2020-2024
Disaster Plan
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This plan can be found by going to the ND Department of Human Services website at

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 ND Department of Human Services vault in the state capitol or the Children and Family Services Division office located on Divide Ave in Bismarck, ND.

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, Human Service Zones (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 and custodial agency 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 assigned CFS Field Service Specialists. 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 licensing office and saved electronically to the “Q” drive managed by Children and Family Services. The “Q” drive allows any State employee to access the information. 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 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 CFS Field Service Specialists 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. The state child welfare office (Children and Family Services) partners 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 Field Service Specialists are a primary connection between the local Human Service Zone (social service agency), providers, and Children and Family Services (CFS) Division. Each field Service Specialist has a list of foster youth in their region, as well as emergency procedures/evacuation plans for identified licensed service providers in their region (completed SFN 445).

   a. 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 Field Service Specialist employed by Children and Family Services. Information is available as to the foster parent’s primary and secondary evacuation plan (SFN 445), including emergency contact information.

2. 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 by county of residence under public custody of a Human Service Zone, Division of Juvenile Services (DJS) or a Tribal with Title IV-E status.

3. 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.

4. 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.

5. 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.
6. The department has established a CFS email address dhscfs@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.

7. Emergency Communication to Human Service Zone’s: NDDHS can access Assurance NM as the emergency notification system used by the State of North Dakota and the Department of Human Services to provide important information to our team members.

8. Information/System Security: NDIT provides direction and technical expertise to all Department divisions and facilities to ensure the Department’s IT Resources are used appropriately and in accordance with Department and NDIT policies and procedures. This includes protecting the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of Department information and the systems that handle the information. The Department encourages the proper use of its IT Resources for conducting Department business as an effective and efficient tool within the framework of applicable federal and state laws, federal regulations, administrative rules, and Department policies. Users of Department IT Resources hold positions of trust both in preserving the security and confidentiality of Department information and in safeguarding Department IT Resources. Any potential loss of Department information or IT Resource availability can have a significant impact on the Department’s ability to fulfill its mission. The requirements outlined in this Policy are to assist users in understanding the expectations with regard to appropriate use, and consequently will help minimize some of the risks that are inherent with the daily use of Department IT Resources.

If a disaster has occurred in any region of the state, Children and Family Services (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 Human Service Zone, DJS and CFS office employees. Although there are limits as to what information counties have access to, CFS Field Service Specialist can view all cases within their regional oversight. CFS administrative staff also have full access to every foster care case entered into FRAME.

**Training**

Training for state and local 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 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 in mock drills with Field Service Specialist staff 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](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**

Children and Family Services (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.

**ND Disaster Response**

North Dakota was presented with flooding in the spring of 2019, the ND Department of Human Services activated the State Recovery Multi-Agency Coordination Center, led by the state Agriculture Commissioner, the NDDES Director, the NDDES Homeland Security Director and the State Engineer, who provided direction to help communities with recovery efforts. The state team conducted extensive outreach with residents and producers, establishing Multi-Agency Resource Centers (MARCs) that are staffed by local, state and federal agencies and voluntary organizations whose representatives discussed available assistance, from mental health resources to cleanup help. North Dakota foster parents effected by flooding followed the ND Disaster Plan protocols and re-located if needed, while maintaining communications with custodial agencies of the children and ND Department of Human Services designees.
CFS Disaster Plan
Provider Call In & Email Notification

FOSTER CARE & ADOPT PROVIDER
DISPLACED DUE TO DISASTER?
CALL IN ASAP

In the event that you must evacuate your foster/adopt home, please call or e-mail your location to the legal custodian or licensing agency at (701)-__________________,
or, the
ND DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
1-800-245-3736
CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES
701-328-2316
dhscfs@nd.gov

Full disaster plan is viewable 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

Disaster Plan Form located at https://www.nd.gov/eforms/Doc/sfn00445.pdf
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>FAMILY EVACUATION DISASTER PLAN</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NORTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FOSTER CARE DIVISION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SFN 445 (4-2019)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Clear Fields**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Foster/Adoption Name (Last, First)</th>
<th>County</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Address</td>
<td>City</td>
<td>State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone Number</td>
<td>Cell Phone Number</td>
<td>Email Address</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foster Care Provider Number</td>
<td>Foster Care Licensing Period</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contact</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Address</td>
<td>City</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ZIP Code</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone Number</td>
<td>Cell Phone Number</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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, or e-mail my location to dhecfs@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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Printed Name</th>
<th>Signature</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

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.
North Dakota Disaster Plan Overview

North Dakota was presented with flooding in the spring of 2019, the ND Department of Human Services activated the State Recovery Multi-Agency Coordination Center, led by the state Agriculture Commissioner, the NDDES Director, the NDDES Homeland Security Director and the State Engineer, who provided direction to help communities with recovery efforts. The state team conducted extensive outreach with residents and producers, establishing Multi-Agency Resource Centers (MARCs) that are staffed by local, state and federal agencies and voluntary organizations whose representatives discussed available assistance, from mental health resources to cleanup help. North Dakota foster parents impacted by flooding followed the ND Disaster Plan protocols and re-located if needed, while maintaining communications with custodial agencies of the children and ND Department of Human Services designees.

