

Montezuma County, Colorado COVID-19 RESPONSE

After-Action Report/Improvement Plan – Version 2

06-02-21

EVENT OVERVIEW

Incident Name	COVID-19 Response and Recovery
Incident Dates	March 12, 2020 until this AAR June 2, 2021
Scope	This real-world event began in Feb of 2020. Our county formally declared an emergency on 18 th day of March, 2020. The Board of County Commissioners formally rescinded the Emergency Declaration on 14 th day of May, 2020.
Mission Area(s)	Mitigation, Response, Recovery
Objectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Communicate by all media mediums with consistent messaging from all ESFs using the JIS.2. Ensure all Public Health and Governor's orders are communicated to the public, all responders and staff.3. Continue dialogistic and prevalence testing for COVID 19 virus.4. Maintain training and staffing for testing sites.5. Continue to monitor positive cases and conduct contact tracing.6. Each ESF will develop their own continuity of operations plan based on staff becoming infected.7. Continue economic recovery efforts with the Federal, State and local partners.8. Assess and implement social and mental health recovery strategies.9. Continue situational awareness.10. Maintain an adequate supply of PPE for first line responders.
Threat or Hazard	Pandemic Flu, COVID-19
Scenario	The presence of COVID-19 in Colorado constitutes a disaster emergency under C.R.S. § 24-33.5-701, et seq. (from Governor's Executive Order D 2020 003 "Declaring a Disaster Emergency Due to the Presence of Coronavirus Disease 2019 in Colorado")
Sponsor	The County of Montezuma
Participating Organizations	Total personnel for the MAC Group: 1 State, 4 Policy Group, 15 EOC staff, and 15 ESFs (35 people total).
Point of Contact	County Emergency Manager Jim Spratlen

OBJECTIVES, STRENGTHS, AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT

Objectives

1. **Communicate by all media mediums with consistent messaging from all ESF's using the JIS.**
2. **Ensure all Public Health and Governor's orders are communicated to the public, all responders and staff.**

Strengths

The full capability level can be attributed to the following strengths:

Strength 1: Multi-Agency Coordination Group (MAC Group) was quickly formed from various County personnel and Emergency Support Functions (ESF) and based on their life experience, we formed a very functional EOC Staff to tackle this objective during this pandemic. Working relationships that developed prior to the pandemic allowed for a seamless transition into the response. Several personnel stepped up to lead which made this response and recovery as seamless as possible.

Strength 2: Collaborative relationships within the County contributed to a Unified EOC Director with the Emergency Management and Montezuma County Public Health Department. This partnership was also seen in all the positions within the EOC makeup, allowing consistent and accurate information to be disseminated to all in a timely manner.

Strength 3: Virtual meeting and doing business by emails and phone calls was a challenge but we were able to accomplish all the objectives that were set by the Directors for the past 110 days.

Strength 4: The Hospital weekly informational videos were very helpful in answering the numerous questions from the public.

Areas for Improvement

The following areas require improvement to achieve the full capability level:

Area for Improvement: The gap in our EOC was the lack of training for personnel assigned to the EOC in most all positions on how a MAC Group functions and the setup of a JIC operation.

Context and Analysis: The circumstances we were under were very challenging with not being able to have in-person meetings to help with the training of EOC personnel.

Objective:

3. **Continue dialogistic and prevalence testing for COVID 19 virus.**
4. **Continue to monitor positive cases and conduct contact tracing.**

5. Maintain training and staffing for testing sites.

Strengths

The partial capability level can be attributed to the following strengths:

Strength 1: All EMS and Public Health staff worked closely together and were trained and knowledgeable in the testing procedures. Public Health Department performed the contact tracing and data collection at a very high level of accuracy.

Strength 2: The trained staff worked in collaboration with other agencies, including the Ute Mountain Ute tribe and Indian Health Services.

Strength 3: All assigned personnel were able to critique their procedures and became more effective in future planned events.

Strength 4: All assigned personnel were able work together in purchasing a BD MAX testing analyzer to have localized rapid testing for our community and not have to rely on the state.

Areas for Improvement

The following areas require improvement to achieve the full capability level:

Area for Improvement: One of the gaps was the ability to train and keep a large enough staff for registration of the people being tested and the contact tracing procedures.

Context and Analysis: The circumstances we were under were very challenging with not being able to have in-person training. Virtual and on-the-job training was performed often. The lack of personnel made contact tracing difficult to keep up with demands.

Objective:

6. Each ESF will develop their own continuity of operations plan based on staff being infected.

Strengths

The partial capability level can be attributed to the following strengths:

Strength 1: Prior to the pandemic, the Department heads had an awareness of their personnel and their abilities so they were able to fill in the gaps caused by outbreaks in their departments.

Strength 2: ESFs were aware of their business locations and possible sites that could be utilized as an alternate site, if needed.

Strength 3: IT department had the proper equipment and training for all personnel to use equipment from home during this pandemic's first few months. This transition was effectively executed early on in the response.

Areas for Improvement

The following areas require improvement to achieve the full capability level:

Area for Improvement: The Continuity of Operations (COOP) needed a more dynamic approach as to what could be done virtually and what needed to be done in person. This was also not just a matter of one supervisor not being at the work place, it could mean a whole group of a department could be in quarantine for 14 days. This presented a new concept of "COOP" that we were not prepared to handle. Some departments needed to add staff to complete their COOP plans.

