

CHILD WELFARE SERVICES DISASTER RESPONSE PLAN TEMPLATE

County & Agency Name: Merced County Human Services Agency Date Completed: June 29, 2016

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This template is intended to be used as a guide to help counties incorporate the 2006 federal disaster response criteria as part of local child welfare plans regarding children and non-minor dependents. Children and non-minor dependents in the probation system must also be included in the plan. County plans must be amended annually to include Child Welfare Services (CWS) Disaster Response Plans.

In September 2006, Congress passed the Child and Family Services Improvement Act of 2006 (Public Law [PL] 109-288). PL 109-288 amended Part B of Title IV of the Social Security Act to reauthorize the Promoting Safe and Stable Families Program. Among other changes, PL 109-288 established requirements for states on disaster planning in child welfare under section 6(a)-(16) and Welfare and Institutions Code Section 16500.1(c)(1). Accordingly, counties are requested to address the following program areas in developing local disaster readiness plans.

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CWS Disaster Response Criteria A:	Identify, locate, and continue availability of services for CWS children, Probation children, non-minor dependents, including non-minor dependents residing in foster care, out-of-county placements, children placed in or out of California through the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC), out-of-state non-minor dependents under county care or supervision who are displaced or adversely affected by a disaster:
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Essential Function:	1. Identification and location process of CWS children, Probation children, non-minor dependents, including those in probation residing in foster care, out-of-county placements, ICPC children, and out-of-state non-minor dependents who may be displaced.
Process Description:	<p>CWS: The Staff Services Analyst will generate a monthly list of all children in placement utilizing a computer generated report from Business Objects. The list will be maintained by the Deputy Director and accessed in the event of a disaster for contact information for each foster child. The Deputy Director and each of the Program Administrators also have secure remote access to the list. All CWS personnel with an assigned caseload will contact the children on their assigned caseloads via telephone and/or personal home visits. If the assigned social worker is not available, another social worker will make the contacts. Caseload coverage will be ensured by each supervisor, Program Administrator, or Deputy Director, in said order. Social Service Program Workers may be assigned to help contact all of the children.</p> <p>Probation: The Probation Department will prepare a list on a monthly basis of all wards in group homes or foster care with names of the group homes/foster agencies, addresses, phone numbers and two or more contact persons. This list will also include information about special medical or mental health needs of these wards, and the names, addresses, and phone numbers of the child's parent/guardian. This information will be e-mailed to and printed out by the Program Manager at the Juvenile Justice Correctional Complex (JJCC) and the Assistant Chief of Custodial Services with the printed copies kept in their respective offices/facilities. The Program Manager at the JJCC will ensure a copy of is also maintained in the JJCC Control Room. In addition, the Deputy Probation Officers (DPOs) assigned to the Placement Unit and the Placement Unit Supervisor will maintain a printed copy as well. Copies will be maintained in a secure and confidential manner, obsolete copies will be destroyed. In the event wards, who are placed in a group home or foster home, become displaced or adversely affected by a disaster, the placement officer or other designated staff will contact each group home/foster home of those children affected. Contact can be made in person, by telephone, or with the assistance of allied agencies (e.g., local law enforcement, local probation services). The placement officer is to determine the safety and security status of each ward in their care.</p>
Essential Function:	2. Communication process with child care providers
Process Description:	CWS: All CWS personnel with an assigned caseload will contact the care providers on their assigned caseloads via telephone and/or personal home visits. If the assigned social worker is not available, another social worker will make the contacts. Caseload coverage will be ensured by each supervisor,

	<p>Program Administrator, or Dputy Director, in said order. Social Service Program Workers may be assigned to help contact all of the care providers.</p> <p>Probation: In the event wards who are placed in a group home or foster home become displaced or adversely affected by a disaster, the placement office or other designated staff will contact each group home/foster home of those children affected. Contact can be made in person, by telephone, or with the assistance of allied agencies (e.g., local law enforcement, local probation services). The placement officer is to determine the safety and security status of each ward in their care. If the Probation Department is satisfied that the safety and security of the child is not in jeopardy, the child will remain with the provider.</p>
Essential Function:	3. Identification of evacuation procedures – Event known in advance
Process Description:	In addition to the County Emergency Plan maintained through County Adiminstration, CWS and the Probation Department will continue to provide services as outlined in this document.
Essential Function:	4. Identification of evacuation procedures – Event not known in advance
Process Description:	In addition to the County Emergency Plan maintained through County Administration, CWS and the Probation Department will continue to provide services as outlined in this document.
Essential Function:	5. Identification of shelters
Process Description:	<p>CWS: CWS personnel will be assigned to designated Red Cross shelters to assist with the intake and registration of any unaccompanied minors. Active efforts will be made to reunite minors with parents, guardians, responsible relatives, or other responsible caregivers.</p> <p>Probation: In the event wards are displaced from their assigned group home or foster home and cannot temporarily be returned to their parent/guardian or immediately laterally placed, the ward(s) will be housed at the Juvenile Justice Correctional Complex (JJCC) until they can be appropriately placed.</p>
Essential Function:	6. Parental notification procedures
Process Description:	<p>CWS: As soon as possible after ensuring the safety of all children in foster care, CWS personnel will make</p>

