

Otter Tail County Department of Human Services Continuing Operations Plan

August 2011

I. SCOPE:

- When an event occurs during the regular work day that affects the building such as fire or a weather related incident, staff will follow established county procedures for tornado or fire, including the providing for the safety of clients in the building.
- In the event of a disaster that limits access to agency resources or limits staff's ability to carry out the day to day functions of the agency, Otter Tail County Department of Human Services will continue to provide priority services to meet the safety needs of children and vulnerable adults.
- Staff will follow the local, state and federal mandates when ever possible. If it is not possible they will follow the spirit of these mandates to the best of their ability.
- In addition to our the priority and core services the agency provides on a day to day basis, during a disaster Human Services may also is required to meet the Mass Care and Behavioral Health needs of all the citizens of Otter Tail County. Otter Tail County Human Services has Memorandums of Understanding with the American Red Cross to provide both of these functions.
- Otter Tail County Human Services and Public Health staff may need to support these functions until the American Red Cross is able to respond to full capacity. If special needs populations are relocated staff may need to be available at all times.

II. ASSUMPTIONS:

- Partners and other County Agencies will most likely also be impacted by the disaster and may not be able to provide supports and assistance as provided during non emergency times. With limited staff, any or all staff may be asked at times to work out of their normal functions to meet the priority services.
- Staff will notify their supervisor or designee of their availability to report for work.
- Depending on the type of disaster the work site may change to alternative sites, community locations, or workers may be assigned to work from home.
- Staff is mindful of their own safety and of the citizens we serve, following the outlined procedures established for the event. These procedures will be established by the Emergency Operations Center and passed through the appropriate chain of command.
- If there is a concern about the procedures or worker safety staff should contact their supervisor or their designee.
- Unless otherwise determined by the County Board, all procedures regarding leaves will continue as out lined in labor management agreements and employee policies and staff will be expected to work unless they have approval for leave.
- Otter Tail County Human Services will support those staff who homes or families are directly affected by the disaster with-in the current labor management guidelines or any further guidelines given by the County Board during the disaster event.
- Otter Tail County and the agency will do everything possible to insure that necessary resources are available to staff to carry out the priority functions.

III. AGENCY PRESERVATION OF ESSENTIAL PROGRAM RECORDS:

- During a disaster event all staff will be required to maintain required documentation for their programs. If there is not accessibility to the building but electronic records are available the staff should use this available resource for documentation. If electronic records are not available paper records should be maintained and transferred to the electronic file after the event.
- Electronic records are regularly backed up by the Otter Tail County MIS department. Paper records can be moved to an identified back-up site if they are at risk, time permitting.
- All staff time and expenditures related to the disaster event should be carefully documented for the possibility of FEMA reimbursement.

IV. OPERATIONS FUNCTIONS:

1. Procedures for Priority Level One Functions:

A. Procedures for assuring worker safety and availability.

- The Director or their designee will be responsible to contact social services supervisors and determine who is available for work, the supervisors and or their designee will in turn contact the agency staff they supervise and determine their current safety needs and issues and their availability for work and discuss with each the work expectations, including access to the agency, county vehicles and equipment.
- If the disaster happens during a work day this should be done immediately. If a worker cannot be located law enforcement should be notified. If the disaster occurs during non -work hours the notification should be made prior to the next work day or sooner if staff is needed for emergency operations.
- Otter Tail County Human Services will make every attempt to keep staff updated on the situation, through available communications systems.
- Notification may be made by the MIR3 system or other notification systems available.
- If a supervisor is not available the director or their designee should assign someone to locate staff and determine availability for work.
- Supervisors will discuss with the worker safety issues, worker safety in the field is primary and worker decisions about their safety will be supported by supervisory staff
- Staff that is assigned to complete field assessments or provide direct care will be outfitted with the recommended personal protection equipment (PPE) for the disaster event. If the PPE requires fitting this will be done by trained personnel prior to the work assignment.
- Staff providing priority one services will utilize an electronic mobile system for record keeping and accessing information.

