

Cohort 2019 Outcomes:

Team 4 Code 3



Innovation Priority:
**Managing Priorities Amidst
Disaster**

Team 4: [Presentation Video](#)

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Moonshot

Mature the operational readiness of California State Agencies and Departments by identifying and cross training organizational staff in both continuity and disaster response skill sets, which feeds into the Statewide Emergency Response Group (SERG) database.

Executive Summary

The best part of our government is designed to assist people in times of need, during times of disaster. California's 2018 fires resulted in 125 lives lost, over 1.8 million acres burned, and over 23,000 homes and buildings destroyed. In 2018, the governor proclaimed 16 State of Emergencies. During these state of emergencies the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) is granted broad authority to obtain any necessary resource on behalf of the governor in order to save lives, protect property, and protect the environment, as authorized in the California Emergency Services Act.

Cal OES utilizes the mission tasking authorities to request state agency assistance to address immediate needs required by the disaster. Due to the critical nature of these responses, all state departments must reprioritize their workload in order to fulfill the mission. Our state departments and agencies face significant challenges in managing their mission critical priorities and addressing the response and recovery requirements during a disaster.

Over the past five years Cal OES issued almost 4,000 mission tasks assignments to multiple state entities. Although these missions are critical to public safety, departments are hindered in supporting their respective mission when staff are redirected from day-to-day workload and assigned to work on disaster-specific tasks. This creates a back-log in work, delays in delivering services and assistance to the public, and puts the state at risk in areas on non-compliance with regulations, legislation, and other policy areas.

Given this new normal, state agencies must take a more proactive planning process to be ready to address the immediate needs caused by the disaster as well as ensure that their priority workload and essential functions continue. Due to the overwhelming nature of disasters, a new process must be implemented to assist in identifying available resources that can help bridge the gap.

We must innovate our disaster response techniques, capabilities, and ensure adequate staffing levels during

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any type of disruption. The ultimate goal of continuity planning is to ensure that the state is able to continue its vital governmental services and operations under all conditions. State agencies must have plans in place to carry out their departmental essential functions without interruption even while responding to statewide emergencies and disasters.

To enhance California's existing continuity program and to better prepare state agencies, this white paper proposes the incorporation of new concepts to the existing state program into a revised continuity guide. The additional elements introduced here are critical to establishing and maintaining a comprehensive and effective organizational capability for state departments when they are called upon to actively respond to state disasters. This guidance requires departments to assess their statutory and mission critical responsibilities and plan how to continue meeting these responsibilities while a large number of staff deploy for disaster response. These guidelines include recommendations for a surge capacity workforce to meet the additional human resource requirements during a disaster.

Previous Cohort

Cohort 2019 built upon Cohort 2018's moonshot which detailed the necessity of socializing continuity planning to ensure the State of California can proactively manage their mission critical priorities during a disaster. It is imperative all state agencies create and maintain a continuity planning guide to maintain their governmental obligations. Cohort 2018 stated that state agencies must have continuity plans in place to carry out their essential functions without interruption while responding to State emergencies and disasters. To better prepare state agencies, they recommended

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incorporating new elements to the current continuity guide which will allow departments to assess their statutory and mission critical responsibilities. In addition, how to continue meeting those responsibilities when their staff are deployed during disaster response and recovery.

Cohort 2018 provided recommendations for human resource changes such as utilizing retired annuitants who have experience in disaster response and recovery, student assistants, and volunteer state personnel to establish a volunteer program to aid in disaster response and recovery. They communicated the potential in providing state management with a template or plan and resources to create a continuity plan or update their current continuity plan so that the state is proactive and not reactive during disaster response and recovery.

Urgency

In their 2018 white paper, last year's disaster response planning cohort underlined the urgency of expanding the continuity of government using the example of the Camp Fire, California's deadliest and most destructive wildfire to date.

Continuing disaster response and recovery needs experienced by communities in 2019 underline the critical need for coordinated continuity planning that ensures the State of California can provide vital government services and operations under all conditions.

From October 23 – November 6, 2019 the Kincade Fire burned 77,758 acres, threatened over 90,000 structures and caused widespread evacuations throughout almost all of Sonoma County. It was the largest fire in Sonoma County's history, as well the largest fire of the 2019 season.

