

2020-2024

Disaster Plan

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This plan can be found by going to the ND Department of Health and Human Services website

<https://www.hhs.nd.gov/cfs/publications-children-and-family-services>

Introduction

The Child and Family Services Improvement Act of 2006 (P.L. 109-288) mandates that State child welfare agencies develop disaster plans that include how they will do the following:

- Identify, locate, and continue the availability of services for children under State care or supervision who are displaced or adversely affected by a disaster;
- Respond, as appropriate, to new child welfare cases in areas adversely affected by a disaster, and provide services in those cases;
- Remain in communication with caseworkers and other essential child welfare personnel who are displaced because of a disaster;
- Preserve essential program records;
- Coordinate services and share information with other States

Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP)

North Dakota has developed and implemented the Emergency Disaster Preparedness Continuity of Operations (COOP) Plan to provide disaster preparedness instruction to foster care providers and adoptive families and children under the custody of a North Dakota public agency. This comprehensive and effective plan is to first and most importantly, ensures the safety, permanency, and well-being of our youth. Second, by having a plan North Dakota will be in full compliance with federal and state mandates.

The North Dakota Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Children and Family Services has an obligation to the clients served to perform its essential functions efficiently during periods of disruption. When emergencies or other situations arise that disrupt HHS operations, HHS will activate the COOP to continue essential functions. This plan has been developed in accordance with guidance in Executive Order (EO) 12656. The Department uses an all-hazards approach in its disaster preparedness planning process.

Fortunately, North Dakota has not had to utilize the formal procedures developed in the Disaster Plan since June of 2011, when the flood occurred in Minot, ND and also affected homes in south Bismarck, ND. Spring of 2019, North Dakota prepared for the implementation of the disaster plan due to the difficult winter and flooding that occurred in specific areas of the state. North Dakota updated the policy and procedure for data entry of families, including a new SFN 445. As of April 2022, foster care providers are no longer completing the SFN 445 instead their emergency disaster information is done through an annual licensing packet, SFN 1037. Adoption families with an adoptive placement in their home continue to use the SFN 45.

Types of Disasters

Natural and man-made disasters come in many forms and may dramatically overwhelm North Dakota's current welfare services service system. This plan is specific to response when one of the three levels of disasters occur.

1. Destruction of the North Dakota ND Department of Health and Human Services vault in the state capitol or the Children and Family Services office located on Divide Ave in Bismarck, ND.
2. Destruction of all or some level of the two data management systems that hold all of the pertinent ND child welfare data; Comprehensive Child Welfare Information and Payment System (CCWIPS) or FRAME.

3. Natural disasters impacting our outlying counties, facilities, and foster homes causing excess loss of life or property damage due to unforeseen destruction by floods, tornados, high winds, power outages, winter and summer storms, etc.

Disaster Preparedness Process

ND Department of Health and Human Services, Children and Family Services, Human Service Zones (counties), providers, professionals and other partners play an important role in preparing and responding to the safety and well-being of children and families during a disaster. ND follows this developed plan in an effort to protect vulnerable children and families during the disaster and for direction in moving forward after a disaster.

1. Initiation of Disaster Plan
2. Provider Identification and Locating
3. Communication Protocols
4. Training for state and custodial agency professionals

Initiation of Disaster Plan

The CFS director, or designee, will activate the CFS Continuity of Operations (COOP) Plan and work in tandem with the HHS Disaster Preparedness Administrator and assigned CFS Field Service Specialists. If a disaster occurs, the COOP is initiated, and information is disseminated immediately to the field by Children & Family Services.

Provider Information & Locating

Children and Family Services (CFS) has established a system for gathering and providing information on foster care providers and adoptive families in the event they are caring for a child under public custody, and they become unexpectedly displaced. Since January 2009, all foster care providers and adoptive parents must outline disaster evacuation plans (SFN 445 or SFN 1037) that consider primary and secondary planning. At the time of licensing and relicensing, applicants will disclose their plan on the form, which is made part of the 'licensing file' or adoptive placement record.

