



Resilience
National Preparedness Directorate
National Training and Education Division

Training Partners Program

TPP Times

In This Issue

Welcome to the Spring 2022 issue of the TPP Times. In this issue, we focus on the efforts of two training partners to increase engagement with tribal communities, ensuring that tribal responders have access to high quality training and emergency management resources.

We also look at how the Rural Domestic Preparedness Consortium makes diversity, equity and inclusion a fundamental part of its mission.

We also focus on new National Incident Management System (NIMS) resources. And in our Section 508 Quarterly column we cover how to make complex data tables accessible.

We welcome your input on the TPP Times, including comments, questions and information you want to share with other training partners. Email your feedback to TPPTimes@fema.dhs.gov.

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RDPC’s Spotlight On Tribal Outreach and Training



Instructor Greg Gould delivering MGT 449 and PER 333 to members of the Suquamish tribe in the House of the Awakened Culture, Suquamish, WA, in 2019.

The Rural Domestic Preparedness Consortium (RDPC) is focused on preparing rural emergency management practitioners and their communities to meet their unique emergency response challenges. Created by Congress in 2005, RDPC has trained more than 120,000 rural and tribal practitioners through deliveries across the country and five U.S. territories. Composed of six academic institutions, each with their own distinct capabilities and experience, RDPC is led by the Center for Rural Development. “We serve underserved areas,” said Lonnie Lawson, president and CEO of the Center for Rural Development. “That was one of the founding principles of this consortium.”

Serving tribal communities has been a focus of RDPC since its inception, with early outreach to the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians and the numerous tribes in

Oklahoma. RDPC also has a longstanding relationship with Salish Kootenai College, a tribal land-grant community college in Pablo, Montana serving the Bitterroot Salish, Kootenai and Pend d'Oreilles tribes.

Chris Herring, RDPC project director at North Carolina Central University, added that fostering diversity in a meaningful way is an important part of the consortium’s work. “In many courses, it’s not unusual to have someone there representing a particular tribal nation or tribal community,” Herring said. Tribal participants bring their unique perspective to class discussions. “It becomes an educational moment for those who are there,” Herring said, “as we talk about some of the tribal concerns and issues.”

Like other rural responders, tribal responders face many of the same threats as their urban counterparts, but largely without the same resources. “The uniqueness of the tribes,” Lawson said, “is there’s a lot of differences in every single one of them.” Challenges include learning different customs, laws and regulations—as sovereign nations, tribes don’t necessarily abide by all state and local laws. “All of those different challenges are unique from the rest of the rural community,” Lawson added.

Additionally, there is still sensitivity among some tribal communities regarding federal recognition. “Depending on who is in the room,” Herring said, “that conversation can go a lot of different ways. The fact that [some tribes] don’t have that federal recognition brings many financial, and other, challenges.

RDPC currently has two courses in its catalog specifically designed for tribal responders:

MGT 449 Community Based Response to All-Hazards Threats in Tribal Communities

“[Provides] tribal nations with the knowledge, skills and abilities necessary to effectively detect, respond to, manage and mitigate all-hazard threats using a whole community approach.”

PER-333 Isolation and Quarantine Response Strategies in the Event of a Biological Disease Outbreak in Tribal Nations

“Provides tribal nations with the knowledge, skills and abilities necessary to effectively detect, respond to, and mitigate a disease outbreak, using a whole community approach.”

In 2010, Eastern Kentucky University conducted a training needs survey of tribal responders across all the federally recognized American Indian and Alaska Native tribes. Laura Hoehne, RDPC program director for the University of Findlay, Ohio, was involved in developing the survey questions that would help identify and measure the training gaps in tribal response. According to Hoehne, “in some of the early research that was done regarding their training needs and gaps, the data was similar to RDPC in general.” Like other rural responders, tribal agencies had trouble getting training for a number of reasons. “They couldn’t free up their people to go,” Hoehne said, “or they couldn’t travel very far, so getting the training to them and their jurisdiction was critical, which is what RDPC is all about—we bring the training to them.”

