

NERC

NORTH AMERICAN ELECTRIC
RELIABILITY CORPORATION

ALIGN

Regional Entity Newsletter

November 2020

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LET'S GET ALIGNED: KEY TAKEAWAYS

Just Launched: Change Readiness Assessment Pulse Check Survey

As part of our efforts to increase change readiness across the ERO Enterprise, the Align team conducted two, short survey-style change readiness assessments last year. The change readiness assessments are key tools for gauging the level of readiness across the ERO Enterprise and helping to identify areas where additional training, communication, and stakeholder engagement activities are required to drive change adoption.

Given the number of readiness activities that have been conducted this year, we are rolling out a [2020 change readiness assessment pulse check survey](#). Please take 5-10 minutes to submit your survey response. Your feedback is critical to help us ensure you are prepared for Release 1!

Know What's Coming: Training

As we shift our focus toward training, the Align team has shared the Release 1 Training Plan and Strategy, which outlines the training approach and a high-level sequence of training events, with the regional training leads. The training leads are responsible for regional and registered entity training and are currently developing Region-specific plans that will inform training rollout over the next few months. Please note that there may be variations in the training schedule and delivery for different Regions based on their respective training plans.

Recently, the team hosted the first Train-the-Trainer (TTT) session for regional training leads, which was used to review the various training tools, post go-live support process, and the dedicated training environment available for Align. The Align project team will hold a refresher TTT session in January as we get closer to go-live.

All training materials, including the training videos that were previewed during the regional adoption workshops and the registered entity testing exercise, are now available on the [NERC Training Site](#). You can navigate to the training videos relevant for your role as seen Figures 1.1 and 1.2 below.

