



TEXAS
Department of Family
and Protective Services

2024 Annual Progress & Services Report

Targeted Plan C – Disaster Plan

2024 Title IV–B Annual Progress and Services Report Targeted Plan

C. Disaster Plan

- *Specify whether the state was affected by a natural disaster since submission of the 2023 APSR, and, if so, describe how the Disaster Plan was used and assess its effectiveness.*
- *Describe whether and how the Disaster Plan has been used during the COVID-19 pandemic and national public health emergency.*
- *Indicate in the 2024 APSR if there are any changes or additions needed to the plan, including any needed updates to maintain contact with families and ensure uninterrupted essential agency operations during a public health emergency. In a separate Word document, provide information on the change or update to the Disaster Plan, if any.*
- *Provide information on how the state's current Disaster Plan addresses disparities for marginalized groups, including people of diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds. If not currently addressed, discuss steps the state will take to address this issue in the updated Disaster Plan that will be submitted as part of the CFSP for FYs 2025-2029.*

DFPS Continuity of Operations Plan -March 2023

CONTINUITY PLAN OVERVIEW

The Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) provides a framework for creating a viable continuity plan and focuses on the key continuity planning elements as addressed in Continuity Guidance Circular (CGC), *FEMA National Continuity Programs*, dated February 2018.

DFPS is charged with promoting safe and healthy families and protecting children and vulnerable adults from abuse, neglect, and exploitation. The agency's services are provided through its Adult Protective Services (APS), Child Protective Services (CPS), Child Protective Investigations (CPI), Statewide Intake (SWI), and Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) divisions.

DFPS recognizes unexpected disruptive events may bring significant risks to essential public health service delivery and business processes. The DFPS COOP provides a framework for building organizational resilience to mitigate, minimize, or recover business processes deemed to be most essential to restore mission critical business systems resulting in disruption of services to partners, clients, and consumers. Strategies include leveraging of shared enterprise resources and working cooperatively and collaboratively with the Texas Division of Emergency Management and the Emergency Management Council.

During fiscal year 2023, activation the disaster plan was not required, and it was not used to address the COVID-19 pandemic and national public health emergency.

PRIVACY STATEMENT

The disclosure of information in this plan could compromise the security of essential DFPS equipment, services, and systems or otherwise impair DFPS' ability to carry out essential emergency responsibilities. Distribution of this COOP in its entirety is limited to those DFPS functions with a need to know the information in order to successfully implement the plan.

This plan is exempt from disclosure to the public per Texas Government Code, Section 552.156.

Any decision to disclose information in this plan outside a Texas or federal government entity or withhold information in this plan from a non-Texas or federal government entity must be coordinated with DFPS' General Counsel.

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PROMULGATION STATEMENT

The DFPS COOP provides a framework to delineate and coordinate efforts that facilitate DFPS's ability to continue its essential functions during a variety of disruptions. The plan is designed to support the agency's ability to maintain critical business and program functions across a wide range of potential threats, specifically when the primary facilities and/or DFPS leadership are threatened, incapacitated, and/or inaccessible.

The plan describes the processes required to continue or restore the function of the DFPS Mission-Essential Functions (MEFs). The desired outcome is to enable preparation processes that lead to continuation or rapid return of vital services provided to DFPS vulnerable clients. Planning for the business continuity of the DFPS mission essential functions during and in the aftermath of a disaster is a complex task. Preparation for, response to, and recovery from a disaster affecting DFPS program and administrative functions requires the cooperative efforts and partnership of each functional area supporting DFPS business.

This plan identifies the essential strategic processes and components of DFPS operations and DFPS' MEFs; presents the roles and procedures for implementation; outlines necessary lines of command; and identifies critical processes needed to continue operations. Specific staff actions and operational tools are included as separate operating guidelines.

Stephanie B. Muth
Commissioner

SECURITY AND DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

This plan and planning materials used to develop this plan are exempt from public disclosure. Texas statute provides information contained in a continuity of operations plan developed under the requirements of Texas Labor Code, Section 412.054 and Texas Government Code, Section 552.156 is confidential and excepted from public disclosure. This includes all records written, produced, collected, assembled, or maintained as part of the development or review of such plans.

PURPOSE, SCOPE, SITUATIONS, HAZARD ANALYSIS AND ASSUMPTIONS

Purpose

The primary purpose of this document is to ensure DFPS as an organization continues or restores normal business operations under emergency and/or disaster conditions and within targeted timeframes. To meet its obligations, DFPS must ensure critical operations can resume/continue normal processing. Throughout the continuity effort, this plan establishes clear lines of authority and prioritizes work efforts.

Scope

This document was developed in accordance with the *Continuity Guidance Circular (CGC)* dated February 2018. It describes the strategic actions and processes DFPS may utilize to resume and/or continue the operations necessary to continue essential functions in a business disruption emergency incident. This plan refers to agency-level actions management and recovery team leads may refer to when implementing division and program-level COOP.

This document describes the actions and processes required to maintain essential functions. Other than the Hurricane Annex, this plan does not address specific disasters. The procedures, strategies, and identified resources in this document may be applied to any incident (all-hazards), as determined by the DFPS Commissioner or designee, in communication with the DFPS Executive Team and DFPS Business Continuity Planner. The DFPS COOP is developed to ensure the capabilities exist to continue mission-critical activities within a wide range of potential emergencies, including localized acts of nature, accidents, and technological, or attack-related emergencies. Furthermore, the scope of the plan does not apply to temporary disruptions where services are anticipated to be restored within 24 hours to primary facilities.

Individual field offices or regional continuity activations are determined by the appropriate Director of Field, Regional Director, District Director, or designee, in conjunction with their chain of command and are supported by the DFPS Executive Team.

Situation Overview

Unexpected disruptive incidents may bring significant risks to essential functions and business processes. To reduce these risks, DFPS has developed a COOP management strategy detailed below. The COOP strategies facilitate the performance of the DFPS essential functions during an emergency incident that may cause an extended disruption to normal operations and/or the timely recovery to normal operations following such an incident.

DFPS response and recovery efforts may require the cooperative effort of intra- and interdivision coordination. DFPS as an agency may request DFPS Programs to coordinate with Health and Human Services (HHS) System agencies. DFPS strategies include leveraging shared agency and HHS System resources while working cooperatively and collaboratively with the Emergency Management Council.

HAZARD ANALYSIS

State planners identified 22 hazards of significant risk in Texas based on an assessment of past federally declared Texas disasters, historical and potential events, and a review of local mitigation action plans.¹ These hazards are described in the State of Texas Hazard Mitigation Plan and the State Threat and Hazards Identification and Risk Assessment (THIRA). Each of these hazards poses a threat to DFPS, although each facility, office, and program may be impacted differently. For example, inland areas are less likely to be significantly impacted by a hurricane but may be more likely to experience wildfires.

Natural Hazards

- Hurricane, Tropical Storm
- Drought
- Hailstorms
- Flooding (Coastal and Riverine)
- Wildfire
- Pandemic
- Sever Winds
- Winter Weather
- Extreme Cold
- Extreme Heat

- Chemical Hazmat Release
- Radiological Incidents

Human Caused Hazards

- Improvised Nuclear Attack
- Cross-border Violence
- Explosive Devise
- Active Shooter
- Cyber Attack
- Biological Attack
- Terrorism

Technological

- Dam Failure

¹ Texas Division Emergency Management, State of Texas Emergency Management Plan, 2020

Planning Assumptions

The actions and processes in this document are based on the following planning assumptions:

- The incident may be statewide or limited geographically and in duration.
- Personnel and resources located beyond the area affected by the emergency or threat will be available to provide support as necessary.
- Outside assistance may be interrupted or unavailable for the first 72 hours.
- In a catastrophic event, selected essential functions may be suspended or devolve to another geographic area or entity until agency capability is reconstituted.
- Planning for a worst-case scenario will provide protection applicable to other incidents.

Objectives

The objectives of the COOP include:

- Ensure DFPS can deliver mission critical services to its staff and clients;
- Minimize the duration of a serious disruption to operations and resources (both information processing and other resources);
- Minimize immediate damage and losses;
- Establish management succession and emergency powers;
- Integrate with the building Office Emergency Action Plan (OEAP) for the safety and well-being of personnel and visitors on the premises at the time of a disaster;
- Establish effective coordination, communications, and reporting processes;
- Provide for the protection of critical facilities, equipment, records, and other assets;
- Achieve a timely and orderly recovery from a disruption and resumption of full services; and
- Assure compliance with legal and statutory requirements.

CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

A. Incident Management and Planning Philosophy

The DFPS incident management philosophy is that all post-incident activities and appropriate resources should be directed toward the goal of restoring MEFs within targeted timeframes, and subsequently reconstituting normal operations. Toward this end, "local and regional management action with State Office support" best describes the strategic structure of incident management teams. DFPS leadership recognizes most emergency incidents are best managed locally with local response resources and regional incident command structures. State Office personnel empower regional incident management teams, working within resource constraints and in the context of strategic partnerships, to restore normal functions and enable the resumption of services as quickly as practical. DFPS leadership also recognizes emergency response and operations constitute a very fluid environment requiring a high tolerance of ambiguity.

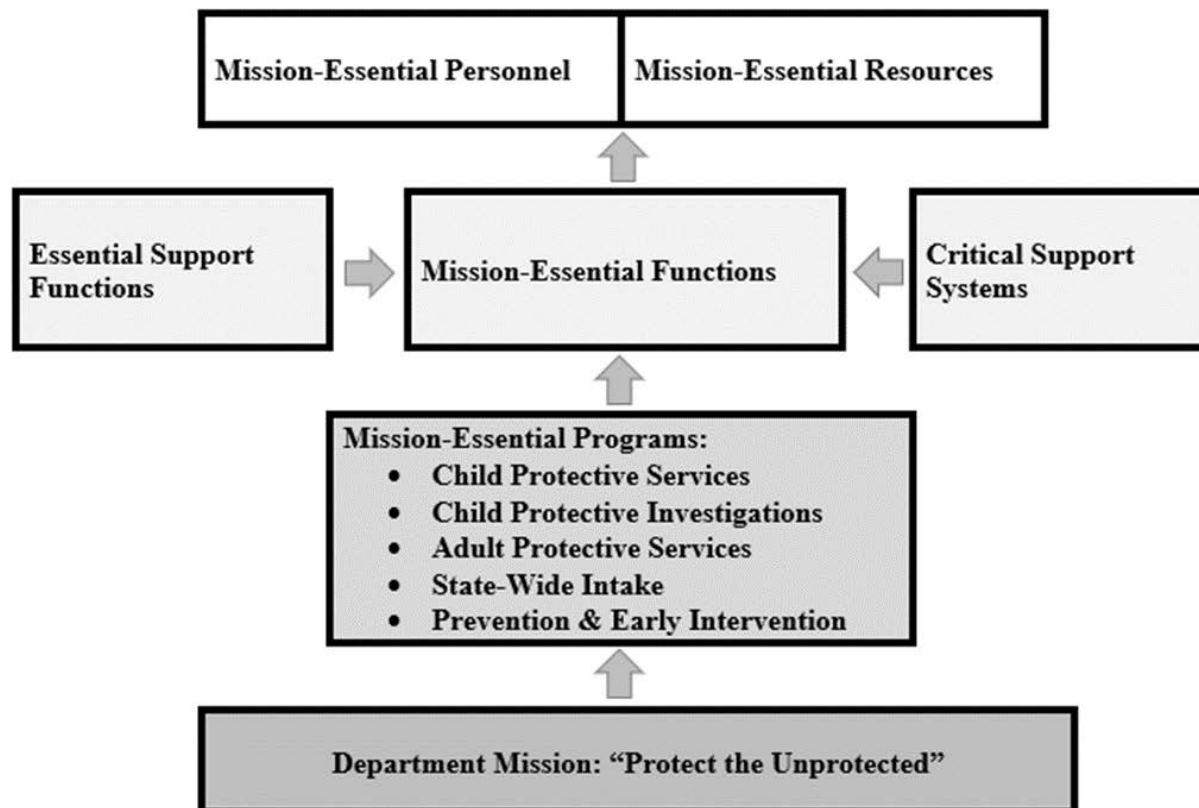
B. Bifurcated Mission

DFPS efforts during disaster response are divided along two parallel yet interrelated paths: continuity of MEFs; and recovery operations that deal with the effects of the incident. Government agencies cannot statutorily or ethically/morally abandon their safety net role and must take affirmative steps to restore services when they are interrupted. Recovery operations refer to those activities that enable reconstitution of normal operations. In the DFPS context, recovery operations will most frequently involve facilities, information technology, records recovery, and security issues (including access and safeguarding state-owned assets).

