



State of Connecticut

CFSP - 2020 - 2024

Disaster Plan

Disaster Planning:

The Connecticut DCF has developed the Central Office Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP). The plan includes staff assignments, staff orientation and training, physical improvements to Work Recovery Area (WRA) sites, purchase of equipment, establishment of additional electronic files, and emergency communications. It is important to note that, for a number of statewide functions, the Central Office COOP serves as a statewide plan. Area Office and facility plans are discussed below.

Moving Forward:

- Commissioner Dorantes is in the final stages of identifying agency leadership; once directors are in place, a new Incident Management Team (see below) will be identified and oriented to the work. Division Directors will work with Implementation Team (see below) members to update division COOP plans from 2018.
- Schedule for regular WRA inspections will be developed and implemented.

Implementation Team:

An Implementation Team was established to ensure that the correct expertise and resources within the agency work together to most effectively and efficiently develop the disaster planning effort, and ensure the correct resources are in place to support that plan. This group has identified and addressed specific site upgrades, equipment, and procedural developments to ensure the department can be effectively managed through weather-related or manmade disasters. The group is currently convened by the Director of Performance Management, and includes Engineering, Information Technology, and management representatives from the Careline.

Moving Forward:

- The group has been meeting on a monthly basis since early 2018, and is moving to a quarterly meeting schedule.
- Online Active Aggressor training for employees is in final stages of implementation, and will be made a mandatory training for all staff.

Incident Management Team (IMT):

Agency Incident Management Teams (IMT) are identified in the National Incident Management System (NIMS) structure, and Connecticut's Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (DEMHS) requires each state agency to have an IMT. The DCF Central Office IMT was reconstituted as part of the planning process, and team members were oriented to the Continuity of Operations Plan, how the IMT works, and their specific roles within the IMT.

Moving Forward:

- The IMT is currently being reconfigured as part of the new administration. New members of the Central Office IMT will be oriented to their roles as part of the 2019 update to the COOP, which is currently underway.

Work Recovery Areas (WRA):

The Implementation Team has worked together to upgrade wireless services at the primary agency WRA – Solnit Center, South. Additionally, two sets of computers - one for the IMT and one for Careline staff, have been established, and a workspace that can accommodate the full staff of the Careline for an extended period of time has been established with wireless service, power drops, and telephone/headsets stored on site so that the WRA can be activated at any time. An additional WRA exists at the Hartford area office, and can be used for short term deployment needs.

Moving Forward:

- Members of the Implementation, led by Careline managers, will develop an additional procedure for identifying the correct WRA, including the ability to establish a WRA within the Central Office building, based on the type of crisis/emergency that requires moving from the regular workspace to a WRA.

Division Updates:

Division directors from the Central Office and Central Office satellite met with Implementation team members to update and rewrite the appropriate sections of the COOP so that the COOP is reflective of current operations and staffing teams.

Moving Forward:

- Division Directors will work with Implementation Team (see below) members to update division COOP plans on an as needed basis.

Expansion of Everbridge Mass Notification System:

The Everbridge Mass Notification System has been expanded to include foster parents and congregate care providers. Implementation team members will continue to work with IT representatives, and regional and central office foster care staff to ensure all foster parents in the DCF system as of mid-November 2018 were added to the Everbridge Mass Notification System. Implementation Team members continue to work with licensing and Office of Children and Youth in Placement (OCHYP) staff to enter all congregate staff agencies into the Everbridge System.

Moving Forward:

- Foster Care staff members will develop policies and procedures to ensure that, as part of the licensing process, foster parents are routinely entered into the Everbridge System.
- Foster Care and Licensing staff will work with Implementation Team members and Everbridge staff to train regional and Central Office staff members to enter and delete foster parents and providers, and to send messages to limited groups, in the Everbridge system.
- Foster Care and Licensing staff will maintain foster parent and provider data, and be responsible for limited notifications, in the Everbridge system.

Training:

Key staff members were trained by the Connecticut Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection (DESPP), and Division of Emergency management and Homeland Security (DEMHS) on the use of reporting systems, and the emergency operations center at the Hartford Armory, which serves as the state's Emergency Operations Center (EOC) during statewide emergency situations.

Moving Forward:

- Continue to partner and build strong relationships with DEMHS to ensure that DCF staff and facilities are prepared to support the children in DCF care, and that a system is in place to notify families DCF works with and to assist them to be prepared in the event of a disaster.
- New members of the Implementation Team will be trained as DEMHS trainings become available
- Foster Care and Licensing staff will work with Implementation Team members and Everbridge staff to train regional and Central Office staff members to enter and delete foster parents and providers, and to send messages to limited groups, in the Everbridge system. Anticipated completion September 30, 2019

Inclusion of Regional Office (RO) and Facility COOPs:

The DCF regional office and facility COOPs have not been updated in a number of years, which was before the COOP format was adopted, hence they remain in the more limited BCP format. A guide has been written to assist regional office management teams in updating their plans, and identifies the most important planning topics to include.

Moving Forward:

- Area offices and Facilities will write their COOPs with assistance from Implementation Team members and update them on a continuous basis.

Identification, Location, and Service to Children Under State Care Affected by Disaster:

The Careline section, the Area Office sections, the facility sections, and the Foster Care and Licensing sections of the COOP, all include emergency procedures, including WRAs, emergency notifications, and contractor emergency plans (or in the case of area office and facility plans – will be) to identify, locate and serve children in state operated facilities, congregate care facilities, and foster homes. These procedures include planning for significant storms when advance notice is available, notification, identification, and outreach during and immediately following natural or manmade disasters, and ongoing recovery operations after natural or manmade disasters.

Moving Forward:

- Staff who license and support foster and adoptive families will ensure there is an emergency disaster plan for each family that is reasonable and doable,
- Licensing staff for DCF facilities and congregate care providers will continue to review and ensure the congregate care provider has a plan for their facility that is reasonable and doable

Emergency Responses in the Past Five Years:

During the past five years, there have been a number power outages that have affected Careline operations. The Implementation Team, and before that representatives from Engineering and IT, worked with Careline staff to relocate to a WRA when necessary, based on existing procedures. During this time period there have been no incidents requiring the implementation of COOP that required the relocation of children in DCF care due to any major disasters. Each incident provided an opportunity to review how the procedures were utilized, and to strengthen emergency planning based on each incident.

Additionally, a number of significant winter storms in 2017 and 2018 caused opening of the state EOC, and a number of joint command calls in which DCF representatives participated. The calls were informational in nature, and allowed state agency representatives to hear the most recent and accurate weather reports, and to report in on any emergency situations occurring within their respective departments. DCF had only minor ice and wind damage, this impacted our staffing by requiring mandatory staff overtime.