From both the Camp Fire and the Kincade Fire, it is clear we are living a new kind of normal. This heightened fire risk has brought about new challenges for California in 2019, including wide-scale power shut offs that lasted several days and even weeks.

For example, from October 9 through October 12, PG&E shut off power to approximately 732,248 customers in 35 counties. 30,000 of these customers had special energy needs due to medical conditions. 23,000 customers were not notified at all and PG&E's website was down intermittently throughout the event.

In the face of the many inadequacies and lack of preparedness in PG&E's October power shut off, state

agencies were brought in to support communities and ensure better future coordination. These included but were not limited to California Health and Human Services Agency, the Department of Technology, the Department of General Services, the Cal OES, the California Public Utilities Commission and the California Department of Forestry and Fire Prevention.

The amount of state government resources redirected during the public power safety shut offs is one of many examples that underline the urgency of disaster response planning for a resilient California.

Continuity Planning Workgroup

Departments and agencies face significant challenges in determining their mission critical priorities and staff, especially under the strain and immediacy assessing response and recovery needs after disaster. Preparation of continuity plans must occur now to mitigate the large-scale impact that agencies and departments face during disasters that can last several months and even years.

Our team recommends the establishment of a continuity planning workgroup at the agency secretary level.

The key goals of this workgroup would be:

- To assess and strengthen California's existing continuity planning and response guidance
- Assess the current state of stakeholder continuity plans
- To ensure and enforce the requirement that all state departments have an updated continuity plan

Staff support and coordination for this workgroup could be coordinated through Cal OES, as they are currently expanding their continuity planning unit.

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This workgroup would be an opportunity to socialize continuity planning at the highest levels of state government as well as foster interdepartmental communication and community.

Background

These 2 tables show the past two years of state activations and the involvement of state employees to perform disaster response, which is most likely out of their normal / daily work requirements.

Calendar Year 2018			
Total Number of Events / Disasters	Total Number of Days under Disaster Response	Total Number of State Agencies Activated	Total Number of Staff Activated for Disaster Response
7	101	38	1124
CALENDAR YEAR 2018			
Total Number of Events / Disasters	Total Number of Days under Disaster Response	Total Number of State Agencies Activated	Total Number of Staff Activated for Disaster Response
5	43	17	608

Surveys

This “white-paper” invested in to three surveys. The first two: **(1) Continuity Essential Elements Annual Assessment** and **(2) State Emergency Plan (SEP) Capability Cross-walk** centered on learning how state agencies and departments’ continuity plans enable the performance of their organizational essential functions and services. The third survey **(3) State Emergency Response Group (SERG)**—described later in this paper—focuses on external information needed to develop the requirements for (SERG) database.

Annual Assessments – 1st Survey

Cal OES has authority to require State Agencies and Departments to perform an Annual Assessments of [their] organization’s continuity plan. This assessment is based on ten (10) elements of viable continuity capability, which when infused throughout one’s COOP plan, the organization can expect to be poised for efficient performance of their organizational essential functions and services.

In order for COHORT 2019 to better understand the overall disposition of state agency / department COOP plans, Cal OES conducted an internal survey of the annual assessments received by state agencies and departments. The table below depicts the identified concerns and comments from the internal assessment. The assessment comments are not all inclusive; they do provide a “general awareness” on which continuity elements have a higher degree of concern.

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(Continuity Essential Elements Annual Assessment)