“In many courses, it’s not unusual to have someone there representing a particular tribal nation or tribal community; it becomes an educational moment for those who are there

Since in-person training has largely been on hold during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, RDPC’s training has transitioned online via Zoom, which has been embraced by many of the tribes. One benefit of Zoom training is that even when courses are targeted at a particular tribe, they are open to participants nationwide. This creates opportunities for networking between tribes across the country and gives participants the chance to share their knowledge and experience, learn from one another, and develop a stable of contacts and resources they can turn to once the class has ended. “I was afraid that Zoom wouldn’t foster that,” Hoehne said.

RDPC also participates in Tribal Training Week, hosted by the Center for Domestic Preparedness, which provides a venue to raise awareness of the resources available to these communities. Networking is an important component there, as well, getting people in touch with the resources they need. “You will have sessions at the end of the day that actually last as long as some of the classes we put on,” Lawson said, “because they really want to know what resources are available to them.” RDPC is participating in the planning for the next Tribal Training Week later this year.

There are currently two tribal-specific courses in the RDPC catalog, though Julie Wilson, director of the RDPC, pointed out that a majority of their trainings have impacted tribal members.

“Probably the comment I hear most,” Lonnie Lawson said, “is folks saying, ‘wow, other people have the same types of issues that I have.’ That networking is so valuable, knowing that they’re not alone in the challenges that they’re facing every single day.”

Learn more about the RDPC, their tribal training, and the other training they have available online at <https://ruraltraining.org/>. ♦

LSU Prepares to Mark One Year of Tribal Public Safety Dialogue Sessions

As part of its efforts to build upon its relationships with tribal nations and tribal emergency responders, Louisiana State University’s National Center for Biomedical Research and Training/Academy of Counter-Terrorist Education (LSU NCBRT/ACE) began hosting monthly, virtual Tribal Public Safety Dialogue Sessions.

These open forum sessions focus on an emergency management topic or issue. The sessions serve as a space for tribal citizens and responders to share their experiences, challenges and success stories. Each session features tribal officials as guest speakers and LSU NCBRT/ACE subject matter experts.

“We hope that these sessions serve as a place for tribal responders to connect and network as well as develop and enhance their preparedness capabilities,” said LSU NCBRT/ACE Operations and Plans Assistant Director Deyvon Cooper. “NCBRT/ACE is striving to meet the needs of the tribal responder community as we are aware it has been a historically underserved community. These dialogue sessions are just one part of our mission to improve our outreach to Indian Country.”

The first session, a conversation on the COVID-19 pandemic effects and vaccine distribution efforts in tribal communities, was held Tuesday, April 13, 2021. Speakers included Dr. Jamechia D. Hoyle, a public health professional and LSU NCBRT/ACE subject matter expert; Jessica Mesa-Saldana, Training and Exercise Coordinator with Tohono O’odham Nation Department of Public Safety Office of Emergency Management; and Tim Zientek, Director of Emergency Management for the Citizen Potawatomi Nation and Chair of the Inter-Tribal Emergency Management Coalition in Oklahoma.

Since its launch in April, LSU NCBRT/ACE has hosted additional dialogue sessions:

- May: COVID-19 Updates and discussions on re-opening
- June: Active Shooters on Tribal Land Part 1: The Oneida Casino/Hotel Incident discussed by the Oneida Nation of Wisconsin Chairman Tehassi Hill and Vice Chair Brandon Yellow Bird Stevens
- July: Active Shooters on Tribal Land Part 2: Historical Perspective, Lessons Learned, and the importance of a designated Public Information Officer
- August: COVID-19 Update and Managing Public Information During an Incident
- September: Responder Mental Health and Mental Fatigue
- October: Run. Hide. Fight. paradigm for tribal community citizens
- January: COVID-19 Omicron Variant Updates
- February: LSU NCBRT/ACE’s Site Protections Through Observational Techniques course

More than 475 tribal responders, public health professionals, and community leaders have participated in the sessions since last April.

“It was amazing to have Native Instructors from Indian Country to facilitate such an important and necessary training,” said Towatoy Bourgeau, Director of Security for the Nez Perce Clearwater River Casino and Lounge. “The instructors were top notch and the training material was invaluable.”

