

Cooperative Training Outreach Program (CO-OP)

Responses to Frequently Asked Questions

The following questions regarding the Cooperative Training Outreach Program (CO-OP) were submitted by SAAs and Training Partners via emails received at firstrespondertraining@dhs.gov. The responses provided in this document are designed to address issues about accessing, implementing, and paying for the delivery of SLGCP courses under the CO-OP program. Please keep in mind that the current version of this document is under development and questions will be answered as they are received at the above-listed email address.

QUESTION: What is the purpose of the Cooperative Training Outreach Program (CO-OP)?

ANSWER: CO-OP is a program designed to decentralize the delivery of identified ODP courses and facilitate access to them in a cost effective manner, augmenting the capacity of States, territories, and tribal entities (participating entity/entities) to deliver SLGCP/ODP (SLGCP) courses. The program provides ready access to all the tools, including course curricula and supporting materials, that participating entities need to offer courses to their response communities without the attendant costs of course development and approval processes.

QUESTION: What is the timeline for implementation of the CO-OP?

ANSWER: CO-OP will be implemented in three phases. The first phase will occur in the first quarter of Fiscal Year (FY) 2006, in which State Administrative Agencies identify and approve institutions within their states, territories, or tribal entities to adopt and deliver SLGCP standardized training programs. In the second phase, during the second quarter of FY06, SLGCP will provide State SAA and Training Points of Contact (POC) an electronic toolkit containing a list of the identified courses, the full curriculum for each course, and all attendant training support materials needed to deliver SLGCP-developed training through SAA-approved institutions. In the third phase, the program will become institutionalized, with ongoing use by signatory State sponsored, certified instructors delivering an expanding number of courses to an increasing number of responders. It is important to note that during this phase, the limited number of courses that have currently been adapted for delivery under the CO-OP will be expanded.

QUESTION: What will the CO-OP process give SAAs the ability to do?

ANSWER: As part of this process, SAAs will have the ability to:

1. Designate State and local organizations (academies and/or institutions of higher education) in the various response disciplines as approved deliverers of standardized training curriculum made available by SLGCP;
2. Select and download fully developed course curricula and associated materials for delivery through SAA-approved institutions;
3. Validate that designated institutions have the most current version of curriculum and periodically receive updates to Training Support Packages; and
4. Manage and track terrorism preparedness training within their State, Territory, or tribal entity based on their individual requirements and Homeland Security Strategies.

QUESTION: What steps do SAAs need to take to initiate participation in CO-OP during phase 1?

ANSWER: SAAs choosing to participate in the CO-OP can designate an institution as an approved provider for one or more curriculum offerings. Until the electronic toolkit is available, SAAs can provide the information by email on institutions for which they seek approval to firstrespondertraining@dhs.gov. The email should include information as cited in Information Bulletin #193.

QUESTION: May SAAs designate more than one institution to participate in this program?

ANSWER: Yes. An SAA may designate more than one institution.

QUESTION: Can SLGCP grant funds to be used to pay for the costs associated with the CO-OP program?

ANSWER: Yes. Costs associated with the delivery of courses under the CO-OP program generally follow allowable costs as outlined in the Homeland Security Grant Program (HSGP) Guidance from FY 2005. Some of the costs that are allowable include, but are not limited to: reproducing materials, hiring instructors, travel to courses. If the HSGP Guidance does not address your questions, please direct specific questions to: firstrespondertraining@dhs.gov.

QUESTION: What are the reporting requirements for the CO-OP program?

ANSWER: Participating entities will be required to furnish information about the number and type of participants they train. The electronic toolkit, available in phase II at www.firstrespondertraining.gov, will contain the form that will be used to report data once courses are delivered by the participating entity. During phase II of implementation, pre- and post course assessment tools will be available as part of the Training Support Packages (TSPs) with each course. The pre course assessment captures background information on students and measures their grasp of the knowledge, skills, and abilities prior to the course. The post course assessment captures information on changes in level of knowledge, skills, and abilities. It also captures information on the effectiveness of the instructor, course format, and course content based on the student's assessment of the course. Although CO-OP participants are not required to report pre and post course assessment results, SLGCP highly recommends that participating entities require their instructors to administer assessments in order to determine the effectiveness of the training they deliver through the CO-OP.

QUESTION: What is a Master Trainer?

ANSWER: The Master Trainer is the key component of the CO-OP. A Master Trainer is an individual who is not only an experienced practitioner in a particular field or technical specialty, but also understands and has significant expertise and experience in managing, designing, developing, delivering, and evaluating effective training. This person will provide coordination for all SLGCP-developed training that is offered in SAA-approved institutions at the State, territory, or tribal levels of government. Under CO-OP, SAAs will designate a Master Trainer for each identified academy and/or institution, who will be responsible for monitoring and maintaining the quality of training delivery and instructor credentials. SAAs may designate multiple Master Trainers but must identify a lead Master Trainer who will work with the SAA and be responsible for coordination and reporting.

QUESTION: What are the requirements for Master Trainers?

ANSWER: Programs meeting the following criteria meet the requirements for Master Trainers:

- FEMA’s Emergency Management Institute Master Trainer Program
- Programs meeting *NFPA 1041 - Standard for Fire Service Instructor Professional Qualifications, 2002 Edition*, Fire Instructor Level III, including those accredited by the International Fire Service Accreditation Congress (IFSAC) or the National Board on Fire Service Professional Qualifications (Pro Board);
- Master Instructor Development Programs as offered by a State’s Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training;
- Requirements for program directors as stated in *Standards and Guidelines for the Accreditation of Educational Programs in the Emergency Medical Services Professions*, dated 3/10/05 and accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP); and
- Certified Environmental, Safety and Health Trainer (CET) program meeting *ANSI/ASSE Z490.1: Criteria for Accepted Practices in Safety, Health and Environmental Training*.

QUESTION: Is training across State lines permissible?

ANSWER: The intent of CO-OP is to provide States, territories and tribal entities with the flexibility to institutionalize standardized training within existing training organizations and institutions internal to a State, territory, or tribal entity’s boundaries. However, in support of the one of the priorities in the National Preparedness Goal, that of expanded regional collaboration, States, territories and tribal entities may pool assets and resources to designate regional training centers.

QUESTION: What if my concerns are not addressed in the CO-OP Information Bulletin or this document?

ANSWER: Based on the phased implementation of CO-OP, SLGCP welcomes comments to foster continuous improvement of the program. Persons interested in commenting about the program or asking questions that can be added to this document should send an email to: firstrespondertraining@dhs.gov.

QUESTION: Is the CO-OP voluntary?

ANSWER: Yes, the CO-OP is a voluntary program and SAA’s have full authority for how to select and approve organizations if they choose to participate.