

**Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools  
(REMS) Technical Assistance (TA) Center**

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**Evaluating REMS and EMHE  
Grant Projects:  
An Overview**

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## I. Introduction

Evaluation is an integral component of your Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools (REMS) and Emergency Management for Higher Education (EMHE) grant project and contributes to the overall success of your funded project activities. A high quality school emergency management evaluation produces timely, relevant information about how a project is implemented, how resources are utilized, and how project activities translate into real-world emergency management outcomes. This information can be used by project directors to sustain momentum on your project, to ensure the quality of project implementation, and to document project accomplishments. It can also be used to guide and inform project management decisions that promote the overarching goal of creating, strengthening, or improving emergency management plans in schools and institutions of higher education.

All grantees that receive funding under the REMS and EMHE grant initiatives are required to conduct an evaluation of their project and to periodically report evaluation findings to the U.S Department of Education (ED) in compliance with performance reporting mandates. To support REMS and EMHE grantees in this effort, the REMS TA Center has developed this guide as a resource to inform and facilitate the evaluation process. It is intended to provide practical information to grantees in order to plan and oversee a quality evaluation that conforms to ED and Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) reporting requirements, and that yields useful information supporting the development and sustainability of your emergency management project.

This first section of the guide provides a basic introduction that defines the purpose and benefits of evaluation for REMS and EMHE grantees. This introduction is followed by a section offering guidance on how to select a qualified evaluator for your project and how the project director and the evaluator can work effectively as part of an evaluation team. The third and final section introduces a series of steps that comprise the evaluation process and discusses fundamental aspects of an evaluation effort that can be used to support implementation of your evaluation plan.

### What is Program Evaluation?<sup>1</sup>

Program or project evaluation can be defined as a systematic process for determining the value or effectiveness of a policy, program, or project. It relies on the collection and analysis of information, or data, to answer questions about whether or not, and to what extent, a program or project is achieving its intended goals and objectives.

In the field of evaluation, a **project** can be defined as “...any group of activities supported by resources that are intended to achieve specific outcomes among individuals, groups and communities.”<sup>1</sup> Within the context of the REMS and EMHE funding initiatives, the ‘project’ is the set of planned activities that a local educational agency (LEA) or institution of higher education (IHE) has collectively proposed as a strategy to create, enhance and sustain their emergency management project. Examples of specific ob-

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<sup>1</sup> a) Posavac, E. (2011). *Program evaluation: Methods and case studies*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall. b) Rossi, P.H., Lipsey, M.W., & Freeman, H. E. (2004). *Evaluation: A systematic approach*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc. c) Davidson, E.J. (2005). *Evaluation methodology basics: The nuts and bolts of sound evaluation*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

jectives comprising the evaluated project might include: the implementation of an all-hazards emergency plan, the formation of collaborative partnerships with first responders and other key partners, the creation of emergency management structures, such as ICS teams, to carry out response functions, the review of emergency plans or procedures, or the delivery of emergency training to school or university personnel. Projects often use the proposed activities as formal objectives to guide their overall implementation efforts. In these situations, the approach used for evaluation activities or objectives are the same.

*The **Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools (REMS)** grant program (CFDA 84.184E) administered by the U.S. Department of Education's (ED) Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools provides funds to local educational agencies (LEAs) to establish an emergency management process that focuses on reviewing and strengthening emergency management plans, within the framework of the four phases of emergency management (Prevention-Mitigation, Preparedness, Response, and Recovery). The program also provides resources to LEAs to provide training for staff on emergency management procedures and requires that LEAs develop comprehensive all-hazards emergency management plans in collaboration with community partners including local law enforcement; public safety, public health, and mental health agencies; and local government.*

*The **Emergency Management for Higher Education (EMHE)** grant (CFDA 84.184T) is administered by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools. The U.S. Department of Education (ED) collaborates with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to support this grant competition. Grants provide funds to institutions of higher education to develop, or review and improve, and fully integrate, campus-based all-hazards emergency management planning efforts within the framework of the four phases of emergency management—Prevention-Mitigation, Preparedness, Response and Recovery.*

**U.S. Department of Education Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools Center for School Preparedness**  
*The U.S. Department of Education (ED)'s Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools' (OSDFS) Center for School Preparedness provides support, resources, grants, and training to support emergency management efforts for LEAs and institutions of higher education (IHEs).*

*The **Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools Technical Assistance Center** was first established in 2004 by ED's OSDFS. The REMS Technical Assistance Center's primary goal is to support schools, school districts, and institutions of higher education in emergency management, including the development and implementation of comprehensive emergency management plans. The REMS Technical Assistance Center supports REMS and EMHE grantees in managing and implementing their grants and in sustaining their efforts over time. Non-grantee LEAs, schools, and IHEs also may receive support to improve and strengthen their emergency management plans.*

## **Why is it Important to Conduct Evaluations?**

There are many reasons to evaluate your REMS or EMHE project beyond the need to satisfy Federal funding requirements. Evaluation can have very important benefits for different groups of stakeholders, including benefits to a) those who are involved in implementing the project; b) those that the project directly serves or who are impacted by its outcomes (e.g., improved safety and security of the school or university setting); and c) those that fund or supervise the project – both local funders and national taxpayers.

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### ***For Funding Agencies***

Evaluation enables the Federal government to monitor public expenditures of funds, to ensure that projects are demonstrating results, and to use project findings to shape future school safety and emergency management policy. Specifically, evaluation can:

- Provide feedback to ED about how resources are being applied within school and IHE settings;
- Facilitate performance monitoring of project activities and outcomes to support results-based accountability;
- Build knowledge and understanding of best practices related to emergency management in schools and higher education that can be applied to future funded projects;
- Provide justification of the continuing need to allocate funds to support emergency management planning projects.

### ***For Project Managers and Collaborating Partners***

Evaluation gives managers and their partners tools to monitor project objectives and outcomes and to make informed decisions about how the project is implemented. Specifically, evaluation can:

- Create opportunities for formally engaging key stakeholders in the emergency management project and establishing buy-in for improvement efforts;
- Clarify understanding of conditions that may affect implementation and the relationships between project activities and intended outcomes;
- Identify the strength or weakness of project areas that contribute to success or failure of project implementation;
- Support decisions regarding how to manage and allocate limited resources more effectively;
- Document project development and implementation to demonstrate accountability and to support replication;
- Establish formal mechanisms for gathering and delivering feedback on emergency management functions that support continuous quality improvements; and,
- Demonstrate project accomplishments to help sustain momentum and longer-term resource support.

### ***For School and IHE Personnel, Parents, Students, and Other Stakeholders Served by the Project***

Evaluation can be a tool to engage school and community stakeholders in the emergency management process and to strengthen the overall quality of the readiness effort. Specifically, evaluation can:

- Provide opportunities for stakeholders (e.g., administrators, faculty members, parents, students, or community partners) to voice their concerns about school and IHE safety issues and to share perspectives that can shape the emergency management program;
- Offer evidence of the accomplishment of schools and IHEs to improving emergency management in educational settings; and,
- Strengthen the overall quality of funded activities that contribute to school or campus safety and security outcomes.

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## **Section Summary**

This preceding section of this guide focuses on defining ‘project evaluation’ within the REMS and EMHE program context and discusses why evaluation is beneficial for your funded project. The next section of the document offers guidance on how to work successfully with an evaluator to plan and implement an evaluation of your project. It provides recommendations for selecting a qualified individual to serve on your evaluation team, and how to plan, monitor, and supervise the evaluation effort.

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## II. Getting Started: Working with an Evaluator

As part of the REMS and EMHE application process, all prospective grantees are required to outline a plan for evaluating their project that defines goals and objectives for the proposed project and identifies indicators of performance within each objective. In practice, however, many grantees who do not have previous experience evaluating school-based projects may find the evaluation process challenging and may not know how to get started.

This next section provides basic guidance on identifying an evaluator and managing the evaluation relationship effectively. It will first assist grantees in determining whether an internal or external evaluation represents the best fit for their project. For grantees that choose to contract with an outside vendor, the section also offers suggestions for how to identify a list of prospective evaluation contractors, and elements to include in a Request for Proposals (RFP) that will guide and facilitate the selection process. This section also discusses the roles and responsibilities of the project director as a manager of the evaluation team.

### Choosing between an External and Internal Evaluator

One of the first decisions you will need to make when preparing to evaluate your REMS or EMHE grant project is to determine who will be primarily responsible for planning and conducting the evaluation. An evaluator can be either internal or external, depending on your preferences and the resources available to your district or institution. Whatever option you choose, the decision can have important implications for the outcome of your evaluation, so it is important to use careful consideration when weighing different options. Some of the comparative advantages and disadvantages of working with an internal or external evaluator that may exist are outlined in Figure 1 on the following page.

Studies comparing the benefits of external and internal evaluation approaches often conclude that an optimal model is one that brings evaluation professionals and internal project staff together as part of a collaborative evaluation team. This team approach combines the benefits of strong evaluation expertise and outsider accountability with insider knowledge and perspectives on the project and its context that can enhance the evaluation process.

For LEAs and IHEs who do choose to work with an external evaluator, it is important to keep in mind that a good evaluator should always work in close collaboration with project staff to ensure that the evaluation is consistent with the values and priorities of the project management team and is responsive to the informational needs of both managers and key stakeholders.