Adoption placement cases (SFN 445):

A copy of the plan is saved electronically to the "Q" drive managed by Children and Family Services. The "Q" drive allows select CFS employees to access the information. Any individual who has access to the "Q" drive can access the Access Database to:

1. Edit information to ensure accuracy and up-to-date information; and
2. Run a query to the database which will readily sort families by
 - a. County
 - b. City
 - c. Name

Foster care cases (SFN 1037):

A copy of the plan is saved electronically in SharePoint and tagged as the SFN 1037. CFS employees with access to the Licensing tile in SharePoint can access emergency contact information to:

1. Edit information to ensure accuracy and up-to-date information; and
2. Run a query to the database which will readily sort families by
 - a. County
 - b. City
 - c. Name

North Dakota Administrative Code (NDAC) 75-03-40 requires Qualified Residential Treatment Programs to have written plans and procedures for meeting disasters and emergencies. A facility shall have written plans and procedures for meeting disasters and emergencies. Employees must know all plans and procedures for meeting disasters and emergencies. The facility shall advise children in placement and their custodial agency of all emergency and evacuation procedures upon admission to the facility.

Foster care providers (family, therapeutic, and facility) will follow the communication protocols and will have access to the CFS telephone numbers and email address for ongoing updates and feedback from the CFS Continuity of Operations (COOP) Plan.

Communication

The CFS director, or specified designee, will activate the CFS COOP and work in tandem with the HHS Disaster Preparedness Administrator and CFS Field Service Specialists to develop processes that are specific to each region so as to respond to the disaster utilizing the appropriate services in that particular region/area. Children and Family Services partners with the following state agencies: Department of Agriculture, Department of Public Instruction, Environmental Quality Departments, Department of Justice and the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, Disaster and Emergency Services, Military Affairs, Labor and Industry Departments, Department of Commerce, Department of Revenue and Department of Transportation, the Red Cross, Salvation Army, local, state and regional disaster directors, Homeland Security and other private and professional agencies and associations.

No one can predict when and where a disaster may strike. It is even more difficult to plan for every scenario to produce the best possible outcome to get through such tragic events. ND has established this basic flow chart of communication and contacts that will assist in the event of a disaster.

1. CFS Administration (Permanency, Case Management, Licensing and Adoption) all have direct communication access (phone and email) to public custodians. Children in placement can be tracked through our data management system, FRAME. A report can be generated through this system which will outline the placement resource for all children by county of residence under public custody of a Human Service Zone, Division of Juvenile Services (DJS) or a Tribal Nation (Title IV-E only).
2. CFS Field Service Specialists are a primary connection between the local Human Service Zone, Division of Juvenile Services or Tribal Nation (public custodian). Each Field Service Specialist has a list of cases they offer technical assistance for in their service area, as well as emergency contact information of the public agency case manager.
3. CFS Licensing Unit has access to all licensed foster care providers and the ability to sort families from a geographic area and identify if they have a placement in their home, etc. if new need to get ahold of a family, their SFN 445 (adoptive families) or SFN 1037 (foster families) has identified emergency contacts and locations where they would go in the event of an emergency. In addition, our unit has a centralized email inbox (cfslicensing@nd.gov) and phone call center (701-328-2322).
4. Press releases addressing a state disaster will be generated from the Department of Homeland Security/ND Department of Emergency Services, Public Information Office or a Joint Information Center (JIC). There is a website available to provide emergency information to foster care providers.

5. Child Protection Services will continue to deliver services through the local agency, with backup support from other North Dakota Field Service Specialists and Intake Unit. The established crisis on-call process of calling centralized Intake for CPS will remain in place, under the direction of Children and Family Services.
6. During any disaster, the CFS COOP (Division Director, CFS Management Team made up of CFS Program Administrators, and Interstate Compact Administrator) will remain available through phone and electronic forms of communication to coordinate services and share information with appropriate parties.
7. The department has two measures in which providers and families can contact the Department to report a disaster or evacuation. CFS Central Office email address dhscfs@nd.gov and **1-800-245-3736** and **701-328-2316** as well as CFS Licensing Unit email address at cfslicensing@nd.gov and **701-328-2322**. The following message has been placed on the two designated telephone numbers: *You have reached the Children & Family Services of the North Dakota Department of Health and Human Services. If you are a foster care provider or adoptive placement that has been displaced as a result of a disaster, please leave your telephone number and current address, as well as the name of the foster child or children currently with you. We will contact you as soon as possible.*
8. Emergency Communication to Human Service Zone's: HHS can access Assurance NM as the emergency notification system used by the State of North Dakota and the Department of Health and Human Services to provide important information to our team members.
9. Information/System Security: NDIIT provides direction and technical expertise to all Department divisions and facilities to ensure the Department's IT Resources are used appropriately and in accordance with Department and NDIIT policies and procedures. This includes protecting the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of Department information and the systems that handle the information. The Department encourages the proper use of its IT Resources for conducting Department business as an effective and efficient tool within the framework of applicable federal and state laws, federal regulations, administrative rules, and Department policies. Users of Department IT Resources hold positions of trust both in preserving the security and confidentiality of Department information and in safeguarding Department IT Resources. Any potential loss of Department information or IT Resource availability can have a significant impact on the Department's ability to fulfill its mission. The requirements outlined in this policy are to assist users in understanding the expectations with regard to appropriate use, and consequently will help minimize some of the risks that are inherent with the daily use of Department IT Resources.

