	GEORGIA DIVISION OF FAMILY AND CHILDREN SERVICES CHILD WELFARE POLICY MANUAL			
	Chapter:	(1) Administration	**Effective Date:**	January 2020
	Policy Title:	Emergency Operations Plans		
	Policy Number:	1.14	**Previous Policy #:**	N/A

CODES/REFERENCES

P.L. 109-288 Child and Family Services Improvement Act of 2006
Title IV-B of the Social Security Act Section 422 (b) (16)

REQUIREMENTS

The Division of Family and Children Services shall:

1. Identify, locate and continue availability of services for children under the State's care or supervision who are displaced or adversely affected by a disaster.
2. Respond, as appropriate, to new child welfare cases in areas adversely affected by a disaster and provide services in those cases.
3. Remain in communication with Social Services Case Managers (SSCMs) and other child welfare personnel who are displaced because of a disaster.
4. Preserve essential program records.
5. Coordinate services and share information with other states.
6. Develop a Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) for each County DFCS office, update the COOP annually and submit the COOP to the Regional Emergency Management Coordinator.
7. Provide critical and/or emergency child welfare services during a disaster to include at a minimum:
   a. Ensuring the safety and well-being needs of all children in foster care.
   b. Providing emergency services to children and families with Family Preservation cases to ensure their safety and well-being;
   c. Responding to reports of child abuse and neglect;
   d. Responding to the needs of unaccompanied minors. Unaccompanied minors include children separated from caregivers and/or children whose caregiver(s) are incapacitated and unable to perform basic parental functions (i.e. feed, clothe, shelter and protect child(ren)).

NOTE: Routine services shall resume as soon as circumstances permit.

PROCEDURES

The State DFCS office shall:

1. Develop and update standards and/or training materials as needed, for new and existing child welfare staff, foster parents and contracted placement resource providers, regarding disaster planning and response to include:
   a. *A Desk Reference* for state office staff that:
      i. Defines various safety hazards;

DRAFT

ii. Recommends corresponding actions in the event of a specified threat;
iii. Details evacuation procedures; and
iv. Describes the roles and responsibilities of state personnel designated to aid in an emergency (i.e. Capitol Police Services, Fire Marshall and DFCS Emergency Floor Coordinators).

NOTE: The State Emergency Management Coordinator will maintain the Desk Reference.

b. *Written Safety and Quality Standards* (SQS) for DFCS Foster Parents to ensure the ongoing safety and wellbeing of children and to support preparedness in the event of a disaster (see policy 14.1 Resource Development: Safety and Quality Standards for a full list of requirements). SQS for foster parents include:
   i. Posting a written evacuation plan in a prominent place in the home (e.g., on a refrigerator or family bulletin board), and reviewing it with the children;
   ii. Maintaining a comprehensive list of emergency telephone numbers, including poison control, and posting those numbers in a prominent place in the home;
   iii. Obtaining certification in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and first aid;
   iv. Maintaining a functional smoke alarm and carbon monoxide detector on each level of occupancy of the home and at least one near all sleeping areas, and a functional fire extinguisher;
   v. Following medication management protocol for children; and
   vi. Complying with requirements for the supervision of children of various ages and levels of need (see policy 14.8 Resource Development: Supervision of Children).

   NOTE: The Resource Development (RD) Team will monitor compliance with SQS.

c. *Written standards for Child Caring Institutions (CCI) and Child Placing Agencies (CPA)* contracted to provide Room Board and Watchful Oversight (RBWO) for foster children. RBWO Standards shall contain requirements to ensure private placement providers comply with SQS and have a written disaster plan to address emergency situations (See RBWO Standard 13.33). Planning consideration for emergency / disaster is to include such things as:
   i. Transportation;
   ii. Medication;
   iii. Record management;
   iv. Ongoing communication; and
   v. Location of the nearest shelter, hospital, police and fire station.

   NOTE: The Office of Provider Management (OPM) will ensure plans are maintained annually as part of its ongoing compliance review.