#### ***A Note on Evaluation Integrity***

*Regardless of who is selected to conduct the evaluation of your project, it is important to identify the evaluator early in the project and to keep them well-informed throughout the project cycle. The individual or team should be an unbiased party and someone who can objectively evaluate the project. The Project Director should not also serve as the evaluator to ensure this objectivity. Outside consultants who have been hired to perform significant parts of the grant (e.g., conducting training or developing emergency plans and procedures) should also probably be excluded from serving in the evaluator role as they might have an unfair bias.*

Figure 1  
**Internal versus External Evaluation**  
*Weighing the Advantages and Disadvantages<sup>2</sup>*

	Advantages	Disadvantages
Internal Evaluator	<p><b>Understanding of Organizational History/Context:</b> Internal staff bring ‘insider’ knowledge and understanding of the project and its context (e.g., project development, resources, stakeholder involvement) that can inform the evaluation process and enhance the interpretation of findings.</p> <p><b>Acceptance:</b> Internal staff may be perceived as less threatening or judgmental than an external evaluator and their presence is less likely to disrupt normal activities.</p> <p><b>Timing:</b> Less time is required to learn about the project and to form relationships with stakeholders.</p>	<p><b>Perceived Bias:</b> Internal staff may be perceived as ‘too close’ to the project effort to maintain an objective viewpoint.</p> <p><b>Information Access:</b> Stakeholders may be less willing to disclose information (e.g., to critique emergency plans or practices) to internal personnel.</p> <p><b>Competing Priorities:</b> Competing job responsibilities may leave insufficient time to dedicate to the evaluation effort.</p>
External Evaluator	<p><b>Evaluation Expertise:</b> External evaluators may have stronger evaluation skills and experience and can be selected based on the professional qualifications.</p> <p><b>Perspective:</b> An external evaluator brings a new, outside perspective that differs from those who are more involved with the project.</p> <p><b>Autonomy:</b> External evaluators are less influenced by internal politics than internal staff and may have more freedom to present findings objectively.</p> <p><b>Credibility:</b> External evaluators may be perceived as more credible judges of project activities and accomplishments.</p>	<p><b>Potential for Delayed Start-Up:</b> Procuring an external evaluator can delay project timelines.</p> <p><b>Time Demand:</b> More monitoring and supervision may be required when working with an external contractor.</p> <p><b>Cost:</b> Costs associated with hiring an outside consultant may be higher than ‘in-house’ evaluation costs. (Note: Occasionally it is possible to secure a volunteer external evaluation at little or no cost. These may come from a non-profit organization, local educational service district, or through a local university’s internship project.)</p>

## Identifying a List of Potential Evaluators

Although it may be preferred, it is not always necessary that your project evaluator work or reside within your local area. As with any procurement action, federal grantees are required to use methods permitting full and open competition, this process cannot be hindered with onerous or unfair requirements.<sup>3</sup> High-quality evaluation studies can be conducted remotely with the help of communication technologies (e.g., e-mail, conference lines, webinars) or through hiring of local data collection staff to assist with the evaluation. Working with an evaluator long-distance will, however, require a highly collaborative team approach that should feature frequent communication between the evaluator and the project management staff, including formal and informal e-mail and telephone contact, periodic progress reports and evaluation updates, and continuous feedback about project processes and outcomes. Another point to consider is that external evaluators located far from your project site may include funds in their project proposal to support travel costs to and from your site.

<sup>2</sup> It is possible, particularly with IHE grantees, to have evaluators that are internal to the organization (e.g., professor’s students, or research and design professors or classes), but external to the project that could effectively serve as an independent evaluator for the emergency management project.

<sup>3</sup> REMS and EMHE Grantees are required to follow basic procurement guidelines outlined in Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) Section 80.36 to ensure that procurement transactions are conducted in a manner that provides for full and open competition. Note: EDGAR Section 80.36 takes precedence over state and local procedures in these cases where the minimum requirements in section 80.36 provide greater protection of the procurement process. Procurement guidance for REMS Grantees is posted online at <http://www.ed.gov/programs/dvpemergencyresponse/factsheet08.html>. Information regarding regulations for EMHE Grantees is posted online at <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/emergencyhighed/legislation.html>.

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Funded projects that prefer to work with an external evaluator or that do not have the internal capacity to conduct their own evaluation will need to establish a list of prospective evaluators to consider. Funded projects that have not already established a list of evaluators or that have never worked with an outside contractor may find it challenging to locate a qualified candidate(s). Projects located in rural or remote communities may have additional difficulty in accessing a pool of qualified external evaluators.

The following strategies may be helpful in locating an experienced evaluator or evaluation team to partner with you on your evaluation effort.

#### ***Consult Other Departments within your Own Organization***

Departments within your district or educational institution that have applied for or have received funding under other government or foundation grants may have worked with an external evaluator. These individuals may be able to recommend a potential consultant that they have successfully worked with in the past and/or assist you with navigating your district or institution's requirements for securing an evaluator.

#### ***Contact Previous Grantees in your Region or Local Area***

ED has funded many cohorts of grantees nationwide for several years under the REMS and EMHE projects. OSDFS and the REMS TA Center maintain a list of grantees and can help you identify other LEAs or IHEs to contact that may be able to assist in your processes for selecting a qualified evaluator that fits the scope of your project.

#### ***Contact Local Colleges or Universities***

Local universities and colleges can be a valuable resource for meeting your evaluation needs. Individual departments or research centers within universities often contract with organizations to conduct evaluation studies. These departments may have faculty or supervised graduate students who are available to assist in the evaluation of your project, which may sometimes lower costs. If you contact a university, someone may be able to refer you to a relevant project, department, or center that would be interested in partnering with your organization.

#### ***Contact Professional Organizations or Other Affiliated Groups***

Professional evaluation or project management associations, community foundations, or other philanthropic organizations often maintain listservs or evaluation resource directories that are accessible to the public and can be helpful in identifying evaluators with relevant project experience. These individuals or associations can be found online using simple Internet searches.

#### ***Contact Emergency Management Consultants***

Many leading emergency management consultants who provide technical consultation and training will also offer project evaluation services. These consultants can be also be found via simple Internet searches and may also contact you to offer information about their services. When choosing an emergency management consultant as an evaluator, it is important to ensure that whoever you hire has the requisite evaluation experience and expertise to conduct a high-quality evaluation of your project, and

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can provide an objective analysis (i.e., the person(s) who implements your project should not also evaluate the project).

### ***Workforce Internet Searches***

Using the Internet to access potential evaluators has gained increasing popularity with the explosion of various social network and employment websites. These can provide access to a diverse, talented workforce experienced in conducting evaluations. Make sure you: 1) develop a comprehensive Request for Proposal (RFP) statement, and 2) verify and check the professional credentials of any potential evaluator before entering into a contract with them.

### ***Use of Other Advertising Mediums***

Lastly, don't forget about more traditional advertising approaches. These can involve local newspapers, and if you have access to a local university or their employment bulletin boards.

## **Procuring an Evaluator and the Request for Proposals (RFP) Process**

REMS and EMHE grantees that are planning to work with an evaluator, either internal or external, must follow local and State procurement policies and all relevant Federal procurement policies, including those outlined in EDGAR, even if an evaluator was named in their original application.<sup>4</sup> These guidelines require that projects initiate a competitive process to select an evaluator for their project. The following set of recommendations is designed to guide grantees through the selection process using a formal RFP.

### **What is an RFP Process?**

An RFP is a formal or open solicitation to individual evaluators or evaluation firms asking them to submit proposals in response to a scope of work. In the context of evaluations, RFPs are used as an objective method of contracting for evaluation services using a standardized review process to select a qualified evaluator(s). Although the process of developing a well-written RFP requires careful planning and coordination with project, finance and sometimes legal departments of your institution, the advantage of competitive procurement is to allow for the review of a set of submissions that adhere to a consistent format and content requirements that can be easily rated according to an established set of criteria. The information outlined below includes general information about the RFP process. However, please recognize that the competitive process varies greatly from one institution to another, so this document should not be seen as a prescriptive list of how to manage an RFP process. Rather, this document offers general information on this topic for those grantees that may be unfamiliar with competitive procurement.

The first step in developing a formal written RFP is to determine the scope of work that will be required under the evaluation contract. The scope represents the grantee's expectations for the evaluation of the project. It should prioritize the informational needs of stakeholders (e.g., what project managers and Federal funders need to know) and should then take into account what is feasible given the allowable budget and contract timeframe (based on grant/project period).

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<sup>4</sup> If you named an evaluator in your grant application, that individual/organization should be considered as a "place holder" until an official evaluator is selected. This does not exempt you from meeting the requirements of full and open competition.

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An RFP does not need to specify in detail every aspect of how to accomplish or perform the requested services. Instead, it may be useful for the RFP to describe the evaluation plan as proposed in your REMS or EMHE application, including the goals, objectives, and performance indicators, and to ask prospective evaluators to respond with proposed data collection approaches, analyses, and plans for data reporting. It is important, however, that the same information about the project and original evaluation design be shared with all interested bidders. The RFP does not need to be a lengthy document. Typically, five to 10 pages would be reasonable for these types of projects.

