**Workshop on Reconstituting Operations**

**Sample Facilitator Guide | May 2020**

# Workshop on Reconstituting Operations — Facilitator Guide

In these uncertain times, organizations are grappling with when and how to return to full operations while protecting the wellbeing and safety of the organizational workforce. Reconstituting operations following the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic will require a phased approach that results in restoration of full organization functionality while potentially leveraging nontraditional and flexible work arrangements that can be adapted based on current public health guidance and local needs.

FEMA has developed an Exercise Starter Kit with sample documents your organization can use to conduct your own planning workshop on returning to full operations. This facilitator guide provides planning considerations and discussion questions to help guide internal conversations and decisions around reconstituting operations that will result in an actionable roadmap tailored to your organization’s unique needs and missions. The Exercise Starter Kit also includes sample conduct slides.

Suggested discussion questions for the workshop build upon reconstitution planning principals and relevant White House guidance for employers included in the [*Guidelines for Opening Up America Again*](http://www.whitehouse.gov/openingamerica/).

**Please review this document and tailor the material as necessary to meet the needs of your specific organization.** Update the content that is highlighted in red for individual deliveries of this workshop.

## Workshop Conduct Recommendations

* This workshop, intended to be guided by a facilitator, is designed for remote delivery, either via webinar or conference call.
* Use this facilitator guide in conjunction with the associated **sample conduct slides** provided as part of the Exercise Starter Kit.
	+ This facilitator guide includes directions to the facilitator and additional questions or topics for consideration *highlighted in blue italics* that do not appear on the sample conduct slides. Thisis meant to serve as additional guidance for the facilitator to help navigate the discussion with participants.
	+ The slide numbers below refer to the slide numbers in the sample conduct slides *after* the blue instruction slides are removed.
* These sample materials are designed for a half-day virtual workshop; however, you may decide that dividing content into multiple workshop sessions is a better approach for your organization. The workshop’s duration and structure should be determined by your organization based on your internal needs.
* Options for flexible delivery of this workshop include:
	+ A streamlined session that eliminates areas that have been addressed through other planning efforts.
	+ One session, either in a plenary session or by incorporating breakout groups, to address the full workshop content.
	+ An overview meeting for the entire planning team, followed by smaller team meetings, organized by focus area. Once all team meetings have been completed, a concluding plenary session should be held to share and deconflict plans for each focus area.
	+ An overview meeting for the entire planning team followed by a series of plenary sessions by focus area.
* Recommended participants in this workshop may include: representatives from occupational safety and health, security offices, continuity managers, human resources, facilities, external affairs, budget/financial officers, contracting, labor/union representatives, legal counsel or other leadership and staff, as appropriate. Successful reconstitution planning and implementation depends on participation from key leadership and decision-makers as well as representatives throughout the organization.
* Before the workshop, participants should review the White House *Guidelines for Opening Up America Again* and the FEMA fact sheet, “[Planning Considerations for Organizations in Reconstituting Operations During the COVID-19 Pandemic](https://www.fema.gov/news-release/2020/04/30/planning-considerations-organizations-reconstituting-operations-during-covid).”
* The conduct slides may be sent out to participants in advance (once they have been customized). This will help familiarize participants with the questions to prepare them for the discussion. Questions can be distributed to different groups of staff to address each of the discussion themes.

REMINDER: Any changes made to the sample conduct slides must also be reflected in this facilitator guide.

## Facilitator Instruction Table

NOTE: Slide numbers listed below reflect the slide number once the instructional slides included in the sample slides are removed.