	<p>due diligent efforts to notify parents and/or legal guardians of the safety of his/her child(ren), unless parental rights have been terminated.</p> <p>Probation: The placement officer will be responsible for contacting parents/guardians and advising of the circumstances and the status of their child(ren).</p>
Essential Function:	7. Alternative process for providing continued services
Process Description:	<p>CWS: CWS staff will ensure on-going emergency response and case management duties are fulfilled in accordance with current regulations and Agency policy.</p> <p>Emergency Response: Intake Social Workers will continue to accept referrals during normal business hours as long as phone services are available. Emergency Response Supervisor will notify the on call after hours service provider and request that all CWS/CMS calls be forwarded to the current on call workers for the week. On call SW will screen the calls and contact Emergency Response Intake Supervisor for assignment and response time. For any calls received after hours (5pm-8am), the on call SW will screen the calls and contact on call supervisor for assignment and response time. A list of Emergency Response Social Workers contact phone numbers (County issued cell phone and personal cell) will be kept by Emergency Response Supervisors. Emergency Response Social Workers will be assigned to investigate referrals. They will record preliminary information on the child welfare referral record, form 24-7091, and will enter all information in CWS/CMS as time allows or, in the event of a power outage when the power is restored. ER Social Workers must remain available by cell phones for as long as the services are available. ER Social Workers who have access to a smart phone may continue contact with their supervisor via email as long as phone services are available. In the event that cell phones are out, all available ER Social Workers will be assigned to report back to the agency by non cellular phone or in person on rotating one hour intervals to check for immediate referrals. The ER Supervisors will maintain a schedule of ER Social Worker reporting times. Social Workers who detain will place the children or turn the children over to an assisting Social Worker for placement. In the event of a power outage, detaining Social Workers will be directed to a work site with electrical power to write petitions and detention reports. In addition, Social Workers will be assigned as needed to designated shelters to assist emergency workers with displaced children and families.</p>

	<p>Court: Court Social Workers have access to a ipad or a surface pro-3 tablet, a mobile printer, and remote access to a virtual private network which provides for secure access to the agency's network. Court Social Workers will be directed to begin working from their devices. If the agency experiences a loss of power, the Court Social Workers will be directed to a location with a back-up power source to work on court reports.</p> <p>Family Maintenance/Family Reunification Family Maintenance and Family Reunification Social Workers have access to a ipad or a surface pro-3 tablet, and remote access to a virtual private network which provides for secure access to the agencies network and CWS/CMS. In the event of a power outage, social workers will work on court reports at the location with a back-up power source for all court dates within 10 working days. Each day the new 10-day parameter will apply. Social Workers who are not working on court reports are expected to be in the field contacting parents and children or monitoring visits. Notes will be recorded in CWS/CMS when possible.</p>
Essential Function:	8. Staff assignment process
Process Description:	<p>CWS: CWS personnel, upon learning of the disaster, will contact their supervisor or Program Administrator for assignments and instruction.</p> <p>Probation: The probation Department will dispatch all available staff, including Supervising Probation Officers, Deputy Probation Officers, and Juvenile Institutions Officers to locations where wards must be retrieved and relocated. The Juvenile Services Program Manager and Juvenile Supervising Probation Officers will be responsible for contacting Probation personnel and coordinating this operation.</p>
Essential Function:	9. Workload planning
Process Description:	<p>CWS: After ensuring the safety of their own families, CWS staff will report to their designated station and conduct their assigned duties and responsibilities, as long as it is safe. In the event the disaster results in the need for staff to be stationed at emergency shelters to handle intake and emergency response duties, staff will be assigned to provide those services on a rotation basis.</p>

