

2019-2024 Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) for Municipalities in New Castle County, Delaware

DISASTER MANAGEMENT

New Castle County, Delaware



PROJECT DETAILS

DIFFICULTY: Medium

COST: \$105,000

TIMEFRAME: 18 Months

DELIVERABLES: A COOP for each municipality in New Castle County, a gap analysis of the previous County COOP, and an updated NCC COOP integrated with the municipal Plans, which provides a summary of resources needed and actions taken to activate a viable COOP within 2 hours of an emergency event.

CORE COMPETENCIES:

- Continuity of Operations
- Consensus Building
- Disaster Preparedness
- Inter-Departmental Cooperation
- Stakeholder Engagement

PROJECT TEAM

Vision Planning and Consulting

CLIENT CONTACT

Chris Hodgden, Coordinator
Office of Emergency
Management

NCC Dept. of Public Safety
3601 N. DuPont Hwy
New Castle, DE 19720

christopher.hodgden@newcastle.de.gov

302-395-2704

PROJECT OVERVIEW

VPC was contracted by New Castle County Government for a multi-year project to develop Continuity of Operations Plans for the ten County municipalities, and to update the County COOP. Additionally, VPC conducted a Gap Analysis of the prior County COOP to identify strengths, weaknesses, and areas for integration with the new municipal COOPs. The project was funded by an Emergency Management Planning Grant from DHS.

PROJECT SUMMARY

The COOP project was conducted over three phases: Phase I comprised the gap analysis and development of the COOPs for the two largest municipalities in the County, Wilmington and Newark. VPC interviewed City leadership and department heads to gather information on their essential functions, vital technology, records, and resources, and any critical interdependencies between functions or departments.

VPC developed a questionnaire and a capabilities assessment for each department, to guide them through the essential functions identification process and to assist them in developing staff rosters, inventories and other special considerations for physical, technological, and human resources.

VPC held a one-day on-site workshop with department heads to finalize all essential functions tables, lines of succession and backup facility information, and to review the critical inventories gathered through the capability assessment, questionnaires, follow-up phone calls, and emails.

VPC developed a COOP Base plan for each City/Town with individual Annexes for each Department, which listed all of the Continuity information gathered and provided as well as contact information for essential personnel, critical vendors, and point of contact for backup or alternate facilities.

Phase II involved COOP development for the eight smaller municipalities, including essential function identification and individual department annexes. Virtual workshops were held with the smaller jurisdictions, in light of the Covid Pandemic.

Phase III involved a major reorganization of the County's COOP to align with the new municipal COOPs developed in the first two Phases of the project. This phase also addressed the gaps identified in Phase I during the COOP update process.

VPC held a full day, onsite workshop to meet with each of the 17 County Departments. Additional follow-up video-conferences were held with departments that had extensive emergency responsibilities, such as Public Works and Human Resources. Major elements of information in all of the Plans include: Identification of mission essential functions (MEFs); lines of succession; delegation of authority; alternate locations; emergency communications; vital records and technology; and critical interdependencies.

NCC held a COOP Seminar and Tabletop Exercise (TTX) for 30 members of key departments, offices, and other local governments. VPC assisted by providing a detailed overview of the COOP base plan, its purpose, structure, and function, and the department roles and responsibilities.