

Intergovernmental Preparedness for Essential Records (IPER)

The Council of State Archivists (CoSA) launched a broad-scale **Emergency Preparedness Initiative (EPI)** in September 2005 in response to the widespread destruction of records during the 2005 hurricane season. The EPI included development of tools like the **Pocket Response Plan (PReP)**[™], a condensed version of an organization's emergency plan designed to be carried in your wallet, that has been adopted widely by cultural organizations, government agencies, and hospitals, among others.

To ensure that the overall EPI would address nationwide needs in a coordinated way, CoSA asked each state archives to complete an extensive assessment of its own records-related emergency preparedness and response capabilities along with those of other government agencies and historical and cultural organizations within its state. The results of these assessments were reported in ***Safeguarding a Nation's Identity***. One of the highest priorities that emerged from these assessments was the need to provide training to state and local government officials about the importance of protecting essential records, integrating them in continuity of operations protocols, and in creating a framework for disaster response.

As a result, CoSA applied for a training grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency and received \$2.6 million to support its **Intergovernmental Preparedness for Essential Records (IPER)** project. IPER kicked off with a national Summit Conference in July 2008 attended by 200 leaders of state and territorial emergency management agencies, information technology departments, and state archives and records management programs. By 2010, IPER had developed two complementary 7-hour courses targeted at state and local government employees – ***Essential Records*** and ***Records Emergency Preparedness and Response*** – and conducted six institutes to prepare instructional teams in every state to deliver the courses. Most were presented as live webinars, but the instructional teams found they could easily adapt the course materials to fit their own circumstances and audiences, with a number delivering them as all-day in-person workshops. By the time the FEMA funding for the IPER project ended in September 2012, CoSA had prepared more than 150 instructors who in turn trained more than 3,600 state and local government officials in every state and territory. Participants who completed the courses received credit toward the FEMA Continuity of Operations Certificate and also qualified for continuing education units from several national professional associations.

CoSA also developed self-directed versions of both courses. They were distributed copyright-free to each state archives on CD-ROM and should soon be available for individual students to take online, offered free-of-charge through the FEMA-supported Texas Engineering Extension Service (TEEX). A number of state-based teams also plan to continue offering instructor-led versions of both IPER courses.

IPER and EPI resources are available through the [CoSA website](#)

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