In addition to the dialogue sessions, LSU NCBRT/ACE also released a [series of podcast episodes](#) that highlight the history of emergency response in tribal nations and the evolution of tribal relations with the federal government. Guest speakers for this series included LSU NCBRT/ACE Tribal Liaisons Steve Golubic, Ojibwe and former Director of Tribal Affairs for the Department of Homeland Security; and Robert Holden, Choctaw/Chickasaw and former Deputy Director for the National Congress of American Indians.

“Working on the podcasts has given me the opportunity to reflect on how much tribal government officials and tribal responders have stepped up to the plate to implement emergency plans and protocols to better protect their communities,” Holden said. “I also am appreciative of the progress NCBRT/ACE has made to provide expert responder training to tribal governments with an eye to build on this progress in the coming years.”

To receive updates on upcoming dialogue sessions and other tribal emergency response resources, tribal responders are encouraged to subscribe to LSU NCBRT/ACE’s [tribal email list](#). ♦

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion are Key for RDPC

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) is a term used to describe policies and programs that promote the representation and participation of different groups of individuals. It extends to people of different ages, races and ethnicities, abilities and disabilities, genders, religions, cultures and sexual orientations. On June 25, 2021, President Joseph Biden signed the “Executive Order on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility in the Federal Workforce” in an effort to make the federal government a “model for diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility, where all employees are treated with dignity and respect.”

The Rural Domestic Preparedness Consortium (RDPC) has been a forerunner of DEI for nearly two decades, established in 2005 by Congress to address the preparedness and training gaps among our nation’s rural and tribal first responder communities.

According to Lonnie Lawson, President and CEO of The Center for Rural Development, the RDPC has “been involved in Diversity, Equity, Inclusion since day one. That’s part of our mission. We serve underserved areas in rural and tribal communities. One of the founding principles of the consortium was equity and inclusion.” In addition, engaging community colleges in the consortium was also a way to enhance DEI.



A statue of North Carolina Central University founder James E. Shepard. An historically black university, NCCU is an RDPC member focused on African American communities.

North Carolina; University of California-Davis in Davis, California; and University of Tennessee in Knoxville,

The consortium members consist of Eastern Kentucky University in Richmond, Kentucky; NorthWest Arkansas Community College in Bentonville, Arkansas; The University of Findlay in Findlay, Ohio; North Carolina Central University (NCCU) in Durham,

Tennessee. Each consortium member provides training programs and courses targeting specific communities that reflect a wide, diverse first responder population. For example, the NCCU, as a Historically Black College and University, has a focus on African communities. The management-level courses emphasize inclusivity and the need to have representation of diverse communities at the table in order to build relationships and trust.

This is important because a rural community is defined as “any location with a population of less than 50,000 and with a population density of less than 1,000 persons per square mile.” Populations that meet these criteria include tribes, cities, towns, villages, parishes, communities and counties.

Since its inception, the RDPC has successfully trained more than 120,000 rural and tribal practitioners through multiple modalities, delivered by consortium members and through partnerships with the Federal Emergency Management Agency, National Training and Education System, National Domestic Preparedness Consortium and the Center for Domestic Preparedness. ♦

NIMS/ICS Training News & Notes

NIMS Implementation Objectives for Federal Departments and Agencies have been updated

In the Summer 2021 issue of the TPP Times, we discussed the April 2021 release of the factsheet [NIMS Implementation Objectives for Federal Departments and Agencies](#). This release highlights the need for curriculum updates to ensure NIMS content is current in TPP courses and explains opportunities for stakeholder input with the goal of providing better clarity and usefulness in implementing and applying NIMS. The April 2021 factsheet also provides clarification regarding NIMS implementation requirements for the Notices of Funding Opportunity for FEMA preparedness grants. The factsheet also addressed objectives for aligning training with NIMS standards including identifying training required for incident workforce personnel, the minimum training requirements to qualify for specific positions, and the frequency of refresher training required to maintain qualification.

More recently, FEMA published the [FAQ: National Qualification System Process](#) to provide further clarity regarding the intent behind this recent effort.

Focus on the National Qualification System (NQS) was recommended for recipients of Emergency Management Performance Grants in FY 22 and will be required beginning in FY 22. Grantees must meet NIMS Implementation Objectives or be actively working toward those objectives.