	<p>Probation: Probation staff, primarily institution staff, will provide around the clock supervision of wards housed at JJCC. Wards that remain in a group home or foster home will be provided with around the clock supervision by those vendors/agencies. Wards will be removed from the care and custody of any vendor who cannot provide around the clock supervision.</p>
Essential Function:	10. Alternative locations for operations
Process Description:	<p>CWS: Alternative locations for operations include the Westside Family Services Center, the Main Street Youth Center, Family Services Center, AAA (Area on Agency and Aging), Atwater Castle outstation.</p> <p>Probation: The Probation Department will primarily utilize JJCC to house displaced wards. Should the Probation Department be unable to house the wards at JJCC, the department will secure temporary shelter for the ward(s) at juvenile detention facilities in neighboring/adjoining counties until appropriately placed or housed at Merced County JJCC. Failing availability of temporary shelter in a neighboring county's juvenile detention facility, temporary shelter will be secured at other juvenile detention facilities within the state of California. Efforts will be made to house the wards in juvenile detention facilities as close to Merced County as feasible.</p>
Essential Function:	11. Orientation and ongoing training
Process Description:	Supervisors are responsible for ensuring that their staff is familiar with the plan. The plan will also be added to the curriculum for the CWS induction training.
CWS Disaster Response Criteria B:	Respond, as appropriate, to new CWS cases in areas adversely affected by a disaster, and provide services in those cases:
Essential Function:	1. Investigation process
Process Description:	<p>CWS: Emergency Response services will be available to the public during and after a disaster. Child abuse and neglect investigations will be conducted in accordance with regulations, legislation and Agency policies and procedures active in affect prior to the disaster. Emergency Response Supervisors will assess current staffing and identify a team of Social Workers who will respond to new child welfare referrals whose role will be the initial investigation and 24 hour response when required. Alternative worksites are available at the Main Street Youth Center, Atwater Castle outstation, and Los Banos</p>

	outstation. Child Welfare Referral Record, form 24-7091 will be used to record preliminary information and will be entered into CWS/CMS as time allows or, in the event of a power outage, when the power is restored.
Essential Function:	2. Determine circumstances surrounding the child's potential entrance
Process Description:	Social workers will work with the Home Assessment Team in order to locate suitable relatives or non-related extended family members who are not directly impacted by said disaster.
Essential Function:	3. Implementation process for providing new services
Process Description:	Whenever possible, children who are removed from their parent's home during a time of disaster will be taken to the designated work station so that support services may continue. Parents will be given opportunities to receive all services necessary for the safe return of the children to their care. The case carrying Social Workers will be required to do direct referrals to various services and programs, document their actions in case notes to assure service referrals were made in a timely manner.
Essential Function:	4. Services emphasizing reunification due to disaster
Process Description:	CWS will help the families with the necessities needed in order to return their children to their care. A voluntary reunification case if appropriate may be opened.
CWS Disaster Response Criteria C:	Address and provide care for unaccompanied minors:
Essential Function:	1. Structure – CWS personnel
Process Description:	All social workers will assist in the search for parents and/or relatives using multiple agency systems.
Essential Function:	2. Address language barriers to communicate quickly and effectively
Process Description:	Multi-lingual staff are available.
Essential Function:	3. Determine likelihood of reunification and steps toward reunification

Process Description:	The likelihood of reunification is high when the only reason the minor is unaccompanied is due to the disaster and their parents/relatives are located. Existing agency policy for release of children to parents would be utilized, including verifying
Essential Function:	4. Assess and make a determination within 30 days
Process Description:	Social workers will be assigned to accompany minors to search for parents/relatives on a continual basis.
CWS Disaster Response Criteria D:	Remain in communication with caseworkers and other essential CWS personnel who are displaced because of a disaster:
Essential Function:	1. Communication structure – staff
Process Description:	CWS: In the event of a disaster, the Deputy Director will contact all Program Administrators, Program Administrators will contact supervisors assigned to their area, and supervisors will contact Social Workers assigned to their unit.
Essential Function:	2. Communication structure – CWS personnel (phone tree)
Process Description:	CWS: The agency maintains an Emergency Notification Roster, which is updated regularly and distributed to all management and supervisory personnel, for use in the event of a disaster or other emergency recall situation. Program Administrators will contact all staff under their chain of command. Probation: In the event of a disaster, the Juvenile Probation Services Program Manager will activate the disaster plan and will coordinate communication by contacting Juvenile Supervising Probation Officers, who will in turn, contact the Deputy Probation Officers in their respective units. If additional assistance is needed; the Juvenile Probation Services Program Manager will contact the Adult Probation Services Program Manager and Custodial Program Managers for assistance from their respective divisions. Should the Juvenile Probation Services Program Manager be incapacitated or unavailable, the Adult Probation Services Program Manager will contact Juvenile Supervising

