

2020-2024

Disaster Plan

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This plan can be found by going to the ND Department of Human Services website at

<http://www.nd.gov/dhs/info/pubs/docs/cfs/foster-care-disaster-plan.pdf>

The Child and Family Services Improvement Act of 2006 (P.L. 109-288) mandates that State child welfare agencies develop disaster plans that include how they will do the following:

- Identify, locate, and continue the availability of services for children under State care or supervision who are displaced or adversely affected by a disaster;
- Respond, as appropriate, to new child welfare cases in areas adversely affected by a disaster, and provide services in those cases;
- Remain in communication with caseworkers and other essential child welfare personnel who are displaced because of a disaster;
- Preserve essential program records;
- Coordinate services and share information with other States

North Dakota has developed and implemented the Emergency Disaster Preparedness Continuity of Operations (COOP) Plan to provide disaster preparedness instruction to foster families, foster/adopt families and children under the custody of a North Dakota public agency. This comprehensive and effective plan is to first and most importantly, ensures the safety, permanency, and well-being of our youth. Second, by having a plan North Dakota will be in full compliance with federal and state mandates.

The North Dakota Department of Human Services Children and Family Services has an obligation to the clients it serves to perform its essential functions efficiently during periods of disruption. When emergencies or other situations arise that disrupt ND DHS operations, DHS will activate the COOP to continue essential functions. This plan has been developed in accordance with guidance in Executive Order (EO) 12656. The Department uses an all hazards approach in its disaster preparedness planning process.

Fortunately, North Dakota has not had to utilize the formal procedures developed in the Disaster Plan since June of 2011, when the flood occurred in Minot, ND and also affected homes in south Bismarck, ND. Spring of 2019, North Dakota prepared for the implementation of the disaster plan due to the difficult winter and flooding that occurred in specific areas of the state. North Dakota updated the policy and procedure for data entry of families, including a new SFN 445.

Types of Disasters

Natural and man-made disasters come in many forms and may dramatically overwhelm North Dakota's current welfare services service system. This plan is specific to response when one of the three levels of disasters occur.

1. Destruction of the North Dakota State Capitol building where the ND Department of Human Services, Children and Family Services is housed.
2. Destruction of all or some level of the two data management systems that hold all of the pertinent ND child welfare data; Comprehensive Child Welfare Information and Payment System (CCWIPS) or FRAME.
3. Natural disasters impacting our outlying counties, facilities, and foster homes causing excess loss of life or property damage due to unforeseen destruction by floods, tornados, high winds, power outages, winter and summer storms, etc.

Disaster Preparedness Process

ND Department of Human Services, Children and Family Services, regional Human Service Centers, counties, providers, professionals and other partners play an important role in preparing and responding to the safety and well-being of children and families during a disaster. ND follows this developed plan in an effort to protect vulnerable children and families during the disaster and for direction in moving forward after a disaster.

1. Initiation of Disaster Plan
2. Provider Identification and Locating
3. Communication Protocols
4. Training for state, regional, and county professionals

Initiation of Disaster Plan

The CFS director, or designee, will activate the CFS Continuity of Operations (COOP) Plan and work in tandem with the NDDHS Disaster Preparedness Administrator and regional human service centers regional supervisors. If a disaster occurs, the COOP is initiated and information is disseminated to the field by Children & Family Services immediately.

Provider Information & Locating

Children and Family Services (CFS) has established a system for gathering and providing information on foster families and foster/adopt families in the event they are caring for a child under public custody and they become unexpectedly displaced. Effective January 2, 2009, all foster parents and foster/adopt parents must outline disaster evacuation plans (SFN 445) that consider primary and secondary planning. At the time of licensing and relicensing, applicants will disclose their plan on the SFN 445 which is made part of the 'licensing file'. A copy of the plan is maintained at the regional office and also forwarded to CFS where the information is input into the "Q" drive at the North Dakota State Capitol. The "Q" drive allows any State employee to access the information, inclusive of the regional human service centers. Any individual who has access to the "Q" drive can access the Access Database to:

1. Edit information to ensure accuracy and up-to-date information; and
2. Run a query to the database which will readily sort families by
 - a. County
 - b. City
 - c. Name

North Dakota Administrative Code (NDAC) 75-03-16 requires Group and residential child care facilities to have written plans and procedures for meeting disasters and emergencies. A facility shall have written plans and procedures for meeting disasters and emergencies. Employees must know all plans and procedures for meeting disasters and emergencies. The facility shall advise children in placement of all emergency and evacuation procedures upon admission to the facility.