Issues addressed in the FAQ include:

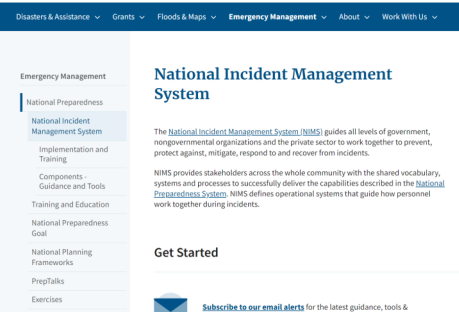
- Deadlines for NQS implementation
- Clarification regarding organizations and jurisdictions that are required to use NQS
- Alternatives to the NQS requirements
- Funding for implementation of NQS technology
- Applicability to sub-recipients
- Clarification regarding the definition of “incident workforce”

This continued emphasis on alignment with NIMS means that response organizations across the country will be increasingly reliant on training that is consistent with NIMS. ♦

NIMS Alerts

NIMS Alerts provide important information on NIMS. [Subscribe to FEMA’s email alerts](#) to receive the latest guidance, tools and resources. FEMA’s National Integration Center (NIC) recently released the following:

- **NIMS Alert 01-22:** FEMA Launches the National Resource Hub to Unify Resource Management Nationwide
- **NIMS Alter 02-22:** FEMA Seeks Input on Development of National Continuous Improvement Guidance



[More information about NIMS can be found online](#), including up-to-date guidance, information on implementation and training, and tools and resources.

NTED Course Updates: New and Recertified

New

- AWR-390-W Improving Individual and Household Literacy and Management Support to Post-Disaster Recovery
- AWR-391-W Improving Business Financial Literacy and Management Support Post-Disaster Economic Recovery
- AWR-401-W Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment and Stakeholder Preparedness Review Online
- MGT-478 Community Cybersecurity Information Sharing Integration
- MGT-469 Radiological Dispersal Device (RDD) Response Guidance Train the Planner
- Drone Assessment and Response Tactics, Residential, Mobile & Customized

Recertified

- AWR-308: Natural Disaster Awareness for Caregivers
- AWR-310 Natural Disaster Awareness for Community Leaders
- MGT-326 Emergency Operations Center (EOC) Operations and Planning for All-Hazards Events

Calendar of Upcoming Events

- March 5 - 12: [Tribal Training Week](#), Center for Domestic Preparedness, Anniston, Alabama
- March 14 - April 7: [Tribal Training Week Virtual Training](#), Online

Section 508
Quarterly

Working with Complex Data Tables in Adobe PDFs

Data tables are an incredibly useful method of presenting information, but ensuring that those tables are accessible can sometimes involve a few extra steps. This is especially true with complex tables including merged or split cells, or multiple levels of headers.

Header 1		Header 2	
Header 1a	Header 1b	Header 2a	Header 2b
Data	Data	Data	Data
Data	Data	Data	Data
Data	Data	Data	Data

Above is a simple example of a complex table. Header 1 and Header 2 each span two columns, and each has two sub headings. Each data cell has two headers that will need to be associated.

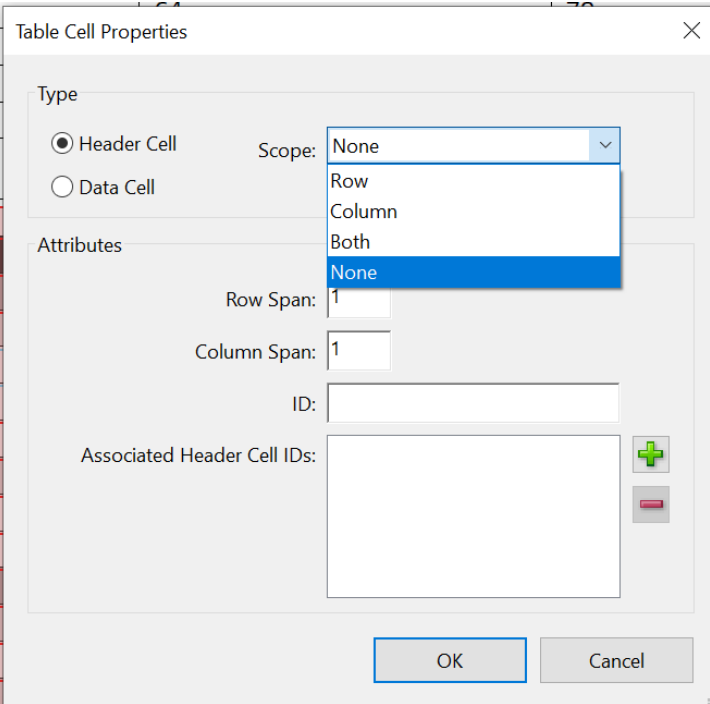
The first thing to consider when dealing with complex tables is the final format of your materials, because at this time, complex tables cannot be made accessible in Microsoft Office. If your final course materials are Word or PowerPoint, and you’re using a complex table, then you’ll have to consider alternate ways of presenting that information. However, if you’re working with HTML, or if your final course documents are going to be PDFs, you can use complex tables provided you ensure that all of the data cells are properly associated with the appropriate header cells.