	Probation Officers, etc., as listed above.
Essential Function:	3. Communication structure – contracted services
Process Description:	Each Program Administrator who oversees a contracted service will communicate with the service provider via land line or cell phone to assess if the service provider can continue with business as usual or if there will be any suspension in services provided. If services will be suspended the immediate need of this service will be assessed and every effort will be made to locate an alternative source for services of immediate need. If a service will be temporarily suspended and it may affect the timeliness for family reunification, this will be reported to the court.
Essential Function:	4. Communication process when all normal channels are unavailable
Process Description:	<p>CWS: All staff are assigned cell phones, and in the event of a disaster, staff will be instructed to keep them turned on. Merced County issues critical notifications to citizens county-wide should there be a threat to health or safety and notifications can be received to landlines, cell phones, email, fax, or instant messaging.</p> <p>Probation: Those with cell phones or radios will turn them on and keep them available for use as needed.</p>
Essential Function:	5. Communication frequency
Process Description:	<p>CWS: Communication between management and line staff will happen at least twice a day, in the morning and in the afternoon. More often as necessary to advise of new information or instructions.</p> <p>Probation: Staff will be kept abreast of relevant new information as that information is known to the Chief Probation Officer, Assistant Chief, or Program Managers</p>
Essential Function:	6. Communication with media
Process Description:	<p>CWS: The Director, Deputy Directors, Agency Information Officer, or a designee will maintain contact with the media.</p>

	<p>Probation: Communication with the media will be restricted to the Chief Probation Officer, Assistant Chief Probation Officer, or the Merced County Director of Governmental Affairs.</p>
Essential Function:	7. Communication with volunteers
Process Description:	Communication will be coordinated through the County's Emergency Plan.
Essential Function:	8. Establishment of a toll-free number prior to disaster including Telecommunication Device for the Deaf (TDD)
Process Description:	The Merced County Office of Emergency Services will provide contact information to the public. If the agency phone system is still operable, greetings will be changed to provide the public with numbers to call
CWS Disaster Response Criteria E:	Preserve essential program records:
Essential Function:	1. Record preservation process
Process Description:	<p>CWS: Merced County Human Services Agency maintains paper files for each child in placement or with an open case/referral. There are back up files available through the CWS/CMS provider.</p> <p>Probation: Merced County Human Services Agency and California Department of Social Service Data Systems and Survey Design Bureau both have duplicate information regarding financial records pertaining to placement payments for wards.</p>
Essential Function:	2. Use of off-site back-up system
Process Description:	<p>CWS: CWS/CMS can be accessed through various computers throughout the county. In addition, the agency also has access to CWS/CMS through secure tokens assigned to specific line staff,</p>

	<p>supervisors, and managers. These tokens allow web based access to CWS/CMS from alternative sites such as; Main Street Youth Center, Atwater Castle outstation, and Los Banos outstation. There are also a number of iPads with vpn access available.</p> <p>Probation: The probation database can be accessed through various probation locations and other agencies throughout the county.</p>
CWS Disaster Response Criteria F:	Coordinate services
Essential Function:	1. ICPC reporting process must include a process that disseminates information to both the sending state and CDSS
Process Description:	<p>CWS: The Social Worker assigned to any ICPC case will contact both the child and the care provider either by phone or in person, then contact the other state and CDSS to advise them of the situation. The Social Worker will also be responsible for arranging transportation back to the other state if necessary.</p> <p>Probation: The Deputy Probation Officer assigned to any ICPC case will contact both the child and the care provider either by phone or in person, then contact the other state and CDSS to advise them of the situation. The Deputy Probation Officer will also be responsible for arranging transportation back to the other state if necessary.</p>
Essential Function:	2. Mental health providers
Process Description:	The Merced County Mental Health Department may be called upon to provide mental health services during and after a disaster. The assigned Social Workers will make referrals and contact Mental Health when appropriate.
Essential Function:	3. Courts
Process Description:	Welfare and Institutions Code 300 petitions and reports must be prepared and filed within the statutory guidelines during and after a disaster in the event the Court system is functioning.

	All other legal and civil rights accorded to children and their families will also continue to apply during or after a disaster. CWS personnel will make active efforts to comply with those regulations.
Essential Function:	4. Federal partners
Process Description:	The CWS department will work with federal partners as appropriate to ensure the safety and well-being of children in Merced County.
Essential Function:	5. CDSS
Process Description:	The CWS department will work with CDSS to ensure the safety and well-being of children in Merced County.
Essential Function:	6. Tribes
Process Description:	Tribes will be notified in the same manner as parents and legal guardians regarding the safety and well-being of Native American children in placement.
Essential Function:	7. Volunteers
Process Description:	All volunteers will be coordinated through the various service providers such as CASA and Aspiranet.