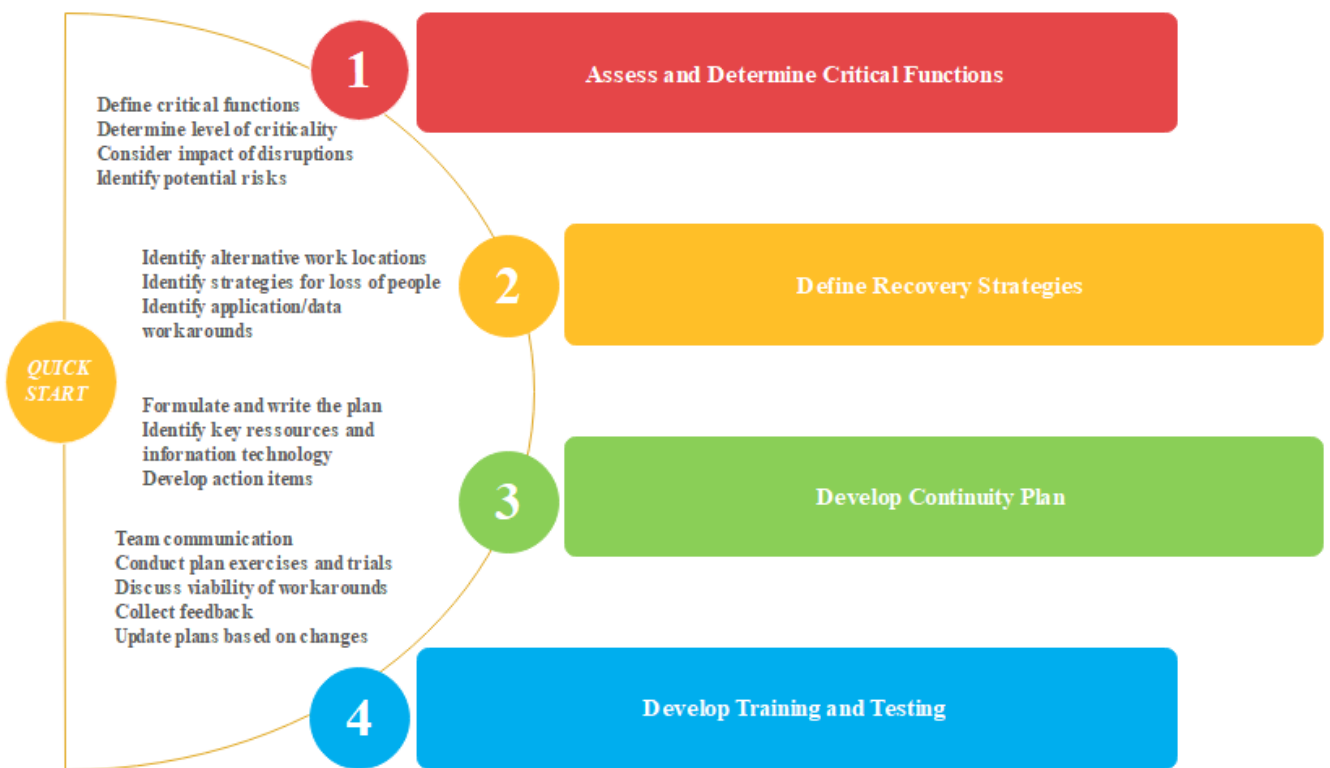


## Introduction to Continuity Planning

Continuity Planning is a strategic act of preventing, minimizing, and managing the consequences of an event that interrupts critical business processes. It addresses actions and measures to be taken before, during, and after a disruption of critical functions. The goal of continuity planning is to ensure that critical service levels are maintained during a crisis and to ensure that department recover as soon as possible. The plans contain details of reasonable and achievable recovery strategy which will help the department prepare for a broad range of disasters. This guide was developed to provide thinking tools that help departments at Ferris State University to develop and maintain their continuity plans. There are 4 phases when it comes to building a continuity program.



## **Phase 1: Assess and Determine Critical Functions**

A critical function is a collection of tasks performed regularly that must resume within a set period of time after an adverse event occurred. If a critical function cannot resume within the predetermined period, the department or the University could be at risk. When determining your department's critical function:

- Define your critical function as a department activity or service—not as a department name, an application, or an object.
- Meet with staff to predict the impact of a disruption of your functions in order to determine their level of criticality.
- Identify the period of time a critical function must be recovered after an adverse event by implying the potential losses. This will help you recognize the high priority functions that you need to focus on first.
- Identify potential risks such as a pandemic, hurricane, flooding, earthquake, etc. to allow the department create action items in order to mitigate the risks. A few examples of an action plan are backing up servers and cross-training workers.
- Consider the impacts of the potential disruptions of the critical functions such as loss of revenue, disruption of teaching, unmet legal obligations, departure of students and staff, etc.
- Consider your dependencies which are the departments that would be affected if your department could not perform its critical functions.

## **Phase 2: Define Recovery Strategies**

After critical functions are identified, the next step is to identify the recovery strategies in order to recover a function if key people, normal work location, resources, or applications are not available. Some of the strategies include:

- Cross-train essential staff members
- Borrow staff from less critical departments or enlist student volunteers
- Identify application and data workarounds for your departments such as shifting to manual process
- Identify alternative work locations such as work for home or alternative locations on campus
- Define recovery strategies for the loss of people such as workers, vendors, and/or suppliers

- Use this question while creating recovery strategies:
  - How do we recover from the risks?

### **Phase 3: Develop the Continuity Plan**

This step involves gathering all information and put them into the plan. The Ferris State University Continuity Planning Tool is available [here](#). The plan should, at least, include the following information:

- Critical functions and recovery strategies
- Three levels of key contacts
- Key resources such as teams, equipment and supplies, transportation and specific skills
- Information technologies such as central application and department application.
- Develop action items

### **Phase 4: Develop Training and Testing**

This step will ensure that all employees are adequately trained to fulfill their responsibility in support of the recovery process. Process evaluation is necessary to ensure the accuracy of the plan. Consider the following guidelines while evaluating plans.

- Communicate your team about the plan and familiarize them with their roles during an adverse event
- Conduct [tabletop exercises](#) to validate the viability of the plan
- Discuss the viability of available workarounds
- Collect feedback from exercise participants regarding where improvements can be achieved
- Document exercise results and proposed feedback
- Update the plans based on daily changes
- Implement action items
- Demonstrate an understanding of process dependencies