Continuity Essential Elements Annual Assessment	Assessment Comments
<input type="checkbox"/> Program Plans and Procedures (Program Management)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessments show some COOP plans Essential Functions (EFs) have minimal alignment with identified threats to facilities and operations. Assessments show some COOP plans do not include all stakeholders / departments that support organizational essential business functions.
<input type="checkbox"/> Essential Functions (EFs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessments show some COOP plans lack logistical support and resource requirements to re-establish and sustain essential function
<input type="checkbox"/> Lines of Succession / Delegation of Authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessments show some COOP plans do not completely describe lines of succession
<input type="checkbox"/> Continuity Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessments show some COOP plans lack pre-positioned resources or contingency contracts with appropriate resource providers
<input type="checkbox"/> Continuity Communications/IT Systems Recovery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessments show some COOP plans lack procedures or plans for communications and/or IT Systems that support essential business functions.
<input type="checkbox"/> Human Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessments show some COOP plans lack procedures for non-continuity staff and employees
<input type="checkbox"/> Essential Records Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessments show some COOP plans lack the identification of essential operational and legal/ financial records
<input type="checkbox"/> Tests, Training, and Exercises	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessments show some COOP plans lack refresher orientation for Continuity staff and inter-agency stakeholders
<input type="checkbox"/> Devolution of Control and Direction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessments show some COOP plans lack necessary resources to facilitate the ability to perform essential functions at the devolution site
<input type="checkbox"/> Reconstitution/Recovery Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessments show some COOP plans lack operational plans to transition from Continuity status to efficient normal operations

SEP Capability Cross-walk – 2nd Survey

As this “white-paper” moves forward with an outcome of the development of the SERG database, it was necessary to understand how California State Agencies / Departments interact with each other, specifically in disaster response capabilities.

The following table, which was queried from the State Emergency Plan (SEP), depicts typical capabilities needed during a disaster and how many state agencies / departments share in similar response capabilities. This SEP cross-walk is meant to highlight where disaster response staffing capabilities for the SERG database can be resourced.

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(State Emergency Plan (SEP) Capability Cross-walk)

Capability	State Agencies / Departments Providing "Like" Capability
Care and Shelter	20
Communication	8
Construction & Engineering	21
Cyber Security	6
Fire & Rescue	12
Food & Agriculture	6
Hazardous Materials	22
Law Enforcement	25
Management	24
Oil Spills	1
Public Health & Medical	28
Public Information	27
Recovery	24
Resources	34
Transportation	7
Utilities	13
Volunteers and Donation Management	9

“COHORT 2019’s way forward describes a progressive approach to engage state agencies and departments to become pro-active in organizational resiliency and disaster response planning.”

Continuity Planning Guidance

COHORT 2018 described four “opportunities” that set the framework for COHORT 2019’s “Way Forward” agenda (see **Continuity Planning Way Forward**) on the following page.

The 1st opportunity was a deliverable to “provide managers statewide with a template / plan / checklist.” COHORT 2019 sees meeting this opportunity with revision of the current Cal OES statewide guidance, thereby, creating a uniform template for organizations to follow.

The 2nd recognized opportunity entails state agencies and departments “to be proactive in early planning.” COHORT 2019’s way forward describes a progressive approach to engage state agencies and departments to become pro-active in organizational resiliency and disaster response planning. COHORT 2019’s progressive approach affirms that state agencies and departments first become familiar with continuity planning principals, followed by an “internal assessment” of the organization’s continuity plan – as outlined in the Cal OES Statewide Continuity Guidance. This self-assessment matures the organization to become intimately familiar with their own continuity plan, thereby, setting the conditions for formulating resilient plans.

The 3rd opportunity leads to “better awareness tools needed for Human Resources and department policies.” COHORT 2019 aims to capitalize on the work that state agencies and departments have performed through pro-active continuity and disaster response planning and assessments. COHORT 2019, through collaboration with Cal OES, will work to develop a SERG database – and/or expand upon existing technologies – that will house names of state employees, which can be readily accessed by an organization for response to a continuity event, or statewide disasters. This database will make searching for trained staff to backfill vacated organizational positions during continuity or disaster response more efficient and timely.

The 4th opportunity highlights the awareness to secure public trust with state and federal agencies. In order to build this trust, COHORT 2019’s way forward recognizes that by embedding in California legislation directives for state agencies / departments to “stay engage” in organizational resilience planning.