During incidents that threaten or disrupt DFPS business functions, DFPS implements the COOP in order to mitigate impact or recover from disruption of the DFPS mission-critical activities and MEFs.

MISSION-ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS

DFPS MEFs are divided into five main programs: APS, CPS, CPI, SWI, PEI. The programs serve different populations but share many administrative functions. DFPS MEFs are prioritized according to a tiered system that provides the ability to restore critical services within targeted timeframes. The prioritization system also identifies where DFPS resources must be committed should circumstances or lack of resources necessitate hard choices.



Definitions and acronyms

- **MEFs (Programs):** Those activities for which DFPS exists or was created; functions that are required by statute, standardized practice, and/or recognized authority (Example: Priority 1 Child/Adult abuse investigations).
- **Essential Support Functions (ESFs) (Support Services):** Tasks (and personnel performing them) and knowledge bases that do not constitute a MEF, but materially contribute to DFPS' ability to perform them. (Example: IT personnel)
- **Critical Support Systems (CSSs) (Tools):** Technology, procedures, and/or data sets that enable and/or facilitate the efficient and timely performance of the DFPS MEFs. (Example: IMPACT)
- **Other Associated Activities (OAA):** Activities and tasks that contribute to DFPS efficiency and effectiveness but are not part of the mission-essential core.

Mission-Essential Functions Performance Target Timelines

- Tier 1 MEFs/ESFs shall be uninterrupted as much as practical and, in all cases, restored to function within 8-12 hours of the passing of the immediate emergency.
- Tier 2 MEFs/ESFs/CSSs shall be uninterrupted as much as practical and, in all cases, restored to function within 24 hours of the passing of the immediate emergency.
- Tier 3 CSSs shall be uninterrupted as much as practical and restored to function within 10 days of the passing of the immediate emergency when possible.
- OAAs shall be restored as time and resources permit.

Priority of Mission-Essential Functions

Tier 1 MEFs (Core Services and Support)

- Receive APS, CPS, and CPI, Priority 1 referrals through Statewide Intake (SWI) and transmit to the appropriate local office for screening (ESF);
- Investigate/take appropriate action where there is immediate danger regarding abuse or neglect of children (MEF);
- Investigate/take appropriate action where there is immediate danger regarding abuse or neglect of children, older adults, and persons with disabilities (MEF);
- Initiate a welfare check of children in DFPS Conservatorship and Family Based Safety Services following an emergency (MEF);
- All child placement functions including preventing placement disruptions;
- Parent-child visits;
- Runaway recovery;
- Investigate/take appropriate action where there is immediate danger regarding child abuse or neglect complaints (MEF); and
- Provide financial resources to support Tier 1 MEFs (ESF).

Tier 2 MEFs (Semi-Core Services and Support)

- Ensure SWI referral and subsequent investigation for all other (non-Priority 1) activities for all programs (ESF);
- Ensure activation of the Public Communication for Disasters Plan, and initiate follow-up communication with caregivers of children in DFPS Conservatorship (ESF);
- Follow-up and track facility evacuation sites and emergency contact numbers for facilities with open investigations (MEF);
- Ensure the availability of information technology in support of normal operations, with priority to IMPACT system (ESF);
- Ensure DFPS compliance with Strategic National Stockpile agreement (ESF).

Tier 3 MEFs (Important Support, Not Urgent)

- Ensure continuation of Runaway Hotline/Youth Hotline operation and referrals;
- Restore/perform purchasing and procurement and accounting functions except as urgently needed to support Tier 1 MEFs (ESF);

- Perform other administrative and support functions that enable routine operations (ESF); and
- Restore OAA as time/resources permit.

Mission-Essential Personnel/Non-Essential Personnel Defined

1. Tier 1 Essential Personnel

- All personnel whose responsibilities include supervision and delivery of Tier 1 MEFs/ESFs to clients/customers;
- All personnel whose responsibilities include receiving and routing initial reports for delivery of Tier 1 MEFs/ESFs to clients/customers;
- All personnel with designated duties in the DFPS Incident Management Structure when activated; and
- All personnel providing ESFs or CSS maintenance of Tiers 1 and 2 MEFs when/as designated by their supervisor.

Note: All personnel that have been issued State-owned equipment or software license(s) to enable off-site working (e.g., laptop, tablet, etc.) must comply with the DFPS “Work from Home” policy regardless of Essential/Non-Essential Status.

2. Tier 2 Essential Personnel

- All personnel whose responsibilities include only delivery of Tier 2 MEFs/ESFs/CSSs;
- All personnel whose responsibilities include routine administrative support when/as designated by management; and
- All personnel must remain available for immediate call-back during regular business hours, their regular work shift hours, and/or as designated by his/her immediate supervisor during emergencies or other extraordinary circumstances.

3. Non-Essential Personnel

- All personnel so designated by management and not involved in delivery or indirect support of Tiers 1 and 2 MEFs/ESFs;
- Personnel whose routine job functions may be suspended for a period of time without loss of mission-essential services; and
- All non-essential personnel must remain available for call-back during regular business hours, their regular work shift hours, and/or as designated by management personnel during emergencies or extraordinary circumstances.

Note: Any employee's essential status designation may be changed at any time upon notification. Duties may also be modified to perform tasks not routinely part of his/her job description, according to DFPS needs.

Mission-Essential Resources

Mission-Essential Resources are divided into four broad categories (people, circumstances, tools, and performance factors) that define what inputs and considerations are needed for DFPS to perform its mission. The value of this exercise is that it assists Incident Commanders to identify missing resources and prioritize efforts to restore essential services. The following provides details for considerations in each category (see Appendix A for diagram):

1. People

- Number sufficiency to meet performance requirements
- Appropriate certifications/licenses/authority to accomplish mission
- Appropriate training to accomplish mission

2. Circumstances

- Safety of DFPS personnel
- Mobility/Transportation Availability/Access safety
- Functioning communications
- Administrative support available
- Task volume/number of calls for service within the disaster area

3. Tools

- Computer/Internet/Paper records
- Communication equipment
- Vehicle appropriate for the circumstances
- Appropriate safety shields/barriers
- Facilities/Office space
- Records systems access
- Stocked client resources (diapers, formula, car seats, walking canes, etc.)

4. Performance factors ("How well?" or "To what degree?")

- Federal and State statutory mandate
- MEF/Business Continuity Planning performance objectives
- Necessary to "safeguard life and health"
- Necessary to maintain a favorable public opinion

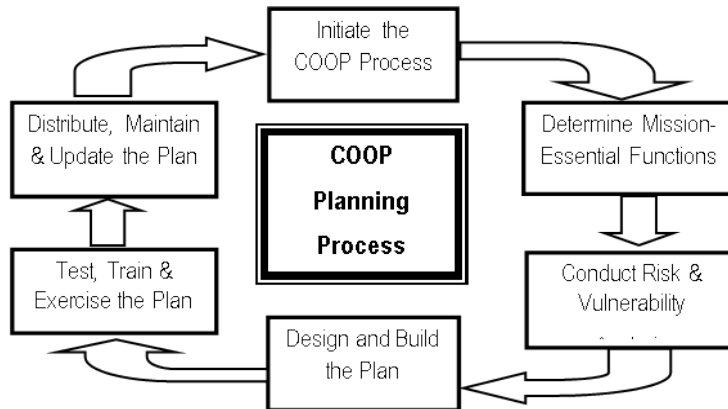
Phase I: Readiness and Preparedness

Readiness and preparedness processes include plan development, testing, training, and exercise. These preparedness activities are essential to assessing, demonstrating, and improving the ability of DFPS to continue its essential functions. Training familiarizes personnel with their roles and responsibilities during COOP activation. Tests and exercises serve to assess, validate, or identify for subsequent correction components of the COOP and systems.

The objectives of testing, training, and exercising the COOP include:

- Assessing and validating COOP policies, and procedures;

- Ensuring agency personnel are familiar with COOP procedures and that designated staff can carry out essential functions in a COOP situation; and
- Testing and validating equipment to ensure both internal and external interoperability.



Training

Training DFPS staff is essential to effectively activate and carry out a COOP implementation. Personnel must be trained so they have the necessary skills and knowledge to carry out their responsibilities.

DFPS will develop a specific training plan and schedule to systematically provide orientation to both personnel with specific roles in COOP activation and all personnel who would be impacted by COOP activation.

Tests and Exercises

Testing and exercising COOP procedures and systems produce results that may be measured and evaluated. These results, combined with participant feedback, provide opportunities to improve the outcome of a COOP implementation following a disruptive incident. DFPS leadership and local program response teams will participate in the agency's COOP testing and exercise program.

The observations and comments of the exercise participants are gathered during the exercise to record a specific issue or upon completion of the exercise. An After-Action Report (AAR) will be completed and made available to the exercise participants. Issues presented in the AAR will form the basis of a Corrective Action Plan to improve COOP implementation (see Appendix G).

A solid, progressive exercise program is developed over time and with careful planning. Types of COOP exercises include discussion based and operational exercises. The DFPS COOP exercise program will utilize tabletop exercises, and drills and coordinate

functional exercises. All exercises will be Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program compliant.

Tabletop Exercise

In this exercise, participants are presented a scenario in a written/oral format and respond as if the scenario was really happening and then debrief afterwards. This type of exercise is particularly useful for new or newly revised plans. It allows decision makers to “walk through” an incident and afterwards discuss and resolve issues that became apparent during the exercise.

The DFPS Business Continuity Planner will coordinate with DFPS Programs to develop a program plan for facilitating tabletop exercises for their respective organizations. These plans identify exercise objectives, implementation schedules, participant roles, and after action responsibilities.

Functional Exercise

This type of exercise involves the simulation of an individual or multiple parts of COOP implementation such as notification procedures or using specific systems and equipment. The DFPS Business Continuity Planner will coordinate with DFPS Programs to develop functional exercises that test the agency’s ability to communicate and work at an alternate worksite during continuity activation.

Phase II: ALERT AND NOTIFICATION - Activation

Emergency situations occur on a daily basis throughout the State. Program staff, Information Technology (IT), Program Support, Worker Safety Support, and Regional Administrative Services respond to the vast majority of emergency situations without external assistance. However, potential, or actual emergency situations that may produce a severe or widespread impact may create a need for DFPS system wide assistance. The State matches the intensity of its preparedness and response activities to the intensity of a potential threat or the impact of actual incidents. DFPS will adopt and implement these same “readiness and response levels.” As the intensity of threats or impacts increase, response teams are activated, staffing and equipment readiness is enhanced, and additional resources are alerted, mobilized, deployed, and employed.

COOP Activation

The authority to activate agency wide continuity of operations for DFPS rests with the DFPS Commissioner. If the DFPS Commissioner is unavailable or cannot be contacted, COOP activation authority is vested with agency leadership in order of succession. The DFPS Chief Information Officer or other designated IT staff may declare Disaster Recovery activation for an information systems disruption per the DFPS Disaster Recovery Plan.

COOP Activation Guidelines

Action	Conditions
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<p>COOP Activation Recommended</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DFPS facilities cannot be occupied due to structural damage, dangerous environmental conditions, or other limiting factors and the time to repair is estimated to exceed 14 days. • The DFPS information system technical environment is damaged, inoperable, or uninhabitable and the estimated time to resume essential services exceeds 14 days. • MEFs are disrupted and require additional agency wide support to continue or recover the function.
<p>COOP Activation Considered</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DFPS facilities are damaged or inaccessible and use of temporary or alternate facilities is necessary. • Critical equipment and/or vital records have been damaged and cannot be repaired, replaced, or restored within 3-14 days. • Key personnel are injured or are otherwise not available. • Voice/communications cannot be restored within 3-14 days. • Public utilities (e.g., power, water, and/or sanitation) and/or public services (e.g., transportation, law enforcement, and/or communications) have been disrupted.
<p>COOP Activation Not Recommended</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Damaged critical equipment and/or facilities can be repaired or replaced within three days. • Conditions do not disrupt mission-essential functions. • The loss of critical data/vital records is minimal and restorable within three days.