| Slide # | Time | Slide Title/Content | Facilitator Notes |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **1** |  | **Title Slide** |  |
|  |  |  | **WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS [Insert Time]**  |
| **2** | **[insert time]** | **Welcome and Introductions** | *When participants are ready:** *Provide initial remarks.*
* *Explain that the purpose of this workshop is to facilitate a discussion within your organization around reconstituting operations following the COVID-19 pandemic.*
* *Introduce yourself as the facilitator and explain that the facilitator is responsible for keeping the discussion focused on workshop objectives and exploring all issues within the time allotted.*
* *Introduce any additional speakers and allow time for welcoming remarks.*
* *With small participant groups, allow time for participants to introduce themselves.*
* *Given that you are likely to conduct this workshop remotely, address specific protocols (such as muting your microphones when not speaking, etc.) that will provide for an effective virtual meeting.*
 |
|  |  |  | **WORKSHOP SCHEDULE [Insert Time]** |
| **3** | **[Insert Time]** | **Workshop Schedule** | *Briefly go over the agenda and workshop schedule:** Welcome and Introductions
* Workshop Schedule
* Workshop Overview
* Current Situation Update
* Facilitated Discussion
* Action Items and Takeaways
* Closing Remarks
 |
|  |  |  | **WORKSHOP OVERVIEW [Insert Time]** |
| **4** | **[Insert Time]** | **Workshop Overview** | *Provide an overview of the workshop:***Purpose**: Prepare [your organization name] to return to full operations at the appropriate time following the current coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.*Explain that the COVID-19 national emergency could be ongoing for months and lead to multiple rounds of this type of planning. Planners need to remain flexible to continually reassess workplace conditions, the implications of new public health recommendations and additional guidance.***Scope**:* This will be a [insert time] discussion-based workshop.
* *Explain the structure of the workshop if you have decided to conduct a plenary session, multiple sessions or breakouts, etc.*
* Following an overview of the current situation, participants will engage in a discussion based on reconstitution principals and White House guidance for employers included in the *Guidelines for Opening Up America Again.*
* Discussion questions are organized based around four themes: **People**, **Facilities**, **Messaging & Communications**, and **Resources & Logistics**.

*Explain that in today’s workshop, we will apply reconstitution planning principals to discuss the challenges we will face as our organization returns to full operations. Clarify that “reconstitution” is the process by which organizations resume full operations, but successful reconstitution in a COVID-19 environment may look different for each organization. For our organization, reconstitution may not necessarily mean returning to full operations at primary work locations. New staffing models may be a hybrid or combination of telework, shift schedules, on-site personnel and increased use of additional facilities.**Ask whether participants have any questions.* |
| **5** | **[Insert Time]** | **Workshop Objectives** | *Review the workshop objectives.*1. Assess actions needed to safely return to full operations according to appropriate time-phased guidelines.
2. Determine how plans, policies and practices may need to be adapted to safeguard the workforce during reconstitution, consistent with appropriate COVID-19 guidance and recommended community mitigation measures.
3. Identify potential mitigating measures or solutions to remaining risks or challenges that adversely impact our ability to perform all functions, including providing services to customers and the public.
 |
| **6** | **[Insert Time]** | **Workshop Guidelines** | *Review the workshop guidelines with participants. Tell participants that identifying issues is not as valuable as making suggestions and recommending actions that could improve efforts; problem-solving should be the focus.** Our desired outcome from this workshop is a roadmap for a functional reconstitution plan tailored to our unique needs and missions.
* This is an open, no-fault environment – varying viewpoints, even disagreements, are expected.
* Please base your responses on current guidance and plans, policies, procedures, capabilities and resources.
* Consider different approaches and suggest improvements.
* There is no “hidden agenda,” nor are there any trick questions.
* [Insert additional guidelines as appropriate.]
 |
|  |  |  | **CURRENT SITUATION UPDATE [Insert Time]**  |
| **7** | **[Insert Time]** | **Current Situation Update** | *Review the current situation and status of the organization.**Highlight that this portion of the workshop focuses on the current state of operations.** [Information can be found on the following webpages to identify the current situation:]
* [Coronavirus.gov](http://www.coronavirus.gov/)
* [White House: Guidelines for Opening Up America Again](https://www.whitehouse.gov/openingamerica/)
* [CDC: Coronavirus (COVID-19)](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2Findex.html)
* [FEMA: COVID-19 Response](https://www.fema.gov/coronavirus)
* [Provide specific information regarding the status of jurisdictions or areas where your organization has facilities, as appropriate.]
* [Provide specific information regarding the status of your organization.]