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(Continuity Planning Way Forward)

	Activity	Outcome	Time Frame
Phase I	Revise Statewide Continuity Guidance, which includes the integration of parent organization disaster response requirements	Cal OES revises statewide continuity guidance that incorporates statewide disaster response in organizational COOP planning	04/2020
	Socialize Continuity Planning Principals	State Agencies and Departments recognize essential functions (COOP & Disaster Response)	On-Going
	Perform COOP Assessments	State Agencies and Departments recognize potential gaps in their performance of essential functions	Annual
	Agencies / Departments update Administrative Orders (AOs)	Through COOP assessments, State Agencies and Departments identify both organizational continuity and response requirements enabling the update of AOs	On-Going
	Cal OES facilitates the development of Statewide Emergency Response Group (SERG) Database	SERG database enables State Agencies and Departments to augment staff shortages during disaster response with trained personnel	6 mo. after funding for surge capacity program
Phase II	Develop new Executive Order that encompasses requirements for State Agencies and Departments to develop, implement, and maintain COOP planning, training, and exercise	Establishes statutory authority that mandates State Agencies and Departments to prepare all-hazard plans (continuity and disaster response) that protects the performance of organizational essential functions and services	9 mo. after funding for surge capacity program
Phase III	Perform inter-agency test, training and exercises	Demonstrates the abilities for State Agencies and Departments to perform essential functions and services	13 mo. after funding for surge capacity program

Statewide Emergency Response Group (SERG) – 3rd Survey

Cal SERG

While California needs to be fully prepared for the next large scale disaster, the Cal SERG could be the answer to staffing during and after a large scale incident. Disasters can last well over a year when taking into consideration the response and recovery times. Cal SERG would allow state employees to self-register themselves into the database which could then be used by Cal OES to pull staffing resources in all different disciplines. There would be multiple options in the database that people could volunteer for like:

- Working an Operation Center
- In the Field
- Mass Care and Shelter
- Animal Shelter
- Backfill

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Since Cal OES would be managing the system, they would collect information from volunteers like:

- Name
- Address
- Work Address
- Contact Phone Number(s)
- Skills

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This database would have a verification process that would include and upload section for training certificates or credentialed positions as well as a supervisory approval from the volunteer's agency. Cal OES would then be able to use the database to request assistance from personnel throughout the state, in all disciplines, to respond to a decided location.

Having these kinds of resources throughout the state would not only be beneficial for response times but also employee burnout. For example, if a large scale disaster occurred in Southern California and certified personnel were no longer available from responding agencies, Cal OES could use Cal SERG to locate and deploy staff to the designated area in a moment's notice.

Before creating a database like this, we thought it would be a good idea to find out if people would even be interested in volunteering in some way during or after a disaster. We created questions for a statewide survey and asked the following question:

In What Ways Could Your Organization Assist in Future Disaster Response/Recovery Efforts?
(Multiple responses were allowed)

Chart 1.1



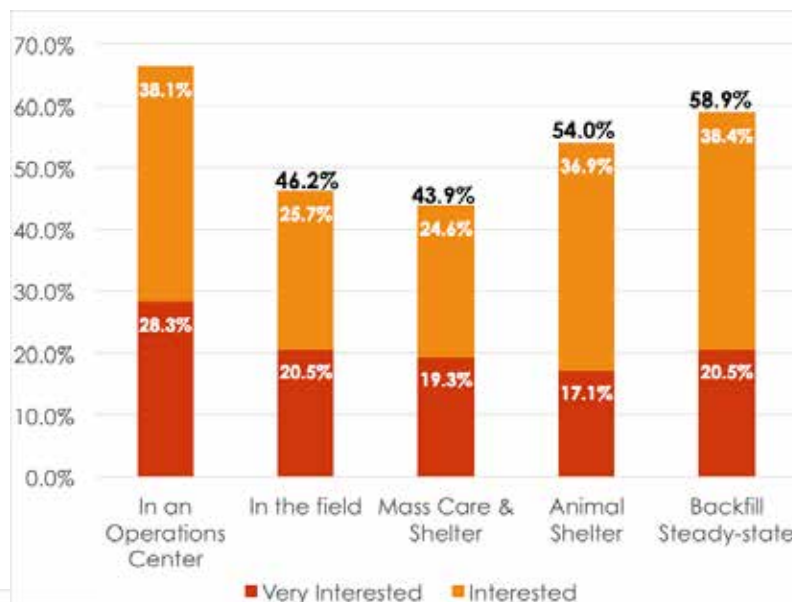
In looking at the responses on Chart 1.1, over 77% of state employees agreed that their agency could provide staffing in future emergency disaster response/recovery efforts. In addition to staffing, employees felt they had the ability to facilitate training and have facilities necessary during times of disaster.