If a disaster has occurred anywhere in North Dakota, Children and Family Services (CFS) staff will immediately follow up on all voice messages left or emails received. Depending upon the extent of the disaster, CFS staff is prepared to provide weekend staff coverage to manage phone lines and needs.

FRAME contains placement information on all children in foster care. This system can be accessed by Human Service Zone, DJS and CFS office employees. Although there are limits as to what information Zones and DJS have access to, CFS can view all cases with full access in FRAME.

Training

Training for state and local offices is determined based on the locality of the agency, local approaches to agency structure for detailed disasters, inclusive of drills for fire, tornado, storms, active shooter, etc. Foster care providers receive training on emergency response as part of the PRIDE training module, and fire safety in person and web based online training is available. HHS can choose to develop a team to train state and local offices in disaster preparedness and is a direct liaison to the North Dakota Department of Emergency Services, an agency that provides 24/7 emergency communications and resource coordination with more than 50 lead and support agencies, private enterprise, and voluntary organizations to assist local jurisdictions in disaster and emergency response activities. Training is ongoing and updated when necessary.

CFS Administrators have access to the Disaster Plan which is also posted on the department's website. This information is disseminated annually and shared at the time of a new hire at CFS. CFS will participate in mock drills to better prepare for a disaster.

Foster care providers and adoptive parents may be given an "Emergency North Dakota Foster Care Call In" card at the time of licensure or re-licensure as well as have emergency information and agency contacts available to them in the Foster Parent Handbook

<https://www.hhs.nd.gov/sites/www/files/documents/DHS%20Legacy/foster-parent-handbook.pdf>

North Dakota Court System

If a disaster has occurred in any region of North Dakota involving children in foster care under the jurisdiction of the North Dakota Court System, a protocol between the North Dakota Department of Health and Human Services and the North Dakota Court System has been developed. A master list of all displaced children and their location, compiled by the CFS Permanency Administrator, will be sent to the Juvenile Court Director located in the region the disaster has occurred.

Records Preservation

Permanent archived adoption records are stored either on microfiche (prior to 1990) or in electronic storage. Electronic records are on the state's server system which is backed up daily and stored off-site. Servers are in a secure location and access is monitored.

Children & Family Services (State Office) Function

Children and Family Services (CFS) will facilitate the creation of the designated CFS Continuity of Operations (COOP) team. CFS will collaborate with emergency personnel, state emergency agencies to best accommodate comfort in knowledge and understanding of expectations during the emergency. CFS will observe all mandates regarding state and federal requirements, including report completion, grant management and information system oversight. ND Department of Health and Human Services recognizes that critical incident stress debriefing may be needed. Should the disaster leave personnel requiring assistance in coping with the tragedy, personnel will be offered debriefing groups and /or counseling.

Lastly, a strategic plan will be developed should CFS administration determine that staff and essential services from another area needs to be dispatched to the disaster affected region, or if services are being utilized inappropriately.

Disaster Follow-Up

The ability of the stakeholders to carry out the disaster plan will be evaluated, as well as CFS's ability to obtain assistance from designated partners. Administration will review all information available stemming from the disaster. An assigned team will determine if policies and/or the disaster plan needs to be revised or if new policies need to be written, to adequately address future disasters.

ND Disaster Response

North Dakota was presented with flooding in the spring of 2019, the ND Department of Health and Human Services activated the State Recovery Multi-Agency Coordination Center, led by the state Agriculture Commissioner, the NDDDES Director, the NDDDES Homeland Security Director and the State Engineer, who provided direction to help communities with recovery efforts. The state team conducted extensive outreach with residents and producers, establishing Multi-Agency Resource Centers (MARC) that are staffed by local, state and federal agencies and voluntary organizations whose representatives discussed available assistance, from mental health resources to cleanup help. North Dakota foster care providers effected by flooding followed the ND Disaster Plan protocols and re-located if needed, while maintaining communications with custodial agencies of the children and ND Department of Health and Human Services designees.

