Reconstitution: Reopening after COVID-19

National Continuity Programs

Presentation for FEMA Region III | May 2020

Welcome!

Reconstitution is a concept that supports an organization's return to normal, or even a new normal, after an incident. FEMA National Continuity Programs (NCP) can help you and your organization make informed decisions on how and when your organization can recover after this pandemic by sharing thought provoking questions, different factors to consider, and some ideas on how to accomplish this change while still preserving the integrity of your essential functions.

Presenter

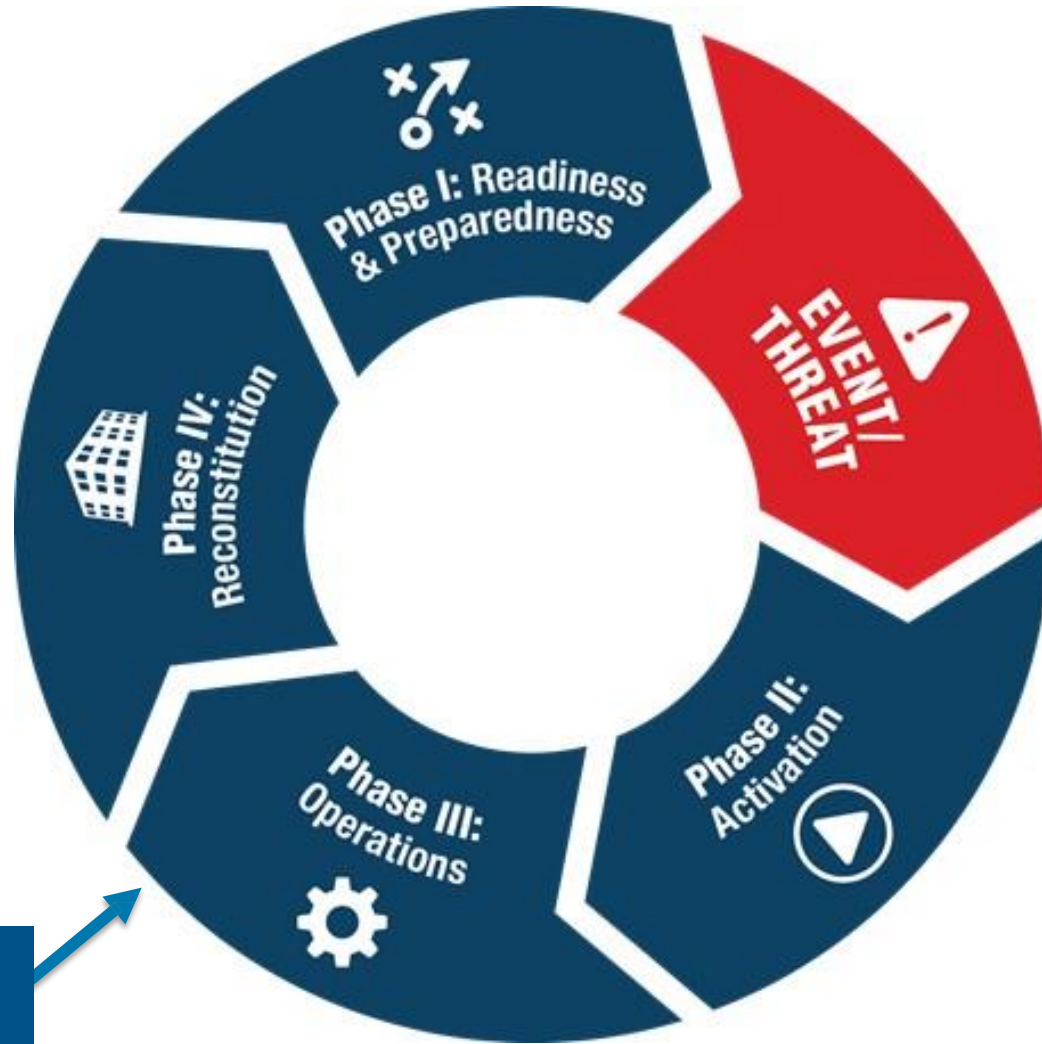- Denise Chrosniak, Continuity Training Branch Specialist, NCP