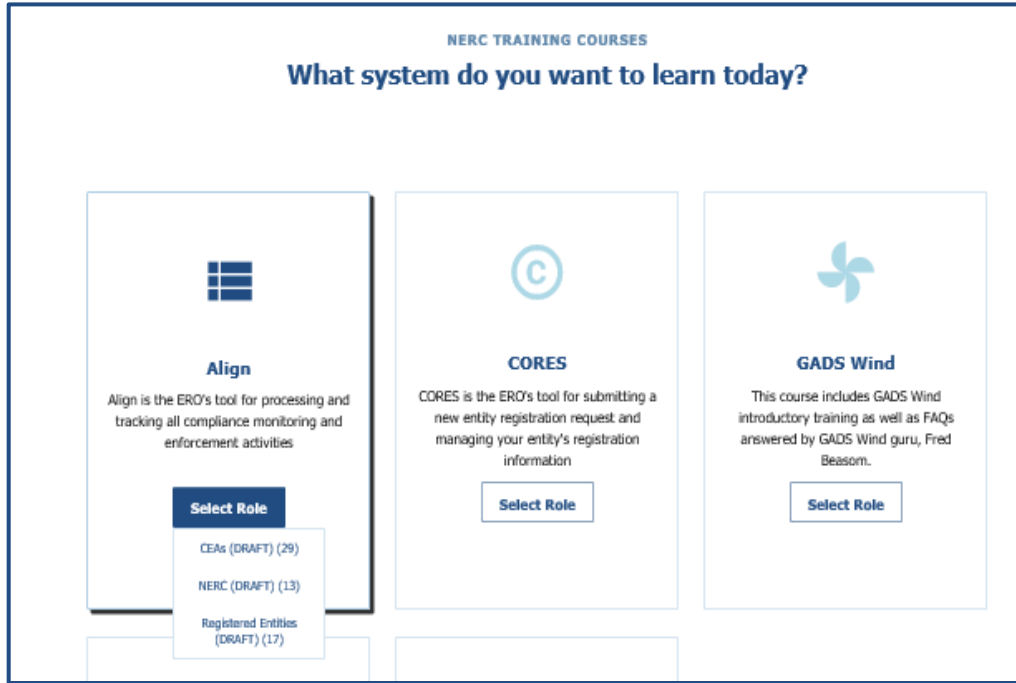


Figure 1.1: NERC Training Site

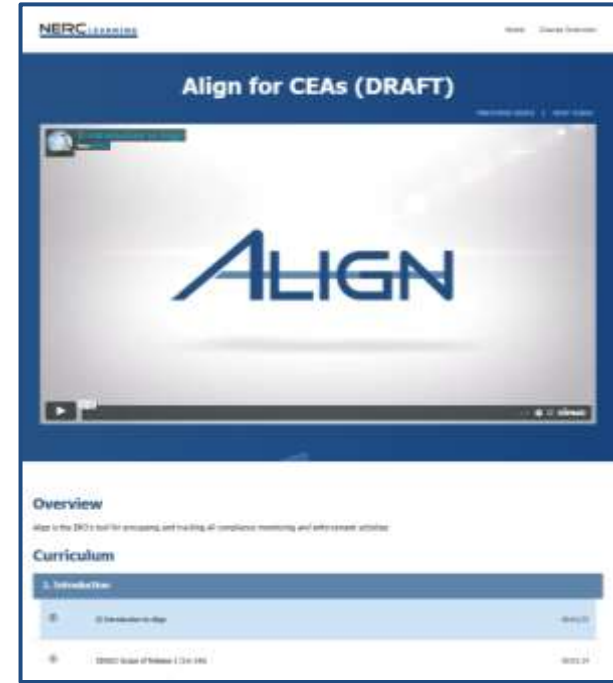


Figure 1.2: NERC Training Site

David Abdalla, senior program manager for Tennessee Valley Authority, has been with the company for nearly 15 years and recently reviewed the registered entity training videos on the NERC Training Site. “The new Align tool provides a number of enhancements and upgrades, which will make it easier to understand, input, and track items. The Align system screens are cleaner and easier to follow than previous systems, and also provide detailed help text to guide users through different screens,” said Abdalla. “The training videos are short, concise, easy to reference, and provide step-by-step instructions. I am looking forward to using the Align tool starting next year.”

In addition to the training videos, the site contains comprehensive End-User and Start/Stop/Continue guides, all of which will be used during training. The End-User guides provide a detailed overview of how to navigate through Align Release 1 functionalities, while the Start/Stop/Continue guides provide detailed guidance on which activities move to Align and which activities stay inside the legacy systems. Each Region will use the same training materials as seen in Figure 1.3.

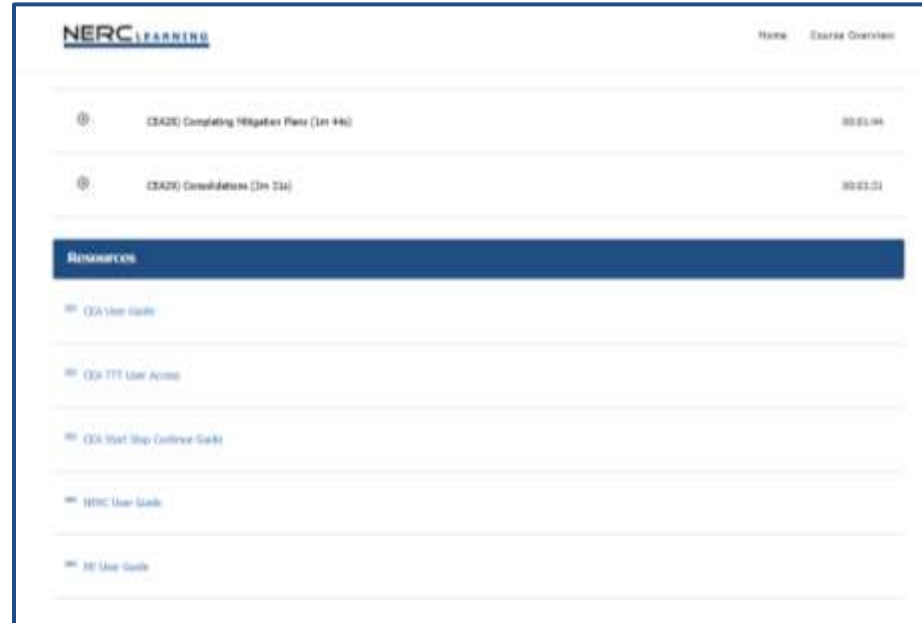


Figure 1.3: NERC Training Site

Please reach out to the Training subject matter experts (SMEs) for your Region with any training-related questions. Please note that Align and ERO Secure Evidence Locker (SEL) training for registered entities will not begin until Q1 of 2021, closer to the rollout of Align in your Region.

