

Follow-Up Document for the Webinar

Disaster Plan Requirements and Resources for NC's Local Child Welfare Agencies

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Presenter

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Recording: if you missed the webinar or want to view it again, go to:

<https://fcrp.unc.edu/disaster-plan-requirements-and-resources-for-ncs-local-child-welfare-agencies/>

Answers to Questions Asked During the Webinar

Responses in this document are from the NC Division of Social Services Child Welfare Services Section.

Will there be a template for us to use with our resource families to help them develop plans?

Yes. There is a template available in the toolkit (available [here](#)) and in the disaster course coming to fosteringNC.org in November 2021.

Are there copies of disaster plans counties can share?

NCDSS is exploring the best option to provide counties with ideas for plans from other experienced counties, as well as any lessons learned.

In addition to the overall disaster/emergency plan staff should be aware of, should staff be also aware of the Agency BCP/COOP plan as well?

Yes. It is important that child welfare ensure that the agency BCP/COOP includes child welfare electronic and paper records. The plan should include all kinds of disasters (including a hack), preservation of and access to all records during a disaster, while complying with all confidentiality statutory requirements. Sharing the high levels from the BCP/COOP in your child welfare-specific plan related to how you will ensure protection of your files and how you intend to ensure you have access to records during a disaster are important for NCDSS to know.

Our county disaster preparedness is handled through emergency management. Am I correct that we need to coordinate with them to develop a response that is specific to child welfare and the families we work with? Should staff also coordinate with their agency disaster/emergency coordinator?

It is a local agency decision as to how you develop and operationalize your child welfare-specific plan. However, your agency disaster/emergency coordinator at a minimum should be made aware of what is in your plan.

It is always best practice to collaborate with other first responders in your county. DSS has responsibility for sheltering during a disaster; therefore, the agency must develop a plan that considers how they will cover all the agency responsibilities during a disaster. Parts of the child welfare plan include things like ensuring children and families receive needed services. During a disaster, delivery of these services will likely be tied to groups working with your county emergency management.

Is it okay to tie the CWS plan to our department's BCOOP as an addendum?

Yes. It is up to local child welfare agencies how they integrate their child welfare-specific plans. However, NCDSS will want you to submit a copy of your child welfare-specific plan annually along with the attestation to your NCDSS Regional Child Welfare Consultant. All reporting will also come through your Regional Child Welfare Consultant, since it contains confidential case-specific child welfare information.

In looking at NC's 2020-2024 child welfare disaster plan, it says the NCDSS maintains a list of facilities that can assist with providing placements and services. Can we get copies of the list?

Disasters may hit any area of our state and therefore require the state to identify areas not impacted and that might be able to assist in providing a placement in an emergency. Should a placement be needed, NCDSS will work to aid in identification of a placement option in a safe location. There is no way to have this as a standing list due to impact area of the disaster as well as daily census changes in placement resources.

What prompts the implementation of the plan? Is it a formal declaration?

Your agency will need to identify the point at which it will implement its plan in response to a local emergency. One option is to activate when you receive notice your local emergency operations center is activated. North Carolina's statewide child welfare disaster plan has identified it would begin implementation of its disaster plan upon the activation of the State Emergency Operations Center.

Has North Carolina changed how child welfare agencies prepare for and respond to disasters? This all seems new.

North Carolina recognized after Hurricanes Mathew, Michael, and Florence that an enhanced focus on both our state child welfare disaster plan, as well as communication with our counties during both the disaster and recovery, would enhance our preparation for large scale disasters and the provision of services to our clients during a disaster. The Sept. 22 webinar was an effort to open that dialogue with our counties across the state and begin the work to improve our preparation for disasters. We hope the many resources described in this webinar will support your work in this area.

Participant responses to the question:

“What is one thing you will do in response to what you have learned today?”

- Start working on our local plan to cover all aspects learned from the training
- Start working on a plan
- Ensuring that I have what we need for taking CPS reports by paper
- Begin unit discussion on local plan
- Access the tool kit
- Have a discussion with staff
- Start typing
- Find out where the CW disaster plan is
- Discuss this with other CPS supervisors and program managers
- Find and review our current plan and have discussions with co workers
- Our CW Program has been looped into our Business Continuity with a divisional addendum but there are definitely some areas to clarify and beef up!
- Meet with Director and PM to discuss the plan and make sure we have everything needed
- Coming up with an actual plan before disaster strikes would be greatly beneficial for our agency
- Download and access the tool kit
- Begin discussion to get plan in place and train staff
- Provide information to Foster Parents, in regards to upcoming training
- Familiarize myself w/ my county's plan
- Promote the upcoming training to resource families
- Learn how to access the agency plan
- Utilize the forms as a check list Jennifer Hurd: use the tool kit
- Review our current local plan
- Access and read the toolkit Jacki Johnson: Read information and start working on plan
- Coordinate with Safety Director around including specific plans in our COOP
- Tool kit Coleen Anderson: ensure we can function without electricity
- Use checklist
- Discuss / work plan / training / use tool kit
- Review the policy and discuss with the Director
- Access toolkit and develop our plan
- Locate plan and update it
- Put a packet together for CPS reports and have all phone numbers handy
- Protection of paper records
- Asking more questions in regards to the local county plans
- Brainstorm to ensure the plan is all encompassing
- Access Toolkit and begin planning
- Make copies of all CPS forms
- Review the policy and start the discussion with key management and staff