- Emma Poon, Chief, Regional and Stakeholder Branch, NCP

Phases of Continuity

Phase I: Readiness & Preparedness

EVENT/ THREAT

Phase II: Activation

Phase III: Operations

Phase IV: Reconstitution

You are here

Reconstitution

- Reconstitution is returning to normal, or new normal, sustainable operations once leadership determines continuity operations can terminate.

  - This may mean returning to the original facility, staffing and schedules, or a new facility.

  - It can also mean changing how functions are accomplished.

- Planning for the recovery of the organization occurs during the readiness and preparedness phase, but the process of reconstitution will generally start when an incident occurs or soon after the incident concludes.

- Organizations are responsible for:

  - Providing an executable plan for returning to normal operations.

  - Coordinating and pre-planning options for reconstitution regardless of the level of disruption.

Reconstitution Planning Considerations

- Begin now by developing a plan and procedures for how your organization will resume operations. Organizations may need to consider a time-phased approach to prepare a facility to be reoccupied. Offices, functions, and returning personnel may need to be prioritized or work in staggered shifts.

- Communicate with employees and inform them of the process for returning to work. Consider providing online training and guidance for employees before returning.
  - PACE = Primary, Alternate, Contingency, Emergency

- Coordinate with partners and stakeholders. Determine what methods you will use to inform your employees, customers, and stakeholders that your operations are being resumed.

Planning Considerations cont.

- Address physical/psychological impacts to personnel through employee and family support plans and other human resource measures.

- Develop an After-Action Report/Improvement Plan to note lessons learned and improve plans.

How COVID-19 Could Affect Reopening

- Absenteeism – Workers could be absent because they are sick, caring for someone who is sick, or potentially exposed to someone who is sick. There may also be workers afraid to come to work for fear of exposure.

- Changes in Patterns of Commerce – Consumers may change their shopping patterns or demand for certain items may change. How and when they access your workplace is likely to change, and may change more than once.

- Interrupted supply and delivery – Supplies you need to conduct business may be delayed or canceled with or without notification.