Align Training SMEs	
Organization	Training SMEs
MRO	Michael Spangenberg ; Ryan McNamara
NERC	Sara Minges ; Simran Ahuja
NPCC	Daniel Kidney ; Kimberly Griffith
RF	Bob Folt ; Ron Ross
SERC	Janice Carney ; Rick Dodd ; Shawna Speer
Texas RE	Machelle Castro ; Rachel Coyne ; Rochelle Brown
WECC	Angie Shapiro ; Mailee Cook

Benefits of the ERO Secure Evidence Locker

The Align team is continuing to make progress with the ERO SEL, which is under construction and will be implemented in conjunction with Align Release 1 on March 31, 2021. The ERO SEL is a key component of NERC’s reimagined suite of Compliance Monitoring and Enforcement Program (CMEP) work and data management tools.

The ERO SEL will provide an isolated, on-premise environment for evidence analysis across the ERO Enterprise. In addition to securing the evidence process, the ERO SEL will:

- Ensure proper chain of custody management for registered entity evidence through compartmentalized access provided to select authorized users;
- Monitor and limit the length of time that evidence is within the possession of the ERO Enterprise; and
- Eliminate the creation of evidence copies to limit exposure and destroy evidence on a schedule to ensure that evidence is for kept the least amount of time necessary.

For more information on the ERO SEL, visit the “Secure Evidence Locker Functionality” section on the [Align FAQs](#) page. The team is also hosting an [ERO Enterprise stakeholder webinar](#) to share information on registered entity self-built lockers on Monday, November 30 from 1:00–2:00 p.m. Eastern.

Updated Timeline of Key Activities

The coming months are packed with communications and training activities to ensure that the ERO Enterprise and the registered entities are fully prepared for a smooth transition to Align and the SEL as well as future releases. The timeline below provides an overview of key activities over the next six months.