*Explain that reconstitution planning during COVID-19 requires a phased approach that aligns with the guidance provided in the White House* Guidelines for Opening Up America Again*.**It is important that your organization closely coordinates plan implementation with the local conditions where each facility is located and ensures that the “Gating Criteria” outlined in the* Guidelines for Opening Up America Again *have been satisfied. Ongoing monitoring of local conditions and the status of reopening phases will allow for a flexible approach to implementation as numbers of local cases decline, hospital and testing capacity improve, and if new outbreaks occur or local capacity declines.* |
|  |  |  | **FACILITATED DISCUSSION [Insert Time]**  |
| **8** | **[Insert Time]** | **Discussion Questions: *Current Operational Status* (1/2)** Government Building Logo | *Explain to participants that we will now engage in the facilitated discussion portion of this workshop, starting with a review of our current operational status, followed by discussion questions organized around four themes:** *People*
* *Facilities*
* *Messaging & Communications*
* *Resources & Logistics*

*Review the following workshop discussion questions with participants.**Add, tailor or augment suggested questions as appropriate for your organization.*Discussion Questions: Current Operational Status (1 of 2)1. How does our organization define reconstitution success? What is the desired end state for this planning process—where a gradual process, with multiple phases, may be required?
2. Has our mission delivery degraded under current circumstances?
	1. Are any functions not being performed or not being performed well?
	2. Are any functions not being resumed?
	3. Has expanded telework been successful?
	4. What have been the benefits and shortfalls to teleworking?
	5. What additional activities did your organization undertake that may now be considered new essential functions?
3. How are we accommodating operational needs, both in the office and in non-office settings, such as those working in the field?
4. Have we instituted policies and procedures consistent with “Guidelines for Employers – All Phases” as described in the *Guidelines for Opening Up America Again*?
 |
| **9** | **[Insert Time]** | **Discussion Questions: *Current Operational Status* (2/2)**Government Building Logo | *Review the following workshop discussion questions with participants.**Add, tailor or augment suggested questions as appropriate for your organization.*Current Operational Status Discussion Questions (2 of 2)1. What critical decisions do we need to make to support our reconstitution strategy?
	1. Who are the critical decision-makers?
	2. What data or information do the decision-makers need?
	3. What funding or other resources are required to implement the critical decisions?
	4. What planning factors currently exist within our reconstitution plans that might drive decision-making? Are those still viable in the current operational environment?
2. How are our regional or field offices participating in this planning?
	1. What is the decision-making process for our offices in different geographic areas that may be in different stages of achieving gating criteria or in different phases, according to the *Guidelines for Opening Up America Again*?
	2. Do regional or field office decisions need to be approved at headquarters?
 |
| **10** | **[Insert Time]** | **Discussion Questions: *People* (1/4)****People Logo** | *Review the following workshop discussion questions with participants.**Add, tailor or augment suggested questions as appropriate for your organization.**Explain to participants that this section should focus on plans and policies to protect our people and we will discuss the specific resources needed to implement those policies when we get to the “Resources and Logistics” questions.*Discussion Questions:People(1 of 4)1. How will we determine which employees will return to facilities during each phase, and who is making those recommendations?
2. When considering the return of staff to a given facility, should we prioritize specific functions?
3. How will we determine who is available to return to work in person?
4. Have we considered employee needs such as childcare and transportation? Can we implement any creative and flexible solutions to help employees meet these needs?
	1. How will the reduction, limitation or effects of social distancing for public transportation affect employees’ ability to safely access their primary worksite, and how will that affect long-term staffing plans?
5. What other considerations may impact employees’ return to their primary work locations?
	1. *Additional family situations*
	2. *Employee anxiety to the current situation*
	3. *Resurgence or additional spread (“waves”) of the virus*
	4. *Availability of transportation*
 |