- Source: Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19
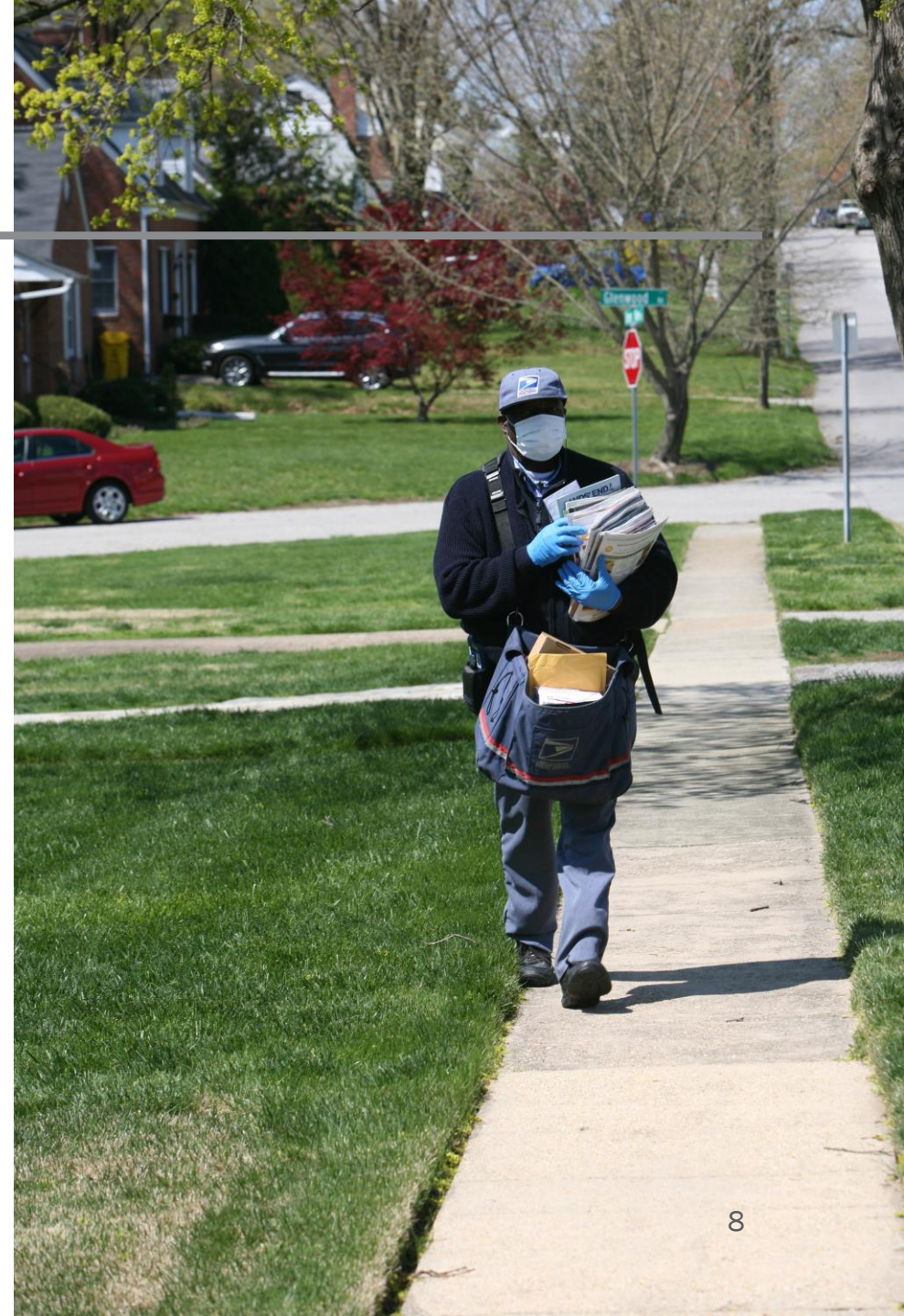
Prioritize Your Essential Functions

- What is an essential function?

  - Essential Functions are *critical activities* an organization performs that are directly related to accomplishing the mission of the organization.