It is also important that the RFP be designed to reflect the actual needs of a district or IHE, rather than copying an RFP other projects have used previously. This will ensure that the final evaluation plan reflects key elements of the plan proposed to ED as part of the original application and that the evaluation is responsive to local needs of your specific project. If you wish to go above and beyond the scope proposed by ED, you may. The approved evaluation plan in your grant application may be weak or outdated. Please discuss changes with your Federal project officer (FPO).

A completed RFP serves as the work expected for conducting the evaluation of your project. It is the document that is sent to prospective evaluators or evaluation firms and is the basis for their development of a proposed work schedule and budget. You can consider using your existing contacts of prospective evaluators or evaluation firms to distribute the RFP. You can also post your RFP online. In the previous subsection, a number of potential mechanisms to identify evaluators was presented.

### **What are the Elements of a Formal RFP?**

The next step in the RFP development process is to structure the written document. Although there is no standard format common to all RFPs, most versions include the following components:

- *Background Material*: provides a description of the project to be evaluated, the stated goals and objectives, the indicators or performance measures specified in the application for funds, and any other information relevant to the proposed project or performance reporting requirements;
- *Statement of Work*: provides a clear description of requested evaluation tasks, timelines, and deliverables;
- *Instructions for Proposal Content*: outlines narrative sections of the proposal that should be addressed by the bidder. These sections could include a discussion of the need for the emergency management project and the evaluation, the proposed technical approach to completing tasks in the statement of work, relevant project experience, staff qualifications, and proposed budget and deliverables.
- *Selection Criteria*: identifies the criteria used to review and rate proposal submissions, with relative weight or importance assigned to different sections of the proposal; and,
- *Details on the Proposal Submission Process*: outlines minimum evaluator qualifications and specifies submission deadlines, formatting requirements (e.g., minimum or maximum page length), contact information, and anticipated dates of notification.

### **What Types of Criteria should be used to rate Proposal Submissions?**

The next step in drafting an RFP is to establish selection criteria for choosing an evaluator and to include these criteria in your request for proposals. REMS and EMHE grantees should establish crite-

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ria that embody the needs and expectations for their district or IHE evaluation, and that specify any minimum qualifications related to professional experience or levels of education.

Possible selection criteria for rating REMS and EMHE evaluation proposals include a prospective bidder's:

- Knowledge of the need to improve emergency management within schools and institutions of higher education;
- Demonstrated knowledge and understanding of the REMS and EMHE funded project, its stated goals, objectives, and performance measurements, and the reporting requirements of the Federal funding agency;
- Professional evaluation experience, including expertise in qualitative and quantitative evaluation methods;
- Knowledge of and familiarity with the school or university project context, and experience conducting evaluation studies within educational settings;
- Understanding of emergency management concepts (e.g. all hazards, four phases of emergency management; NIMS);
- Experience working collaboratively with community stakeholders;
- Clarity in defining the proposed scope of work for the evaluation and the technical merit of the evaluation approach, including discussion of tasks, timelines, and project deliverables that are clearly linked to the goals and objectives of the project, and that adhere to the reporting requirements of the grant.
- Cost
- References

What NOT to include:

- Any factors that may unnecessarily limit competition such as location of evaluator.
- You may also consider the pros and cons of including your original grant proposal to illustrate the scope of your project.

### **What are the Final Steps in the RFP Process?**

An important final step in the RFP process is to check references of all potential vendors, and to request samples of previous evaluation work products or deliverables that are comparable in scope or content to the work requested. These steps will give you a reasonable expectation of what the evaluator can provide, and help you to ensure that you are working with a contractor who is capable of producing a useful, high-quality evaluation. It also is important to maintain thorough documentation of all actions related to the procurement process.

#### ***A Note on Solicitations from Vendors***

*Once you have been notified of your REMS and EMHE grant award, you may be contacted by vendors who are interested in evaluating your grant. Some of these vendors may claim to have experience that has been viewed as favorable by the U.S. Department of Education (ED). Please be advised that as a Federal agency, ED does not endorse any particular vendor, nor are there any "preferred" vendors.*

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## **Framing the Project Evaluation: The Utilization-Focused Approach**

Once an evaluator has been selected, it is important to establish a framework for the overall evaluation that can help clarify its purpose and define the roles and relationships among evaluation team members. There are many different frameworks that can guide the evaluation of a project. One of the most appropriate frameworks for the REMS and EMHE project context is a utilization-focused approach that emphasizes the practical use of evaluation findings and their application to real-world settings. This approach centers on the informational needs of the intended users—or more specifically, the key stakeholders responsible for funding, managing, and sustaining the emergency management project.

These intended users often play an important role in the evaluation effort, reflecting the idea that evaluation results are more likely to be utilized when the users of the information have contributed to the process and share ownership of findings. As such, project managers and members of the evaluation team should consider working with a range of stakeholders to determine informational needs that should ultimately shape the evaluation design.

## **Roles and Responsibilities of the Project Director**

When working with either an internal or external evaluator, the REMS and EMHE project director will often have primary responsibility for bringing together stakeholders and monitoring the progress of the overall evaluation effort. Specific responsibilities for the project director involved in managing the evaluation relationship include:

- Offering review and feedback to the evaluator to ensure that the plan is well-aligned with the project objectives and activities, fulfills all Federal reporting requirements, and supports the informational needs of stakeholders;
- Informing collaborating partners and stakeholders about the REMS and EMHE evaluation plan and soliciting ongoing feedback, data and support;
- Providing support to the evaluation effort (for example, providing contact information, administering surveys, or following up with respondents);
- Monitoring the evaluation effort to ensure that all planned activities are being carried out in a timely manner;
- Ensuring that evaluation findings are clearly communicated to their relevant audiences and that findings and lessons learned are integrated into the emergency management project.
- Providing evaluation results to Federal funders.

## **Section Summary**

This section focused on the process of selecting an internal or external evaluator and managing the evaluator relationship effectively. The third and final section outlines fundamental steps involved in the evaluation process. It provides specific information on the use of logic models to describe and focus the evaluation, introduces evaluation tools that can be used to collect project data, and specifies the requirements for Federal performance reporting identified for the REMS and EMHE projects.

### III. Steps in the Evaluation Process

Evaluation can be viewed as a systematic process that relies on a standardized set of procedures to accomplish its objectives. This process can be organized into a series of steps that will help direct and facilitate the overall effort and ensure that an evaluation is on-track and structured to produce meaningful findings that respond to the informational needs of stakeholders. Although these steps may not always be implemented in a consecutive sequence and are often interrelated, each is essential to the overall process. This section of the guide provides a detailed discussion of each step and its role in the overall evaluation process.

#### Step 1: Engaging Key Stakeholders

The first step in the evaluation process is to engage groups of stakeholders who are knowledgeable about the needs of a school-based emergency management project, are invested in what can be learned from the evaluation, and who can practically apply the knowledge gained from evaluation findings to the policy or project environment. Stakeholders include anyone who plays a role in implementation and anyone who is impacted by the project.

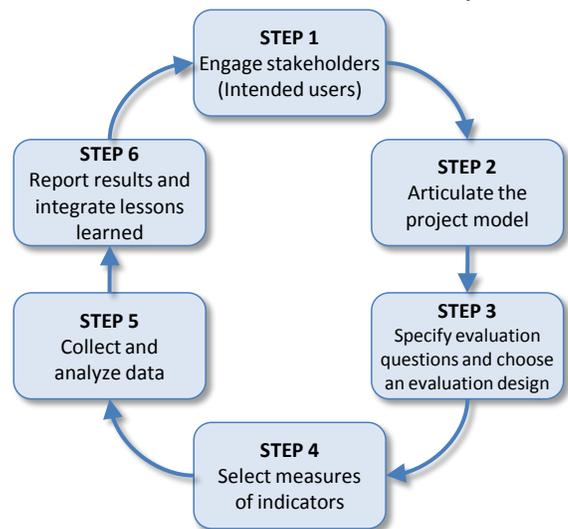
Within the REMS and EMHE grant context, the term ‘stakeholders’ can refer to a number of different participants including, but not limited to:

- Project directors;
- Federal funders;
- District or institution officials;
- School or campus administrators;
- Members of Incident Command System (ICS) teams;
- Faculty members;
- Students and their parents;
- First responders; and,
- Other community partners, such as:
  - Representatives of public health or mental health agencies;
  - Local governments;
  - Media representatives; or,
  - Members of the community at-large.

There are several important roles that these stakeholders can contribute to the project evaluation. These include, but are not limited to:

- Providing input into the evaluation design and identifying how key findings can be used to support decision-making or generate new knowledge of effective emergency management practices;
- Sharing perspectives on the emergency management effort by serving as respondents to data collection activities; and,
- Reviewing and interpreting evaluation findings and offering feedback about recommendations and lessons learned.

Figure 2  
*Recommended Steps for Evaluating  
Your REMS and EMHE Funded Projects*



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Minimally, stakeholders should be kept apprised of the evaluation effort, should be invited to share their input where appropriate, and should be notified of any emerging findings as the evaluation proceeds.

## **Step 2: Articulating the Project Model**

The second step in the evaluation process is to articulate the project model. This step involves clearly describing the funded project and clarifying its goals and objectives. This step helps establish the underlying framework for structuring the evaluation plan. Several elements comprise a comprehensive description of the project model.