Foster care providers (family, therapeutic, and facility) will follow the communication protocols and will have access to the CFS telephone numbers and email address for ongoing updates and feedback from the CFS Continuity of Operations (COOP) Plan.

Communication

The CFS director, or specified designee, will activate the CFS COOP and work in tandem with the NDDHS Disaster Preparedness Administrator and human service center regional supervisors to develop processes that are specific to each region so as to respond to the disaster utilizing the appropriate services in that particular region/area. Regional and state child welfare offices partner with the following state agencies: Department of Health, Department of Agriculture, Department of Public Instruction, Environmental Quality Departments, Department of Justice and the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, Disaster and Emergency Services, Military Affairs, Labor and Industry Departments, Department of Commerce, Department of Revenue and Department of Transportation, the Red Cross, Salvation Army, local, state and regional disaster directors, Homeland Security and other private and professional agencies and associations.

No one can predict when and where a disaster may strike. It is even more difficult to plan for every scenario to produce the best possible outcome to get through such tragic events. ND has established this basic flow chart of communication and contacts that will assist in the event of a disaster.

1. The regional human service center office is the primary connection between the local social service agency, providers, and Children and Family Services (CFS) Division. Each regional office has a list of foster youth in their region, as well as emergency procedures/evacuation plans for identified service providers in their region (completed SFN 445). Regional Supervisors located in the regional human service center are the direct connection between CFS and local staff in a disaster situation.

In the event that the human service center is also affected by the disaster, the neighboring regional human service center has agreed to act as a backup. They will provide available services to foster families and/or foster children who have become displaced.

Example: If the city of Grand Forks, ND (and/or surrounding areas) were to succumb to a flood, the documentation and location of foster families can be accessed by any other regional office, or by the State Office. Information is available as to the foster parent's primary and secondary evacuation plan (SFN 445), including emergency contact information.

Foster or foster/adopt youth placed in the region can be tracked through FRAME. A report can be generated through this system which will outline the placement resource for all children within this county and/or region.

2. Press releases addressing a state disaster will be generated from the Department of Homeland Security/ND Department of Emergency Services, Public Information Office or a Joint Information Center (JIC). There is a website available to provide emergency information to foster care providers.
3. Child Protection Services will continue to deliver services through the local agency, with backup support from other North Dakota regions or counties. The established crisis on-call process will remain in place, under the direction of the State Child Protection Administrator.

4. During any disaster, the CFS COOP (Division Director, CFS Management Team made up of CFS Program Administrators, and Interstate Compact Administrator) will remain available through phone and electronic forms of communication to coordinate services and share information with appropriate parties.
5. The department has established a CFS email address dhsdfs@nd.gov and two designated telephone numbers (1-800-245-3736 toll-free and 701-328-2316) as ways in which to report a disaster. The following message has been placed on the two designated telephone numbers: *You have reached the Children & Family Services Division of the North Dakota Department of Human Services. If you are a foster parent or foster/adoptive parent that has been displaced as a result of a disaster, please leave your telephone number and current address, as well as the name of the foster child or children that are currently with you. We will contact you as soon as possible.*

If a disaster has occurred in any region of the state, CFS staff will immediately follow up on all voice messages left or emails received. Depending upon the extent of the disaster, CFS staff is prepared to provide weekend staff coverage.

FRAME contains placement information on all children in foster care. This system can be accessed by county, region, and state employees. Although there are limits as to what information counties have access to, regional supervisors can view all cases within their regional responsibility. CFS also has full access to every foster care case entered into FRAME.

Training

Training for state, local, and county offices is determined based on the locality of the agency, local approaches to agency structure for detailed disasters, inclusive of drills for fire, tornado, storms, active shooter, etc. Foster parents receive training on emergency response as part of the PRIDE training module, and fire safety in person and web based on line training is available. NDDHS can choose to develop a team to train state, county and local offices in disaster preparedness and is a direct liaison to the North Dakota Department of Emergency Services, an agency that provides 24/7 emergency communications and resource coordination with more than 50 lead and support agencies, private enterprise, and voluntary organizations to assist local jurisdictions in disaster and emergency response activities. Training is ongoing and updated when necessary.

CFS Administrators have access to the Disaster Plan which is also posted on the department's website. This information is disseminated annually to partnering regions and counties and shared at the time of a new hire at CFS. CFS will participate with regional offices in mock drills to better prepare for a disaster.

