

## CHILD WELFARE SERVICES DISASTER RESPONSE PLAN TEMPLATE

County & Agency Name: \_\_\_\_\_Plumas County Dept. of Social Services\_\_\_\_\_ Date Completed: \_\_\_9/1/2016\_\_\_\_\_

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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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<b>CWS Disaster Response Criteria A:</b>	<b>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:</b>

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:	Initially, the Department will utilize a feature of SafeMeasures located within the mapping tool to locate and identify children that may be displaced. The Department's caseload generally runs at less than 50 children. This small caseload size makes it relatively easy to determine the extent to which any children who are our responsibility are affected by a disaster. During the initial response the Department will utilize cell phone contacts to the extent that these resources are available to determine whether such children have in fact been displaced. If such resources are not available or are not immediately successful, the Department will utilize Red Cross victim assistance resources (message boards, shelter registries) as an initial contact point for dislocated children and families. Subsequent contacts will be made with Mountain Circle Family Resource Agency and Environmental Alternatives Foster Family Agency and to relatives in the County. To the extent that such resources do not yield results, we will also utilize law enforcement welfare checks as those services are released from other priorities and made available to the Department.
Essential Function:	2. Communication process with child care providers
Process Description:	The Department of Social Services does not directly administer any child care programs. In Plumas County these programs are administered through the Alternative Payment programs run by Plumas Rural Services (PRS). To the extent that there is a coordinated response between PRS and the Department directed to child care providers, the Department will utilize existing county disaster response protocols including cell phones, and Ham radio operators. Where possible and appropriate, the Department will also utilize relative contacts and law enforcement resources as described above.
Essential Function:	3. Identification of evacuation procedures – Event known in advance
Process Description:	The Department will rely on existing disaster response plans and directives from the local Office of Emergency Services. During a local, state or federally declared disaster, the Director of the Department of Social Services is sited at the Emergency Operations Center (when such a center is operational) and is seated as a member of the Emergency Response Command team for Shelter Operations. As the Office of Emergency Services is now co-located in the same facility as the Department and as the Emergency Operations Center is also located there, such procedures can be implemented with much greater efficiency. With this direct relationship in place, communication regarding evacuation directives and establishment of emergency shelters will be direct and immediate.
Essential Function:	4. Identification of evacuation procedures – Event not known in advance

Process Description:	The Department will rely on existing disaster response plans and directives from the local Office of Emergency Services. The Director, or in his absence, the Assistant Director are designated as a members of the County Emergency Operations Team and will rely on existing disaster operations plans for communication protocols to persons who are displaced due to a disaster. As is indicated above, with the co-location of the Office of Emergency Services and the County Emergency Operations Center within our facility, our ability to make such connections is enhanced.
Essential Function:	5. Identification of shelters
Process Description:	Local Red Cross and Office of Emergency Services personnel have identified emergency shelters in the county's existing disaster response plans. Department of Social Services staff is identified as part of the initial response team for shelter operations in the event of a disaster scenario. Our staff receives periodic training in emergency and disaster shelter management and operations. This training is updated regularly.
Essential Function:	6. Parental notification procedures
Process Description:	Parental notification will occur as the recovery phase begins. The Department's immediate responsibilities lie in assisting in the overall management and response to a disaster scenario and to assure that all children and families we are responsible for during the shelter management phase are accounted for and are safe until the immediate threats are reduced or mitigated entirely. The Department will utilize hot line and law enforcement communications during the immediate recovery phase to contact parents where necessary and appropriate.
Essential Function:	7. Alternative processes for providing continued services
Process Description:	Service continuity will be a function of the disaster recovery process except to the extent that there is a need for emergency response to allegations of child abuse or neglect. In areas immediately affected by disaster, such responses will be coordinated with law enforcement and other disaster response personnel to assure that they are safe to perform, are within any limitations imposed by access restrictions, and are approved by the incident command personnel.
Essential Function:	8. Staff assignment process
Process Description:	Availability for service will depend on the type of disaster or emergency, its location and its severity. Currently, the Department utilizes a "call down" telephone tree however the typed of emergency or disaster may render that unusable. Back-up systems could include e-mail, reverse 911, sandwich boards or bulletins, and announcements over local radio. Initial staff assignment will be on a voluntary basis based upon availability and response priorities (shelter operations will take the initial priority except for emergency response activity). If volunteers from existing staff resources are not

