

NCHRP 20-68 – “US Domestic Scan Program”
Domestic Scan 21-01 Lessons of Agency Resilience During Periods of Disruption

The onset and progress of the global COVID-19 pandemic have presented unprecedented challenges to state transportation agencies. Often changing public health precautions and guidelines, high absenteeism due to illness, fear and anxiety within agency and contractor workforces and the public generally, supply shortages, and economic instability and sudden changes in travel demand, and reduced revenues were among the more visible disruptions to “normal” operations. More subtle challenges arose from coping with telework, public demands for increased safety measures, and construction seasons with lighter than usual vehicle traffic. Throughout the experience agencies have learned valuable lessons and many have found innovative ways to maintain their operations and productivity.

Anecdotal evidence from agencies in Washington State, Virginia, Vermont, Texas, Minnesota, Idaho, Georgia, and others indicates that the experiences gained in dealing with the pandemic disruptions may be useful to other agencies and in the preparing for and responding to future disruptions stemming from public health concerns or other sources. Technology played a key role in some instances, while others illustrate the value of flexible staffing policies, workforce adaptability, and effective leadership. The objective of this scan is to document agency experiences and the lessons learned that can ensure and facilitate agency resilience to maintain efficiency and effectiveness during disruption and post-event recovery, as well as agency preparedness for future disruptions.

The scan team will seek to identify the most innovative and beneficial elements of practice adopted by state transportation agencies to maintain their productivity and system performance, particularly as those activities have enhanced agency resilience and are likely to strengthen agencies’ adaptability if confronted by future disruptions. The scan will investigate such key factors as remote work policies and arrangements, use and configuration of physical workplace, continuity of services and prioritization of work, use and incorporation of technology; productivity and performance management, employee engagement, remote training and learning, communications, and leadership and culture.

This scan is being planned as a Virtual Peer Exchange (Type 4). The scan will entail compilation of lessons learned by each participating agency and effective practices that can comprise a “toolbox” of resources that agencies can adapt for their own use. The scan’s audience includes CEOs, department leadership, supervisors, and managers; strategic planners, and human resources and emergency response personnel. The scan results are likely to be of interest to all of AASHTO’s committees but particularly to the AASHTO Executive Committee and several Committees in the Agency Administration, Program Delivery and Operations and Enterprise/Cross Discipline areas.

Original Scan Proposal Title: Agency Resilience During Periods of Disruption

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| Activity | Planning Milestones (minimum months prior to scan) | Tentative Schedule - Scan # 21-01 Lessons of Agency Resilience During Periods of Disruption |
|---|---|--|
| Chairs and Team Members Identified | D-5.5 | May – June 2021 |
| SME Selected | D-5 | May – June 2021 |
| Desk Scan Completed | D-3.5 | August 2021 |
| Organizational Meeting Held | D-3.5 | August 2021 |
| Host States Confirmed | D-3 | September 2021 |
| Draft Agenda for Virtual Scan Drafted and Confirmed | D-.75 | October 2021 |
| Briefing Materials Distributed | D-.25 | October 2021 |
| Prescan Conference Call Held | D-.25 | November 2021 |
| Scan Conducted | D | November 2021 |
| Thank You Letters Sent to Hosts | D+.25 | December 2021 |
| Draft PowerPoint submitted by SME | D+.5 | December 2021 |
| Final PowerPoint Submitted by SME | D+1 | December 2021 |
| Draft Report Delivered to NCHRP and Panel | D+3 | February 2022 |
| Final Report Delivered to NCHRP | D+5 | April 2022 |