Context and Analysis: The circumstances we were under were very challenging not being able to have in-person meetings to help with the training of staff on what was involved in a COOP.

Objective:

7. Continue economic recovery efforts with the Federal, State and local partners.

8. Assess and implement social and mental health recovery strategies.

9. Continue situational awareness.

Strengths

The partial capability level can be attributed to the following strengths:

Strength 1: Region 9 and the Chambers of Commerce in the County built partnerships with the local businesses to help communicate the next steps in financial, social and mental health recovery.

Strength 2: Montezuma County Business Taskforce was formed to assist in rebuilding the businesses. Montezuma County had economic relief funds out to the community ahead of State and Federal relief.

Strength 3: Businesses also assisted in helping the MCBTF and other businesses in building some foundations of reopening.

Strength 4: Weekly MAC Group meetings facilitated the opportunity to receive current situational updates in a timely manner.

Areas for Improvement

The following areas require improvement to achieve the full capability level:

Area for Improvement: We need more assistance from the State and Federal partners along with a better clarification on the guidance that was being handed down to the local people.

Context and Analysis: The circumstances we were under were very challenging not being able to have in-person meetings to help with the training of the community on what re-opening really looked like. Face to face conversations on social and mental recovery issues were needed yet difficult to facilitate.

Objective:

10. Maintain an adequate supply of PPE for first line responders.

Strengths

The partial capability level can be attributed to the following strengths:

Strength 1: Our County was able to acquire adequate supplies of PPE at the beginning of the response and during the response from various vendors and State warehouses.

Strength 2: Some agencies had a supply of PPE prior to the pandemic response which allowed them to utilize their supplies for their personnel and to share with other agencies until more PPE arrived.

Strength 3: Emergency Management was able to work closely with the State in acquiring needed PPE throughout the response and recovery period.

Areas for Improvement

The following areas require improvement to achieve the full capability level:

Area for Improvement: County needs to build their cache of PPE for first responders and not have to rely on State or Federal assistance.

Context and Analysis: The circumstances we were under were very challenging not being able to gauge the amount of PPE needed in a pandemic wide spread across the globe. What would seem to be adequate supplies for above normal operations was not adequate for a pandemic response and recovery effort. Yet, if the county was able to store PPE in bulk, if the PPE was not stored in a climate controlled environment, the PPE would deteriorate and could not be used.

Appendix A: IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Issue/Area for Improvement	Corrective Action	Primary Responsible Organization	Organization POC	Start Date	Completion Date
1 The gap in our EOC was the lack of training for personnel assigned to the EOC in most all positions on how a MAC Group functions and the setup of a JIC operation	Have specific training for EOC Staff, JIC members and ESF's in the County	Office of Emergency Management, State of Colorado, Regional Field Manager	Jim Spratlen Colleen Gadd Thomas McNamara	Spring 2021	Spring 2022
2. One of the gaps was the ability to train and keep a large enough staff for registration of the people being tested and the contact tracing procedures.	Continue to train all staff on testing procedures and contact tracing	Public Health Department Hospital Staff EMS Staff	Karen Dickson Dr. Kent Aikin Matt Lindsay	Summer 2020	Summer 2022
3. The Continuity of Operations (COOP) needed a more dynamic approach as to what could be done virtually and what needed to be done in person. This was also not just a matter of one supervisor not being at the work place, it could mean a whole group of a department could be in quarantine for 14 days. This presented a new concept of "COOP" that we were not prepared to handle.	Each County Department should develop a COOP and it would be placed into the EOP	Office of Emergency Management Each Department Head (24)	Jim Spratlen All Department Heads	Fall 2020	Spring 2023

4. We need more assistance from the State and Federal partners along with a better clarification on the guidance that was being handed down to the local people.	State and federal partners develop a plan and training from the best practices over the course of 6 months	State Federal Local	Various	Summer 2021	Summer 2023
5. One gap recognized was that we did not have an adequate amount of PPE for first line responders during a worldwide pandemic response and recovery effort.	Develop State and federal partners to acquire needed PPE and maintain an adequate supply in a climate controlled environment.	County Emergency Manager Public Health Dept First line responder agencies Skilled nursing/Assisted living facilities	Various	Summer 2021	Summer 2022

This IP has been developed specifically for the County of Montezuma as a result of COVID-19.

APPENDIX B: EVENT PARTICIPANTS

Participating Organizations
Federal
FEMA
CDC
State
DHSEM – Training Officer
DHSEM – Regional Field Managers and Field Services Manager
DHSEM - Director
CDPHE CDOT Governor's Office National Guard
Montezuma County
Commissioners Officer of Emergency Management Public Information Office All County Departments Hospital Medical Air Support EMS Fire Law Enforcement Mental Health Provider Communications School Districts Chambers of Commerce Airport Emergency Support Functions Energy and Utility Companies Skilled Nursing/Assisted Living Facilities
Local Jurisdictions
City of Cortez
Ute Mountain Ute Tribe
Town of Mancos
Town of Dolores
Montezuma County