B. Procedures for Conducting Child Protection and Vulnerable Adult Investigations.

- During such emergency situations Human Services would be responsible for providing protective services to children and adults at all times.
- If the physical building is accessible intake calls will be taken in the normal manner, if the physical building is not accessible, and until an alternative site or telephone contact numbers can be established, emergency calls will be taken by the Sheriff's dispatch and routed to Human Services staff using on-call procedures.
- Recognizing that there may be limited staff available to conduct field assessments and provide for the direct care of these persons, the agency will triage all calls for assistance. A risk assessment will be completed at the point of intake to determine whether a field call will be made.
- Reciprocal reporting with law enforcement will continue as directed by statute. However, recognizing that law enforcement will be required to take on new priorities during a disaster emergency event, a Social Worker would proceed in conducting a field call independently when peace officers are unable to respond.
- During their assessment social workers should attempt to make a safety plan that would insure the safety of the child (ren) or vulnerable adult in their homes or the community, if this is not possible they should follow procedures for emergency placement.

C. Procedures for Emergency Placements of Children and Adults.

- Authority to place children or vulnerable adults in County custody would lie with law enforcement if available. In those circumstances where law enforcement is not available, Social Workers would initiate contact with the County Attorneys office from the field by cell phone requesting a pick up order to be drafted based upon first hand observations by the Social Worker of imminent risk to the child or vulnerable adult. The County Attorney would then obtain a court order. Upon confirmation of a signed Pick up Order from the court, the Social Worker will independently take the child or adult into custody.
- Attempts will be made to secure foster or relative placement. Should there not be enough homes available to care for all of the children; the EOC should be notified so that Otter Tail County Human Services can contact the American Red Cross (ARC) to activate the Memorandum of Understanding to establish a shelter.

D. Procedures for Mass Care and Behavioral Health Functions:

- The Agency has MOU with the American Red Cross to provide first line mass care and behavioral health during a disaster. The EOC will determine the need for these services and the logistics officer will make contact with ARC to provide to the general public.
- A special needs shelter may be needed for special populations in that event Human Service and Public Health Staff may be to provide supervision of the children and vulnerable adults but the ARC would provide food, water, cots and blankets. Individuals must bring all personal medical equipment, supplies and medications and, if possible a care giver to accompany them to the shelter.

Basic medical assistance and monitoring will be available at the special needs shelter

- Staff from all sections of the Agency may be reassigned to provide direct care at the shelter set up for congregate care of vulnerable children and adults who are without family support and in the custody of the County. Initially staff may be assigned to twelve hour shifts until it is determined that more staff is available for the 24 hour coverage needed to maintain this service.
- Individuals requiring advanced level of care should make advanced arrangements with a hospital, assisted living facility or skilled nursing facility.

2. Procedures for Priority Level Two Functions:

A. Investigation and Assessment Procedures

- Moderate and low risk CP and AP investigations and assessments will be assigned by the appropriate supervisor and completed whenever possible in the required times frames.
- The processing of emergency guardianships and MH and CD commitments will be assigned and completed as soon as possible to insure the safety of the client and community.

B. Procedures for Assuring Safety for Children in Facilities:

- The list of children in out of home placement will be accessed remotely if the physical building is not available. If the physical building is not available and remote access is not available, the Social Work staff will begin to contact each foster home.
- Social Work staff will make contact with each child in Out of Home placement, including those placed in other counties and states, immediately affected/impacted areas within 48 hours and other areas within 2 weeks.
- An assessment of safety, risk, and well-being will be conducted. Services to meet these needs will be met by the Social Work staff and other support systems as they can be accessed by the Social Worker. This would include children placed in other counties and states.
- If an event occurs when the child in placement is not at the home, the foster parent should make every attempt to locate the child and make a safe emergency plan for the child, if the foster parent is unable to locate the child or insure the child's safety the foster parent should immediately notify child's placement worker or other agency staff and law enforcement.
- Staff will contact biological parents with a child(ren) in out of home placement within 48 hours to relay information on the child's safety.
- If a child is injured during the disaster the foster parent should seek emergency medical care if needed and as soon as possible notify the placement worker and child's parents.
- Staff will report information to their Supervisor or designee who will maintain a master list that the contacts have been made and the outcomes.
- Social workers providing services to adult clients in facilities in the immediately affected/impacted area will make contact with the facility and/or clients with-in 48 hours and make an assessment of safety, risk and well being and insure that the

facility has notified the client's guardian and/or next of kin of the safety of the client.

