

Press Release

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY LAUNCHES PROGRAM TO DECENTRALIZE FIRST RESPONDER TRAINING

WASHINGTON, D.C.—The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) announced that it will begin implementing a new Cooperative Training Outreach Program (CO-OP) designed to expand first responder preparedness training across the country by permitting the states to identify and approve institutions within their states, territories or tribal entities that can adopt and deliver the Department’s standardized training courses.

“The new CO-OP Program will achieve the President’s objective to expand our current training system so that state and local instructors can teach first responder training courses at thousands of community colleges, public safety academies, state and private universities and other facilities,” said Matt A. Mayer, Acting Executive Director of the Office of State and Local Government Coordination and Preparedness. “The CO-OP Program will add to the preparedness of the nation by making courses already certified by the DHS Office of State and Local Government Coordination and Preparedness (SLGCP) more available throughout participating states.”

The CO-OP Training Program will be implemented in three phases throughout Fiscal Year 2006. During the first phase, the State Administrative Agencies (SAA) will be able to identify and approve state institutions that can deliver SLGCP’s fully developed curricula for first responder training courses.

The SAAs will designate a Master Trainer for each identified academy or state institution who will be responsible for the instructor’s credentials and for monitoring and maintaining the quality of training delivered at the institutions.

During the second phase of the CO-OP Program, the Homeland Security’s Office of State and Local Government Coordination and Preparedness will provide the State SAA and Training Points of Contact with an electronic toolkit that will list the first responder training courses, the full course curriculum, and the training support materials needed to deliver the DHS certified training through the SAA-approved institutions such as community colleges, public safety academies, and state universities.

The CO-OP Program will become institutionalized during the third phase of the program, as state sponsored, certified instructors begin delivering an increased number of first responder training courses.

“The CO-OP Program will be based on state assessments that clearly define specific training needs at all levels of emergency response to prevent, protect against, respond to, and recover from acts of terrorism,” said Matt A. Mayer. “The scope of the challenge is daunting, with the training audience estimated to be in excess of 7 million responders from 10 emergency response disciplines and the private sector.”

The CO-OP Program will enable the State Administrative Agencies to better manage and track terrorism preparedness training within their states, territories, or tribal entities based on their individual requirements and homeland security strategies.

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