The Disaster Plan is intended to offer clarity to foster care providers and adoptive families surrounding who to call and when. In addition, exposes the collaborative effort of various agencies who partner when natural disaster strikes, and North Dakota is in a position to respond and support families and caregivers.

ND Disaster Recovery

After a disaster, Children and Family Services will work diligently to ensure disaster planning includes specific information about how to address any child, family, provider and staff emotional trauma. In addition, coordination with service providers and community agencies will occur to ensure appropriate referrals are made to support the emotional wellbeing of children and families impacted by the disaster.

**CFS Disaster Plan
Provider Call In & Email Notification**

**FOSTER CARE PROVIDER &
ADOPTIVE FAMILY PLACEMENT
DISPLACED DUE TO DISASTER?

CALL IN ASAP**

**In the event that you must evacuate your
foster/adopt home, please call or e-mail your
location to the legal custodian or licensing agency at
(701)-_____,**

or, the

**ND DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES**

701-328-2316 or 701-328-2322

dhscfs@nd.gov or cfslicensing@nd.gov

Full disaster plan is viewable by going to the ND Department of Health and Human Services
website location: <https://www.hhs.nd.gov/cfs/publications-children-and-family-services>

ADOPTIVE FAMILIES: SFN 445 <https://www.nd.gov/eforms/Doc/sfn00445.pdf>



FAMILY EVACUATION DISASTER PLAN
 NORTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
 ADOPTION DIVISION
 SFN 445 (3-2022)

Clear Fields

New Pre-Adopt Placement
 Address Update

Name (Last, First)		Human Service Zone		Date
Address		City	State	ZIP Code
Telephone Number	Cell Phone Number	Email Address		

This document contains my relocation plan in the event that I am required to leave my home address due to a natural disaster or catastrophic event during the adoptive placement period.

EMERGENCY CONTACT 1

Contact Name				
Address		City	State	ZIP Code
Telephone Number	Cell Phone Number	Email Address		
Additional Contact Information				

EMERGENCY CONTACT 2

Contact				
Address		City	State	ZIP Code
Telephone Number	Cell Phone Number	Email Address		
Additional Contact Information				

EVACUATION LOCATION

Contact Name				
Address		City	State	ZIP Code
Type <input type="checkbox"/> Hotel <input type="checkbox"/> Family Member's Home <input type="checkbox"/> Lake Cabin <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify): _____				

I understand that there are critical items I am urged to take with me when we evacuate. These may include:

- Agency contact information (e.g. agency emergency contact number)
- Child information (e.g. prescriptions, recent medical reports, physician's name and contact information, immunization history).
- I understand that in the event that I must evacuate my home, I am required to report my location to the legal custodian, adoption worker, or the North Dakota Department of Human Services. To contact the North Dakota Department of Human Services, I can call 1-800-245-3736 (toll-free in-state), **701-328-2316**, or e-mail my location to dhscfs@nd.gov.
- I understand that if any of the information included in this plan changes, I am to update the legal custodian, adoption worker, or the North Dakota Department of Human Services within 14 days of the change.

Printed Name	
Signature	Date

Form must be completed by adoptive family and submitted to the worker completing the adoption study. Adoption worker will submit with the family adoption assessment to Children and Family Services.

FOSTER CARE PROVIDERS:

SFN 1037 <https://www.nd.gov/eforms?sfntitle=1037#searchResults>

SECTION D - FAMILY EVACUATION DISASTER PLAN

Evacuation planning is required for all licensed foster parents in the event there is reason to leave your home due to a natural disaster or catastrophic event. Indicate emergency contact information below:

Emergency Contact #1

Contact				
Address		City	State	ZIP Code
Telephone Number	Cell Phone Number	Email Address		
Additional Contact Information				

Emergency Contact #2

Contact				
Address		City	State	ZIP Code
Telephone Number	Cell Phone Number	Email Address		
Additional Contact Information				

Evacuation Location

Type			
<input type="checkbox"/> Hotel <input type="checkbox"/> Relative's Home <input type="checkbox"/> Lake Cabin <input type="checkbox"/> Other			
Contact Name			
Address	City	State	ZIP Code

I understand that there are critical items I am urged to take with me when we evacuate. These may include:

- Agency contact information (e.g. agency emergency contact number.)
- Child information (e.g. prescriptions, recent medical reports, physician's name and contact information, immunization history).
- I understand that in the event that I must evacuate my home, I am required to report my location to the legal custodian, licensing agent or the North Dakota of Human Services, CFS Licensing Unit.
- I understand that if any of the information included in this plan changes, I am to update the legal custodian, licensing agent or the North Dakota Department of Human Services within 7 days of the change.

