, internally or externally.
 - Everything that was needed from my telework location was operational and functioned accordingly.
 - Exercise went well from remotely connected location in Denver to Kansas City remote IT personal.

7. What type of COOP training or assistance would strengthen weaknesses found during the exercise?

- Regional COOP training.
- Additional training on the importance of having an updated COOP.
- Maybe real-time contacts made with support partners such as GSA, APHIS, UPS, Portland Field Office, etc.
- Understanding of Roles and Responsibilities.
- More details on damage. Do we have communications? Do we have IT services?
- I think testing the actual scenario where we did not have network and communication access in the buildings. I think having no email or communication ability inside our buildings would be a good test for our communication during a tragic event.
- More time needed to train employees.
- Regular exercise and internal COOP audits/updates.
- No actual phone contact from management or other involved personnel to advise or provide better guidance on how to proceed or what to expect in the exercise.
- Update of issues as they occur by mail or text if available. Other locations may have additional capabilities that could assist.
- Additional training on plan.

8. Additional Comments

- Overall it was good exercise, participants from GSA Region 6 stated it was one of the best ones they had partaken in.
- Overall, NBC COOP exercise went pretty well. The response to various verbal/email inquiries from all participants, in their assigned areas, were quick. NBC provided accurate real-time information for all areas concerns such as employee accountability, Logistic/inventory assessments, system access, Order of Succession, and Essential Functions to be performed at the alternate site.
- Need to have more information on expectations. Are you expecting an answer from us on scenarios that are sent to us that do not apply to our division or section? As an example we got a question about how to account for loss of files. I think that would be a records issue and not something our section would be the primary focus on answering in a real event. We may have to provide RP codes for them to sweep, but that would be the extent of it.
- Great scenario
- Can provide more detail and coherent comments once I have had time to reflect and process the exercise that was completed.

APPENDIX D: EXERCISE PARTICIPANTS

KC RICE '16
CBP
DHS/IP
DHS/FPS
DHS/USCIS/NBC
DHS/USCIS/NRC
DOE/NNSA
FAA
FDA
FEMA Region VII
FRA
FTA
GSA-OMA R6
HHS/FDA/SWR/KC LAB
NWS Cent. Reg. HQ
SSA
TSA-Kansas City
USACE KC District
USDA/GIPSA/FGIS
USDA/GIPSA/TSD
Total: 19

SLICE '16
DHS/CBP
DISA
FBI St. Louis
GSA-St. Louis East Field Office
GSA-St. Louis West Field Office
TSA-St. Louis
USDA/FSIS Midwest Lab
USDA/RD-CSC
VA/RMC
Total: 9

Number of Participants

- 28 agencies & organizations
- ~ 580 Participants
- ~ 53 alternate sites (including telework locations)

Of the **28** agencies that participated in KC RICE-SLICE '16, **14** (50%) provided input to this AAR and **18** (~ 6%) of individual Participant Evaluation Forms were received.

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APPENDIX E: ACRONYMS

Acronym	Meaning
AAR	After Action Report
BCP	Business Continuity Plan
BIA	Business Impact Analyses
BPA	Business Process Analyses
COOP	Continuity of Operations
CWG	COOP Working Group
ENDEX	End of Exercise
ENS	Emergency Notification System
ERG	Emergency Relocation Group
FCD	Federal Continuity Directive
FEB	Federal Executive Board
FOUO	For Official Use Only
GSA	General Services Administration
GETS	Government Emergency Telecommunications Service
HSEEP	Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program
KC RICE	Kansas City Regional Inter-agency Continuity Exercise
IP	Internet Protocol
MEF	Mission Essential Function
MSEL	Master Scenario Events List
POC	Point of Contact
SLICE	St. Louis Inter-agency Continuity Exercise
STARTEX	Start of Exercise
TDY	Temporary Duty
WPS	Wireless Priority Service