| **11** | **[Insert Time]** | **Discussion Questions: *People* (2/4)****People Logo** | *Review the following workshop discussion questions with participants.**Add, tailor or augment suggested questions as appropriate for your organization.*Discussion Questions:People(2 of 4)1. How will we assess our staff and implement guidance that considers the following categories?
2. Vulnerable populations as defined in *Guidelines for Opening Up America Again*
3. Employees in good health and under age 65
4. Symptomatic employees and contractors
5. Employees and contractors who must work on site
6. Do we have plans in place to monitor changing conditions for another wave of COVID-19? What are the potential triggers for changing conditions due to another wave?
7. How will we monitor our workforce for indicative symptoms, as recommended in the *Guidelines for Opening Up America Again*? What resource requirements or limitations do we need to consider to implement this monitoring?
8. What new work arrangements will we use to keep the returning workforce safe?
9. *Mix of telework/office; more telework than previously approved*
10. *Adjust shift schedules to include early, evening, weekends*
11. *Rotating cohorts/teams on alternating weekly schedules*
12. *Physical distancing*
 |
| **12** | **[Insert Time]** | **Discussion Questions: *People* (3/4)****People Logo** | *Review the following workshop discussion questions with participants.**Add, tailor or augment suggested questions as appropriate for your organization.*Discussion Questions: People (3 of 4)1. Do we need to revise our human resources policies to accommodate new work arrangements, or to detail processes for sick employees or those with sick family members exposed to the virus or showing symptoms?
2. What plans or protocols do we need to put in place to ensure the safety of our workforce when reoccupying facilities?
	1. Do our plans incorporate the use and distribution of personal protective equipment (PPE) or other precautionary measures for staff?
	* *Will cloth face coverings be required?*
	* *What would a prioritization effort look like?*
	1. Will there be staff self-health evaluations?
	2. Will there be health screenings, such as taking temperatures, or asking risk-based questions, upon arrival?
 |
| **13** | **[Insert Time]** | **Discussion Questions: *People* (4/4)****People Logo** | *Review the following workshop discussion questions with participants.**Add, tailor or augment suggested questions as appropriate for your organization.*Discussion Questions: People (4 of 4)1. How will we backfill positions that cannot be staffed with their regular employees, or redistribute those responsibilities to others who are able to return to our facilities?
2. How will we identify and onboard surge staff to fill needed roles?
	1. If staffing shortages cannot be overcome, which functions will be prioritized?
	2. Who is authorized to redirect staff or resources to those priority functions?
3. How will we address human resource issues prior to employees returning to our facilities?
4. *Availability of employee assistance programs; staff and family support plans*
5. *Availability of mental health professionals and counselors*
6. *Assistance with claims processing related to healthcare and employee benefits*
7. *Benefits issues for employees that can no longer work or wish to retire*
8. *Questions about pay, benefits, vacation, etc., for staff who worked overtime or were not working*
9. *Questions regarding fairness of agency policies*
10. With current travel limitations in place, how are we continuing to meet mission needs?
11. How will we ensure the safety of our workforce when travel restrictions are lifted?
12. How do these planning factors and considerations impact near and long-term staffing plans? Does a hybrid staffing model consisting of telework, shift schedules, on-site staff and the increased use of additional facilities allow for the sustainment of essential functions?
 |
| **14** |  |  | **Break [Remove or adjust timing as needed]** |
| **15** | **[Insert Time]** | **Discussion Questions: *Facilities* (1/3)****People Logo** | *Review the following workshop discussion questions with participants.**Add, tailor or augment suggested questions as appropriate for your organization.*Discussion Questions: Facilities (1 of 3)1. Have we established a priority order for opening multiple facilities or locations?
	1. What does that entail?
	2. Should we prioritize buildings that are the most public-facing and those critical to implementing COVID-19 response and recovery efforts?
2. How will we verify that all systems, communications and other required capabilities are available and operational, and that we are fully capable of performing all functions and operations at a given facility?
3. What discussions do we need to have with property managers or the facility management team prior to our staff returning to a facility?