SECTION E - YOUTH IN FOSTER CARE DRIVING

Foster parents must review the pamphlet, [DN 271](#), "Motor Vehicle Operation by Youth in Foster Care" at the time of initial licensure, annual licensure, and as needed thereafter. Below is the notice/acknowledgment the foster parent(s) received and understand the information.

- I have reviewed the pamphlet "Motor Vehicle Operation by Youth in Foster Care" which outlines the North Dakota Department of Human Services policy related to the operation of motor vehicles by youth in foster care.
- I understand the policy related to the operation of motor vehicles by youth in foster care.
- By checking this box and typing my name below, I/we am signing this document electronically. I/we agree that my electronic signature is the legal equivalent of my manual/handwritten signature. I/we agree that the electronic signature appearing on this document has the same validity and enforceability as a handwritten signature.

Signature	Date
Signature	Date

Plan Amendment – June 2020

North Dakota Disaster Plan Overview

North Dakota was presented with flooding in the spring of 2019, the ND Department of Human Services activated the State Recovery Multi-Agency Coordination Center, led by the state Agriculture Commissioner, the NDDDES Director, the NDDDES Homeland Security Director and the State Engineer, who provided direction to help communities with recovery efforts. The state team conducted extensive outreach with residents and producers, establishing Multi-Agency Resource Centers (MARC)s that are staffed by local, state and federal agencies and voluntary organizations whose representatives discussed available assistance, from mental health resources to cleanup help. North Dakota foster parents effected by flooding followed the ND Disaster Plan protocols and re-located if needed, while maintaining communications with custodial agencies of the children and ND Department of Human Services designees.

North Dakota responded to a wet summer and fall, as well as an unprecedented early winter storm in October 2019. Significant flooding impacted families across North Dakota and required a government approach to helping citizens of our state and ensuring child welfare agencies, providers and clients were served and assisted. The ND Disaster Plan was reviewed again and foster parents impacted by flooding followed protocols and re-located if needed, while maintaining communications with custodial agencies of the children and ND Department of Human Services designees. North Dakota State assessments indicated that damage in the 21 counties would exceed \$9.2 million, with an additional \$2 million in damage, which remained underwater. The North Dakota Department of Transportation also reported damages totaling \$29.7 million to its network of Federal Aid System (FAS) roads. The Commissioner urged producers to relocate livestock to areas of protected from the storm and contact the Hay Hotline to access additional hay or transport of supplies to farmers and ranchers in need. North Dakota conducted coordination calls to discuss preparedness measures with representatives of the Department of Transportation, Highway Patrol, National Guard, Department of Agriculture, Department of Human Services, Department of Health, Civil Air Patrol, State Radio, State Water Commission, National Weather Service, Rural Electric Cooperative Association and voluntary agencies, including the American Red Cross.

In the spring of 2020, worldwide pandemic of COVID-19 effected the nation. North Dakota created a website of <http://www.nd.gov/dhs/info/covid-19/index.html>. The State of North Dakota, led by the Governor's office produced daily press conferences and several COVID resource guidelines, documents, and other related information for clients, stakeholders and staff. The North Dakota Department of Human Services worked and is continuing to navigate the risks and concerns with COVID-19. The goal was to minimize the risk for the individuals served and employed. The Department is committed to delivering on its mission of serving people in need across the state of North Dakota. Service delivery locations remained open and continued to serve clients; more virtual and distance learning opportunities available to clients since March 2020. Human Service Centers and authorized agents; ND Human Service Zones (formerly county social service offices) continued to provide necessary services, while screening for COVID-19 illness risk, while monitoring and following recommendation of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). A series of FAQ documents were made available and continue to be updated specific to child protection, foster parent licensing, case manager-child face-to-face visitation, virtual visitation and more: <http://www.nd.gov/dhs/info/covid-19/provider-q-a.html>

Given the disasters and utilization of the plan, it was determined there was no need to make formal changes to the ND Disaster Plan.