### *Establishing Clear Goals and Objectives*

One of the most important steps in this initial stage of planning an evaluation is to ensure that you have established a clearly defined set of goals and measurable objectives to guide project implementation and to measure implementation progress. A *goal* is a general statement of a desired outcome or condition a project aims to achieve. For example, a goal for your project could be to create “*A safe and secure school community prepared to respond to and recover from all hazards and emergencies.*”

A REMS or EMHE funded project may have one or more overarching project goals to guide their project design. These goals are usually general statements about desired changes in conditions that can be operationalized in many different ways.

An *objective* is more specific than a goal. A well-stated objective specifies exactly what will be done, who will be involved, when it will be carried out, and how it will be measured. Objectives should be written in such a way that they are specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and time-bound (SMART).

The following is an example of a specific, *measurable* objective that defines what the project plans to achieve. “*To train five crisis team members in each of our 10 school buildings in basic first aid by month 6.*”

### *Using a Logic Model to Link Goals and Objectives with Activities and Intended Outcomes of the Project*

Once goals and objectives have been clearly defined, a logic model can be used as a tool to further conceptualize the project model and the evaluation design. A logic model is a graphic depiction of the cause-and-effect relationship between activities and outcomes and the sequence of steps that will lead to desired results. Logic models were initially used by evaluators to clarify project processes and identify appropriate measurements, and were later adopted by project directors as an effective project planning and communication tool.

There are many different versions of logic models, several of which are widely used in public project management and evaluation. Although there are some minor differences in structure and format, all serve the similar purpose of illustrating the relationships among needs and resources, targeted goals and objectives, planned activities, and their resulting outcomes. Some of the key questions that can be answered with a logic model include the following:

1. What will it look like when the desired conditions or outcomes are achieved?
2. What are the needs or conditions the project intends to impact?

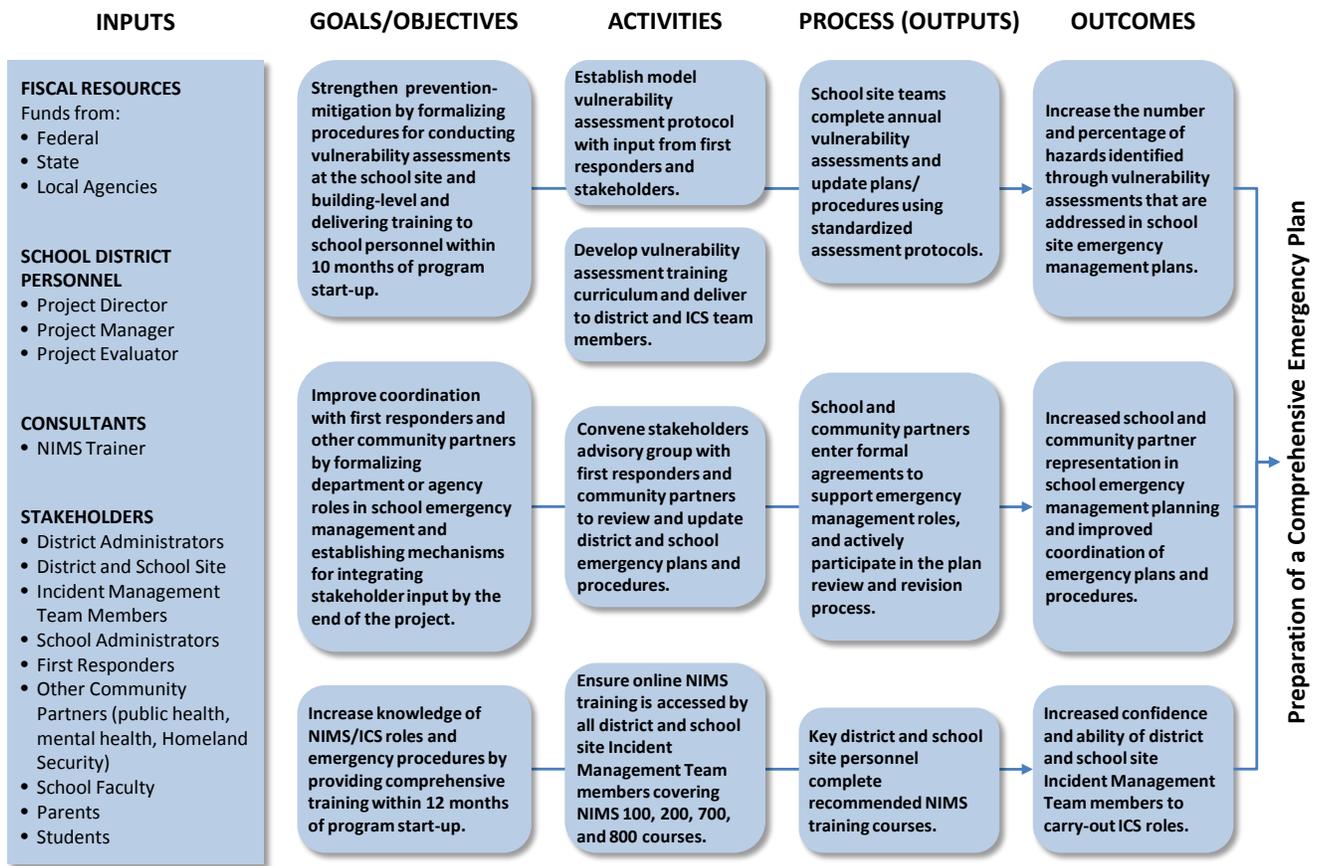
- 
3. What actions need to occur and what skills and knowledge will individuals need to acquire in order for these outcomes to be realized?
  4. What resources are needed to support the achievement of results?

There are several important benefits to using a logic model to describe your project and frame your evaluation. A logic model can be used to clarify and test assumptions about why selected strategies will produce targeted outcomes, to identify conditions required for effectiveness, and to easily communicate the project's purpose, design, and rationale to key stakeholders and other audiences. Further, once a project has been articulated in the form of a logic model, it becomes much simpler to identify indicators and measures related to project objectives and activities that support performance measurement.

A sample logic model is provided on the following page to illustrate how a model can be used to describe your REMS or EMHE project. The model presented includes each of the following components:

- *Goals and Objectives*: the statements that define the intended results of the emergency management project and the specific strategies used to achieve them.
- *Activities*: the planned elements of the funded project that drive changes in the emergency management system.
- *Inputs*: the resources invested in your project effort. These might include fiscal and personnel resources, collaborative partnerships, technological tools and infrastructure, and research-based knowledge and practices.
- *Outputs*: the immediate products of planned activities. These should include quantifiable measures of what was produced (e.g., training events were held) and how many individuals were reached (e.g., number of key personnel receiving NIMS training).
- *Outcomes*: specific statements about desired changes in conditions that are reflected in the project goals and are directly linked to the planned activities and outputs.

Figure 3  
**Elements of Program Logic Model**  
*Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools (REMS) Sample Project*



### Step 3: Specify Evaluation Questions and Select an Evaluation Design

Once the project goals, objectives, measurable indicators and activities have been clearly described, the next step in the evaluation process will be to focus the evaluation effort. This involves specifying the set of evaluation questions that will guide the overall process and determining the evaluation methods that will be used to measure responses. The Evaluator will lead this effort, but other stakeholders should be involved.

In a utilization-focused evaluation, the purpose will be largely driven by the informational needs of key stakeholders who are the intended users of the results and findings. The evaluation questions and the methods, measurements, and data collection and analysis approaches that are used might include:

- Delivering feedback about project activities and implementation strengths and challenges to inform decisions about project management and operations;
- Identifying ‘best practices’ that have been effective in school or higher education settings that can be replicated on other campuses;
- Producing evidence concerning the contribution and effectiveness of the project model to long-term safety and security goals; or,

- 
- Creating formal mechanisms that support continuous improvement of emergency management efforts and long-term sustainability of activities (e.g., assessing vulnerabilities, practicing and testing emergency procedures, after action reports, and monitoring compliance with emergency management requirements).

### *Defining the Set of Evaluation Questions*

There can be many different goals and objectives of interest in the evaluation process requiring diverse informational needs. To achieve them, it is important to prioritize these interests when defining the set of evaluation questions that will serve as the focus for the evaluation design. In some instances, it may not be feasible for projects to address all of their stated goals and objectives in their key evaluation questions, so it is important to prioritize the list of goals and objectives and to be clear in conveying which objectives are not addressed and why. Resource constraints are typically the reason certain goals or objectives are not tracked in an evaluation (e.g., community wide surveys may be appropriate to determine the extent of community awareness but are generally too costly to implement in projects with small evaluation budgets).

This process of defining the set of evaluation questions will ensure meaningful information is collected that is responsive to stakeholders. The questions should directly reflect the stated goals, objectives and indicators of the project be written clearly, and emphasize changes in procedures, resources, and personnel capacity that will form the basis for measurement and data collection efforts.

To do so, project directors may consider:

- What is the problem or need that the LEA or IHE is trying to address through the project?
- Who are the targeted audiences for the project activities? What are their roles and how will they affect the outcomes?
- How will the project director know if the project is working?
- What are the possible effects—both immediate (outputs) and longer term (outcomes)?
- What evidence would be accepted as an indicator of success? How will we know when we get there?