Foster parents and foster/adopt parents may be given an "Emergency North Dakota Foster Care Call In" card at the time of licensure or re-licensure as well as have emergency information and agency contacts available to them in the Foster Parent Handbook <http://www.nd.gov/dhs/info/pubs/docs/cfs/foster-parent-handbook.pdf>.

North Dakota Court System

If a disaster has occurred in any region of North Dakota involving foster children under the

jurisdiction of the North Dakota Court System, a protocol between the North Dakota Department of Human Services and the North Dakota Court System has been developed. A master list of all displaced foster children and their location, compiled by the Foster Care Administrator, will be sent to the Juvenile Court Director located in the region the disaster has occurred.

Records Preservation

Permanent archived adoption records are stored either on microfiche (prior to 1990) or in electronic storage. Electronic records are on the state's server system which is backed up daily and stored off-site. Servers are in a secure location and access is monitored.

State Office (Children & Family Services) Function

CFS will facilitate the creation of the designated CFS Continuity of Operations (COOP) team. CFS will collaborate with emergency personnel, state emergency agencies to best accommodate comfort in knowledge and understanding of expectations during the emergency. CFS will observe all mandates regarding state and federal requirements, including report completion, grant management and information system oversight. ND Department of Human Services recognizes that critical incident stress debriefing may be needed. Should the disaster leave personnel requiring assistance in coping with the tragedy, personnel will be offered debriefing groups and /or counseling.

Lastly, a strategic plan will be developed should CFS administration determine that staff and essential services from another area needs to be dispatched to the disaster affected region, or if services are being utilized inappropriately.

Disaster Follow-Up

The ability of the stakeholders to carry out the disaster plan will be evaluated, as well as CFS's ability to obtain assistance from designated partners. Utilization of CFS's toll free telephone number and division email address will be reviewed.

Administration will review all information available stemming from the disaster. An assigned team will determine if policies and/or the disaster plan needs to be revised or if new policies need to be written, to adequately address future disasters.



FAMILY EVACUATION DISASTER PLAN
 NORTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
 FOSTER CARE DIVISION
 SFN 445 (4-2019)

- Foster Care
- Adoption
- Initial Licensing
- Renewal Licensing
- Address Change Only

Clear Fields

Foster/Adoption Name (Last, First)		County	Date	
Address		City	State	ZIP Code
Telephone Number	Cell Phone Number	Email Address		
Foster Care Provider Number		Foster Care Licensing Period From: _____ To: _____		

This document contains my relocation plan in the event that I am required to leave my home address due to a natural disaster or catastrophic event.

FIRST CHOICE, WITHIN THE SAME COMMUNITY

Contact				
Address		City	State	ZIP Code
Telephone Number	Cell Phone Number	Email Address		
Additional Contact Information				

SECOND CHOICE, WITHIN THE SAME COMMUNITY

Contact				
Address		City	State	ZIP Code
Telephone Number	Cell Phone Number	Email Address		
Additional Contact Information				

FIRST CHOICE, OUT OF REGION

Contact				
Address		City	State	ZIP Code
Telephone Number	Cell Phone Number	Email Address		
Additional Contact Information				

SECOND CHOICE, OUT OF REGION

Contact				
Address		City	State	ZIP Code
Telephone Number	Cell Phone Number	Email Address		
Additional Contact Information				

Contact information for the person with whom I will be in touch in case of an emergency, and who the agency can contact if necessary (e.g., family member or friend, living outside of the immediate area):

Contact				
Address		City	State	ZIP Code
Telephone Number	Cell Phone Number	Email Address		
Additional Contact Information				

I understand that there are critical items I am urged to take with me when we evacuate. These may include:

- Agency contact information (e.g. agency emergency contact number)
- My foster child's information (e.g. prescriptions, recent medical reports, physician's name and contact information, immunization history).

I understand that in the event that I must evacuate my home, I am required to report my location to the legal custodian, licensing agent or the North Dakota Department of Human Services. To contact the North Dakota Department of Human Services, I can call 1-800-245-3736 (toll-free in-state), [701-328-2316](tel:701-328-2316), or e-mail my location to dhscfs@nd.gov.

I understand that if any of the information included in this plan changes, I am to update the legal custodian, licensing agent or the North Dakota Department of Human Services within 14 days of the change.

Printed Name	
Signature	Date

Form must be completed by the foster care provider or adoptive family and submitted to the authorized agent completing the licensing/adoption study.

- The foster care licensing worker will submit to the regional office and the North Dakota Department of Human Services regional office will submit to Children and Family Services.
- Adoption worker will submit with the family adoption assessment to Children and Family Services.