Plan Amendment – June 2021

North Dakota Disaster Plan Overview

North Dakota responded to a dry summer and fall 2020, as well as an unprecedented dry winter in early 2021. The Disaster Plan was not utilized for weather related impacts, rather to review protocol related to the world-wide health pandemic (COVID-19) which led to economic disaster for residents across the nation. The ND Disaster Plan is maintained, reviewed and updated to ensure child welfare staff and foster parents impacted by a disaster follow protocols and re-located if needed, while maintaining communications with custodial agencies of the children and ND Department of Human Services designees.

In the spring of 2020, North Dakota experienced the first positive case of the coronavirus (COVID-19). The pandemic effected the nation and required different more innovative ways of doing business for Children and Family Services Division, as well as ND child welfare programming statewide. North Dakota created a website of <http://www.nd.gov/dhs/info/covid-19/index.html>, led by the Governor’s office. Governor Burgum produced daily press conferences and several COVID resource guidelines, documents, and other related information for clients, stakeholders and staff. The North Dakota Department of Human Services worked to navigate the risks and concerns with COVID-19, ongoing oversight continues today even thou our state is not considered “high risk” at this time. The goal of pandemic intervention and disaster planning was to minimize the risk for the individuals served and employed. The Department is and continues to be committed to delivering on its mission of serving people in need across the state of North Dakota. Service delivery locations remained open and continued to serve clients; while more virtual and distance learning opportunities were made available to staff and clients. Human Service Centers and authorized agents; ND Human Service Zones (formerly county social service offices) continued to provide necessary services, while screening for COVID-19 illness risk and monitoring and following recommendation of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). A series of FAQ documents were made available specific to child protection, foster parent licensing, case manager-child face-to-face visitation, virtual visitation. Effective April 1, 2021, Governor Burgum lifted the statewide public emergency.

In addition to this plan, ND Department of Human Services alongside ND Department of Health manage response plans; updated and revised periodically. A site with various plans can be referenced at: <https://www.health.nd.gov/epr/redacted-response-plans/>

Given the nature of the North Dakota climate and local supports, there was no need to formally utilize the ND Disaster plan in the last year. However, formal changes to the ND Disaster Plan included revising common language which formally referenced “regional human service center regional representatives” to instead read “Children and Family Services Field Service Specialists”. In addition, any references to county social service offices is now referred to as Human Service Zone throughout the plan.

Plan Amendment – June 2022

North Dakota Disaster Plan Overview

2022 brought forth record high snowfall and blizzard conditions in mid-April, which led to additional and unpredicted ground flooding and flash floods in cities and towns across North Dakota. It is typical for the Red River in eastern North Dakota, along the Minnesota boarder to flood, but it is not as common for the Pembina River (Neche, ND), Sheyenne River (Lisbon and Carrington, ND). CFS did not experience any families who were displaced, but rather able to hold out the storm and maintain dry homes.

No disaster plan implementation was required. The ND Disaster Plan is maintained, reviewed and updated to ensure child welfare staff and foster parents impacted by a disaster follow protocols and re-located if needed, while maintaining communications with custodial agencies of the children and ND Department of Human Services designees.

In addition to this plan, ND Department of Human Services alongside ND Department of Health manage response plans; updated and revised periodically. A site with various plans can be referenced at: <https://www.health.nd.gov/epr/redacted-response-plans/>.

Given the nature of the North Dakota climate and local supports, there was no need to formally utilize the ND Disaster plan in the last year. However, formal changes to the ND Disaster Plan included revising language to include the newly developed CFS Licensing Unit, new email address and centralized phone number.

Plan Amendment – June 2023

North Dakota Disaster Plan Overview

2023 brought forth record high snowfall across majority of North Dakota. CFS did not experience any families who were displaced, but rather able to hold out the storm and maintain dry homes. The HHS Disaster Plan was not required to be implemented. The ND Disaster Plan is maintained, reviewed and updated to ensure child welfare staff and foster care providers impacted by a disaster follow protocols and re-located if needed, while maintaining communications with custodial agencies of the children and ND Department of Health and Human Services designees.

