

## Five **P**s of COOP

Planning for an emergency is like planning for a baby: No matter how ready you think you are, you're not. But there are some basic procedures agencies can follow so that when disaster strikes, feds will be prepared, said Pete Johnson, the Energy Department's chief technology officer. Johnson offered five steps departments can take to make sure they're ready for an emergency.

**PLAN:** Have one. Everything an agency does flows from it.

**PEOPLE:** Include the entire organization, not just people in IT, procurement or those on the emergency planning committee.

**PLACES:** What do you do if your building cannot be occupied? Where do people work from? Where do employees meet? How long do employees work from home or at telework centers? Do they not work at all? Have answers to these questions.

**PROCESSES:** How does the agency continue to function in the wake of a disaster? What functions need to change and how do they change? What functions need to go away? How will employees know the processes have changed?

**PRACTICE:** Take a holistic approach to drilling and training. This is the hardest part, but knowing where to go and when will pay off when a real emergency happens.

—Jason Miller

## A quick checklist

### How to keep within the procurement rules during a disaster

**COMMUNICATE:** Know what other agencies are doing, what they may need, and what can be shared; know what's on the GSA schedule.

**EDUCATION:** Train contracting officers so they are fluent in the FAR's emergency contracting rules.

**ACCOUNTABILITY:** Add internal controls requiring strict approval of big, open-ended contracts.

**BE PREPARED:** Sign contingency contracts in advance so crucial supplies like food, water, ice and temporary housing can be delivered immediately.

"It's a matter of preparedness. Let's plan better, let's know what's on the GSA inventory so we'll know what we'll need," said Richard Skinner, Homeland Security Department inspector general.

—Rob Thormeyer