	sufficient, staff will be assigned based upon location and based upon their individual circumstances (i.e. those who are immediately impacted by the disaster will be placed lower on the call back list).
Essential Function:	9. Workload planning
Process Description:	The Director and Assistant Director retain sole responsibility for workload planning and priority determinations during a disaster or emergency. These tasks will be performed in conjunction with the County Emergency Operations Management Team which has overall responsibility for incident management and response; and for the assignment of disaster response resources to the most critical and essential functions as the emergency management system becomes operational.
Essential Function:	10. Alternative locations for operations
Process Description:	While the existing EOC center operates out of the Health and Human Services Complex, alternative locations for emergency operations are available depending upon the location and type of disaster. Such a decision is reserved, however, to the Incident Command structure and EOC Management Team. As the Social Services Director is a member of the County Emergency Operations Management Team, he is uniquely positioned to put into operation a change in site location due to a disaster and to determine the priorities for individual program operations including child welfare services.
Essential Function:	11. Orientation and ongoing training
Process Description:	Emergency Shelter operations and disaster and emergency assistance responses are part of the Department's continuing training.
<b>CWS Disaster Response Criteria B:</b>	<b>Respond, as appropriate, to new CWS cases in areas adversely affected by a disaster, and provide services in those cases:</b>
Essential Function:	1. Investigation process
Process Description:	Child welfare referrals for investigation will be screened through the standardized risk assessment tool, Structured Decision Making, to the extent that computer tools are available to social workers receiving such calls. Responses to such calls will be coordinated with law enforcement personnel and the incident command system to assure that such responses are consistent with other disaster response priorities. No independent responses will be made without prior law enforcement involvement during initial disaster response. During recovery operations, the performance of such activities shall be under the immediate control of the Director or the Assistant Director, as appropriate.
Essential Function:	2. Determine circumstances surrounding the child's potential entrance

Process Description:	As is indicated above, no independent responses will be made without prior and/or concurrent law enforcement involvement. Decision regarding child entrance into the system will be dependent upon circumstances such as whether or not Courts are operating or are substantially impacted by the emergency or disaster, the availability of resources such as an out of home placement source and the ability to access areas of the county that are substantially impacted by the disaster or emergency.
Essential Function:	3. Implementation process for providing new services
Process Description:	Implementation processes will be dependent upon the type of disaster and the geographic area impacted. Because we anticipate being directly connected to the Disaster Operations Management structure, there will be coordination with the command system for incident response. Any new services will require initiation by and/or approval of the incident command structure. As the Director sits on the Incident Command Emergency Operations Management Team, such coordination should not be difficult.
Essential Function:	4. Services emphasizing reunification due to disaster
Process Description:	Such services will need to be structured on a case by case basis and, as with items 2 and 3 above, will be dependent upon type of disaster and geographic areas impacted.
<b>CWS Disaster Response Criteria C:</b>	<b>Address and provide care for unaccompanied minors:</b>
Essential Function:	1. Structure – CWS personnel
Process Description:	Even under non-disaster circumstances, Plumas County has not dealt with unaccompanied minors and/or unaccompanied non-minor dependents in our Child Welfare system. Hence, under any circumstance, the Department would need to deal with such a situation under a disaster or emergency condition as we would with any CWS response. Such responses would be prioritized and dealt with as circumstances would permit.
Essential Function:	2. Address language barriers to communicate quickly and effectively
Process Description:	We have staff that is bi-lingual. To the extent that they are able to provide assistance, they will be engaged as appropriate.
Essential Function:	3. Determine likelihood of reunification and steps toward reunification
Process Description:	During a disaster or emergency event, circumstances such as these will be evaluated and prioritized as appropriate. Depending upon staff availability and the extent of the disaster, such