Complex tables don’t necessarily follow a logical pattern (i.e., a header row at the top with rows of data below, with each data cell having a single header cell at the top of its column). A data cell in a complex table can have several different header cells, and header cells can span multiple columns and rows to cover multiple sets of data. Assistive technology can’t interpret these tables without programmatic cues; those programmatic cues need to be manually built into the table.

This article will be looking at how to work with complex tables in a PDF, but the concepts and terminology are similar for HTML. The first step is to open the Table Editor. The Table Editor is accessible through the Reading Order pane. Find the table in your document, open the Reading Order pane, click on any element of the table, and the Table Editor button will become available; select it to open the Table Editor.

With the Table Editor open, right click anywhere in the table and select Table Editor Options from the menu. Make sure “Show cell type” is selected; this will label all of the table’s headers with “TH” and all of its data cells with “TD.” Select OK to close the window. Then right click on any cell to again open the context menu. Selecting “Table Cell Properties” will open the properties window for that cell—note that properties are set on a cell-by-cell basis, and while you can change the properties of multiple cells at the same time, it’s important to remember that each cell carries its own properties. The first property is cell Type: either Header or Data. Type also includes the Scope attribute, which is only available for header cells; header cells will have a scope of Column, Row, or Both. The cell’s Attributes include its Row Span (how many rows the cell takes up), Column Span (how many columns the cell takes up), ID (the cell’s programmatic name), and Associated Header Cell IDs (the programmatic names of the cell’s headers).

The next step is to make sure all of the headers are properly



The Table Cell Properties window is shown above. From this window you can set a cell’s type, its scope, span, its ID, as well as any associated header cells.

identified as headers, and that their Scope, Row Span, and Column Span attributes are properly set. This is all done in the Table Cell Properties window for each of the headers. Depending on how your PDF was created, the headers may already have IDs assigned. If not, you can right click on the table to open the context menu and select “Auto Generate Header Cell IDs.”

Once the headers are properly set, the next step is to associate the data cells with all of their headers. Select a data cell (or if multiple data cells share a header, select all of those cells), right click on the cell and open the Table Cell Properties window. Use the plus sign button to add the first associated header and a list of the table’s headers will appear; select the cell’s first header from the list. Continue adding associated headers in the logical order, following the same steps each time.

Once each data cell has the correct headers associated with it (i.e., listed under that cell’s Associated Header Cell IDs) the table is ready. When assistive technology encounters the table, it will understand how the table is structured and be able to convey the data to the user in a way that is equivalent to the visual presentation. ♦

Want the latest? Get monthly news and updates

The Higher Education (HiEd) Program publishes a monthly newsletter covering a wide variety of topics and updates from the Higher Education community. To sign up for the HiEd newsletter go to [Signup for FEMA Email Updates \(govdelivery.com\)](#). An archive of past issues is available online at the [FEMA Emergency Management Education Newsletter Archive](#).

**Questions, comments or story ideas
for the *TPP Times*? Email TPPTimes@fema.dhs.gov**

Disclaimer: Please note that the federal government provides links and informational data on various emergency management and first responder community resources and events and does not endorse any non-federal events, entities, organizations, services or products. Please let us know about other events and services for individual and community preparedness that could be included in future newsletters by contacting TPPTimes@fema.dhs.gov.

www.firstrespondertraining.gov