The decision process for activating DFPS COOP begins when an actual, threatened, or perceived incident with actual or potentially serious consequences to people, property, or business processes is reported to DFPS management. If the incident response requires the evacuation or implementation of other protective action guidance, DFPS staff will follow emergency procedures outlined in the facility's OEAP.

DFPS personnel are notified in a timely manner about the incident, the status of agency operations, and COOP activation. Methods of relaying information to agency personnel may include, but are not limited to, scripted messages in Send Word Now (SWN) and the DFPS website. In addition, DFPS supervisors maintain their direct reports' current emergency contact information as part of the agency's efforts to prepare for emergencies. Managers may use this "call tree" information to communicate pertinent information to their employees away from the worksite and/or during non-business hours in a timely manner.

External Stakeholders external to the agency also will be informed of the incident and changes in DFPS operations as it affects them. The level of information relayed, and the method of notification will be appropriate to the stakeholder's relationship with DFPS.

By DFPS policy and procedures, all calls and other inquiries or requests received by DFPS employees from the news media must be referred to the DFPS Communications Division or Public Information Office (PIO).

Phase III: Continuity Operations

Activation of the DFPS COOP is determined by the DFPS Commissioner in conjunction with the DFPS Executive Team, include and support from the Associate Commissioners for Programs and the DFPS Business Continuity Planner.

The DFPS Commissioner assumes the role of or appoints the Incident Commander (IC) at the State Office campus. The IC assesses and determines the extent of response and recovery support required and coordinates agency support of these efforts through DFPS leadership. Local response teams will be assembled based on the scale, location, and scope of the threat involved.

In the absence of an appointed IC, the most senior level DFPS employee first made aware of the disruption (e.g., regional director or district director) will assume the IC duties. An acting IC may be relieved from IC duty at the direction of a higher authority within DFPS or overall DFPS management. Staff relieved from this position are required to coordinate a briefing to the incoming IC and assist in a deputy or support role, as necessary.

If the continuity incident requires the relocation of the State Office campus, essential personnel may be distributed first to functioning DFPS leased space or to other state-owned space. If required, the purchase of new lease space would be processed through the state's leasing entity, the Texas Facilities Commission (TFC). Should relocation become necessary, relocation activities will become top priority. Only personnel essential to the maintenance and primary function of the affected business element or program will be provided space in continuity operations sites.

DFPS personnel may be required to relocate to an alternate work site if access to DFPS' primary facilities is not possible for an indeterminate period of time due to contamination, severe structural damage, or other limiting factors. To fulfill its mission in the event of diminished resources, DFPS leadership has identified a subset of functions most critical to DFPS' immediate mission and the minimum staff required to operate those functions. These staff would be provided space in the initial 24 to 72 hours.

Program and business areas with MEFs or essential support activities have pre-identified the resources they need to operate in a physical environment. These needs include seating, electrical requirements, equipment, and supply items. Based on these needs, DFPS will use one or more of the above options to acquire alternate work sites to accommodate staff who support critical agency functions.

DFPS staff who can coordinate MEFs or other business processes outside a traditional office environment may be asked to leverage remote access capabilities. DFPS has a large mobile workforce, including DFPS program caseworkers who are responsible for MEFs, including child and adult investigations, foster care, and conservatorship workers. DFPS has also developed a telework process and policy, as well as the infrastructure needed to allow staff to work remotely. DFPS staff will follow agency policies, and Texas

state policies and procedures related to remote/telecommuting, as well as information resources requirements, tools, and resources necessary to support remote/telework.

The telework program includes procedures to ensure employee accountability and provides training that helps supervisors manage employees without face-to-face contact during normal operations. Telework agreements are reviewed and renewed annually.

ORGANIZATION AND ASSIGNMENT OF RESPONSIBILITIES

All DFPS staff have some level of COOP planning responsibility. These responsibilities may include, but are not limited to, providing information as appropriate to COOP protocols and participating in training and/or exercises as needed to ensure DFPS' ability to implement continuity of operations. In addition, the following positions and groups have specific sets of expectations related to the agency's COOP planning process.

DFPS Executive Team

Supports the DFPS COOP planning via the following actions:

- Advocates for and provides strategic direction for DFPS and their respective program's COOP process.
- Reviews and approves high-level DFPS COOP deliverables.
- Resolves escalated issues and assists the DFPS Business Continuity Planner in making critical decisions based on recommendations; and
- Provides information and participates in events that further DFPS's ability to implement continuity of operations.

DFPS Chief Operating Officer / Deputy Chief Operating Officer

Assures DFPS COOP goals and objectives are consistent with DFPS objectives and policy; and COOP objectives, deliverables, and schedules are met on time and within scope via the following actions:

- Advocates for, secures resources, and provides strategic direction to the DFPS Business Continuity Planner;
- Reviews and approves COOP deliverables and submits to the DFPS Commissioner as needed;
- Resolves issues escalated by the DFPS Business Continuity Planner and makes decisions on recommendations; and
- Serves as the decision maker related to Brown-Heatly office closures

DFPS Business Continuity Planner

Assures the purpose, objectives, and deliverables of DFPS COOP planning are completed on time and within scope of DFPS goals via the following actions:

- Coordinates assignments that contribute to completion of COOP objectives and plans and submitting deliverables for approval;

- Convenes meetings of DFPS response teams and creates ad hoc workgroups to meet COOP planning objectives;
- Identifies issues, risks, and opportunities that may impact COOP planning and escalates as necessary to the DFPS COO for resolution;
- Liaisons with internal and external entities to meet agency COOP objectives;
- Advocates for the DFPS Business Continuity Management program and seeks appropriate resources; and
- Oversees DFPS presence at the State Operations Center (SOC) during activations.

DFPS IT Director

- Oversees and coordinates the development, maintenance, and distribution of DFPS Disaster Recovery Plans (DRPs) as appropriate, including Data Center Services.
- Coordinates actions with DFPS COOP programs so DRPs support the DFPS COOP in the event recovery from a significant disruptive incident is necessary.

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DFPS Program Support Director

- Coordinates response with DFPS and HHSC staff to facility related issues statewide in the event that recovery from a significant disruptive incident is necessary.
- Serves as the Liaison with HHS Regional Administrative Services

X. COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY & OBJECTIVES

When natural or man-made disasters occur, DFPS has a pressing need to communicate with clients, contractors, foster parents, the regulated community, the general public, and its own staff.

Since normal channels of communications may be disrupted, DFPS uses alternative and multiple methods of communication to increase the likelihood that messages reach their target audiences.

Key objectives include:

- Staying in communication with DFPS staff to maintain continuity of operations, assure the safety of employees, and expedite recovery to normal operations;
- Ensuring foster parents and licensed providers tell DFPS the location of children in state care, future locations in the event of a move, and report on the status and well-being of those children;
- Providing or coordinating assistance for clients; and
- Coordinating DFPS communications with the Texas Division of Emergency Management and other state agencies to improve the overall effectiveness of the state's emergency response.

To achieve these goals, DFPS relies on specific tactics and tasks. Various programs and divisions have specific communications responsibilities. However, the hub of mass communications activity is the Unified PIO.

Public Information Office

In the DFPS incident command structure, the DFPS Communications division is the PIO. The Communications Director is the incident Public Information Officer and leverages DFPS Communication staff as needed.

The PIO also coordinates with communications counterparts in the Texas Division of Emergency Management, The Office of the Governor, and other state agencies. This enables DFPS to benefit from and contribute to the communications, resources, and capabilities of all of state government.

The [Texas Division of Emergency Management](#) facilitates this coordination with regular conference calls.

Communications Tactics and Channels

Email and the DFPS intranet are primary forms of mass communications used internally to communicate daily with DFPS staff. However, in a widespread disaster such as a hurricane, these methods may be unreliable in some areas of the state. Therefore, DFPS uses a variety of tactics and channels to supplement normal channels of communications in these situations. Examples of some of these communications are in the appendixes.

When possible, DFPS will tell staff before or near the onset of an event to be aware of these types of communications and remind them of their responsibilities.

For staff communications, DFPS primarily provides immediate information through broadcast email and mass texting (Send Word Now) and follows those up with web postings and cascading communications as needed.

For external mass communications, DFPS primarily uses direct email, cloud-based subscription email (GovDelivery), web postings, and social media, but may also engage the news media for assistance in special circumstances.

Emergency Announcement Email

At the onset or prior to a widespread disaster, the Unified PIO sends a broadcast email, usually from the DFPS Commissioner to all staff warning them of the situation or emergency. The goal is to send this communication before normal communications channels are interrupted. This message varies depending on the situation, but usually it reminds staff about how to assure their safety, as well as alternative ways they may receive information during and after the event. It will also remind staff to make sure their contact information in Send Word Now is current and their on-call schedules are updated in IMPACT. See example in Appendix 1.

Office Preparations Emails

In the event of a hurricane or other widespread weather event, Program Support coordinates with HHSC Regional Administrative Service (RAS) to assure instructions are sent to affected offices on how to protect state assets such as files and records. See

example in Appendix 2. Note: The actual communications are handled primarily by RAS, but Program Support can send regional broadcasts if needed.

Mass Texting

DFPS uses Send Word Now, an online mass-texting application, to send warnings or other emergency messages on office closings, weather alerts, active shooter warnings, or any other special instructions to staff.

Call Trees

Call Trees are a backup or supplemental communication channel to mass texting and broadcast email. All divisions and offices maintain cascading call trees help account for the safety and whereabouts of employees or to provide instructions during times when normal communications channels are disrupted and assures the agency can maintain essential operations. Managers maintain multiple phones, personal email, and other contact and locating information for each staff member under their direct responsibility.

Program Specific Broadcasts

CPS and APS may send messages specific to their staff through program specific broadcasts if they need to provide instructions immediately. However, these distribution lists are statewide and cannot currently be targeted to specific regions or offices. If only certain areas are targeted, the PIO can relay these messages through regional broadcasts that reach all staff in a given geographic area or specific office. These messages may be followed by a cascade if deemed necessary to reinforce the message.

Cascading Communications

During a statewide disaster or disease outbreak, DFPS often supplements mass communications with cascading communications that pass specific instructions from executives to managers and from managers to their direct-reporting staff. This can be used to put staff on notice that they must read and follow all instructions in all disaster related communications, which can be critical to the health and safety of DFPS staff and clients. Or it could be specific instructions on program activities that must be altered because of the emergency.

A cascade begins at the executive level and may use any communications channel, but usually standard email or call trees. See example in Appendix 5.

Web Postings

During emergencies, DFPS maintains a page or pages on the public website containing resource information for DFPS staff, clients, and foster parents. At the onset and throughout a disaster or emergency, the PIO will work with divisions to place any additional appropriate emergency information on the DFPS public website and/or the DFPS Intranet. On the public site, this includes a prominent banner or headline on the DFPS Homepage.

Target audiences may include DFPS employees who may not be able to access the DFPS network, as well as clients, foster parents, providers, and others.

This method may include but is not limited to:

- Notice of available disaster information on this website;
- Instructions to foster parents, kinship caregivers, etc.;
- Resources and emergency preparedness tips for foster parents; and
- Specific instructions for DFPS staff if appropriate.

DFPS may summarize but does not attempt to duplicate the content of other agencies or non-profit organizations, nor create a comprehensive list of all resources. DFPS focuses on original content specific to its responsibilities and links to key resources of benefit its staff and clients.

Subscription Email

DFPS uses a mass email platform known as GovDelivery to send emails to subscribers. While subscribers include some DFPS staff, most are external stakeholders. This tool allows DFPS to send messages to more than 60,000 people and organizations at once and track how many emails were opened as well as other levels of engagement. DFPS often uses this tool in unison with the public website and social media.

Situation Reports

During a disaster declaration DFPS submits daily situation reports to the Texas Division of Emergency Management through the SOC. These reports often provide content for the updates to the Office of the Governor and other state leadership offices. See Appendix 7.

