

The National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) supported the Advanced Practice Centers (APC) from 1999 to 2012. The APC has been a credible source for free public health preparedness products that can be easily implemented by any local health department (LHD), as the products were created *by* LHDs *for* LHDs. Today, there is a legacy of more than 100 APC Products that build capacity, saving health departments time, resources and money by providing proven solutions and world class ideas that are ready for implementation.

CASE STUDY

The Seattle and King County Advanced Practice Center develops tools to help local health departments carry out emergency response strategies in the areas of vulnerable and at-risk populations, risk communication, pandemic flu, isolation and quarantine, community and partner engagement, continuity of operations, and public information call centers.

EXEMPLARY APC PRODUCT

Sustaining Critical Services: Continuity of Operations

<http://apc.naccho.org/Products/APC20102207/Pages/Overview.aspx>

Most recently updated in 2011, the *Sustaining Critical Services: Continuity of Operations* is a toolkit from the Seattle and King County APC that helps local health departments establish a plan for preparing for and responding to disruptive events (power outages, building fires, tornados, hurricanes, severe winter storms, and the like). The toolkit consists of ten tools with themes like prioritizing essential functions, human capital management, supply chain resiliency, and incident management. Each tool is supplemented with links to helpful resources – blank templates, completed samples, and additional background materials. The tools also include recommended planning exercises that, once completed, will improve any local health department's readiness to activate its continuity of operations plan.

Notable Feature: *The Sustaining Critical Services: Continuity of Operations* product is scalable. Developed by a health department that serves an urban population of over one million people and has a staff of 1,900, it has been successfully implemented by many LHDs, including rural health departments with significantly smaller staff sizes and fewer available resources.

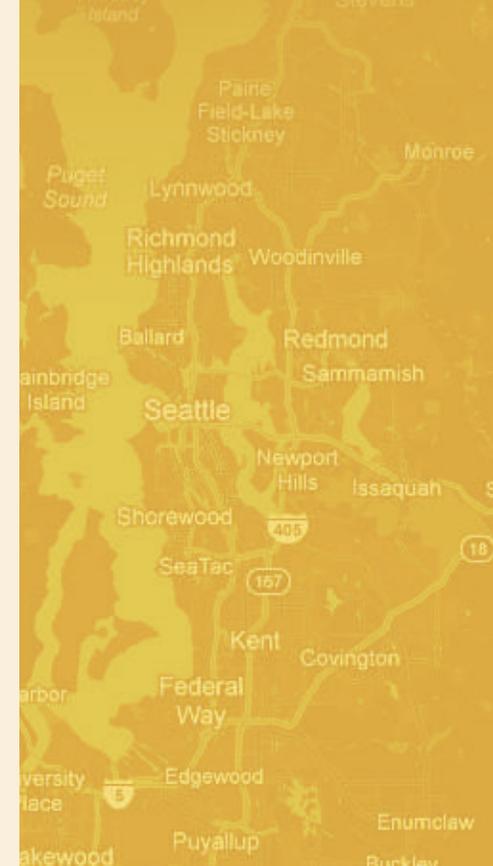
PHEP Capabilities Supported by this APC Product:

Capability 2: Community Recovery

Capability 3: Emergency Operations Coordination



THE SEATTLE AND KING COUNTY ADVANCED PRACTICE CENTER



APC PRODUCT IN PRACTICE

From October 2010 to September 2011, the **Cerro Gordo County Department of Public Health** worked with the Seattle and King County APC site to implement pieces of the *Sustaining Critical Services: Continuity of Operations* toolkit. Cerro Gordo's goal was to update the county's existing Emergency Response Plan with plans for maintaining the critical daily services it provides to residents during times of emergency and disaster. These services include home care, immunizations, health screenings, inspection services, and disease prevention. Jodi Willemsen, Public Health Preparedness Service Manager, was the project lead for Cerro Gordo County Department of Public Health, which serves 43,786 residents in Mason City, IA and has 43 employees.



PROVIDED A HIGH QUALITY SOLUTION

Ms. Willemsen shared, "This APC toolkit allowed our organization to substantially improve our existing continuity of operations plan using the tools and templates provided. It helped to broaden our approach, and offered ideas we may not have considered on our own."



SAVED TIME

"The pre-developed templates were very nice to have and saved a lot of time," said Ms. Willemsen. "We would guess it would take at least three to four months to develop a plan and exercise scenario from scratch. [With this APC Product], the time it took to create a tabletop exercise was approximately 12 hours."



SAVED RESOURCES

"Accessing existing tools that are easy-to-use and scalable is critical for organizations with little time, funding, and staff," shared Ms. Willemsen. "With this toolkit, we saved time and money developing a tabletop exercise and training, as well as in updating our continuity of operations plan. There are minimal requirements of local health departments to be able to utilize this toolkit effectively, other than to have a general understanding of hazards or threats likely to affect their agency."



INCLUDED CONSULTATIVE SUPPORT FROM APC STAFF

"We appreciated the Seattle APC staff being available to answer our calls for further definition with some of the tools, and to talk through how some tools might be scaled down to fit a smaller agency. We also liked hearing Seattle's real world experience with continuity of operations planning. We heard firsthand how some of the tools came to be. There is nothing better than learning from actual experience, and Seattle & King County's APC was happy to share that with us," said Ms. Willemsen.



ACHIEVED RESULTS

Ms. Willemsen confirmed that, "By using this resource, our organization improved its existing continuity of operations plan, increased its capacity to maintain essential services, and successfully incorporated the tools into our regular operations."

After implementing the APC toolkit and conducting the toolkit's tabletop exercise, the Cerro Gordo County Department of Public Health took a step further, holding a day-long, full scale exercise to test their new continuity of operations plan. For this effort, they received recognition from the state of Iowa's Department of Public Health.