Other key considerations that might shape the formulation of evaluation questions include:

- *Usability*: Is there a specific use or application of the information that is generated in response to the evaluation question?
- *Timing*: Can the evaluation question be reasonably answered within the project timeframe of the evaluation study (e.g., 24 month grant period)?
- *Practicality*: Can the evaluation questions be reasonably answered given the information that is available and that can be generated using existing resources?

### *Selecting the Evaluation Methods*

Once the set of evaluation questions has been formulated, the next step will be to determine which evaluation method or approach is best suited to answering the evaluation questions. The two types of evaluation most relevant to the REMS and EMHE grant projects and that are linked to the evaluation purpose are *process evaluation* and *outcome evaluation*.

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**Process Evaluation** measures how the project is implemented and how the project outcomes are achieved. It is used a) to determine how well a project is functioning, b) to identify elements that contribute to success or failure, c) to help explain or interpret findings, and d) to provide feedback and recommendations to support planning and decision-making. Process measurement can help grantees understand whether project activities reasonably fit with the needs and capacity of educational institution, and whether the implementation was of appropriate quality to achieve results.

#### Examples of Process-Oriented Evaluation Questions

- What types of activities were implemented?
- How many school sites or campuses were actively involved?
- Who were the intended training participants?
- To what extent were activities implemented according to the established timelines?
- To what extent were activities implemented according to plan?
- To what extent were there barriers that impeded the implementation process? And what remedies are needed to overcome or mitigate against barriers?
- How was the project perceived by those involved with its implementation (e.g., staff, community partners, first responders)?
- To what extent had stakeholders contributed to the success of project implementation?
- How was the project perceived by those who will be affected by the outcomes (e.g., school faculty, parents, students)?

**Outcome Evaluation** measures results that are linked to project activities and are reflected in the stated goals and objectives. It is used to determine the project's effectiveness in achieving desired changes in knowledge, practices, or conditions targeted by the grant and to provide evidence that project goals were effectively achieved. While some grantees may choose to focus their evaluation exclusively on measurement of processes or outcomes, the most useful evaluation designs will include a combination of both process and outcome approaches to support measurement of project goals and objectives. The most important factor in determining your evaluation approach, however, will be in making sure that whatever methods you choose they will address the informational needs of stakeholder audiences and will have the capacity to capture continuous feedback at all levels of project implementation.

#### **Step 4: Specifying Measures of Indicators**

After outlining your evaluation questions and determining which methods will produce the most relevant sources of information, you will need to select the specific data measures that will function as your measurable **indicators** of project performance. Measurable indicators should inform evaluation questions and data collection.

The performance indicators used to evaluate the REMS and EMHE grant projects include the mandatory performance measure defined for each federally funded project under the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) of 1993, which is discussed in detail in section three. In addition to the GPRA measure, all grantees are also required to report on the set of 'project-specific' measures and indicators that are unique to your grant project and that were identified in the original grant application, subse-

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quently approved by your FPO. These GPRA and “project-specific” measures must be reported in both the interim and final reports.

### *Selecting Project-Specific Measures*

Different evaluation questions and performance reporting requirements will demand different types of measures and indicators. The most important distinction to make is between *quantitative* and *qualitative* measures.

**Quantitative measures** are produced from numerical data that can be counted, such as the number of training events held, the number of individuals trained, or the number of practice drills or exercises completed. Quantitative measures could also include counts of the numbers and percentages of individuals surveyed who respond in a certain way, such as the percentage of school administrators who report on a Likert scale feeling confident in their knowledge of emergency management functions. **Qualitative measures** are subjective and are produced from information shared by respondents or observers that capture their opinions and perceptions. Collecting and analyzing qualitative data typically rely on fewer numbers of respondents. Qualitative measures are very useful in helping to explain the complex processes or relationships that are involved in emergency management efforts, or identifying implementation barriers or areas of project strength or weakness.

The indicators that you select to assess project performance should be clearly defined and measurable. An advantage of using a logic model to describe your project is that it graphically depicts your project activities, outputs, and outcomes in a way that enables you to easily pinpoint where measures and indicators are needed.

Most of the indicators that you select will be either measures of “outputs” or measures of “outcomes.”

### **Output Indicators**

Examples of output indicators might include:

- Increase in the number of hazards addressed in school emergency management plans;
- Increase in the percentage of schools with active Emergency Management Teams;
- Increase in the number of key personnel trained in NIMS;
- Increase in the number of drills completed;
- Increase in the number of classroom emergency supply kits; or
- Increase in the number of meetings held involving collaborative partners including the number of partners attending.

These indicators provide evidence that the funded project has been successful in implementing planned activities.

### **Outcome Indicators**

Examples of outcome indicators might include:

- The number of training participants reporting knowledge of emergency procedures or increased capacity to respond to a crisis on campus;

- 
- The number of school administrators reporting improved coordination with state/local plans in emergency management functions; or,
  - Reductions in response times for practice drills and exercises.

### Quality Indicators

Grantees should also include measures of “project quality.” Examples of quality indicators might include:

- The percentage of training participants that were satisfied with their experience or that rated training content positively; or
- The percentage of collaborating partners who perceived meaningful roles as participants in the emergency management process.

These quality indicators can be useful in explaining the relationship between project activities and outputs and their resulting outcomes.

When determining which measures you should select as indicators of project accomplishments there are a number of factors to consider, including:

- *Feasibility*: Are there available data to support measurement of the selected measure or indicator?
- *Efficiency/Cost Effectiveness*: Can the data be accessed without imposing significant cost or burden on stakeholders?
- *Validity*: Does the indicator represent a valid measure of the output or outcome? For example, would an indicator measuring the number of meetings attended by collaborating partners be sufficient to assess the level of engagement in or commitment to the emergency management project?

The following set of suggestions may also be helpful in selecting measures that are appropriate to your evaluation purpose and informational needs and can strengthen your measurement design:

- Adapt measures that have been previously used by other REMS and EMHE funded projects;
- Select multiple measures of the same phenomenon to capture different perspectives;
- Include measures of effects on individuals, such as increased knowledge, awareness, confidence, and practices for implementing appropriate emergency management practices;
- Include measures of effects on organizations, such as changes to policies, procedures, infrastructure, or resources (e.g., NIMS adoption);
- Include measures of effects on larger coordinated systems, such as improved integration among the various departments across the college campus.
- Use qualitative data sources to supplement quantitative measures as a way to explain and interpret what and how results were achieved.

### The Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA)

The Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) was enacted in 1993 as a tool to increase government accountability of public funds and to improve project effectiveness by promoting a focus on results. GPRA requires that all Federal agencies establish goals and objectives for their funded projects and develop performance plans that specify objective and quantifiable measures of performance for activities that are implemented under their funded initiatives. Each Federal grant project has its own

GPRAs measure(s) and all funded grantees are required to report on the GPRAs performance measure(s) identified for their project. In writing the REMS or EMHE grant and thus by accepting the award, each grantee agrees to participate in the Federal GPRAs reporting.

***What are the Formal Requirements for GPRAs Reporting under the REMS and EMHE Projects?***<sup>5</sup>

It is important that the GPRAs measure is included in the project evaluation plan and that baseline data are collected early in the project period. Since the GPRAs measure provides the basis for comparison and evaluation of all grantees funded through the REMS and EMHE projects, the language for the GPRAs indicator cannot be altered or changed by any grantee. Reports, both interim and final, that do not include an explanation of progress on the required GPRAs measure(s) will not be accepted. Failure to report on the measure can result in a determination of non-compliance.

Figure 4

<b>FY 2010 Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools (REMS) Government Performance and Results Act (GPRAs) Measure</b>
<p><b>What is the GPRAs measure for this project?</b> The average number of National Incident Management System (NIMS)<sup>6</sup> course completions by key personnel at the start of the grant compared to the average number of NIMS course completions by key personnel at the end of the grant.</p>
<p><b>What do I need to report on the GPRAs measure for REMS?</b> Before beginning implementation of NIMS training connected to this grant, grantees were required to determine baseline data - the total number of NIMS courses completed by key personnel from their project at the start of the grant. Since the award of the grant, grantees should have developed a plan to track course completions as part of the grant. The baseline number and increase in course completions should be reported in your interim performance report.</p>
<p><b>What is the target outcome for the REMS GPRAs measure?</b> The target for the FY 2009 and 2010 REMS GPRAs measure is for each REMS grantee to achieve an average increase of two course completions by the end of the grant. Grantees may exceed this number; however, at a minimum ED expects an increase of an average of two course completions.</p>

Figure 5

<b>FY 2010 Emergency Management for Higher Education (EMHE) Government Performance and Results Act (GPRAs) Measure</b>
<p><b>What is the GPRAs Measure for this project?</b> The average number of National Incident Management System (NIMS) training course completions by key personnel at the start of the grant compared to the average number of NIMS training course completions by key personnel at the end of the grant.</p>
<p><b>What do I need to report on the GPRAs measure for EMHE?</b> Before beginning implementation of NIMS training connected to this grant, grantees were required to determine baseline data - the total number of NIMS courses completed by key personnel from their project at the start of the grant (before October 1, 2011). Since the award of the grant, grantees should have developed a plan to track course completions as part of the grant. The baseline number and increase in course completions should be reported in your interim performance report.</p>
<p><b>What is the target outcome for the EMHE GPRAs measure?</b> The target for the FY 2010 EMHE GPRAs measure is for each EMHE grantee to achieve an average increase of two course completions by the end of the grant. Grantees may exceed this number; however, at a minimum ED expects an increase of an average of two course completions.</p>

<sup>5</sup> Note: over time, different cohorts of grantees funded by the Department have had to respond and document their success in achieving different GPRAs measures. Make sure your project evaluator is fully aware about the measures associated with their funding period.