North Dakota responded to a wet summer and fall, as well as an unprecedented early winter storm in October 2019. Significant flooding impacted families across North Dakota and required a government approach to helping citizens of our state and ensuring child welfare agencies, providers and clients were served and assisted. The ND Disaster Plan was reviewed again and foster parents impacted by flooding followed protocols and re-located if needed, while maintaining communications with custodial agencies of the children and ND Department of Human Services designees. North Dakota State assessments indicated that damage in the 21 counties would exceed $9.2 million, with an additional $2 million in damage, which remained underwater. The North Dakota Department of Transportation also reported damages totaling $29.7 million to its network of Federal Aid System (FAS) roads. The Commissioner urged producers to relocate livestock to areas of protected from the storm and contact the Hay Hotline to access additional hay or transport of supplies to farmers and ranchers in need. North Dakota conducted coordination calls to discuss preparedness measures with representatives of the Department of Transportation, Highway Patrol, National Guard, Department of Agriculture, Department of Human Services, Department of Health, Civil Air Patrol, State Radio, State Water Commission, National Weather Service, Rural Electric Cooperative Association and voluntary agencies, including the American Red Cross.

In the spring of 2020, worldwide pandemic of COVID-19 effected the nation. North Dakota created a website of http://www.nd.gov/dhs/info/covid-19/index.html. The State of North Dakota, led by the Governor’s office produced daily press conferences and several COVID resource guidelines, documents, and other related information for clients, stakeholders and staff. The North Dakota Department of Human Services worked and is continuing to navigate the risks and concerns with COVID-19. The goal was to minimize the risk for the individuals served and employed. The Department is committed to delivering on its mission of serving people in need across the state of North Dakota. Service delivery locations remained open and continued to serve clients; more virtual and distance learning opportunities available to clients since March 2020. Human Service Centers and authorized agents; ND Human Service Zones (formerly county social service offices) continued to provide necessary services, while screening for COVID-19 illness risk, while monitoring and following recommendation of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). A series of FAQ documents were made available and continue to be updated specific to child protection, foster parent licensing, case manager-child face-to-face visitation, virtual visitation and more: http://www.nd.gov/dhs/info/covid-19/provider-q-a.html

Given the disasters and utilization of the plan, it was determined there was no need to make formal changes to the ND Disaster Plan.
Plan Language: North Dakota updated the attached plan to revise language referencing regional human service center regional representatives to read “Children and Family Services Field Service Specialists”. In addition, any references to county social service offices is now referred to as Human Service Zone throughout the plan.

North Dakota Disaster Plan Overview
North Dakota responded to a dry summer and fall 2020, as well as an unprecedented dry winter in early 2021. The Disaster Plan was not utilized for weather related impacts, rather to review protocol related to the worldwide health pandemic (COVID-19) which led to economic disaster for residents across the nation. The ND Disaster Plan is maintained, reviewed and updated to ensure child welfare staff and foster parents impacted by a disaster follow protocols and re-located if needed, while maintaining communications with custodial agencies of the children and ND Department of Human Services designees.

In the spring of 2020, North Dakota experienced the first positive case of the coronavirus (COVID-19). The pandemic effected the nation and required different more innovative ways of doing business for Children and Family Services Division, as well as ND child welfare programming statewide. North Dakota created a website of http://www.nd.gov/dhs/info/covid-19/index.html, led by the Governor’s office. Governor Burgum produced daily press conferences and several COVID resource guidelines, documents, and other related information for clients, stakeholders and staff. The North Dakota Department of Human Services worked to navigate the risks and concerns with COVID-19, ongoing oversight continues today even though our state is not considered “high risk” at this time. The goal of pandemic intervention and disaster planning was to minimize the risk for the individuals served and employed. The Department is and continues to be committed to delivering on its mission of serving people in need across the state of North Dakota. Service delivery locations remained open and continued to serve clients; while more virtual and distance learning opportunities were made available to staff and clients. Human Service Centers and authorized agents; ND Human Service Zones (formerly county social service offices) continued to provide necessary services, while screening for COVID-19 illness risk and monitoring and following recommendation of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). A series of FAQ documents were made available specific to child protection, foster parent licensing, case manager-child face-to-face visitation, virtual visitation. Effective April 1, 2021, Governor Burgum lifted the statewide public emergency.

In addition to this plan, ND Department of Human Services alongside ND Department of Health manage response plans; updated and revised periodically. A site with various plans can be referenced at: https://www.health.nd.gov/epr/redacted-response-plans/