2. Develop and maintain web-based access to the DFCS Emergency Operations Plan.
3. Issue notification of suspended and resumed placement of children through Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC) in disaster affected areas.
4. Initiate memoranda of understanding (MOU) with vendors and partners with statewide service / resource capability.
5. Identify and maintain a State Emergency Management Coordinator (SEMC) whose responsibilities include but aren't limited to the following:

DRAFT

a. Develop the annual DFCS Emergency Operations Plan in coordination with state and community partners;
b. Provide written guidance to county and regional DFCS offices regarding the development of COOPs that meet state and federal preparedness standards;
c. Review all county COOPs to assure adherence to planning requirements;
d. Issue notifications of severe weather alerts and warnings that occur during regular business operating hours to REMC and Regional Directors;
e. Train Regional Emergency Management Coordinators (REMC) on related DFCS plan, policy and procedures;
f. Represent state level DFCS emergency resource coordination when requested by local jurisdictions;
g. Oversee activation of state DFCS team(s) to support local emergency shelter operations.
h. Maintain updated documents that facilitate communication and continuity of operations including:
    i. County COOPs
    ii. Internal agency directories that contain email addresses and telephone numbers of the State Office Leadership Team, Regional Directors, County Directors and REMC.
    iii. External agency and partner contact information including American Red Cross (ARC), Salvation Army, Department of Public Health (DPH), DHS Division of Aging Services (DAS), Georgia Emergency Management Agency (GEMA) and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
    iv. Desk Reference for emergency operation management for state office staff

The County DFCS office shall:

1. Collaborate with community partners (i.e. health care providers, law enforcement, fire personnel, mental health providers, local department of education, other community agencies, etc.) to develop a COOP that is specific to the county.
    a. Outline the roles and responsibilities of the various agencies involved;
    b. Determine the services each agency can provide to children and/or families affected by a disaster;
    c. Establish phone trees, email notifications or other forms of notification to communicate with DFCS staff and community partners involved within a disaster-affected area;
    d. Conduct drills:
        i. Quarterly in areas most susceptible to severe Atlantic and Gulf Coast weather disturbances.
        ii. Biannually in all other counties.
    e. Notify Regional Director and REMC of dates and types of drills conducted;
    f. Outline the process to be used to identify, locate and provide services to the children in foster care. Consideration should be given to the following:
        i. Utilizing non-affected county staff to assist;
        ii. Maintaining emergency contact information at all times for the placement resource;
        iii. Specialized needs of the children (i.e. medically fragile, behavioral/mental health issues, special dietary needs, medications, etc.);

DRAFT

iv. Incorporating a process for providing notification to child's legal county/state and parents/guardians, when applicable, regarding the safety and well-being of the child;
v. ICPC placements;
vi. Updating placement information in Georgia SHINES as soon as possible but within the required 72 hours of occurrence;
vii. Assuring child welfare staff has remote and secure access to Georgia SHINES via virtual private network (VPN) and portable (i.e. laptop or tablet) computer; and
viii. Ensuring face-to-face contact with the displaced child and placement resource by a SSCM or Social Services Supervisor (SSS) within five (5) calendar days of a relocation notice.

g. Identify how responses to reports of abuse and neglect will be made and whether or not law enforcement or other emergency personnel can accompany DFCS on these responses; and
h. Determine ways to secure any DFCS paper case records and ensure updated documentation is entered into Georgia SHINES.

2. At initial approval and ongoing, discuss with individual foster parents and other placement providers their plans in the event of a disaster; In the event they have no plan in place, provide assistance in developing a plan.
3. Complete and update annually the county COOP according to approved guidelines.
4. Submit the completed/updated COOP to the Regional Emergency Management Coordinator by May 15th of each year.

The Regional Director shall:

1. Advise the Deputy Director of Child Welfare of the following information in the event of an emergency / disaster:
   a. Initial assessment of emergency / disaster
   b. Operational capability of agency facility
   c. Availability of local staff to assist or need for assistance from region
   d. Shelter openings and operations

The Regional Emergency Management Coordinator shall:

1. Review and maintain copies of County COOPs from within their region.
2. Submit the completed/updated COOP to the SEMC by June 1st of each year.
3. Document dates of drills conducted within the region and submit a quarterly report to the SEMC.
4. Assist in training of local staff and foster parents.
5. Disseminate notifications of severe weather alerts and warnings that occur during regular business operating hours to County Director and/or designee.

PRACTICE GUIDANCE

The Child and Family Services Improvement Act of 2006 requires all states to have a disaster plan in place to address how the state's child welfare agency will ensure a continuity of child welfare services in the wake of a disaster. This disaster plan should incorporate how services along the child welfare continuum from intake through adoptions will be provided. The plan should include procedures for locating the children and families involved with the child welfare agency and ways to ensure their safety and well-being. Since all emergency

DRAFT

response efforts begin and end at the local level, it is incumbent upon the state to support the development of county plans and to facilitate emergency response as needed.

FORMS AND TOOLS

Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) - Template
Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) – Appendices Index

DRAFT