	circumstances may not achieve the highest priority, but they will be evaluated in context of other responses and activities (such as staffing an emergency shelter and performing emergency response to allegations of child abuse).
Essential Description:	4. Assess and make a determination within 30 days
Process Description:	During a disaster or emergency event, circumstances such as these will be evaluated and prioritized as appropriate. Depending upon staff availability and the extent of the disaster, such circumstances may not achieve the highest priority, but they will be evaluated in context of other responses and activities (such as staffing an emergency shelter and performing emergency response to allegations of child abuse).
<b>CWS Disaster Response Criteria D:</b>	<b>Remain in communication with caseworkers and other essential CWS personnel who are displaced because of a disaster:</b>
Essential Function:	1. Communication structure – staff
Process Description:	Primary resources for such communication are Department issued cell phones. As a back-up, the local disaster response plans include the use of the Ham radio operators system and the Emergency Broadcast System. The Department has also recently coordinated with the Public Health Department to implement emergency e-mail notifications to critical staff, if e-mail communications are available. As a last resort, if other means of communication are not available, the Department would turn to bulletin board notices at Emergency Shelters and Disaster Recovery Centers.
Essential Function:	2. Communication structure – CWS personnel (phone tree)
Process Description:	Because the Department has only nine social workers, no organized phone tree will be necessary. Key management and supervisory staff retain home phone contact information, emergency contact information and cell phone contact information for all staff that are needed in an incident response scenario. As described above, the Department may use e-mail notification systems subject to their availability.
Essential Function:	3. Communication structure – contracted services
Process Description:	No contracted services are in place that would be an element of immediate response to referrals under a disaster scenario. Hence, no communication protocols are necessary.
Essential Function:	4. Communication process when all normal channels are unavailable
Process Description:	The Department will rely on other mechanisms that are typically established as part of the County Disaster Planning and Response system. These include Ham radio operators, announcements provided over the emergency broadcast network and message boards

	through the Red Cross operated shelters.
Essential Function:	5. Communication frequency
Process Description:	Communication frequency will be as often as necessary and appropriate. All communications will be coordinated through the Incident Command Public Information Officer.
Essential Function:	6. Communication with media
Process Description:	All communications with the media will be through the Incident Command Public Information Officer. The Department will not engage in any unilateral contacts with the media.
Essential Function:	7. Communication with volunteers
Process Description:	It is not envisioned that any communication will take place with volunteers during the initial disaster response period. Depending on the nature of the disaster and the geographic location, the Department will follow existing protocols for the use of and communication with volunteers that are currently found in county disaster response plans.
Essential Function:	8. Establishment of a toll-free number prior to disaster including Telecommunication Device for the Deaf (TDD)
Process Description:	A toll free number is currently in place
<b>CWS Disaster Response Criteria E:</b>	<b>Preserve essential program records:</b>
Essential Function:	1. Record preservation process
Process Description:	All Child Welfare Services records are retained in a computer system with off-site storage of overnight network back-up systems.
Essential Function:	2. Use of off-site back-up system
Process Description:	See above. Offsite back-up is in place.
<b>CWS Disaster Response Criteria F:</b>	<b>Coordinate services and share information with other states and counties; include a description of the process utilized by the county to ensure that information regarding children placed pursuant to the ICPC occurs with both the sending state and CDSS:</b>
Essential Function:	1. ICPC reporting process must include a process that disseminates information to both the sending state and CDSS

Process Description:	During the initial disaster response, we do not envision the need to engage in immediate contacts that are driven by the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children. During recovery, and depending upon the nature, extent and the geographic location of the disaster incident, we may designate a single contact point in the Department for such communications.
Essential Function:	2. Mental health providers
Process Description:	Local mental health staff will be subject to the same limitations and service proscriptions that the Department will be. We do not anticipate a separate process, outside of those crisis response services that are available through our local mental health department, that would enable a different avenue to access mental health services during the initial response to a local disaster.
Essential Function:	3. Courts
Process Description:	The Courts may or may not operate during the initial disaster response phase. We will abide by the emergency operations protocols that are issued by the Courts during the response and recovery phases.
Essential Function:	4. Federal partners
Process Description:	Not Applicable.
Essential Function:	5. CDSS
Process Description:	Communication with CDSS during the initial disaster response phase will be coordinated through the State Office of Emergency Services. To the extent that they are reasonably available, cell phone communication and/or computer e-mail may be utilized by the Director or the Assistant Director to communicate with the Assistant to the Director for Community Affairs.
Essential Function:	6. Tribes
Process Description:	During the response phase, we do not anticipate the need for immediate contact with local tribes. To the extent that such contacts may be necessary during the recovery phase, we expect to be able to contact the tribal representative through our existing network and resources.
Essential Function:	7. Volunteers
Process Description:	It is not envisioned that any communication will take place with any volunteers during the initial disaster response period. Depending on the nature of the disaster and the geographic

	location, the Department will follow existing protocols for the use of and communication with volunteers that are currently found in county disaster response plans.
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