In taking it a step further, we wanted to know how interested employees would be with assisting during and after a disaster.

In the same statewide survey we asked the following question:

If California Was To Implement Statewide Incident Response Teams Comprised of Volunteers, How Interested Would You Be in Serving? (Multiple responses allowed)

Chart 1.2



In looking at the responses on Chart 1.2 it appears that there is an average of over fifty percent of people willing to assist in almost any of the capacities discussed in the survey. This means there could be a plethora of people to choose from when a disaster occurred that could respond throughout the state. These resources could be pulled almost instantaneously with a system like Cal SERG.

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VEST

It is also recommended that Cal OES work with the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) Disaster Services Bureau (DSB) and get information from their Volunteer Emergency Services Team (VEST) program. A VEST member remains in their current position with the State of California, but basically agrees to be redirected temporarily to the DSB during an emergency or disaster response, if their work schedule and work load permits. VEST members must have their supervisor's permission to join VEST and also must get supervisor clearance for each deployment.

VEST members may enjoy up to ten days of training a year in disaster-related topics. In addition to the various trainings, the potential exists to be assigned to an operation during an emergency or disaster. Assignments may depend upon the training a VEST member has received. VEST members may be deployed to DSB's Department Operations Center or to another operation anywhere in California where the need exists. Some of these operations include disaster shelters and Local Assistance Centers. Deployments are generally for a minimum of five days and a maximum of 15 days, depending upon the mission. Sometimes VEST members are asked to deploy in a matter of hours of first notification, after receiving clearance from their supervisors.

Becoming a VEST member is an opportunity for state employees to assist the California public in times of emergencies or disasters in Government-directed recovery operations. It is also an opportunity to receive training and do something outside of employees normal work routine.

What We're Doing Now

Our recommendation is to mature continuity planning by surveying the current continuity plans. Not all state agencies have continuity plans or their continuity plans are outdated. The next step is to work with Cal OES to outline current best practices and socialize those practices throughout all state agency continuity plans. State agencies may have different mission critical functions and a universal continuity plan may not be ideal, however, a state agency will be better prepared if they had an outline for continuity planning and response guidance.

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Cohort 2018 recommended the use of a new database or expanding the current boomerang database. Cohort 2019's recommendation built upon Cohort 2018's in that a new volunteer database should be created and managed by Cal OES. The database would be called California State Employees Response Group, or Cal SERG. The database would be volunteer based and initially created for state employees, however, our recommendation is to eventually expand it to include volunteers at the local level or the public. Ideally, the Cal SERG would house information pertinent to disaster response and recovery. Information in the database will include items such as the volunteer's certification, knowledge, skills, abilities, location, availability, etc. This database would be easily accessible to administrators to access necessary information to contact volunteers when their services are needed during disaster response and recovery.

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Conclusion

Disasters in California are becoming more complex, with their impacts becoming more destructive than ever. It is imperative that California innovates its disaster response techniques, capabilities, and ensure adequate staffing levels during any type of disruption. State agencies must have plans in place to respond to statewide emergencies and disasters, while maintaining essential functions.

This white paper proposed the incorporation of new concepts to the existing state continuity program into a revised continuity guide. The additional elements introduced are critical to establishing and maintaining a comprehensive and effective organizational capability for state departments when they are called upon to actively respond to state disasters. This guidance requires departments to assess their statutory and mission critical responsibilities and plan how to continue meeting these responsibilities while a large number of staff deploy for disaster response. These guidelines include recommendations for a surge capacity workforce to meet the additional human resource requirements during a disaster.

State agencies must take a more proactive planning process to be ready to address the immediate needs caused by the disaster as well as ensure that their priority workload and essential functions continue. Due to the overwhelming nature of disasters, a new process must be implemented to assist in identifying available resources that can help bridge the gap. Doing so will create a more resilient California; one that can recover from any disaster, while mitigating impact of future threats.

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