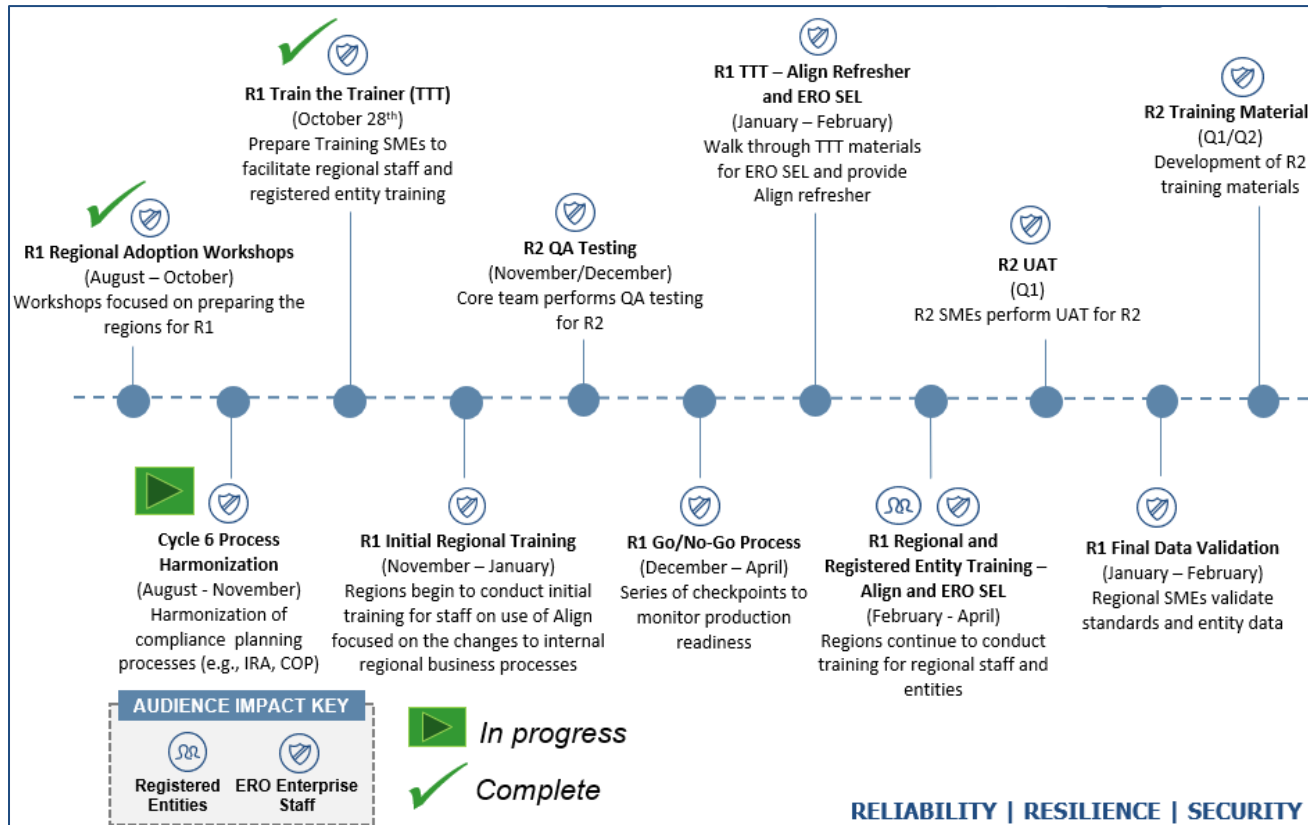


Figure 1.4: Key Activities Timeline

Completion of Adoption Workshops in Your Region

In August, the Align team launched a series of adoption workshops to prepare ERO Enterprise staff for Release 1 pre- and post-launch activities. The team kicked off the adoption workshops with ERO Enterprise-wide sessions, which covered topics that are relevant across the Regions such as the data migration strategy, the governance model, and post go-live support. These sessions were followed by Region-specific workshops, which included another live demo of the Align tool and a Q&A. The workshops also reviewed the training approach, discussed the regional roll-out strategy and data integration across ERO Enterprise technologies, and walked through the standardized ERO Enterprise business processes.

The Region-specific workshops wrapped up last month and represent a key change readiness milestone for Release 1. Following the completion of the workshops, the Align team shifted its focus to training readiness and the regional SME teams are working on follow-up items, including identifying changes required to regional business processes as part of Release 1 and creating lists of regional users who will need access to Align.

Accessing Align: Act Now!

As we continue to get closer to Release 1, it is important that you complete the verification of your ERO Portal Account prior to the commencement of Align training for regional staff. You are required to have an active ERO Portal Account prior to accessing Align. **Please follow the instructions below to verify your existing account now!** If you cannot remember your username/password, select the “Forgot Password/Username” to reset your password. If you have questions or problems concerning your ERO Portal account, please submit a support ticket [here](#).

All registered entities should also have a primary compliance contact (PCC) set up with an ERO Portal Account. PCCs will be responsible for managing access for their organizations within the ERO Portal. Prior to go-live, NERC will ensure all PCCs with ERO Portal Accounts are set up as Align Registered Entity Submitters and Entity Administrators responsible for approving access requests.

To Verify an ERO Portal Account:

1. Navigate to <https://eroportal.nerc.net>.
2. Select “Sign In” in the upper left-hand corner.
3. Enter your credentials to confirm access to ERO Portal.

Quick Links for Reference

Here is a list of links to commonly requested project materials for Align and the ERO SEL. Please reach out to your Change Agents for additional materials.

Quick Links
FAQs
Program Business Case (Updated April 2020)
Registered Entity SEL Functional Specification (Updated November 2020)
ERO SEL Stakeholder Presentation (March 23, 2020)
Project SME Site (Secure Member Access Only)
NERC Training Site

Want to Learn More? Key Contacts and Resources

The next Align Q&A is scheduled for **Tuesday, November 24**, and is open to everyone in the ERO Enterprise. Join this call to get answers to your questions and hear the latest updates from the project team. Please reach out for call details and submit your questions in advance to AskAlign@NERC.net. You can also reach out to your Region's Change Agents, who meet on a monthly basis and have the latest project updates. They are another resource available to you for asking questions or sharing comments and feedback on the project.

Align Change Agents	
Organization	Change Agents
MRO	Desiree Sawyer , Marissa Falco
NERC	Chris Boyd-Witherspoon , Jamie Calderon , Farzaneh Tafreshi , Sara Minges
NPCC	Jason Wang , Kimberly Griffith
RF	Ray Sefchik
SERC	Andrew Williamson , Janice Carney , Melinda Montgomery , Rick Dodd , Todd Curl
Texas RE	Rochelle Brown
WECC	Ben Aldous , Mailee Cook , Michael Dalebout

ABOUT THE ALIGN NEWSLETTER

This newsletter compiles a list of important Align project updates with actionable deadlines, as well as upcoming events, recently posted resources, and other relevant news and information. Please email AskAlign@nerc.net with feedback on this newsletter. Current and future newsletters and additional project resources, including the regularly updated [Align FAQs](#), can be found on the [Align Project Site](#).