  - Essential Functions are a limited set of organization functions that should be continued throughout, or resumed rapidly after, a disruption of normal activities.
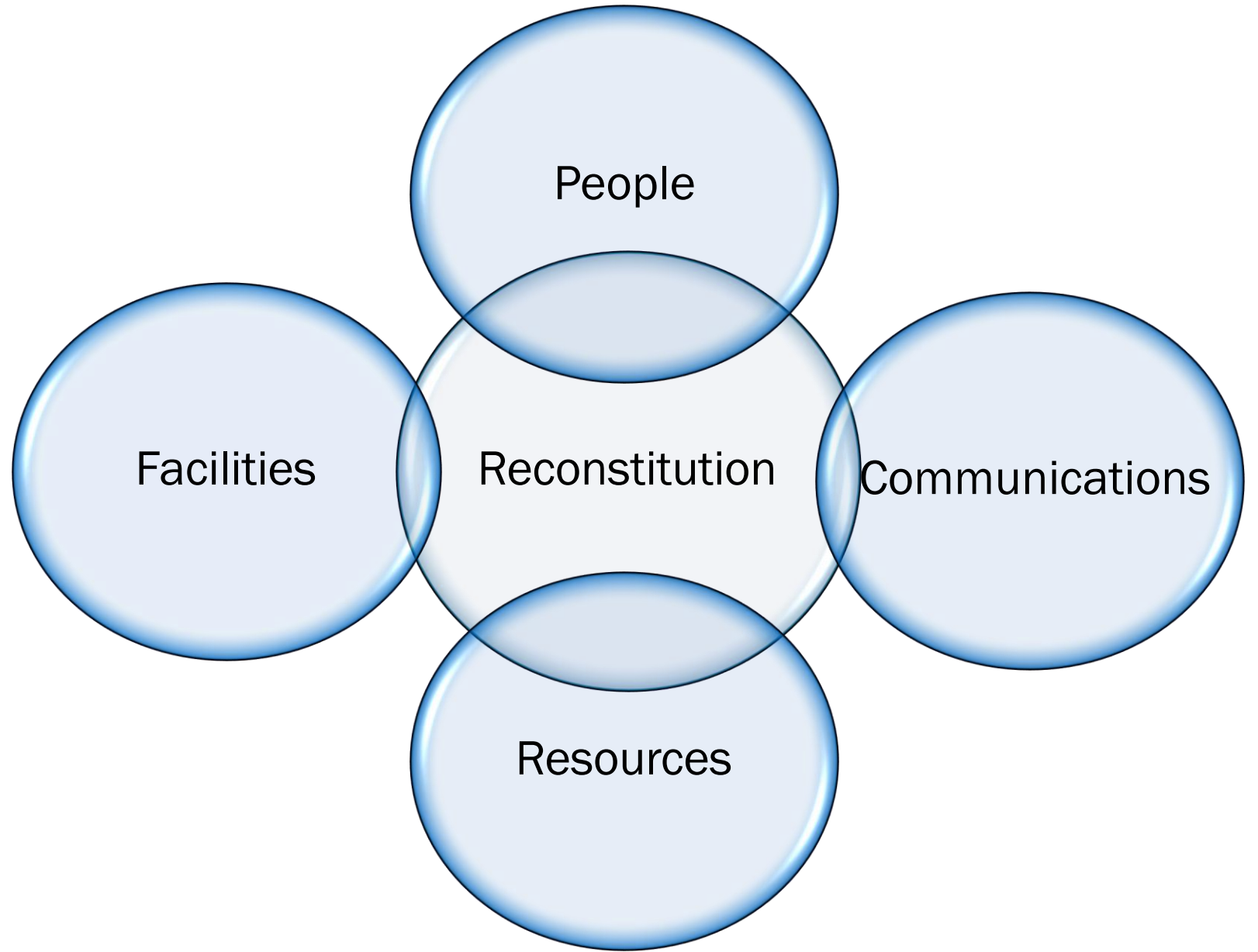
Essential Functions are:

- ✓ Urgent

- ✓ Important

- ✓ Cannot be delayed

- ✓ Something no one else does

Implementing Reconstitution

People

Facilities

Reconstitution

Communications

Resources

Suggested Guidelines for Individuals

- Wash your hands with soap and water or use hand sanitizer, especially after touching frequently used items or surfaces.

- Avoid touching your face.

- Sneeze or cough into a tissue, or the inside of your elbow.

- Disinfect frequently used items and surfaces as much as possible.

- Strongly consider using face coverings while in public, and particularly when using mass transit.

- PEOPLE WHO FEEL SICK SHOULD STAY HOME.

  - Do not go to work or school.

  - Contact and follow the advice of your medical provider.

- Source: Opening Up America Again

11

Suggested Guidelines for Employers

- Develop and implement appropriate policies regarding:

  □ Social distancing and protective equipment

  □ Temperature checks

  □ Sanitation

  □ Use and disinfection of common and high-traffic areas

  □ Business travel

- Monitor workforce for indicative symptoms. Do not allow symptomatic people to physically return to work until cleared by a medical provider.

- Develop and implement policies and procedures for workforce contact tracing following employee COVID+ test.

Suggested Guidelines for Employers cont.

- Continue to encourage telework, whenever possible and feasible with business operations.

- If possible, return to work in phases.

- Close common areas (traditional physical locations) where personnel are likely to congregate and interact, or enforce strict social distancing protocols.

- Minimize non-essential travel and adhere to CDC guidelines regarding isolation following travel.