<sup>6</sup> School and campus “Key personnel” complete NIMS training accessible at [http://rems.ed.gov/index.php?page=NIMS\\_activity\\_detail\\_2009\\_2010&activityID=8](http://rems.ed.gov/index.php?page=NIMS_activity_detail_2009_2010&activityID=8). This link also includes information on the courses, determining key personnel, what courses can be considered for GPRAs and how to access courses.

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### *How are Key Personnel Defined?*

In order to fulfill NIMS requirements, schools and IHEs should determine which personnel need to receive Incident Command System (ICS) and NIMS training based on their roles(s) in the overall school or IHE emergency management project. (See NIMS information on the REMS TA Center website [http://rems.ed.gov/index.PHP?page=Resources\\_NIMS](http://rems.ed.gov/index.PHP?page=Resources_NIMS) for up-to-date guidance.)

In addition, some prior grantees have inquired about volunteers, including parents, part-time and wage staff. Because employment policies vary greatly from institution to institution, we suggest that you consider the role of the various individuals on your campus (albeit volunteer, part-time or contract employees) and the role they might have in emergency management response. If you feel that some of those individuals would play a vital role in the response to an emergency on your campus, then "yes," you may count them in your NIMS course completion data collection toward the GPRA measure. Please remember to include them in both your baseline tabulations and your final tabulations. Also, please provide a narrative description of how you defined "key personnel" in the "explanation of progress" section of your ED-524B project status charts so that ED may fully understand your data. This can simply be a listing of the position titles and does not need to name individuals. Such a chart can help your institution to sustain a training system as staffing levels change, or additional courses are needed.

### *What NIMS Courses can be Counted?*

In accordance with U.S. Department of Education guidance, it is recommended that certain "key personnel" complete the following six courses in order for an individual or organization to be considered NIMS compliant through FY 2010.

- IS-100 An Introduction to the Incident Command System<sup>7</sup>
- IS-200: ICS for Single Resources and Initial Action Incidents
- IS-300: Intermediate ICS
- IS-400: Advanced ICS
- IS-700: NIMS, An Introduction
- IS-800: National Response Framework, An Introduction
- G-402 Incident Command System (ICS) Overview for Executives/Senior Officials<sup>8</sup>

### *Additional Relevant Courses*

In addition to the series of courses required for key personnel under NIMS, ED, and DHS/Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) have identified a series of other courses that also support emergency management efforts at schools and campuses. To date, they include: IS-701, IS-702, IS-703,

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<sup>7</sup> Courses IS-100.SC: Introduction to the Incident Command System (ICS) for Schools or IS-100.HE: Introduction to ICS for Higher Education, are courses that were specifically designed to provide ICS training within a K-12 school-based or IHE based context. Completion of either version of this course by school and IHE emergency management personnel may substitute for completion of the IS-100.

<sup>8</sup> G-402 Incident Command System Overview for Executives/Senior Officials does not fulfill mandatory training requirements for key personnel under NIMS. However, ED for the purposes of the REMS and EMHE grant programs, and the GPRA performance indicator calculations, has determined that the district, school, or IHE emergency management team may use its discretion to recommend this course to executive personnel in place of IS-100. Grantees may include this course in their determination of average number of courses completed by key personnel.

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IS-706, E-361, IS-362, and E-363. If individuals at your LEA or in your institution have taken these courses, you may count them in your GPRA data analysis, as well. If there are additional FEMA certified courses that you would like to propose be counted in your baseline and final data for the GPRA measure on NIMS course completions, please email your FPO a request that includes the name and number of the course, and a justification for why it should count. Your FPO will review your request and respond with guidance.

#### ***Where and How can Courses be Accessed?***

IS-100, 200, 700, and 800 courses are all available online as Independent Study (IS) courses offered through the FEMA Emergency Management Institute (EMI) at <http://training.fema.gov>. IS 300 and 400 are only available through in person trainings. Grantees should reach out to their local emergency management partners, and their State Homeland Security office or State Emergency Management agency to identify training opportunities for these courses.

#### ***When is GPRA Data Reported?***

REMS and EMHE grantees are required to collect and report on the GPRA performance measure to ED throughout the project period. Specifically, grantees will be required to report data on this measure on the interim and final reports, for which ED will provide detailed reporting guidance annually. ED will aggregate data provided by grantees for this GPRA measure and use that data in developing future budget proposals. ED will also share this performance data with Congress. ED will also publish results from individual grants to illustrate how grant sites are making progress toward project objectives.

### **Step 5: Collect and Analyze Data**

Although the collection and analysis of data are largely dictated by decisions regarding the selection of key measures and indicators, there are a number of data collection tools available that can support process and outcome measurement and provide evidence of project accomplishments. Often it is recommended that project evaluations use multiple procedures for gathering, analyzing, and interpreting data as a way to strengthen the credibility of findings. Selecting multiple sources of evidence also creates opportunities to represent a variety of stakeholder perspectives about the project. This mixed set of perspectives offers a more comprehensive view of your project that can enhance the credibility of the evaluation effort. Similarly, integrating qualitative and quantitative information can yield information that is more complete and that responds to the interests and expectations of a wider audience.

The table presented below outlines and describes a number of data collection approaches and offers examples of potential uses within the REMS and EMHE project context. Please contact your school administrator before collecting data to determine the need for Institution Review Board (IRB) approval, and coordinate with your FPO if you have any questions.

Figure 6

Readiness for Emergency Management for Schools (REMS) and Emergency Management for Higher Education (EMHE) Data Collection Methods and Approaches		
Method	Description	Example of Uses
General respondent surveys	General respondent surveys involve collecting information from individuals in schools or institutions and other stakeholder groups (e.g., parents) about their behaviors, attitudes, or perceptions related to emergency management issues. Stakeholder surveys use questionnaires containing open-ended and/or fixed response items. Surveys may be administered electronically, by mail, in-person by telephone or on site using hard copy forms. Surveys will require a carefully constructed data collection instrument with clear instructions for the respondent.	School administrator surveys, or surveys of faculty members, parents, or students. (Appendix A includes an example of a student survey concerning the perceptions of being safe.)
Key stakeholder interviews	Key stakeholder interviews may be one-on-one conversations conducted in-person or by phone that are guided by a structured set of questions that are relevant to specific interviews and can be structured or open-ended. Key informant interviews differ from general respondent surveys in that they are more in-depth and usually involve fewer numbers of respondents, who are more involved with or knowledgeable of the emergency management project or activities than general respondents.	Project management surveys, surveys of district Incident Management Team members, or representatives of collaborating partner agencies. (Appendix B has an example of a key stakeholder survey for a school principal.)
Focus groups/ small group interviews	Focus group interviews are structured discussions usually involving five to 15 participants led by a qualified facilitator. The facilitator should be unbiased, and adept at engaging participants in conversation. A small number of questions, prepared in advance, are posed to the group to generate in-depth consideration of a topic. Focus groups are useful in examining participant perceptions, feelings, attitudes and recommendations. They should be used to collect information from a representative sample of a larger group of stakeholders, such as parents, faculty or school administrators, when it may not be feasible to collect information from the entire population.	Focus groups with school faculty members, parents (e.g., PTA members), students, or community partners, such as first responders.
Feedback or debriefing questionnaires	Feedback questionnaires are surveys of individuals who have participated in a specific activity. They are designed to solicit specific information about the activity for participant data and can be used to identify areas of strength or weakness. You may wish to gauge perceived value or knowledge gained for each participant. One way to ensure a high response rate for feedback forms, is to exchange a certification of completion upon receipt of the participant's form.	Training feedback, practice drill debriefing. (Appendix C has an example of a training feedback.)
Observations	Formal observations involve on-site observer's surveying specific activities or events and evaluating them using specific criteria for performance.	Observations of meetings, training events, or practice drills or exercises.
Document review	Document review involves assessment of written products or materials based on specific criteria (e.g., does a revised emergency plan contain detailed all-hazard procedures from each of the four phases?).	Review of revised emergency plans or procedures, training curricula, meeting agendas or minutes, or written correspondence.

While each of these approaches has the potential to provide useful and relevant information for your REMS and EMHE evaluation, adhering to the following set of recommendations can improve the overall efficiency and quality of the data collection tools and processes and the quality of the information collected:

- Always have a clearly defined purpose and anticipated use for the data being gathered. “Fishing expeditions” that involve excessive data requests without a clearly defined need impose unnecessary burden and can reduce stakeholder buy-in.