In May, 2023 Governor Burgum asked the federal government for a Major Disaster declaration stating, “Within the past five years, North Dakota has received eight federally declared disaster declarations with our most recent being the November 2022 ice storm. The state had a particularly challenging winter, falling within 0.4 inches of the record average statewide snowfall and breaking snowfall records in the central portions of the state. The western and eastern regions also experienced significant amounts of snow and precipitation resulting in widespread flooding across the state. Dakota requests a major disaster declaration for the April 10, 2023, to May 6, 2023, flood event that impacted the counties of Barnes, Burke, Dickey, Dunn, Golden Valley, Grand Forks, Hettinger, LaMoure, McHenry, Mercer, Morton, Mountrail, Nelson, Pembina, Ransom, Richland, Sargent, Steele, Towner, Walsh and Wells. The aforementioned counties have submitted approximately \$4.1 million in damages, with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) validating \$2.48 million based on submitted documentation. Total damage estimates that were reported by impacted jurisdictions exceeded \$5 million, however, there were several counties that experienced flood impacts but were not able to exceed their per capita damage threshold to be included in this request thus far.”

Sandbagging operations were crucial in helping residents protect themselves and their homes. Loads of sand were delivered where needed across the state. Hundreds of thousands of sandbags were filled by volunteers and community members. Locally, there were locations with available pre-filled sandbags, or a designated area where people could come fill sandbags as needed. Pre-positioned sandbag machines from the state were distributed where necessary to alleviate some of the load of physical filling. Protecting homes with sandbags is time-consuming and laborious. An average sandbag weighs 40 pounds, which poses challenges to those who are unable to lift and haul them for their own protection. Emergency sandbag deliveries were made for those who were isolated by water or had no way of getting assistance. Community members came together and worked endlessly to move and fill these sandbags around homes.

In addition to this plan, ND Department of Health and Human Services manage response plans; updated and revised periodically. A site with various plans can be referenced at:

<https://www.hhs.nd.gov/health/emergency-preparedness-and-response/redacted-response-plans>.

Given the nature of the North Dakota climate and local supports, there was no need to formally utilize the ND Disaster plan in this past year. However, formal changes to the ND Disaster Plan included revising language to include the merger of the ND Department of Human Services with the ND Department of Health to now be recognized as, the ND Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

Plan Amendment – June 2024

North Dakota Disaster Plan Overview

The end of 2023 brought forth a December ice storm which affected large parts of North Dakota. CFS did not experience any families who were displaced, but rather able to hold out the storm and maintain dry homes. The HHS Disaster Plan was not required to be implemented. The ND Disaster Plan is maintained, reviewed and updated to ensure child welfare staff and foster care providers impacted by a disaster follow protocols and re-located if needed, while maintaining communications with custodial agencies of the children and ND Department of Health and Human Services designees.

On February 15, President Joseph R. Biden, Jr. declared that a major disaster exists in the State of North Dakota and ordered Federal assistance to supplement state, tribal, and local recovery efforts in the areas affected by a severe winter storm and straight-line winds from December 25 to December 27, 2023.

The winter storm caused more than \$11.5 million dollars in damage over 13 counties. Freezing rain and 40 mile per hour winds destroyed more than 2,000 power poles and knocked out power to more than 20,000 customers. The ice storm forced sections of interstate highways to close, including from Grand Forks to the Canadian border.

Federal funding was made available to state, tribal, and eligible local governments and certain private nonprofit organizations on a cost-sharing basis for emergency work and the repair or replacement of facilities damaged by the severe winter storm and straight-line winds in the counties of Barnes, Cass, Dickey, Grant, LaMoure, Logan, McIntosh, Ransom, Richland, Sargent, Steele, Stutsman, and Traill.

The presidential disaster declaration unlocked FEMA public assistance to help pay for the costs of repairing damaged infrastructure.

The 2024 spring snow melt brought minimal flood impacts due to the mild winter and no snow pack. Many areas of North Dakota started spring off with below normal precipitation and minor drought conditions.

In addition to this plan, ND Department of Health and Human Services manage response plans; updated and revised periodically. A site with various plans can be referenced at:
<https://www.hhs.nd.gov/health/emergency-preparedness-and-response/redacted-response-plans>.

Given the nature of the North Dakota climate and local supports, there was no need to formally utilize the ND Disaster plan in this past year. However, formal changes to the ND Disaster Plan included revising language to include the merger of the ND Department of Human Services with the ND Department of Health to now be recognized as, the ND Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).