Governor and Legislative Updates

DFPS External Relations provides email updates to the Office of the Governor and legislative leaders, such as the Lieutenant Governor, Speaker of the House, and oversight committees, on the status of DFPS operations, and client services and safety, based on the frequency requested. These updates include information on how DFPS is seeking to carry out its responsibilities, the status of children in foster care and efforts to confirm and assure their safety, the status of DFPS offices, and the effects on DFPS staff, including their health and safety. See Appendix 8.

Foster Parent Call Tree

When there are evacuations or other reasons, CPS staff directly contacts DFPS foster and kinship parents to determine the location and safety of children in DFPS conservatorship, and to provide any instructions needed. Child-placing agencies (CPAs) are responsible for contacting their private foster homes and reporting the status to DFPS. In areas where a Single Source Continuum Contractor (SSCC) handles case management, the SSCC is responsible for contacting caregivers and reporting their status to DFPS.

Contacting Notices

During statewide disaster or disease outbreaks state health officials may warn people to stay home to avoid spreading the illness. In this case, DFPS sends messages to contractors to clarify whether DFPS is waiving or not waiving any contract requirements for service providers, such as residential treatment centers or CPAs. See the example in Appendix 9.

Social Media Posts

The PIO uses DFPS social media accounts and leverages those of other state agencies, such as Twitter and Facebook, to send and receive quick and timely messages to and from the public, stakeholders, and staff. While not a primary form of communications, these social media websites are likely to be available as long as the cellular networks are operational. These messages are used in tandem with public web postings as needed.

News Media Notices

When appropriate and possible, the PIO asks news media organizations to broadcast or publish messages to DFPS staff, clients, contractors, and providers, etc. This would only be attempted when necessary and as a supplemental communication. Since cooperation is voluntary and the media will be pre-occupied, there is no assurance DFPS messages would be reliably sent or received by this method. However, it does provide an additional means of reaching audiences when normal communication channels are disrupted.

Wrap Up Broadcast Email

When operations are returning to normal, the PIO may send a broadcast email to staff, announcing further directions and thanking everyone for their efforts. In some cases, this is appropriate and in others it is not. See example in Appendix 11.

Communications Responsibilities Chart

Communications or Task	Audiences	Lead
Emergency Announcement Broadcast Email	Staff	PIO
Wrap Up Email	Staff	PIO
Office Preparations Email	Staff	RAS/Program Support
Send Word Now Messages	Staff	RAS/DFPS
Direct outreach	Foster & Kinship Parents	CPS
Calling Trees	Staff	Every division
Cascading communications	Staff	Executives, every division
Web Postings	All audiences	PIO
Updates for Governor and Legislative Offices	Governor and Legislative Offices	External Relations
Wrap Up Broadcast Email	Staff	PIO
Social Media posts	All audiences	PIO
Subscription Email	All audiences	PIO
Foster Parent/Kinship Call Tree	Foster parents verified by CPS and Kinship caregivers	CPS
Disaster Hotline	Foster parents, Kinship caregivers, licensed providers	SWI
Contractor Notices	Contractors	Purchased Client Services, PEI
News Media Notices	All audiences	PIO

XI. MULTI-YEAR STRATEGY AND PROGRAM MANAGEMENT PLAN

The DFPS COOP is dynamic and will be modified as significant changes occur regarding the ability to respond, the facilities, or the organizational structure. Additional reviews should be undertaken following each exercise and when testing major systems. Any issues identified in training may trigger a plan review.

Most major issues affecting the COOP will result from lessons learned from exercises. Other sources of information for identifying major issues could come from:

- Presidential Directive, and state and local ordinances or directives, as appropriate.
- Direction from DFPS leadership.
- Policy or mission changes.
- Changes in technology or office systems.
- Changing customer needs.

PLAN DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTENANCE

The DFPS Business Continuity Planner is responsible for updates and plan maintenance. Designated DFPS staff members are responsible for ensuring all emergency contact numbers for essential personnel are current. Agency leadership and appropriate staff are kept informed regarding any approved changes to the plan.

The general requirements for maintaining the DFPS COOP include:

- Following DFPS strategy for methodically reviewing and identifying issues that could affect COOP planning or operations. Reviews may involve agency leadership for resolution of issues. The long-term plan maintenance of the DFPS COOP will be planned in advance and completed according to an established schedule.
- Reviewing COOP policies and procedures at least annually as part of the continuity program to ensure they reflect current conditions. Additional reviews and updates will occur after exercises and real-world incidents, as well as changes to DFPS's structure, essential functions, or mission.

AUTHORITIES AND REFERENCES

Authorities

Texas Labor Code Section 412.054

References

The Texas Homeland Security Strategic Plan 2021-2025

FEMA Continuity Guidance Circular (CGC)

[State Office of Risk Management Website](#)

ANNEX A. MISSION-ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS

Defining DFPS MEFs is the cornerstone for business continuity planning. The table below lists the DFPS MEFs. During any interruption in service, the priority for continuity and recovery efforts may change based on the conditions and circumstances of the recovery efforts.

DFPS MEFs

Agency MEFs
Statewide Intake - Receive CPS, CPI, and APS referrals and transmit to local offices >> Tier 1 or 2
CPS Program Intake - Receive and assign Priority 1 & 2 CPS Abuse and Neglect Intake Reports >> Tier 1 or 2
APS Program Intake - Receive and assign Priority 1 APS and Priority 1 & 2 In-Home Abuse and Neglect Intake Reports >> Tier 1 or 2
CPI Program Intake - Receive and investigate Priority 1 & 2 Abuse and Neglect Reports for CPS Programs; Investigate Priority 1 Child Care Licensing (CCL) & Residential Child Care Licensing (RCCL) intake reports >> Tier 1 or 2
Special Investigations - Receive and investigate Priority 1 & 2 Abuse & Neglect High Profile Cases (fatalities, near death, and human trafficking) >> Tier 1 or 2
Communications - Provide effective internal and external communications during and after the incident; Provide vital information to contractors, vendors, community partners, staff, clients, and the media—See Communications Plan >>ESF Tier 1
IT/Technology - Provide support of automation and telecommunication needs which includes IMPACT (Information Management Protecting Adults and Children in Texas)

DFPS has established priorities for resuming essential functions that facilitate its ability to provide services as rapidly and efficiently as possible during a continuity incident. Tasks not deemed essential may be deferred until additional personnel and resources become available.

DFPS MEFs are functions that must be continued throughout or resumed rapidly after a disruption of normal activities. DFPS has identified all functions and MEFs in the agency with a recovery time objective of immediately to eight hours, as the highest priority.

ANNEX B. ESSENTIAL RECORDS MANAGEMENT

A vital state record is defined as any state record necessary to:

- (a) The full spectrum of all-hazards emergencies, including records critical to carrying out, resumption, or continuation of state agency operations in an emergency or disaster;
- (b) The legal and financial status of the agency; or
- (c) The protection and fulfillment of obligations to the people of the state.

Vital records must be backed up with the duplicate records stored off-site so in the case of a disaster, the backup version can be used to resume normal business.

Vital records have been identified by each division, department, and program area and are managed by the DFPS Records Management Office. Additionally, each division, department, and program area will serve as a repository of this information.

Preparedness and Response Actions

Prior to Event

- Directions to staff on how to protect their records for an upcoming storm are included in the announcements RAS sends out via Send Word Now.

After the Event

- Records Management Group (RMG) consults with RAS and Program Management to determine the extent of damage to any records.
- RMG visits on-site, when allowed, to gather any salvageable records and sends them to their assigned Records and Imaging Office (RIO) for digital scanning.
- For any records too damaged to be taken by RIO staff, a request will be made through RAS for the records to be restored. This is accomplished by a private vendor.
- If they are restored successfully, the records will then be converted to digital images.
- For any records unable to be restored, RMG documents in the records logs what occurred.

ANNEX C. LEADERSHIP AND STAFF

DFPS Leadership and Orders of Succession

Leadership and Orders of Succession

Succession to office is critical in the event DFPS leadership is debilitated or incapable of performing their legal authorized duties, roles, and responsibilities. The designation as a successor enables that person to act for and exercise the powers of a principal, if

necessary. The following pre-determined orders of succession are designed to allow for an orderly, pre-defined transition of leadership within DFPS.

Continuity of Operation Order of Succession Authority
Commissioner, DFPS
Deputy Commissioner
Chief of Staff
Chief Operating Officer
Associate Commissioner for CPS
Associate Commissioner for CPI
Associate Commissioner for APS
Associate Commissioner for Statewide Intake
Office of the Governor

ANNEX D. DISASTER PROTOCOL ANNEX

DFPS Responsibilities

The following are the Program-specific disaster response plans:

CPS:

PHASE	RESPONSIBILITY
Preparedness	<p>DFPS asks staff to always ensure their personal safety first and foremost when determining if they are to come to work. DFPS staff who evacuate are advised to stay in touch with their supervisors and heed the advice of local officials as to when it is safe to return to their homes. Regional Leadership will implement a plan with each program/unit to be able to communicate about each DFPS staff members safety.</p> <p>In addition, DFPS relies heavily on a variety of communications methods to provide information to staff.</p> <p>CPS ensures the safety of children by requiring families to have a disaster plan indicating their location before, during, and after the affected disaster area and includes a requirement to notify CPS of each child's location should evacuation become imminent.</p>

Response

Caregivers of children in DFPS conservatorship are required to evacuate their home if an evacuation is mandated for the area in which the caregiver lives. Foster/Adoptive Home Development workers are responsible for ensuring that DFPS homes (including those verified/approved as a result of an ICPC request) complete Form 2288 (Disaster Plan for Foster/Adoptive and Kinship Homes) and the Kinship Development or Conservatorship worker (if no Kinship development worker is assigned) is responsible for ensuring the kinship homes complete Form 2288.

Each foster/adoptive and kinship home must have a written Disaster Plan on file with CPS as these homes need to be prepared and have an evacuation plan in the event of an emergency.

CPS Response actions for children include:
The CPS Director of Field will designate staff to contact the CPS Data Request Intake and Tracking (DRIT) Liaison to initiate a DRIT request for a list of children, including the contact information for their caregivers, who reside in the forecasted or impacted area in:

- DFPS Conservatorship
- Sub C-IC
- FPR

The request will specify the area by county or Region and the CPS DRIT Liaison will reference DRIT number 92864 when initiating the request. Staff designated by the CPS Director of Field will sort and distribute appropriate DRIT spreadsheets accordingly.

Additionally, within 24-hours of an advisory, foster/adoptive, kinship, or conservatorship workers will:

- Make telephone contact with each of their assigned families located in the advisory area;
- Verify the information on Form 2288;
- Remind the family evacuation is required if mandated for their area;
- Remind the family to take at least a two-week supply of medication for the child, if applicable, and if the family evacuates; and
- Instruct the family how to contact DFPS in order to report the children's location and conditions after they reach their evacuation destination.

CPS Response actions for staff include:

- The CPS Director of Field will designate responsibility for creation of a list of staff who reside in, or whose headquarters are located in the forecasted or impacted area from the DFPS All Positions Report-hr 41 report.
- In the event of a staffing shortage and a need for state office support, the Regional Director will notify the CPS Director of Field who will assign responsibility for initiating and documenting contacts.

CPI:

PHASE	RESPONSIBILITY
<p>Preparedness</p>	<p>The CPI Director of Field Operations, or designee, will have primary responsibility for managing CPI's internal disaster and emergency protocols.</p> <p>Succession: In the event t the CPI Director of Field is unable to carry out the disaster protocols, they will designate a regional director to assume all responsibilities. The delegated regional director will assign duties to program staff throughout the state, as appropriate, to manage the crisis. CPI staff will be notified the succession protocol has been activated via an emergency announcement communication.</p> <p><u>Staff Responsibilities Prior to the Event</u></p> <p>If local officials give a disaster warning or advisory at least 48 hours before the disaster is expected to occur, CPI staff must complete the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the contact spreadsheet provided by staff reporting to the CPI Director of Field to determine which clients/families reside in or near the impacted area and are at risk; • Contact clients/families at risk either by telephone or face-to-face and discuss their emergency plan which should include procedure to protect against potential hard and advise them of the possible dangers for not evacuating; • Provide clients/families with emergency telephone numbers and instructions on obtaining local evacuation shelter information in the event an evacuation is necessary; and
<p>Response</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gather the name and location for where the family plans to go if they evacuate.