- Staff will report information to their Supervisor who will maintain a master list that the contacts have been made and the outcomes.

C. Procedures for assuring safety to High Risk Children and Adults in Community:

- The list of families and adults needing contact will be accessed remotely if the physical building is not available. If the physical building and remote access are not available, the child protection/child welfare staff will be contacted to identify high risk children living in their parents' homes on their case load.
- If the social worker assigned to the caseload is not available for work the supervisor will assign an available staff member.
- Social Work staff will make contact with each family that have children at high risk, including high risk minor parents and each adult in high risk in immediately affected/impacted areas within 72 hours and a face to face visit will be conducted within 10 days.
- An assessment of safety, risk, and well-being will be conducted and safety plans developed as needed.
- Services to meet these needs will be met by the Social Work Staff and other support systems as they can be accessed by the social worker.
- If there is a need for additional financial resources that could be accessed through the income maintenance programs the social worker should notify the client of the procedures in place during the current disaster episode.
- If the needs are not available through income maintenance the social worker should contact their supervisor. All additional disbursements of funds related to the disaster episode should be carefully documented for potential FEMA reimbursement.
- Social work staff should document all contacts, safety plans and services provided in the clients file.

D. Procedures for providing Emergency Income Maintenance programs:

- If there is accessibility to the office, emergency and on going financial assistance will continue in the normal manner.
- If the office is not available alternative sites will be chosen to administer financial services and the procedures for accessing services will be made available to the public on available media outlets. Income maintenance supervisors and staff will be able to access records from remote sites.

E. Procedures for Emergency Central Agency Contact and Office Support

- Should a natural or man-made disaster occur, Otter Tail County Human Services will make every attempt to restore the agencies telephone numbers as soon as possible and make the public aware of the access. Should the building remain unavailable, the County will establish a central contact number. Otter Tail County will use all available media to advertise the access numbers.
- Office support or other staff may be assigned to answer calls from a remote location.

- Mail needed to support priority 1 and 2 functions will be distributed as soon as possible.

F. Procedures for Maintaining Agency Budgets and Payroll.

- Human Services Fiscal Supervisor and accounting staff in collaboration with the County Treasure will maintain payment system to continue payments to foster homes, providers, vendors and care givers and ensure continued compensation for agency personnel.
- They will also document all expenses related to the disaster for the possibility of federal or state reimbursement. If there is not accessibility to the building these records can be accessed remotely.

3. Procedures for Priority 3 Functions:

- Services for moderate and low risk social services and clients both children and adults will begin with-in 14 days and continue on their required plan of service.
- Income maintenance supervisors will be in contact with the Minnesota Department of Human Services for procedures to maintain on-going needed financial services to families and individuals who may be unable to access re-certification procedures due to the disaster.
- All on-going financial services should resume within 14 days
- All on-going child support services should resume within 14 days.

4. Procedures for Priority 4 Functions:

- Agency licensing functions licensing and relicensing functions will resume with-in 30 days
- All other agency functions will begin within 60 days.

Following is a grid of priority services that are provided by the agency.

Priority 1: Services that need to be provided 24 hours a day seven days a week.

Priority 2: Services that need to be restored within 48 hours.

Priority 3: Services that need to be restored within 10-14 days.

Priority 4: Services that need to be restored within 30-60 days.

ASSESSMENT AND PLANNING:

1. Each employee should receive a copy of the continuing operations plan as well as a one hour orientation on expectations during a disaster.
2. During the assessment and case planning phase of each case assigned for case management the assigned social worker should have discussions with the family and adults about their emergency plan in the event of a disaster, including the

names and emergency contact numbers of family members, friends or other resources the family would utilize if they needed to re-locate.