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- Formalize data collection procedures so that data gathering activities are implemented consistently across data collectors and activities, and can be used over time (annual review, strategic planning or reorganization activities).
  - Use trained data collectors or provide training to staff to ensure that data collection procedures are properly followed and that information requests are consistent with cultural norms and expectations.
  - Establish formal procedures to protect the confidentiality of respondents.
  - Balance the need to provide enough information to support meaningful conclusions about your project with the need to minimize burden on respondents.
  - Capture feedback from stakeholders that are knowledgeable of the topic under consideration and who can contribute meaningful perspectives to your evaluation questions, as well as stakeholders not as closely related to planning and implementation, such as students, staff, parents, community, etc.
  - Review and pilot test data collection tools where appropriate to ensure that data being gathered conforms to expectation of data quality and completeness.

### **Analyzing Results and Providing Feedback**

After evaluation information is collected, it should be organized in a way that allows the project director to summarize results, identify common themes or patterns, and assess project data against established goals and objectives. The information should be analyzed at periodic intervals over the course of the evaluation to provide project staff with ongoing feedback about their project. This feedback can be used to validate what project staff and partners are doing or identify areas where refinements are needed (e.g., did increasing the number of training hours result in better drill outcomes?). When negotiating an evaluation contract, be sure to come to agreement with your project evaluator(s) regarding the need for periodic progress reports and updates on the status of evaluation activities. Evaluators typically also provide data and analysis for required interim and final ED performance reports, after action reports for drills and exercises. These deliverables, and a timeline, should be outlined in the RFP and subsequent evaluation contract.

### **Step 6: Report Results and Integrate Lessons Learned**

Given the effort required to plan and implement a high-quality evaluation, information generated through a project evaluation should be carefully applied to resource and project management decision-making. The ultimate hope is that the evaluation will yield data and information that will help you improve your emergency management planning efforts. There are, however, a number of factors related to the presentation of findings that will influence the likelihood that evaluation results will be used. These include:

- *Evaluation Credibility*: Evaluations that are conducted by qualified evaluators and that draw conclusions based on sound evaluation methods are more likely to be perceived as credible and to be given strong consideration.
- *Clear Presentation*: Evaluation reports that use clear, non-technical language and that present a focused discussion of results will be more easily understood and utilized, including charts and graphs.
- *Timeliness*: Evaluation findings that are delivered to stakeholder audiences in a timely manner are more likely to be integrated into management decisions;

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- *Relevance and Resonance*: Evaluation findings that capture a variety of stakeholder perspectives and that resonate with the intended audience by speaking to their interests and specific informational needs are also more likely to be utilized;
  - *Use of Actionable Findings*: Evaluations should include a set of realistic, actionable recommendations that stem from evaluation findings; this will aide in implementation and improvement. Lessons learned are also more likely to be gleaned from emergency management efforts when clear pathways have been developed as part of the initial planning process to incorporate findings into continuous quality improvement efforts.

Project directors can also play an important role in ensuring that findings and recommendations are applied in ways that improve and sustain the emergency management project. Specific steps include: a) working with key stakeholders beyond the formal reporting timeline; b) engaging in follow-up facilitation to promote and enhance use of findings; c) requesting feedback early in the project regarding the perceived value of the evaluation results and the strengths and limitations of the evaluation design; d) identifying examples from the field of how stakeholders have applied evaluation lessons to emergency management efforts; and, e) disseminating these models to other school sites or stakeholder groups.

## Summary Conclusions

The Department of Education’s REMS TA Center has created this guide as a tool to support grantees’ efforts to comply with Federal evaluation requirements under their REMS and EMHE projects in a manner conducive to sustaining your institution’s efforts beyond the period of Federal funding. To this end, the document provides guidance on specific REMS and EMHE recommendations for identifying an evaluator, and supplements Federal performance reporting requirements for REMS and EMHE grantees under the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) and EDGAR. Although it is not designed to serve as a comprehensive manual on how to conduct a project evaluation, it does offer practical information on fundamental aspects of the evaluation process and suggests an evaluation framework that promotes the practical application and use of evaluation findings in real-world school and higher education settings. Within the context of REMS and EMHE projects, this framework encourages the use of project evaluation as a management tool that can help strengthen the overall quality and sustainability of your emergency preparedness program.

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# Appendix A

## *Student Survey concerning Perceptions of Preparedness and Safety at School*

## School Safety and Security Survey (Example)

School Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Survey: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade: 6 7 8 9 10 11 12  
(Circle one)

Gender: Male Female  
(Circle one)

Dear Student:

Thank you for agreeing to complete this survey. We want to learn about how safe you feel in your school. Please be honest in your answers, and tell us what you really think. Your responses will help us understand what makes school a better place to learn, and how changes may be made to improve it. You may choose not to answer any question. No one will be able to know how you answered because there are no names attached to the survey.

1. Thinking about your time at school, during the *last month*, how safe did you feel in each of these places?

Check one box for each statement.

	Not At All Safe	Not Really Safe	Sort of Safe	Safe	Very Safe	N/A
a) School parking lots	<input type="radio"/>					
b) School grounds (sidewalks and gathering areas such as outside courtyards and bike rack areas)	<input type="radio"/>					
c) Entries and exits	<input type="radio"/>					
d) Corridors/hallways and locker areas	<input type="radio"/>					
e) Staircases and landings,	<input type="radio"/>					
f) Restrooms	<input type="radio"/>					
g) Classrooms	<input type="radio"/>					
h) Gym locker rooms	<input type="radio"/>					
i) Gymnasium and athletic areas such as gyms or practice areas	<input type="radio"/>					
j) Outside recreation and/or athletic areas such as playgrounds or courts	<input type="radio"/>					
k) Cafeteria and vending areas	<input type="radio"/>					
l) Portables and other non-attached buildings	<input type="radio"/>					
m) School bus waiting areas	<input type="radio"/>					
n) On the school bus	<input type="radio"/>					

1a. Why do you feel unsafe at any of these locations?

2. Please indicate the time(s) of day when you feel 'not at all safe' or 'not really safe' in any of the areas checked in the boxes above.

Check all that apply.

a) Before school opens

b) During class sessions

c) During school breaks

d) During lunch periods

e) After school is over

f) Evenings during school events

g) Evenings after school events

**3. During the last month, how often did you avoid each of these places because you felt unsafe?**

Check one box for each statement.

	Never	Seldom (1-2 Days)	Sometimes (3-5 Days)	Often (6-15 Days)	Frequently (16+ Days)
a) School parking lots	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b) School grounds (sidewalks and gathering areas such as outside courtyards and bike rack areas)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c) Entries and exits	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d) Corridors/hallways and locker areas	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e) Staircases and landings,	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f) Restrooms	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g) Classrooms	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
h) Gym locker rooms	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
i) Gymnasium and athletic areas such as gyms or practice areas	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
j) Outside recreation and/or athletic areas such as playgrounds or courts	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
k) Cafeteria and vending areas	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
l) Portables and other non-attached buildings	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
m) School bus waiting areas	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
n) On the school bus	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**4. What, from your perspective, is the single biggest safety problem in your school?**

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**5. Have you ever used or participated in any of the following at your school?**

	Yes	No	I have considered using	We don't have this at our school	I don't know
a) Safety drills and exercises	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b) Peer mediation training for students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c) Anger management training for students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d) Meet with counselor	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e) After-school programs for students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**6. Has your school administration talked to the student body about these specific safety issues?**

(Note to Evaluators: Expand the list to cover hazards specific to your community.)

	Yes	No	I don't know
a) Weather problems (e.g., tornados, hurricanes, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>If yes, do you know what to do in a weather emergency?</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b) Health-related problems (e.g., communicable diseases like flu)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>If yes, do you know what to do in a health-related emergency?</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c) Potential violent intruder on your campus	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>If yes, do you know what to do in a violent intruder incident?</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**7. What one thing would you do to improve the safety and security at your school?**

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# Appendix B

## *Example of a Key Stakeholder Survey – Principal*

# Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools (REMS) Key Stakeholder Survey (Principal Version)

The school district recently received funding from the U.S. Department of Education to strengthen emergency response and crisis management planning throughout the district. As part of this effort we will be working with the school district to evaluate the impact of these activities on schools' capacity to effectively respond to and manage crisis incidents on campus.

Please take a few minutes to complete our brief questionnaire. Your responses will provide a baseline "snapshot" of school safety climate and safety planning activities within the district prior to implementation of the grant. The answers you provide are completely confidential; no names will be used. We would like to thank you in advance for your participation. Your commitment to this important effort is very much appreciated! For questions, or find out how to get involved with emergency management planning in the district, please contact Mr. X at xxx-xxx-xxxx.

## PERCEPTIONS OF THE SCHOOL SAFETY CLIMATE

Check one box for each statement.