Response actions:

- Staff debriefs should begin as soon as practical after an incident; When initiated they will occur daily with Regional Leadership to determine staff impact, children seen, new case triage, and any other needs of the impacted areas.
- Upon receipt of the emergency announcement email, the actions below are to be taken for children:

The CPI Director of Field will designate staff to initiate a DRIT for a list of children, including the contact information for their caregivers, who reside in the forecasted or impacted area.

The following reports will be utilized to initiate the DRIT:

- Parental Child Safety Placement
- Children in DFPS Custody Still with Inv. Primary
- 31 Report – Children Not Seen

The DRIT and information will be placed on the Program Administrator (PA) SharePoint. The regional director assistant (RDA) will ensure documentation surrounding contact with these children and their safety is uploaded and documented on a spreadsheet and saved on the PA SharePoint.

Staff designated by the CPI Director of Field will sort and distribute spreadsheets as follows:

- Parent Child Safety Placements:
 - Staff designated by the CPI Director of Field sort the spreadsheet by stage type, merge into the contact spreadsheet, and provide the list of children in investigation to regional staff who will initiate contacts, unless the CPI Director of Field designates alternate staff.
- 31 Report Children Not Seen
 - Staff designated by the CPI Director of Field sort the spreadsheet by worker region and children having no face-to-face. the regional directors in the impacted areas will delegate tracking of face-to-face attempts.
- New Intakes
 - Should impacted areas request assistance in managing and triaging new intakes due to a shortage of staff, the regional director notifies the CPI Director of Field. Together they will designate staff to access, route, and triage new intakes in the impacted areas. The designee

will ensure tracking of intakes and will utilize the new intake tracking log located in the PA SharePoint.

- As contacts are initiated, staff will update the information-gathering spreadsheets to reflect contacts with caregivers, and the status of children for whom they are responsible. This will also include the families' plans if they later become impacted by the disaster.
- Staff outside the impacted area will be assigned responsibility for initiating contact at the discretion of the CPI Director of Field.
- Tracking spreadsheets will be updated daily in the PA SharePoint so the process of merging information into a master spreadsheet can be completed. If field staff are making contacts, responsibility will be assigned on the local level for gathering contact spreadsheets and saving them to the PA SharePoint.

The following actions are to be taken for staff:

The CPI Director of Field will designate staff to initiate a DRIT for a list of staff who reside in, or whose headquarters are located in, the forecasted or impacted area.

- Staff designated by the CPI Director of Field will upload the list in the PA SharePoint.

The tracking spreadsheet will be managed by staff designated by the CPI Director of Field:

- As contacts are originated, the tracking sheet will be updated.
- In the event of a staffing shortage, there will be a need for State Office support; the regional director will notify the CPI Director of Field, who will assign responsibility for initiating, and documenting contacts.

A copy of the tracking sheet will be updated daily in the PA SharePoint and the CPI Director of Field will be apprised the following morning of all staff who have not been accounted for.

APS:

PHASE	RESPONSIBILITY
Preparedness	The APS GO TEAM! consists of 19 volunteers from across the state staff and includes: case workers, worker V's, supervisors, subject matter experts (SMEs), PAs, and a regional attorney. The APS Go Team! serves as the first deployed should a natural disaster occur. Each member will be issued a Pro Card and either have a personal credit card or state-issued credit card for hotel, food, and gas expenses. This team will be able to deploy quickly without having to wait for a Pro Card or Xtra card to be issued.
Response	<p>Response actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • APS has non-coastal districts assigned to coastal districts that will provide backup during natural disasters. • The APS GO TEAM! will be put on stand-by once an event is imminent and deployed to the affected area when law enforcement determines it is safe to do so.

PEI:

PHASE	RESPONSIBILITY
Preparedness	When a disaster occurs, PEI will ensure the safety of PEI staff and providers, as well as assess the impact and potential planning that should occur for continuity of services and operations.
Response	<p>Response actions for Affected PEI Staff Protocol include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The direct supervisor will make every effort to contact their team member to ascertain their welfare and status as soon as possible. 2. Staff in any impacted areas should abide by HHSC or DFPS office closures. 3. Any time, a disaster prevents a staff member from getting to their office, either due to accessibility issues or personal property issues, they should notify their supervisor. 4. Supervisors will escalate information, as appropriate, through their chain of command. 5. The following messaging and information will be shared with staff by their supervisor, unless otherwise indicated, according to existing DFPS policy :

- a. Messages are sent through the calling tree at the onset or prior to a disaster, providing instructions on reporting to work, coverage for essential services, and other vital information. These messages remind staff that important information and resources will continue to be posted on the DFPS intranet and public website. Other messages will be sent up and down the calling tree as needed until normal communications methods are restored. For PEI, each manager will contact their staff via phone call or text and designate a backup designee in the event the manager is unable to perform this task.
- b. Emergency Announcement email: At the onset or prior to a disaster, the DFPS Communications division will send a broadcast email from the DFPS Commissioner or Executive Team to all staff notifying them of the impending disaster or emergency. This email will provide instructions as warranted and will notify staff about information and resources available on the public website. Other broadcast emails are sent as the situation dictates.
- c. Public Website Resources: The DFPS Communications division works with all agency areas to build and maintain a variety of resources for staff and the public on agency Websites. All significant communications to staff are mirrored on the web so those who need to reference them or have additional questions have that information at their fingertips. If email and the intranet are compromised, critical staff information is duplicated on the DFPS public website.
- d. Office Preparations Email: In the event of a hurricane or other widespread weather event, staff in each affected office are sent instructions on how to protect state assets, including computers, files, and records.
- e. IT Inspection of Equipment: Prior to staff returning to offices which have been closed due to damage, IT staff inspects equipment to ensure it is safe to use.

Affected Contractor Protocol:

Any time, a disaster could impact the welfare and/or business operation of a contractor, PEI will follow the following protocol:

1. The program specialist (backup personnel would be program lead or program division administrator for that contract) will make every effort to contact that operation to ascertain their status within 24 hours of the event. PEI staff should determine:
 - a) Extent of impact, such as contractor staff impacted, the operation's structural damage, and other similar impact.
 - b) Extent of the service effect to clients, including any inability to provide services, possible numbers of clients unable to serve, severity of impact on clients, and other similar impact.
2. The program specialist will escalate this information to their direct supervisor to determine next steps. Issues to take into consideration:
 - a. Does PEI need to give formal approval for any adaptations to service or supports provided to a community?
 - b. Does executive leadership need to be made immediately aware of any issues related to the disaster circumstances?
 - c. Does executive leadership need to conduct any outreach and/or communication to a contractor?
 - d. Does there need to be a PEI Reporting System (PEIRS) data entry accommodation?
 - e. Does there need to be a PEIRS invoicing accommodation?
 - f. Does there need to be a plan to work with the contractor if the service delivery is impacted?
3. The program specialist will document any recommended next steps in an email summary and receive approval from their direct supervisor.
4. The action steps should be distributed to all key parties for approval. At a minimum this should include the contract manager assigned to the contractor and the division administrator of Research and Evaluation. Depending on the action required, the program specialist will obtain proper approval, which can include cross team staff and different levels of leadership.
5. The program specialist will monitor completion of the steps/actions frequently, updating the status, and/or modifying and adding any additional steps/actions needed.

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. The program specialist and contract manager will determine a plan to conduct regular check-ins, depending on the severity and nature of the disaster, with their contractor(s) until the disaster event emergency passes. 7. Any time during the monitoring of the action steps information needs to be escalated, the program specialist or contract manager will inform their direct supervisor. The supervisor will determine if the information needs to be escalated up the chain of command. 8. Final summary status will be compiled by the program specialist to report to their direct supervisor who determines whether or not it requires escalation and/or distribution to other key staff. <p>Disaster documents will be filed in a created share drive folder for the specific disaster event.</p>
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SWI:

Consequence to Function, Plan I.1

Problem Description:	Phone Provider Down
Component Function	The current DFPS phone provider is Lumen, and it is managed by the HHS Telecom Team. It is unlikely Lumen as a network would go out of service, but this problem situation contemplates complete outage.
Problem Consequences	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No external digital phone or analogue calls of any type are received or transmitted. 2. E-reports and correspondence are the only viable means of receiving reports.
Notifications	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The DFPS Automatic Call Distributor (ACD) Administrator and HHS Telecom Team 2. SWI Associate Commissioner (when necessary, SWI Associate Commissioner makes remaining notifications) 3. Chief Operating Officer/Executive Team/Information Resources Technology (IRT) 4. SWI Internal Notifications 5. Director, IT Operations 6. Director, Program Support 7. Business Continuity Planner 8. Media Relations Manager
Task Responsibilities	Action Steps

DFPS ACD Administrator and HHS Telecom Team	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Contact phone provider 2. Initial troubleshooting and reporting. 3. Determine if a work around may be implemented during standby for actions once service is restored.
SWI	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. ASAP determine what media are available for intake receipt. 2. Redirect staff to E-reports & correspondence 3. Initiate Notifications
IT/General computing Services (GCS)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Assist with troubleshooting. 2. Standby for necessary actions once service is restored.
Lumen	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Keep IT informed of the status of problem-solving. 2. Standby for necessary actions once service is restored. 3. Fix issue and restore services
Media Manager	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prepare public information statement encouraging intakes to e-reports or alternative methods.
Program Support	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Through the DFPS Operations e-mail, notify all personnel of the loss of intake ability and internal phone use.
Plan Testing, Training, Exercising, and Maintenance	HHS conducts tests and exercises of the Avaya and Cisco platform systems. The Avaya platform has two data centers with AT&T carrier capacity for fail over redundancy.

COMMUNICATION APPENDIXES

This appendix contains examples of past communications that may be used as a starting point.

Appendix 1 – Emergency Announcement Email

(Example #1)

As you may know, Tropical Depression Harvey is expected to strengthen into a tropical storm or hurricane and make landfall on the Texas coast by Friday or Saturday. This storm will produce heavy rains and flooding in some areas along the Texas Coast but could also cause flooding further inland. Please stay tuned to your local weather situation and heed the warnings and instructions of local officials.

I know how committed you are to protecting children and vulnerable adults. However, please be careful as you travel to the office or in the field. If your office is open, and you don't believe you can safely get there, contact your supervisor. If your office is closed, stay home unless you are designated as essential personnel. Again, coordinate with your supervisor.

The best way to find out if your office is open or closed is to make sure your contact information is up to date in the [Emergency Notification and Alert System](#). If for any reason you are not registered with the system, please [register](#).

In case of evacuations, make sure you know who to call in your chain of command and that your supervisor has all your contact information. Talk to your supervisors if you are unfamiliar with your Emergency Calling Tree protocol. Also, programs should make sure on-call schedules are up to date in IMPACT.

It's possible that you could lose access to the DFPS Safety Net and agency email in a widespread weather event. If that happens, we'll post emergency information on the [DFPS public website](#), which you can access directly on your agency or personal phone. We may also send messages through the [DFPS Facebook page](#) or [Twitter account](#).

If there are evacuations, we will ask DFPS foster parents to check in with us, either by filling out a survey on our public website or by calling the Texas Abuse Hotline at 800-252-5400. CPAs and all other types of residential providers will do the same for the children in their care.

Again, be careful, stay in contact with your supervisor, and watch for more messages as this event unfolds.

Commissioner Hank Whitman

(Example #2)

Tropical Depression Imelda is causing widespread flooding in Southeast Texas and could cause flooding in Northeast Texas over the next couple of days. From Houston to Beaumont, some DFPS offices and many homes and roads are flooded.

Please stay tuned to the local weather and heed the warnings and instructions of local officials. They will let you know if you need to shelter in place or evacuate. If you do evacuate, make sure you know who to call in your chain of command and that your supervisor has all your contact information.

I know how committed you are to protecting children and vulnerable adults. However, please be extremely careful as you travel to the office or in the field. If your headquarters is open and you don't believe you can safely get there, contact your supervisor. If your office is closed, stay away from it and coordinate with your supervisor.

