Grants To States For School Emergency Management Planning (SEMP)

FACT SHEET

What Is School Emergency Management Planning (SEMP)?

Lessons learned from school emergencies such as the tragic events of Sandy Hook highlight the importance of preparing school officials and first responders to develop and implement emergency operations plans (EOPs). By having plans in place to keep students and staff safe, schools play a key role in taking preventative and protective measures to stop an emergency from occurring OR reduce the impact of an incident.

Although schools are not traditional response organizations, when a school-based emergency occurs, school personnel respond immediately. They provide first aid, notify response partners and provide instructions before first responders arrive. They also work with community partners and governmental organizations that have a responsibility identified in the school EOP to provide a cohesive, coordinated response to events as they unfold. Community partners include first responders – law enforcement, fire service, emergency medical service and emergency management personnel – as well as public and mental health entities.

Why Is SEMP Important?

Each school day our Nation’s schools are entrusted to provide a safe and healthy learning environment for approximately 55 million elementary and secondary school students in public and nonpublic schools. Families and communities expect schools to keep their children safe from threats (human-caused emergencies such as crime and violence) and hazards (natural disasters, disease outbreaks and accidents).

Local schools need to be prepared to respond and meet the challenges of natural or man-made emergencies or disaster events. In collaboration with local government and community partners, schools can take steps to plan for these potential emergencies through the creation of a school EOP – a school-based plan that specifically addresses the development of all-hazards, high-quality emergency operations plans.

What Is Louisiana’s Goal In School EOP Development?

Louisiana’s goal for school EOP development is to help ensure every student, teacher and school employee is in a safe and secure facility and prepared to respond in the event of an emergency or disaster incident. To help achieve that goal, Act 313 of the 2001 Louisiana Regular Legislative Session mandates that all elementary and secondary public schools prepare, maintain and exercise a crisis management and response plan.

Today those plans are known as High-Quality School Emergency Operations Plans or High-Quality EOPs.

What Help Is Available To Schools For Developing EOPs?

The Governor’s Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness (GOHSEP) – in partnership with the Louisiana Department of Education (LADOE) – is pleased to offer assistance in developing and implementing High-Quality EOPs.

This opportunity is provided by a grant from the U. S. Department of Education (DOE) through the Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools Technical Assistance (REMS TA) Center. Grants are awarded through the Grants to States for School Emergency Management Planning (SEMP) program.

What Is The Purpose Of The SEMP Grant?

Beyond providing assistance to local school districts for emergency operations planning, the SEMP grant hopes to build capacity at the district and local levels for ongoing all-hazards emergency operations planning. The ultimate goal is to ensure school and campus safety and the appropriate response from on-scene staff in the event of an emergency or disaster.
What Does The Program Include?
The program includes:
- Stakeholder outreach, meetings, round tables, training and exercise. (See side bar.)
- Creation of a plan-development and implementation ToolKit.
- Phased data collection.
- Assistance with plan review and feedback at the district level.

What Are The Training Opportunities?
The Louisiana SEMP Team has developed a robust training component. Classes are being offered online as well as in-classroom. (See side bar.)

Who Should Participate?
If you are a school district superintendent, risk manager, building maintenance staff responsible for school security, security staff, designated point of contact (POC) for this grant OR if you are a stakeholder in school campus safety, you should be involved in this program.

Are Parochial + Private Schools Included In This Initiative?
Through the website and train-the-trainer training opportunities at the district level, all public, parochial and charter schools throughout Louisiana will have access to needed plan development guidance.

When Does All This Happen?
During the 18-month grant cycle, the program will provide the following:

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Look for coming announcements!