

- Selecting an Alternate Facility
- Determining the existence of Interoperable Communications

A. Identifying Essential Functions

Essential functions are those that enable an organization to provide vital services, exercise civil authority, maintain the safety of the general public and sustain the industrial and economic base. In short they are the agency's business functions that must continue with minimal or no disruption.

Essential functions are based on the agency's customers and their needs. Assigning a priority to the customers' needs helps COOP planners distinguish between essential and nonessential functions. Essential functions are the foundation for COOP programs and plans. For an agency at the beginning stage of COOP planning, determining essential functions must be completed before moving to any other area.

Identifying essential functions requires an intimate understanding of all the agency's operations. Although many functions are important, not every activity the organization performs is an essential function that must be sustained in an emergency.

There is no one-way to identify essential functions. But the first step of a BIA--asset identification--offers one approach. This approach focuses on the agency's functions and their criticality. It can be modified for the governmental context into a four-step approach:

- Identify all functions
- Identify essential functions
- Determine essential function resource requirements
- Prioritize essential functions

1. Identify all functions

Use Worksheet #10 to complete this task.

To begin the process of identifying functions within an agency, first identify the areas of responsibility. Use the agency's mission statement, values, goals and objectives, the organization chart, and a brief review of agency operating procedures, rulebooks and legal authorities.

Use Worksheet #11 to complete this task.