Put your safety first. Getting stranded in a flood or putting yourself at risk doesn't help our clients. If it's not safe for you to do a safety check on a client, contact first responders in your area to request one.

Also be aware that we will post information for you on the Safety Net or even the Public Website if the need arises. Finally, programs need to make sure on-call schedules are up to date in IMPACT.

Thank you for protecting the unprotected and remember to put your safety first.

Acting Commissioner Trevor Woodruff

Appendix 2 – Emergency Leave and Payroll

(Example #1)

Emergency Leave for DFPS Staff Affected by Tropical Storm Imelda

DFPS understands staff who have been personally affected by flooding from Tropical Storm Imelda may need time off to take care of personal business.

That is why, effective immediately, Acting Commissioner Trevor Woodruff has authorized:

- Up to five days of emergency leave for employees unable to report to duty because of personal loss or damage from the flood.
- Payment for overtime pay for staff who work overtime because of this event.

Below are the four time-reporting instructions related to this event.

1. Time Off to Attend to Personal Matters

In consultation with their directors, supervisors will validate the need for leave and work with their employees so staff have the opportunity to care for their homes and personal property.

Employees unable to report for duty:

- Must notify their immediate supervisor of the need to take care of their personal obligations.
- May use up to five days (40 hours) of emergency leave and enter the time reporting code DSTRT (Emergency Leave During Disaster) and the override reason code IMLDA (Tropical Storm Imelda) into CAPPs if they are unable to report to work as scheduled.
- May not request emergency leave if they are on leave without pay (LWOP) or on other approved leave (e.g., sick leave, vacation, etc.).

The 40 hours of emergency leave can be used for time taken during the flood or to deal with issues related to the flooding, such as meeting with insurance adjusters. Employees should give their supervisor as much notice as possible and can use the 40 hours of emergency leave as needed.

2. Time Off Because the Office Is Closed

If you need to take time off because your office is closed for this weather event, use the time reporting code OFTWT (Office Weather Closure) and the override reason code IMLDA (Tropical Storm Imelda).

3. Working in Support of Disaster Relief Efforts

If you are working in a supporting role for this event, use the time reporting code REGDS (Hours Worked during Disaster) and the override reason code IMLDA (Tropical Storm Imelda).

4. Requesting and Processing Overtime

If you are working overtime that is related to this flooding event (including those assuming additional duties in support of affected agency staff), you are eligible to be paid for any overtime hours. You must enter the actual number of hours worked, in excess of the eight hours regularly scheduled, in your CAPPs timesheet and use the override code IMLDA (Tropical Storm Imelda).

If you work an unscheduled workday, enter the total number of hours worked using the time reporting code "REGHR" and the override code IMLDA (Tropical Storm Imelda).

To be paid:

1. You must enter a request for overtime hours to be paid through the CAPPs system and enter "Hours worked in support of Tropical Storm Imelda" in the comments.
2. Your supervisor must:
 - Confirm that the overtime is related to work associated with this flooding event.
 - Enter a time reporting code of "FLSAP".
 - Enter the correct number of FLSA overtime hours to be paid in support of the flooding event.
 - Enter the override reason code IMLDA (Tropical Storm Imelda) and in the comments field enters "For hours worked in support of Tropical Storm Imelda."
 - The supervisor will get a pop-up screen to approve the payment as appropriate.

Once your supervisor approves the payout of overtime, you will receive the payment for the overtime hours. The timing of the approval will determine whether the hours will be included in your regular monthly payroll or a supplemental payroll. Managers should review the payroll calendar for payroll processing dates.

(Example #2)

Overtime Instructions

Last night the President issued a disaster declaration for Texas. Aside from making federal assistance available to Texans who suffer hardships, it means DFPS employees must track the time they work on hurricane-related activities.

What this means to you

When you record your time in CAPPs, you need to designate the time spent on hurricane-related duties.

Enter the time-reporting code REGDS (not REGHR) and the override reason code HARVY to specify hours worked in support of disaster relief efforts. This includes scheduled hours and overtime hours.

If your office is temporarily closed and you have been authorized not to work your scheduled hours, use the emergency leave time-reporting code OFTCT (office temporarily closed).

Example

Worked 10 hours all in support of disaster relief.	Use time reporting code REGDS and the override reason code HARVY to for all 10 hours.
Worked 6 hours on normal duties and 4 hours on hurricane related activities.	Use reporting code REGHR (regular hours worked) and enter 6 hours. Add a new line and use time reporting code REGDS and the override reason code HARVY and enter 4 hours.
Did not work normal 8 hours scheduled	Use the emergency leave time reporting code OFTCT.

If you do not have access to CAPPs timesheet during this event, keep track of the hours you work manually and make any necessary entries when you have access to CAPPs. Questions can be directed to the HHS Service Center at 1-888-894-4747, or via email to HHSTLLaction@hpsc.state.tx.us

Travel

Any travel related expenditures associated with Hurricane Harvey should be charged to your usual PAC. Please explain in the travel description that it is related to Hurricane Harvey.

Other Purchase/Expenditure Requests

Any purchases for goods or services related specifically to Hurricane Harvey will need to go through the normal purchase request and approval process. Please reference **HARVEY** when submitting any requests for goods or services related specifically to the hurricane activities.

Appendix 3 – Employee Assistance Message

Natural disasters are very traumatic. To support DFPS employees and their families who have been affected by Hurricane Harvey, our employee assistance program provider, Deer Oaks, is offering support sessions in your area.

Each session allows staff to talk about their losses and share their reactions. Trauma experts will provide supportive listening and education on grief and loss. They will also share some strategies for how to cope with trauma and discuss the support services that are available to you.

Typically, each session lasts two hours. The first hour focuses on group interaction, and the second hour is reserved for those who wish to speak with a therapist one on one. These sessions are open to any DFPS employee, as well as their adult family members. We have arranged for multiple sessions within your area since space may be limited. [\(insert dates, times, locations here for appropriate region/offices\)](#)

You will find a few helpful resources attached to this email. If you need additional information or resources, you may also contact Deer Oaks at 1-866-327-2400.

Appendix 4 – Office Preparations Email Example

TO ALL DFPS STAFF/ Region _____:

For all sites affected by the inclement weather situation (describe), please ensure the following preparations for IT equipment and official case records (paper, CDs, videos, etc. - regardless of medium) are handled prior to leaving your office today.

1. Shut down and disconnect all equipment (PCs, printers and copiers/docu-centers).
2. Cover equipment with plastic bags. The Local Office Coordinator for your office will have these supplies.
3. Make sure no electrical surge protectors are on the floor.
4. As per IT policy, no automation equipment should be on the floor.
5. Safeguard any data stored in CDs to avoid damage in the event of flooding.
6. For training sites, trainers should follow the above procedures for all training rooms.
7. Make sure all case files and records are off the floor and stored appropriately. If you have boxes of records that are part of the Records Cleanup Project, please make sure they are off the floor as well.

Note: For staff with GoToMyPC, it will not be available since your PC will be shut down.

TO ALL LOCAL SITE CONTACTS:

If the site encounters an electrical outage or water damage, you are to immediately contact Regional Administrative Services at _____ or _____ (RSM) at _____.

In the event of damage to any IT equipment or issues when powering them back on, the Local Site Contact should call the Customer Service Center at (877) 642-4777.

Appendix 5 – Cascading Communications Example

Attention all DFPS Staff

In the days and weeks ahead, you will receive a number of broadcast emails and other communications that contain information critical to protecting DFPS staff and clients from Swine Flu or maintaining agency operations.

Each DFPS employee is required to read all Swine Flu messages and apply the information if it relates to their job.

All Swine Flu related broadcasts are available in one place for easy reference– the homepage of the [DFPS Intranet](#).

Instructions for DFPS Managers

1. Immediately forward this email to all your direct reports.
2. Instruct your staff to read all Swine Flu broadcasts and incorporate all applicable information into their daily work.
3. Ensure these messages reach your staff by discussing the contents of each broadcast with your staff members at the earliest opportunity. This can be as simple as reviewing the broadcast at regular meetings and discussing what that means to each person.
4. Managers who supervise other managers are responsible for assuring that those managers are complying with this directive.

Appendix 6 – Public Website Post Example

(DFPS website homepage tease)

Resources for Families Affected by Tropical Storm Imelda

Have you or your family been affected by Tropical Storm Imelda? Use this [list of resources](#) to get help with food, shelter, and more. Would you like to help? The [same page](#) explains how you can assist foster youth, the elderly, and the disabled. [\[go now\]](#)

Appendix 7 – Situation Reports



Texas Department of Family and Protective Services

Summary of Statewide DFPS Activities

Hurricane Harvey
September 5, 2017

DFPS requires that licensed individuals who care for children in TMC or PMC contact the department if they must evacuate. They can contact the department through Statewide Intake or complete a survey on the DFPS website to inform the agency of the location and condition of the children in their care. Data on the survey results is below.

As of 2 pm on 9/5, 652 survey responses have been received, with approximately **1,581** children in GROs, RTCs or Foster Homes who have reported evacuation on the survey and **all children and youth are reported safe with no incidents.**

Current GRO Evacuations: 6 Evacuations (two of these operations do not care for DFPS children)

- R11 - Connections (GRO –Emergency Care Services) to their shelter in New Braunfels, Tx
- R08 – Brownson Home (GRO – Child Care Services) to La Quinta Inn, San Antonio, Tx
- R06 – SWK Casa Quetzal (GRO – Child Care Services) to Channelview, Tx
- R05 – Girls Haven (GRO- Multiple Services) to Methodist Children’s Home in Waco, Tx
- R05 – Boys Haven of America (GRO –Multiple Services) to Jasper, Tx
- R05 – Buckner (GRO –Emergency Care Services/Assessment Services) to Burnet, Tx

Current RTC Evacuations: 1 Evacuation

R08 – Devereux (Victoria campus) (GRO RTC) to Aquilla, Tx

CCL (Daycare Licensing) has received 771 survey results, with 298 operations indicating that they are not operating, the majority located in Harris, Fort Bend, and Nueces counties. From those 298 closed operations, a total of 16,252 children have been displaced. CCL will be allowing and approving operations to temporarily relocate and use

temporary portable buildings to help centers resume care as quickly as possible. Staff who are able in the Houston area are back at work today and coordinating with area operations to resume care as soon as possible.

Child Protective Services (CPS)

- Nineteen offices in Regions 07,08, and 11 re-opened today.
- CPS has staff stationed at both Houston shelters and shelters in Dallas from 8 am to 8 pm daily. Families are identifying themselves to our staff at shelters and asking to get messages to their caseworkers. So, this is a positive.
- There continue to be areas in all of the impacted regions where it is not safe to travel.
- In some areas of the state, we are hearing from law enforcement that they cannot go out on cases where we also cannot get out due to the ongoing extensive rescue efforts.
- Staff are arriving in Houston today to provide assistance on Investigations, Family Reunification, and FBSS cases. We are in the process of trying to finalize a snapshot of what our workforce will look like next week in impacted areas.
- Region 5: still, lots of areas underwater and flooding is ongoing. Evacuations were still occurring over the weekend. We are continuing outreach to determine status of staff and children.
- We learned that registration at Red Cross shelters is a “paper and pen” process and there will not be a way to easily identify what families are at what shelters. We are having further discussions with Red Cross. We have requested assistance from Red Cross/FEMA in helping us locate families. They have one database we are attempting to get access to. We can also use Safe and Well to locate families. This is a site where people who have been displaced register their location.
- We have begun coordination with the teams from National Center for Missing and Exploited Children in Houston.
- While we have received spreadsheets regarding children placed with CPAs in the impacted areas, the situation continues to change by the hour, and we are receiving ongoing updates from providers. As evacuations continued in many areas over the weekend, we are continually updating information. There have been no reported concerns from CPAs. We have completed initial review and cross reference of provider information and evacuation survey information, have reached back out to specific providers for additional information, received updates, and are completing our reconciliation.
- The following GRO/RTCs remain evacuated. We have visited all children at evacuation sites. We have also provided information to CASA regarding these evacuations.