	Not at all	Not very	Somewhat	Very	Extremely
1. Generally, how would you rate the overall safety of your school site?	<input type="radio"/>				
2. In your perception, how prepared is your school to respond to an emergency or crisis event on campus?	<input type="radio"/>				
3. How aware are personnel at your school site of formal policies and procedures for responding to an emergency or crisis on campus?	<input type="radio"/>				
4. How confident are you in your own ability to effectively manage a crisis incident on your school campus if one were to occur?	<input type="radio"/>				

5. Have you ever had to respond to an emergency or crisis on your campus; for example, a fire, natural disaster, violent incident, or medical emergency?
- Yes
  - No

5a. If yes, what was the nature of the event(s)? (Check all that apply)

- Fire
- Gas leak/chemical spill
- Student, staff, parent, or visitor in possession of a weapon
- Act of violence committed by student/staff/visitor
- Gang activity
- Missing child
- Other natural disaster (earthquake, flood, blackout, severe weather alert/emergency)
- Medical emergency
- Intruder on campus (armed)
- Unwelcomed, threatening, or violent parent/visitor
- Police search/investigation
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

6. How would you rate your own knowledge in each of the following areas, with "5" being "Extremely knowledgeable" and "1" being "Not at all knowledgeable"?

a) How to locate the most up-to-date school safety plan for your campus	1	2	3	4	5
b) How to manage a crisis incident using the Incident Command System (ICS)	1	2	3	4	5
c) How to respond to different types of incidents or scenarios (e.g., fire, chemical spill, shooter on campus)	1	2	3	4	5
d) How to communicate with teachers and students when a crisis is occurring	1	2	3	4	5
e) When to contact emergency personnel (i.e., first responders)	1	2	3	4	5
f) Where emergency shutoffs are located on campus	1	2	3	4	5
g) Which routes should be used to evacuate students and school personnel	1	2	3	4	5
h) How to identify and locate students with special needs (e.g., mobility, medication, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
i) How to notify parents and the larger community that an event has occurred	1	2	3	4	5

### SCHOOL SITE SAFETY PLANNING ACTIVITIES

7. Overall, in your perception, how high of priority has school safety planning been for your school district?
- Very high priority
  - High priority
  - Moderate priority
  - Low priority
  - Very low priority
8. Is your plan coordinated with central administration in the district?
- Completely
  - Somewhat
  - Not at all
9. Is your plan coordinated with community partners?
- Completely
  - Somewhat
  - Not at all
10. Please mark each of the following topics your plan addresses.
- Students with special needs
  - Infectious disease plan
  - Food defense plan
  - Natural disasters specific to your region
11. Using a scale of 1 to 5, with “1” meaning “Not at all adequate” and “5” meaning “More than adequate” how would you rate the adequacy of resources available to you to address school safety planning issues for your site?
- 1      2      3      4      5
12. Do you currently have an active school safety committee or emergency management team for your school campus?
- Yes
  - No *IF YOU ANSWERED “NO”, SKIP TO QUESTION 13.*
- 12a.** *If yes, how often do members of the team meet?*
- Monthly
  - Quarterly
  - Semi-Annually
  - Annually
  - As needed
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_
13. Do you currently have a formal, written school safety plan for your campus that outlines school safety policies and procedures?
- Yes
  - No *IF YOU ANSWERED “NO”, SKIP TO QUESTION 14.*
- 13a.** *If yes, has this plan been reviewed and updated in the past year?*
- Yes
  - No

**13b.** If the plan has not been updated in the past year, what was the approximate date in which it was last reviewed and updated?

\_\_\_ / \_\_\_ / \_\_\_

**13c.** How would you rate your school's safety plan in terms of its overall quality (e.g., comprehensiveness, relevance for your site, etc.)?

- Excellent
- Good
- Not very good
- Poor

**13d.** If you rated the quality of the plan as either, "Not very good" or "Poor", what do you see as the most significant limitations of the plan?

**14.** Is there a comprehensive training program in place at your school site to educate all staff (i.e., administrators, teachers, and custodial staff) on school safety procedures, including plans for prevention/mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery?

- Yes
- No IF YOU ANSWERED "NO", SKIP TO QUESTION 15.

**14a.** If yes, please check all school staff that participated in the training?

- |                                      |                                |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> Administrators | <input type="radio"/> Teachers |
| <input type="radio"/> Counselors     | <input type="radio"/> Security |
| <input type="radio"/> Nurses         | <input type="radio"/> Coaches  |
| <input type="radio"/> Cooks          | <input type="radio"/> Janitors |

**14b.** If yes, how often is this training provided?

- |                                     |                                   |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> Monthly       | <input type="radio"/> Annually    |
| <input type="radio"/> Quarterly     | <input type="radio"/> As needed   |
| <input type="radio"/> Semi-Annually | <input type="radio"/> Other _____ |

**15.** Do school personnel (i.e., administrators, teachers, and custodial staff) and students participate in regularly scheduled emergency practice drills and simulations?

- Yes
- No IF YOU ANSWERED "NO", SKIP TO QUESTION 16.

**15a.** How would you rate the overall quality of these practice drills in terms of their adequacy in preparing school personnel and students to respond to a crisis incident?

- Excellent
- Good
- Not very good
- Poor

**16.** Have school personnel been given simple reference guides or other resources that outline school safety policies and procedures?

- Yes
- No

17. Have school personnel been given emergency kits with first aid supplies and non-verbal communication tools to prepare for an emergency or crisis?

- Yes
- No

18. How would you rate the overall strength of emergency management planning efforts for your school sites in each of the following areas?

	Weak	Not very strong	Strong	Very strong
a) Coordination of school policies and procedures with the district office	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b) Coordination of school policies and procedures with community first-responders (fire, law enforcement)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c) Communicating information to parents and other community stakeholders about school policies, procedures, and planning efforts	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d) Creating opportunities for parents, students, and other community stakeholders to contribute to school planning efforts	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e) Ability to notify the following in the event of a crisis				
• School staff	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
• Parents	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
• Media	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
• Community stakeholders	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f) Ability to notify <i>non-English speaking</i> parents/guardians in the event of a crisis special needs planning?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

19. In your view, what is the most significant area in need of improvement with regard to school safety planning and emergency management for your school?

20. Any other comments regarding emergency management planning for your school or district that you would like to share with us?

**Thank you for your feedback!**

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# Appendix C

## *Example of a Training Feedback Form*

# Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools (REMS) Training Feedback Form

Today's training was part of a comprehensive emergency management planning effort being undertaken by the district with funding from the U.S. Department of Education. As part of a district evaluation of this effort, we would like to hear from you about your perceptions of the training experience and your overall satisfaction with the instruction you received.

Please take a few minutes to complete the following questionnaire. Your answers are completely confidential; no names will be used. Thank you for your participation!

## BACKGROUND

1. What is your primary job responsibility?

- Principal
- Vice Principal
- District personnel
- Police/sheriff
- Fire/paramedic
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

2. What type(s) of school are you representing? (check all that apply)

- Elementary school
- Middle school
- High school

3. Prior to attending today's training, have you ever participated in school emergency preparedness training?

- Yes
- No

## PRESENTER

4. How would you rate the presenter who worked with you at your school site in each of the following areas?

<i>Check one box for each statement.</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>Not Very Good</i>	<i>Adequate</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Excellent</i>
a) Knowledge/mastery of the subject matter	<input type="radio"/>				
b) Ability to communicate clearly	<input type="radio"/>				
c) Ability to interest/engage participants	<input type="radio"/>				
d) Responsiveness to questions	<input type="radio"/>				
e) Ability to effectively manage time.	<input type="radio"/>				

**4a.** If you did **not** rate the presenter as either "excellent" or "good" on any of the above items, in what ways could the presentation have been improved?

## TRAINING CONTENT

5. Thinking about the content of today's training, how true for you are each of the following statements?

<i>Check one box for each statement.</i>	<i>Not True At All</i>	<i>Not Very True</i>	<i>Somewhat True</i>	<i>Very True</i>
a) I acquired new information, knowledge, and/or skills.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b) I will be able to apply content from the training to emergency preparedness efforts at my school site.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c) The training content fit my level of experience or prior knowledge of the subject matter.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d) The amount of information covered was suitable for the time allotted for the training.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

6. In your perception, how useful are each of the following tools or resources?

<i>Check one box for each statement.</i>	<i>Not Useful At All</i>	<i>Not Very Useful</i>	<i>Somewhat Useful</i>	<i>Very Useful</i>
a) <b>List out the tools or resources used.</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

6a. If you did not feel that these tools would be "very useful" for improving school preparedness, in what ways could these tools be improved?

## TRAINING OVERALL

7. Thinking about this training session overall, how true for you are each of the following statements?

<i>Check one box for each statement.</i>	<i>Not True At All</i>	<i>Not Very True</i>	<i>Somewhat True</i>	<i>Very True</i>
a) The training has effectively prepared me to respond to an actual school crisis or emergency event.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b) I feel confident in my ability to use the materials when responding to a school emergency.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

7a. If you did not feel that each of these statements was "very true" for you, in what ways could the training have been improved?

8. What was the most useful portion of the training?

9. What was the least useful portion of the training?

10. Were there any topics or issues not covered in today's training that you feel should have been included in order to fully prepare your school(s) for an emergency event?

- Yes
- No

**10a.** *If "yes," what else should have been included?*

***Thank you for your feedback!***

The REMS TA Center was established in October 2007 by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools (OSDFS). The center supports schools and school districts in developing and implementing comprehensive emergency management plans by providing technical assistance via trainings, publications, and individualized responses to requests. For additional information about school emergency management topics, visit the REMS TA Center at <http://rems.ed.gov> or call 1-866-540-REMS (7367). For information about the REMS grant program, contact Tara Hill ([tara.hill@ed.gov](mailto:tara.hill@ed.gov)).

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