- Strongly consider special accommodations for personnel who are members of a vulnerable population.

- Source: Opening Up America Again

People

- Who is responsible for COVID-19 issues and how they impact our workplace(s)?

- Are our human resources policies and processes consistent with public health recommendations and state and federal statutes?

- Have we established a priority order of return (based on our essential functions)?

- How do we determine employee status and their availability to return?

- When can our employees return to work?

- Can we fully staff?

- What training needs to occur before opening?

- What are our plans if a resurgence of the virus occurs?

Communications

- How and what are we messaging / communicating with our employees, stakeholders, vendors, and customers?

- What considerations need to be communicated to employees prior to reopening?

- What should employees expect when they return to work?

- What should stakeholders / customers expect when we reopen?

- Have we coordinated with contractors or vendors about their plans to reopen or how our reopening will impact them?

Suggested Guidelines for Workplaces

- Develop an Infection Disease Preparedness and Response Plan.
  - Implement Basic Infection Prevention Measures
    - Promote personal hygiene, social distancing, and personal protective equipment
    - Routinely clean and disinfect surfaces
- Stay abreast of guidance from health agencies and incorporate recommendations and resources into plans.
- Determine the levels of risk for exposure for workplaces and job tasks and determine mitigation strategies.
- Increase ventilation rates, install high efficiency air filters, install physical barriers, or install drive-through service with limited customer contact.
- Source: Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19

Facilities

- Who is responsible for ensuring our facilities meet the necessary safety and health standards to reopen?

- Have we established a priority order for opening multiple facilities/business locations?

- Have we identified the health and safety requirements outlined by CDC, HHS, OSHA, etc. specific to our organization in order to re-open?

- Can our facilities accommodate any necessary social distancing requirements?

- What health and safety assessments need to occur before we can re-enter our primary location?

Facilities cont.

- Can any necessary facility repairs, updates, or cleaning occur now (during social distancing measures) to prepare for reopening?

- How can we reduce our employee exposure to COVID-19?

- Have we created a plan to clean and disinfect our frequently touched objects and surfaces per EPA's criteria for use against COVID-19?

Resources / Logistics

- Have we determined which portions, if any, of applicable statutes apply to our organization (e.g. CARES Act, etc.)?

- If required or necessary for infection control, do we have the necessary cleaning supplies and personal protective equipment (PPE) for our employees (e.g., masks, gloves, face shields, etc.)?

- Has an accounting been done to determine what resources we have on hand, and what resources are required to reopen?

- Is our supply chain able to accommodate supporting our logistical requirements in preparation for reopening?

Conclusion

- Continue utilization of telework and other workforce flexibilities.

- Incorporate social distancing measures, including limiting capacities, staggering shifts, closing common areas, rotating "office days" for shared offices, and limiting non-essential travel.

- Allow high-risk/vulnerable individuals additional flexibility or continue isolation without repercussions.

- Acquire cleaning supplies, PPE, and implement personal protective policies or measures (handwashing, hand sanitizer, etc.) to limit the spread of the virus and protect employees and customers.

- Conduct health screenings to monitor employee wellness and prevent further infections, and develop or revise human resource policies to detail processes for sick employees or family members or those exposed to the virus.

- Conduct cleaning and sanitizing according to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) guidance.

Resources

- [Opening Up America Again](#)

- [Center for Disease Control: Cleaning and Disinfection for Community Facilities](#)

- [Occupational Safety and Health Administration COVID-19 Information](#)

- [U.S. Office of Personnel Management Coronavirus Guidance](#)

- [U.S. Department of Education COVID-19 Information](#)

- [U.S. Department of Transportation Coronavirus Resources](#)

- [Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency Coronavirus Resources](#)

- [U.S. Small Business Administration Disaster Assistance in Response to the Coronavirus](#)

- [FEMA Continuity Resource Toolkit](#)

Questions?

FEMA-CGC@fema.dhs.gov

FEMA Continuity Guidance Circular