- 3. Social workers determine during planning process which clients would be high risk and which moderate or low risk are and evaluate this on an on-going basis.**
- 4. Supervisors and social work staff would be able to access the contact information for clients remotely either by electronic or paper access.**
- 5. All child foster homes will complete disaster plan during licensing process, emergency relative placement providers will complete a plan with in three days of placement. Emergency plans will be reviewed at re-licensing. The agency will have a plan to have remote access of all foster home relocation plans remotely during a disaster. These plans will include the notification of the child's placement worker and the licensing worker of the children's safety and any relocation.**
- 6. All Adult foster home and residential providers will complete and review emergency plans at contract times and during re-licensing. Included in this plan will be plans to notify the guardian or next of kin the safety information regarding the client.**
- 7. All Otter Tail County Licensed facilities should be plotted on GIS map. Monthly emails should be sent to GIS of changes in any licensing status.**
- 8. All contracted providers providing services to maintain clients in their homes will submit annually with their contract their (COOP) for insuring that clients continue to receive the services in their homes or at a relocation site.**
- 9. All staff will complete a Psychological First Aid training
Director and Supervisors complete the appropriate level of NIMS training**
- 10. Plan for accessing resources for staff to do priority services, including cars, gasoline, food and water.**

Otter Tail County
Human Services Essential Functions

Function	Priority Status	Who Responds	Minimum Personnel	Face to Face Required	Remote Work Site Options	Potential for Cross Training Staff
Represent Human Services in EOC & insuring all Agency functions occur as prioritized.	1	Director or Designee	1	Yes	Yes	Yes
At the request of EOC contact American Red Cross (ARC) for Mass Care & Behavioral Health (BH)	1		1	Yes	Yes	Yes
Plan for any after disaster BH needs	3		1	No	Yes	Yes
Staff may need to perform Mass Care & BH until ARC in place or to provide supervision for special needs population	1	Available Staff	10	Yes	Yes	Yes
Responding to high-risk Child Protection & Adult Protection	1	Supervisor of Intake & Child/Adult Protection	2	Yes	Yes	Yes
Responding to moderate & low-risk CP and AP Assessment Investigating	2		6	Yes	Yes	Yes
Assessing & insuring safety for children in out-of-home placement	2		4	No	Yes	Yes
Assessing & insuring safety for high-risk CP ,CMH &AP clients in the community	2		6	Yes	Yes	Yes
Assessing safety & providing on-going services for CP &CMH clients.	3		6	Yes	Yes	Yes
Adult Foster Care Licensing	4		1	No	Yes	Yes
Adoption/Foster Care Licensing	4		2	Yes	Yes	Yes
Family Child Care Licensing	4		1	Yes	Yes	Yes
All other unit functions	4		14	Yes	Yes	Yes

CP=Child Protection MH=Mental Health
AP=Adult Protection CD=Chemical Dependency
CMH=Children Mental Health EW=Elderly Waiver
BH=Behavioral Health DD=Developmental Disability
EOC=Emergency Operating Center
ARC=American Red Cross

Otter Tail County Human Services Essential Functions

Function	Priority Status	Who Responds	Minimum Personnel	Face to Face Required	Remote Work Site Options	Potential for Cross Training Staff
Supervision of Unit Functions	2	Supervisors of Adult Services Units	1	Yes	Yes	Yes
Assessing & insuring safety of high risk. MH, CD,AP, EW,DD &CADI clients, state wards and emergency guardianship in the community and facilities	2		5	Yes	Yes	Yes
Commitment Process.	2		3	Yes	Yes	Yes
Assessing & Insuring safety of high risk minor parents and their children living in the community.	2		1	Yes	Yes	Yes
Assessing & providing services to moderate and low risk MH,CD,AP,ED,DD, & CADI clients in their homes or facilities.	3		10	Yes	Yes	Yes
All other unit functions	4		26	Yes	Yes	Yes

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Functions	Priority Status	Who Responds	Minimum Personnel	Face to Face Required	Remote Work Site Options	Potential for Cross Training Staff
Supervision of Unit Functions	2	Income Maintenance	1	Yes	Yes	Yes
Emergency Financial Assistance	2		10	Yes	Yes	Yes
Ongoing Financial Services	3		25	Yes	Yes	Yes
All other Unit functions	4		27	Yes	Yes	Yes
Child Support Functions	3	Child Support	10	Yes	Yes	Yes
Supervision of Unit Functions	2	Accounting	1	No	Yes	Yes
Accounting billing & disbursements	2		2	No	Yes	Yes
Payroll	2		2	No	Yes	Yes
Banking	2		2	No	Yes	Yes
Supervision of Unit Functions	2	Office Support	1	No	Yes	Yes
Answering telephone & directing calls	2		3	No	Yes	Yes
Mail	2		11	No	Yes	Yes
All other Unit Functions	4		11	No	Yes	Yes

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