 |
| **16** | **[Insert Time]** | **Discussion Questions: *Facilities* (2/3)****Facilities Logo** | *Review the following workshop discussion questions with participants.**Add, tailor or augment suggested questions as appropriate for your organization.*Discussion Questions: Facilities (2 of 3)1. How will we ensure facilities are clean and safe for all staff before our employees return?
	1. What health and safety assessments do we need to establish?
	2. Are any physical changes needed before bringing staff back to offices? What contract or vendor support will this require?
* *Desk placement*
* *Signage*
* *Ventilation systems*
* *Hands-free options for doors and elevators*
* *Traffic control and directional devices*
* *Six-foot distance markings at workstations, hallways, elevators*
	1. What cleaning protocols do we need to put in place prior to staff re-entering facilities? What contracts or funding do we need to implement based on CDC guidelines?
	2. How will we incorporate CDC guidelines for cleaning facilities into daily operations? How long will these cleaning protocols need to be enforced once our staff has returned?
1. Can any necessary facility repairs, modifications or cleaning occur now (during social distancing measures) to prepare for reopening?
 |
| **17** | **[Insert Time]** | **Discussion Questions: *Facilities* (3/3)****Facilities Logo** | *Review the following workshop discussion questions with participants.**Add, tailor or augment suggested questions as appropriate for your organization.*Discussion Questions: Facilities (3 of 3)1. How will we accommodate, promote and maintain good social distancing and hygiene practices in our facilities?
	1. What facility changes do we need to implement to account for social distancing measures (e.g., breaking workforce into multiple teams/cohorts, alternating work stations, installing barriers, modifying in-person meeting protocols) to protect the health and safety of our workforce?
	2. What other policies do we need to consider (e.g., closing common spaces, limiting in-person gatherings, limiting access to on-site gyms or fitness centers, prohibiting communal food in workspaces, limiting personal items on desks, etc.)?
	3. How will we monitor our workforce to ensure compliance with infection control protocols?
2. What other partners do we need to bring staff back to our facilities and for all of our worksites to be fully operational?
3. *E.g., janitorial, security, food, or other vendors*
 |
| **18** | **[Insert Time]** | **Discussion Questions: *Messaging & Communications* (1/2)****Messaging & Communications Logo** | *Review the following workshop discussion questions with participants.**Add, tailor or augment suggested questions as appropriate for your organization.*Discussion Questions:Messaging & Communications(1 of 2)1. What information do we need to communicate to our employees prior to reopening? How, and how frequently, should we disseminate that messaging? How is the messaging coordinated within the organization?
2. *Health and safety measures*
3. *Change in schedules or shifts*
4. *Employee status*
5. *Priority/phased opening*
6. *Requirements for returning to work*
7. How will we communicate recommended or mandatory social distancing or hygiene practices to employees?
8. What guidance and resources will our employees receive to help them safeguard their family members during the process of returning to work?
9. What strategies should we utilize to communicate to employees with access and functional needs?
10. How will our employees and supervisors communicate considerations about returning to work?
	1. How do our employees report issues or concerns, and how are those issues resolved?
	2. How do our managers and supervisors report employee support considerations?
 |
| **19** | **[Insert Time]** | **Discussion Questions: *Messaging & Communications* (2/2)****Messaging & Communications Logo** | *Review the following workshop discussion questions with participants.**Add, tailor or augment suggested questions as appropriate for your organization.*Discussion Questions:Messaging & Communications(2 of 2)1. How will we communicate and coordinate with contractors and vendors regarding our plans to reopen and the ways in which our plans may impact them?
2. What should customers or other stakeholders expect when we reopen or return to full operations?
3. What are we required to report to other government entities (if anything) regarding the status of our facilities and staff?
4. How should we communicate and track requirements for employee accountability?
5. What is our senior leadership team messaging to our workforce, stakeholders, vendors and customers about our return to our facilities, and how is that being communicated?
 |