Connections: 11 children
Buckners: 14 children
Devereux Victoria: 23 children
Girls Haven: 23 children

Boys Haven: 4 children

- Two churches in East Texas donated thousands of dollars of clothing, shoes, and other items for the ten children who evacuated from Wee Care facility last week and who had lost all their belongings in the storm. The items were delivered this weekend.
- All 4 youth who ran away from Montgomery County during the storm have been located. A Harris County youth is on runaway since the storm started and has not been located. (Additional Harris County youth that ran during storm have returned.)
- We continue specific outreach to all GRO/RTCs that evacuated specifically to discuss short-term and long-term needs. So far, there are two providers that are considering relocation. Three providers have told us they will have to rebuild. We have had 11 providers and/or faith-communities that have offered up vacant space, if there are facilities that want to temporarily move operations on to a different site. We will coordinate exploration of all possibilities and we continue to receive new information from providers and update current available capacity in real time.
- Communication will go out today to both conservatorship staff and residential providers to encourage everyone to promote contact between children and family members on their approved contact list who may have been impacted by the storm to reduce anxiety and concerns with youth in care.
- Our medical services staff have completed attempted contacts to all caregivers for primary medical needs children in areas impacted by the storm. We have also circled back around on region 5 due to the changing nature of the situation in that region. We successfully contacted 459 families. There are 19 families we have not been able to reach after multiple attempts. That information is being provided to the field for follow up face-to-face visits as identified. Medical services staff continue to trouble shoot and problem solve with caregivers as issues are identified.
- Superior has provided a file list of their contacts. They have made substantial outreach. Superior reports providing these types of supports:
 - ▶ Worked to find an alternate refill pharmacy to ensure a member had enough medications in case of extended inclement weather.
 - ▶ Coordinated early medication refills to ensure adequate supply, to include obtaining overrides if needed.
 - ▶ Helped ensure an adequate supply of formula to meet members' nutritional needs.
 - ▶ Worked with a special needs caregiver and followed up on her need for transportation out of an impacted area with several special need's kids.
 - ▶ Worked with an IP facility to ensure placement days were in place/covered as a member was transferred from one facility to another due to the weather.
 - ▶ Worked with coordinating CPS and an IP facility to make sure placement days were in effect appropriately.
 - ▶ Worked with an RTC to help coax a youth into agreeing to evacuate.

- We also asked for specific help for continuity in treatment services to one evacuated GRO, providing substance abuse treatment. They will provide.
- Family-Based Safety Services families: We are continuing outreach and beginning to locate activities to families we have not yet reached. Staff are beginning face-to-face visits in the impacted areas where we can safely travel. We are referring them to all resources available and offering them all the support we can. Staff from other parts of the state are arriving in Houston today to provide additional manpower to locate and visit families.
- Family Reunification: We have completed first contact on these families. We had 516 on our list for the affected counties: 62 were on list in error (either already had cases dismissed or were not actually in an affected area); 85 were attempted but contact could not be made (the bulk of these were in Harris County). 366 were contacted either by phone or face-to-face contact. We are beginning attempts for face-to-face contact to families we have not yet reached. Staff from other parts of the state are arriving in Houston today to provide additional manpower to locate and visit these families.
- Kinship/CPS Foster Adoptive homes: All were contacted prior to event. Second follow up contacts to follow up with these homes was completed Friday. Not all families have been reached. We are beginning to locate activities and face-to-face visits for those we have not been able to reach, where it is safe to travel. We have reached out to the Department of Aging and Disabilities on 24 HCS homes we have been unable to reach.
- Juvenile Justice facilities: We have 41 children in juvenile justice facilities. We have made contact with all facilities. No identified issues.
- Psychiatric hospitals: We have completed contacts to all, and no issues have been identified.
- We are finalizing our SharePoint system with the numerous compiled spreadsheets about our contacts and attempt to locate families in ongoing stages of service and working to summarize the outcomes thus far. All regions will continue documentation in the system, so we can track progress.
- We made a plan for quickly requesting courtesy visits when families in any stage of service are identified who have moved.

Adult Protective Services (APS)

- APS is in the process of assessing the needs of Regions 05, 06, and 11 and are preparing to mobilize staff as needed, deployment to begin this week.
- APS has seen more clients who have been evacuated to emergency shelters and need assistance. Many have medical needs that cannot be met in the emergency shelters and there are clients in need of dialysis. APS is contacting area nursing homes to plan for placement of some clients as appropriate and referring others with specialized needs.
- APS is seeing clients in hotels and shelters who were receiving home health services prior to the evacuation and are now displaced and in need of home health services.

- APS has been in touch with DADS and there are waivers pending as of today that will assist in the reinstatement of home health services at the client's new location with a new home health provider agency. There are also DADS waivers in process of implementation to ease the restrictions of nursing home patients who will need to establish a new nursing home as their place of residence.

DFPS Infrastructure/State Office

- DFPS staff have evacuated in areas where this is mandatory and have been advised not to return to their offices as long as they remain closed.
- DFPS staff are also being displaced, some temporarily until the storm surge recedes and some until new housing can be secured. DFPS programs are compiling data on the needs of the workforce and accounting for the needs of our clients.
- DFPS is receiving requests for needs from families and requests from potential donors. DFPS is working with our partners to ensure that we can facilitate the needs of our clients and partner with our communities.
- Statewide Intake is documenting storm-related intakes with a specific "Disaster code", so we can be aware of storm specific incidents.
- DFPS staff are also manually tracking the time spent on storm-related activities and inquiries. These will ultimately be recorded in the CAPPs system and will be available for remittance to FEMA for disaster reimbursement.
- DFPS has been coordinating with Law Enforcement agencies in affected areas to ensure that in locations where DFPS staff cannot safely respond to an intake or clients in need of services.
- Statewide Intake has backup generators to ensure that the phone lines for the abuse/neglect hotline remain operational.
- Regional Administrative Services and IT are coordinating to ensure asset protection (buildings, computers, and technology, etc.).

Statewide Intake Data with Disaster Code for Hurricane Harvey

- Data collection began at 10 pm on 8/24
- 465 total intakes for clients in disaster areas/affected by the disaster

APS P-1 = 84

APS Others = 101

APS PI P1 = 3

APS PI Others = 5

CPS P-1 = 13

CPS Others: = 49

Licensing P-1 = 0

Licensing Others: = 1

Case Related Special Request = 2

Information and Referrals – total 207

Appendix 8 – Updates for Governor’s Office and State Leaders

(Example #1)

Good evening –

I want to provide an update on the impact of Tropical Storm Imelda on DFPS clients, staff, and facilities.

DFPS is tracking intakes specific to TS Imelda. Historically, intakes for concerns of abuse or neglect will slow during natural disasters, however DFPS still attempts to see children, families, and vulnerable adults whenever safe. If we cannot immediately access these individuals, we do make referrals to law enforcement and will see these families as soon as safely possible.

Child Protective Investigations (CPI) staff are working existing investigations and new investigations as quickly as they can. Face-to-face timeliness will be affected as access to some of these families is currently not possible. However, as the water recedes, staff will visit these families quickly to ensure safety. They are also making phone calls to check in with Parent Child Safety Placement (PCSP) families and ensure that those families have a safety plan to deal with the weather. These families will provide updates to CPI staff if their location changes.

It appears that all Special Investigators in the affected areas are safe, but some may have difficulty in returning home from out-of-town assignments. They will continue to support CPI staff as they are able.

DFPS has reached out to all DFPS Kinship/Foster to Adopt Homes, families involved with Family-Based Safety Services (FBSS), Child Placing Agencies (CPA) and General Residential Operations (GRO). DFPS is aware of no GROs or Residential Treatment Centers (RTC) that needed to evacuate due the storm. On Thursday, Girl’s Haven, which is a GRO, was unable to get folks in or out of their facility due to flooded roads. They were not required to evacuate and remained safe with water and power. Staff checked with them this morning and they reported they are fine. There have been foster families who have left their homes throughout the areas.

Child Protective Services (CPS) has been reaching out to staff and families since Thursday morning and will continue to attempt to contact those who have not yet responded in the following areas:

- Region 5 – Jefferson, Orange, Hardin
- Region 6A – (cities) Kingwood, Atascocita, Humble and Tomball
- Region 6B – Chambers, Liberty and Montgomery

Foster Placements/FAD/Kinship/Other (FRE, HCS, SIL, etc.)

Region 5:

- Contracted placements – all reached and safe.
- FAD – all reached and fine.
- KIN – all reached – 6 children had to leave their homes, but all are safe.

- Other placements (Family Reunification <FRE>, HCS homes, etc.) – actively calling all these children/placements still. Of those reached, 3 have been impacted by flooding.

Region 6A:

- Contracted placements – all reached and safe.
- FAD – 10 children in FAD placements in the impacted cities. We have reached all but one family with one child.
- 6 have been impacted by flooding.
- KIN – 67 children in KIN placements. We are still trying to reach placements for 25 children. So far 6 have been impacted by flooding.
- Other placements (FRE, HCS, etc.) – We have 30 children in other placements. We reached all but 9 of those children. Of those contacted none have been impacted by flooding.

Region 6B:

- Contracted placements – all reached and safe.
- FAD – 24 children in FAD placements – we were able to reach all FAD placements – no children impacted by flooding.
- KIN – 172 children in KIN placements. We have reached placements for 65 of these kids. 3 children impacted by flooding.
- Other placements (FRE, HCS, etc.) – 89 children. We have successfully reached 58. So far 1 impacted by flooding and evacuated.

Family Based Safety Services (FBSS)

Region 5

There are 148 children in FBSS families in the impacted counties. We are still actively attempting to reach these families. So far 8 have been impacted by flooding.

Region 6A

There are 138 children in FBSS families in the impacted counties. We are still actively attempting to reach these families. So far 4 have been impacted by flooding.

Region 6B

There are 399 children in FBSS families in the impacted counties. We are still actively attempting to reach these families. So far 0 have been impacted by flooding.

DFPS Staff

DFPS State Office is getting word that a few staff have been displaced from their homes or have experienced home or vehicle damage. We have been able to contact most of our staff in the affected areas but have also had several staff who had to be evacuated from their homes by law enforcement. Staff communications have been sent, notifying staff of office closures, and directing them to stay in touch with their supervisors.

Child Protective Investigations has reached out to all its staff in the affected areas, and they are safe, however some have evacuated or have damaged homes or vehicles.

- Vehicle Damage – 12 totals (10 from Region 06A, 2 from Region 6B).
- Evacuated/Left Home – 4 Staff (2 from Region 06B, 2 from Region 05).
- Damage to Home – 15 staff (8 from Region 06A, 7 in Region 05).

CPS has reached out to its staff to confirm their safety.

- Region 05: Several staff with flooded homes and cars. We have several who were flooded in Harvey and are now flooded again. Additionally, one staff whose home flooded had a rental car in the driveway that has flooded.
- Region 06A – few people flooded into homes, cars, etc.
- Region 06B – Homes flooded; cars flooded. Last night had to keep a child in the office from another region as could not safety transport them.

All APS staff are accounted for with no reported staff injuries or damage to staff members' homes so far. APS staff from surrounding areas are on standby to help see clients as necessary.

Superior has offered to provide assistance as needed. Thus far, we are not aware of any requests for assistance. Superior is conducting outreach to members who live in the impacted area. **No** significant concerns identified at this time. There are no situations where we are working to ensure immediate safety. We have some families seeking assistance, and we are working through needed material goods with those families.

CLOSED OFFICES IN REGION 05

City	County	Address
Beaumont	Jefferson	3105 Executive Blvd
Beaumont	Jefferson	350 Pine St FLR 9
Jasper	Jasper	928 Marvin Hancock Dr STE A
Kirbyville	Jasper	314 N Herndon
Lumberton	Hardin	347 South Main
Orange	Orange	2220 Gloria Dr
Port Arthur	Jefferson	4200 Jimmy Johnson Blvd
Silsbee	Hardin	1215 E HWY 327

CLOSED OFFICES IN REGION 06

City	County	Address
Galveston	Galveston	123 Rosenberg Ave
Crosby	Harris	6500 FM 2100 RD STE 300
Houston	Harris	3 Northpoint Dr
Humble	Harris	3000 Wilson Road
Liberty	Liberty	1405 Monta ST
Conroe	Montgomery	2017 N Frazier STE C1
Conroe	Montgomery	1515 Odd Fellow St

The only damaged office we are aware of is the one on Executive Drive in Beaumont. HHSC Regional Administrative Services was able to view the damage through security cameras. They have been unable to access the other locations yet and are unsure of other damage. The Rainbow Room in the Beaumont office has been destroyed. Staff did not expect this to be such a significant event and many left computers in the office in Beaumont where it appears water was likely over the desktops.

Please let me know if you have any questions, and I'll be in touch with any updated information.

(Example #2)

Good afternoon,

I want to provide you with a quick update on the impact of Tropical Storm Imelda on DFPS clients, staff, and facilities.

DFPS programs continue to prioritize contact with children, families, and vulnerable adults. The agency has checked on the immediate safety of families involved with Family-Based Safety Services, children in foster care, and vulnerable adults involved with Adult Protective Services. DFPS will continue to check in with them while they recover from the storm, as we know that the effects of the storm may linger after the waters subside.

DFPS is glad to say that no general residential operations received damage or need to be evacuated. We are grateful to our partners in the provider community for their service to our kids and their efforts to make sure our kids are safe and cared for.

DFPS leadership is coordinating with regional leadership to ensure that DFPS staff affected by the storm can care for their own families and homes, while making sure that children and families remain safe and served.

Finally, one DFPS office remains closed at this time. Unfortunately, it appears that the Beaumont Executive Office sustained damage worse than Harvey and may be closed for

a significant amount of time. Our DFPS staff are largely a mobile workforce, and we are working to ensure that staff have the equipment they need to continue to do their jobs while looking for temporary workspace.

Thanks for all that you do, and please let me know if you have questions.

Appendix 9 – Guidance for DFPS Contractors Example

Swine Flu Guidance for Contractors

Because of the critical nature of our work protecting the most vulnerable citizens in our state, all Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) contract requirements remain in force. ***At this time, DFPS has not waived any contract requirements due to the Swine Flu outbreak.***

However, since the situation is fluid, contractors should check the DFPS public website frequently for further instructions (www.dfps.state.tx.us).

DFPS urges all its contractors, especially those that provide direct client services, to take reasonable precautions to reduce the likelihood of contracting and spreading the Swine Flu.

DFPS urges contractors to follow the cautionary advice of health officials.

A great deal of useful information about Swine Flu is available on the Department of State Health Services and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) websites.

- <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/swineflu/default.shtm>
- <http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/>

The CDC recommends good health habits like covering your cough and washing your hands, which can help stop the spread of germs like the flu. The CDC makes the following recommendations.

Avoid close contact

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- When you are sick, keep your distance from others to protect them from getting sick too.

Stay home when you are sick

If possible, stay home from work, school, and errands when you are sick. You will help prevent others from catching your illness.

Cover your mouth and nose

Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. It may prevent those around you from getting sick.

Practice good hygiene

Washing your hands often will help protect you from germs.

Appendix 10 – Employee Assistance Fundraiser Message

DFPS Cares

When Hurricane Harvey slammed into the Coastal Bend and then stalled over Southeast Texas it became the worst natural disaster in Texas history. Today, many of our co-workers are dealing with wind-damaged or flooded homes and trying to put their personal lives back in order, even as they work to fulfill our mission.

That is why DFPS teamed up with Texas Partners for Adult Protective Services to collect donations to help our co-workers. No gift is too big or too small. So, please consider contributing \$5, \$10, \$25 or more at [DFPS Cares](#).

I want to thank all of you who have already given generously. We are more than halfway to our \$20,000 goal, and I know we can surpass that goal with your support. We will continue raising funds until **Noon on Friday September 15th**, and then equally distribute the funds to our colleagues who have been severely affected by the storm to help them meet their immediate, basic needs.

While we know the money we raise will not meet all the many needs created by this historic disaster, it is our hope that we will be able to provide a few necessities to give some relief to those co-workers who need help the most.

We spend all day, every day, caring for children and vulnerable adults. Now some of our friends and colleagues are facing great personal challenges. Some have had their homes and cars flooded and lost clothes and personal items. Some were air-lifted out of their homes to safety. Some continue to serve our clients as they themselves live in emergency shelters. Now is our opportunity to show them the same care and generosity they show the people of Texas.

Again, visit [DFPS Cares](#) and contribute if you can. *Remember that this is an internal DFPS campaign only. Do not share externally from your official work email.*

Thank you again for your generosity,

Commissioner Hank Whitman

Appendix 11 – Wrap-Up Broadcast Email Example

Hurricane Dean Bypasses Texas

The latest weather forecasts show Hurricane Dean is no longer an imminent threat to our state. Therefore, DFPS is returning to normal operations.

I want to thank all our staff who took part in hurricane preparations and mitigation efforts, as well as all the staff who made sure that we continued to protect the unprotected. While evacuations were not necessary for this storm, our efforts were worthwhile and prudent. Dean was and still is a powerful storm and it was clear from our experiences with Katrina and Rita in 2005 that it was imperative to take it very seriously.

Of course, we are just now approaching the most active part of the hurricane season and we cannot let down our guard. The efforts we made preparing for Hurricane Dean will

serve us well if another storm approaches. If that should occur, I would like you to keep in mind that:

- The best way to learn if your office is open or closed is to make sure your contact information is up to date.
- Make sure your contact information is up to dates in the [Emergency Notification and Alert System](#). If for any reason you are not registered with the system, please [register](#).
- Always keep personal safety in mind when commuting or traveling in the field during severe weather. Coordinate with you supervisor.
- Make sure you know who to call in your chain of command to let them know where you are in an evacuation and that you are safe.
- DFPS will post emergency staff information on the public website at www.dfps.state.tx.us in the event agency email and the DFPS Intranet are unavailable.

Hopefully, none of this will become necessary this year. If it does, I am confident that each and every one of you will rise to the occasion to assist each other and work together to continue serving the citizens of Texas.

Thank you again.

Summary of Statewide DFPS Covid19 Activities

The Covid19 pandemic, beginning in March 2020, has been a new type of disaster and remains one that DFPS is still addressing. The DFPS Chief Operating Officer serves as the Incident Commander and all facets of the agency are involved. Unlike more targeted disasters that impact a single geographic area, Covid19 impacts the entire state.

Business Continuity efforts incorporate ever changing information learned about the virus, new federal and state guidance as it arrives, and changing impact on workforce, families, and stakeholders.

The response to Covid19 includes significant workforce effort, predominantly coordinated by the Office of Operations and Human Resources. This includes ongoing work to secure and distribute sufficient Personal Protective Equipment, tracking of workforce availability, contract tracing, and notification of staff and clients. Facility impact is addressed on an ongoing basis, with office cleaning, temporary closure, staffing levels being continuously addressed. Each program has changed its protocol, guidance to staff, policies, and other efforts as new information or direction from state and federal government is received.

Technology has been key to the agency response, with increased teleworking, more mobile equipment for the already mobile direct delivery staff, use of virtual visits or meetings, and virtual partnerships with courts and other stakeholders. Because of the ongoing nature of the crisis and the challenge monitoring all fast changes, DFPS has maintained a Covid19 page on its public website at the following link:

http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/About_DFPS/Coronavirus/default.asp

Additionally, DFPS provides immediate guidance to its staff through an intranet Coronavirus website available to DFPS employees. The DFPS Center for Program

Innovation and Program Coordination conducted focus groups with agency mid- and upper-level leadership to identify what was working well and what challenges remained. Findings included.

Strengths

- Agency's Information Technology (IT) staff and speed to transition to telework status.
- Hiring, on-boarding, and training of new staff continued in the virtual environment.
- The frequency of the internal staff communication and scope of content resulted in staff feeling supported by the agency.
- Participants emphasized the importance of the "cascade" communications channel as it allows field staff at various levels to ask questions and engage their localized expertise in fast-moving situations.
- Regular meetings with the Chief Operating Officer with state office and field program leaders was helpful.
- The agency's close relationship with STAR Health partners and other external partners was successful.
- Worker safety was enhanced when COVID questions were added to SWI intake script "really early."

Challenges

- Existing response plans lacked pandemic-specific protocols to track, act on, and report positive staff cases at the onsite of the crisis.
- Centralized distribution of personal protective equipment (PPE) could not sufficiently meet demand across the state.
- Not all processes are easily adapted to teleworking, such as notarizations, service of legal process, and receipt of physical mail.
- Messaging regarding office closures was inconsistent.
- The coordination of agency offices co-located with other state agencies. Frustrations centered around confusion about roles and responsibilities.
- Court orders varied considerably. Some ordered no face-to-face visits, while others threatened contempt if we didn't facilitate the face-to-face visitations they mandated.
- Setting, adjusting, and maintaining policies was complicated by conflicting information from all levels of government. The rate at which health guidance and protocols changed exceeded the rate at which the agency could distribute the information, so information was often outdated.
- Regional leaders expressed concern with *what* and *how much* information the agency asked them to gather and track.
- The shift to telework pressed the capacity of the agency's virtual private network (VPN).

Despite the ongoing challenges of a national pandemic that continues to have a significant impact on the state's entire child welfare system, it is clear that agency staff and stakeholders maintain a mission-driven approach to the ongoing work.

DFPS Response to February 2021 Winter Weather Event

There were no natural disasters since our last June 30, 2022, IV-B state plan submission that required activating the DFPS Disaster Plan.

An intense Arctic air mass encompassed the entire state of Texas resulting in record low temperatures as well as winter precipitation in the form of snow, ice, and freezing rain which caused major disruptions. The intensity and duration of this air mass had numerous adverse impacts on the electrical grid, water infrastructure, and transportation network.

While still in the midst of the pandemic, the DFPS mission to “protect the unprotected” was challenged as staff faced unforeseen obstacles. As with prior incidents, our caseworkers continued to safely perform agency mission-essential functions while navigating service disruptions by providing direct delivery service to our most vulnerable clients with the assistance of our support staff.

All DFPS staff were instructed by Commissioner Masters to work from home. Staff in mission-critical roles were asked to limit travel, if possible. Emergency leave was granted to all staff who were unable to work due to issues such as power outages.

Program staff received direction from their management to guide them with triaging priority investigations and critical functions. This included guidelines for use of law enforcement to assist with responding on priority investigations, making phone and video calls as a temporary substitute in some types of child investigations as well as for child and family contacts, and identifying replacement staff to cover critical functions for staff without power or who were unable to safely travel.

The agency was well positioned (after transitioning the workforce to telework due to Covid-19 last March) to allow certain support staff and staff in administrative areas to accomplish most of their critical tasks from home without interruption.

An After-Action Review of this incident was conducted which identified challenges with recommendations as well as successes. Following further analysis, some of the recommendations will be implemented in order to enhance resiliency of DFPS operations.

Disaster Planning to Address Disparities for Marginalized Groups

- The Office for Addressing Disproportionality and Disparities (OADD) provides subject matter expertise related to applying a lens for offering and providing support after a disaster occurs in underserved communities with the unique challenges they face.
- OADD encourages the agency’s efforts in utilizing a trauma-informed approach to providing support to marginalized groups after a disaster occurs.

Supplemental Appropriations for Disaster Relief Act (PL 116-20)

DFPS applied for funding April 3, 2020, and received the award of \$558,195.00 in May 2020, in disaster funding from Title IV-B, part 1 to address costs resulting from the impact of hurricanes and flooding to parts of Texas. The agency used these funds to support staff salary expenses to ensure continuity of services, and to maintain the health and safety of children, youth, and families.

CARES Act (PL 116-136)

DFPS received a grant through the CARES Act that totaled \$4,690,717.00. DFPS used \$1,919,705.00 of these funds to support front-line staff through the purchase of personal protective equipment (PPE), to help ensure the safe continuity of services.

Additionally, DFPS used \$773,012.00 for client services, to purchase beds that were used to safely isolate and quarantine children that had tested positive and/or been exposed to COVID-19.

Foster care providers encountered unanticipated costs related to workforce, cleaning/PPE supplies, personal care, educational supplies, and technology/connectivity, as schools closed, and children sheltered in place. To partially off-set these COVID related costs, DFPS awarded \$2.0M to the Texas Center for Child and Family Services (TACFS) to provide grants to foster care and prevention services providers.

DFPS did not provide assistance to the disabled, elderly and kinship families out of the title IV-B, part I funds.