| **20** | **[Insert Time]** | **Discussion Questions: *Resources & Logistics*****(1/2)****Resources & Logistics Logo** | *Review the following workshop discussion questions with participants.**Add, tailor or augment suggested questions as appropriate for your organization.*Discussion Question:Resources & Logistics(1 of 2)1. What resources will we need at our facilities to reinstate on-site functions?
	1. Have we accounted for what resources we already have on hand, and what additional resources we will require to reopen? If not, how will we undertake this effort before we reopen our facilities?
	2. What resource shortages do we anticipate, and what steps can we take to reduce or respond to those shortages?
	3. What resource shortfalls or gaps are regional or field offices required to report to headquarters, and what process is used for prioritizing and allocating scarce resources across our organization?
	4. What decisions can be made regionally or at the field office-level vs. which ones must be made organization-wide?
	* *For example, if our organization decides it is important to place bottles of hand sanitizer on employee desks, should we come up with the resources to implement that policy organization-wide? Or should we let each region or field office decide what resources they need, and encourage them to order, prioritize and distribute those resources on their own?*
	* *In another example, should we provide face coverings to employees? If so, will we let each office or division decide what they are going to require or provide to employees, or will we make certain decisions across our entire enterprise?*
2. Have we determined which portions of new statutes or regulations (if any) may apply to our organization (e.g., CARES Act)?
 |
| **21** | **[Insert Time]** | **Discussion Questions: *Resources & Logistics*****(2/2)****Resources & Logistics Logo** | *Review the following workshop discussion questions with participants.**Add, tailor or augment suggested questions as appropriate for your organization.*Discussion Question:Resources & Logistics(2 of 2)1. What external infrastructure concerns need to be considered and addressed prior to staff returning to our facilities?
2. *How will equipment and supplies that we order be delivered to our facility?*
3. *Is public transportation operational, allowing personnel to get to the facility? What coordination must take place with these operators or vendors to ensure personnel are able to get to work?*
4. *How will mail services and deliveries to the facility be handled?*
5. When we reopen our facilities, do we anticipate any supply chain impacts due to COVID‑19? *E.g., vendors being out of stock of cleaning supplies, vendors being closed due to current restrictions.*
	1. What are potential considerations for resource shortages?
	2. How will we replenish our facility inventories?
6. What potential shortfalls or limiting factors should we anticipate in our ability to implement a workforce protection plan?
 |
| **22** |  |  | **BREAK [Remove or adjust timing as needed]** |
|  |  |  | **ACTION ITEMS AND TAKEAWAYS [Insert Time]**  |
| **23** | **[Insert Time]** | **Action Items and Takeaways** | *The next section of the workshop —* ***Action Items and Key Takeaways*** *— should prompt participants to review the four discussion themes (People, Facilities, Messaging & Communications, and Resources & Logistics) and identify next steps.**Be sure to capture specifics!** *Identify specific and actionable steps your organization needs to take next in each of the four topic areas.*
* *Prompt the group to identify who (person or group) is responsible for taking each of those actions.*
* *Agree on a timeline and set up a time to reconvene or report back.*

*Review the purpose of this segment of the workshop. Ask participants to openly share their thoughts and be respectful of others’ perspectives.**The focus of the conversation should be on identifying the action items in each of the four discussion areas; assigning them to individuals or teams for completion; and agreeing on a timeline and a time to reconvene or report back. For this portion, feedback on the design and conduct of the workshop itself is secondary.**The facilitator should ensure that everyone has a chance to speak and avoid letting one person control the conversation.** For each of the four discussion areas, identify:
	+ Major takeaways
	+ Actions needed
	+ Person or group responsible for those actions
	+ Timeline to reconvene or report back
	+ Next steps

*Following the workshop, participants will move forward and act on all the issues identified during the discussion.* |
|  |  |  | **CLOSING REMARKS [Insert Time]** |
| **24** | **[Insert Time]** | **Closing Remarks** | *If a senior leader is slated to deliver closing remarks, invite them to speak to the group. If not, offer closing remarks and thank everyone for their participation.*  |
|  |  |  | **ADJOURN [Insert Time]** |