Disaster Assistance Handbook For Multipurpose Senior Services Program

California Department of Aging
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SECTION 1: DISASTER IMPACT ON OLDER ADULTS

Planning for Disasters

A disaster creates an overwhelming disruption on a scale sufficient to require outside assistance. Such an event imperils lives and property. Community-wide or regional disaster threats include earthquakes, floods, wildfires, severe weather conditions, and terrorism, including chemical or biological attacks. More localized or agency specific emergencies include fires and events such as a local hazardous materials incident.

- Police, fire, paramedics, and 911 responses will be overrun the first three to five days after a major disaster. For example, if a major earthquake occurs, fires, gas leaks, building collapses, freeway damage, spills, and refinery incidents all require emergency response.

- Utility services may be unavailable for extended periods. Roads may be closed; normal transportation routes may be significantly altered; public transportation may be limited.

- People will largely be "on their own" in the initial days following a major disaster as outside help may be slow in arriving, and outside help may be unreachable if telephone lines are jammed or not functioning.

- The organization's work environment may change dramatically. If it is a major disaster, returning to business as usual will be a long and challenging process. The community infrastructure may be impacted by the disaster and affect the ability of organizations to serve older adults and those with disabilities after the event.

Vulnerability of Older Adults

- Resides in High-Risk Areas – Older adults living on fixed incomes often live in older housing or lower income communities. These communities often suffer the greatest physical and structural damage from disaster.

- Dependent on Support Services – Many older adults require community support services to function independently (home-delivered meals, adult day care, home care assistance, senior centers, etc.). An emergency that disrupts these lifelines leaves them vulnerable.

- No Support System – Low income older adults often do not have the resources to prepare for disasters nor a network to fall back on after the disaster.

- Service Barriers – When disaster recovery services and information cannot be accessed or lack cultural and linguistic appropriateness, many older adults have greater difficulty recovering from disasters.

The Role of MSSP Sites

Depending on the details of local disaster response plans, MSSP sites may perform any of the following:

- Act as a conduit for getting disaster information to older adults

- Obtain information on the disaster needs of older adults back to emergency officials

   Develop and implement a new care plan indicating referred, informal, or waiver services essential in ensuring the health and safety of the MSSP participant

- Ensure that service providers can continue to deliver services after a disaster, to the extent possible

- Provide reassurance to the participants they serve in a manner linguistically and culturally appropriate. Lacking other family or community resources, the use of Waiver Services for translation is permitted

- Offer community resources that enhance response and recovery effectiveness within local jurisdictions

SECTION 2: STANDARD EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

California's basic disaster response framework is the Standard Emergency Management System (SEMS). A 1992 State law mandates the use of SEMS in all State agency disaster responses. County and local governments also use SEMS to receive State reimbursement for expenses they incur in a disaster and is the California standard for organizing disaster work and in responding to disasters.

SEMS Organization Levels

The five SEMS organizational levels follow a hierarchy for requesting resources to meet disaster needs. The action starts with people out in the field responding to the emergency and delivering services to meet needs. As these first level responders run out of resources, SEMS allows for the deployment of resources from the next level up. The process continues in this manner until the State deploys all available resources. A major earthquake, flood or act of terrorism ultimately activates the last or final level of support -- federal emergency resources.

1. **Field** – The SEMS bottom level consists of the first-on-the-scene responders to emergencies such as fire personnel, police, and paramedics. Home and Community Based Services organizations are also at the field level.

2. **Local Government** – For additional resources beyond the field level, the local government resources form the next level of support. Cities, counties and special districts coordinate the overall emergency response within its jurisdiction. An Emergency Operations Center (EOC) functions as the center for coordinating each local government's response. An emergency that affects multiple cities (earthquake, flood, wildfire) or an event that overwhelms the resources of local government, such as a city running out of resources, activates the next level up.

3. **Operational Area (Op Area)** – All 58 California counties are designated as Op Areas. The Op Area includes all the public agencies within that county including cities and special districts. It coordinates information, resources, and mutual aid among all local governments within that county boundary. Op Areas eliminate jurisdictional disputes concerning disaster management, especially resource dispersion. The single Op Area commander coordinates disaster response in that Op Area. Cities, counties, or local government each operate their own EOC, but each local EOC communicates with its Op Area.

4. **Region** – The Op Areas fall under one of three State Administrative Regions -- Inland, Coastal, and Southern. Each region handles mutual aid requests between the Op Areas within that region. Therefore, if a county Op Area cannot provide the necessary requested assistance for a city in its area, then the Op Area contacts its appropriate Office of Emergency Services (OES) Regional Office to request State assistance.

5. **State Government** – Regional level support requests trigger the deployment of State level emergency response. The State EOS coordinates State resources and integrates federal agencies. When State resources cannot meet support requirements, the State requests a federal declaration of emergency to allow for deployment of the Federal Government's resources. The Governor's OES in Sacramento administers the EOC.

Accessing the EOC

MSSP formalizes the relationship to the EOC at the local level. Each government agency generally sends a representative to the EOC during a disaster. Therefore, the first step is to identify the relationship already in place between the department and/or agency in which the MSSP resides and the city or county EOC. MSSP's disaster preparedness includes reviewing the larger department's or organization's disaster plan and/or contacting its city or county Office of Emergency Services for further orientation. For MSSPs representing multiple counties, the task involves contacting each county Office of Emergency Services.

MSSP takes proactive steps to participate in disaster and emergency preparedness planning. Development of a direct relationship and facilitation of a direct channel to its city or county EOC is required. In developing the site's disaster response plans, call the city or county Office of Emergency Services for further orientation. Determine your contact or liaison person and how to access the EOC in an emergency.

MSSPs advocate for disaster support and resources for their participants through contacts with AAAs, local emergency agencies and other MSSP sites. Information and assistance/referral services, available through the local AAA, play a crucial role in disasters.

Incident Command Center

The SEMS Incident Command Center (ICS) provides a disaster management structure model. Organizations develop an emergency table of organizations separate from their normal, day-to-day organization. In an emergency, the organization needs provisions for expedited purchasing processes, flexible modes of information gathering and decision-making (to respond to the changing priorities of a disaster), and special processes to ensure emergency expenditures tracking. ICS provides for the proper level of control with these needs and functions.

Primary Functions of the ICS

1. Management
   - Controls the overall disaster response, directing and setting priorities
   - Responsible for overall emergency policy and coordination across the organization's span of control
   - Liaison with other agencies
2. Operations
   - Implements the emergency plans and priorities as established by Management
   - Coordinates the provision of services/operations that the organization provides following a disaster
3. Planning
   - Collects, evaluates and disseminates information about the emergency
   - Monitors sources of information regarding the emergency and advises in the development of strategic plans

- Develops action plans for operations staff

4. Logistics

    - Provides facilities, services, personnel, equipment and materials to support Operations

5. Finance

    - Manages financial activities related to the disaster

    - Maintains documentation

    - Ensures accounting for staff time/costs and proper execution of claims and contracts

    - Tracks disaster related expenses in the event DHCS authorizes additional emergency expenditures and provides a mechanism for reimbursement

SECTION 3: DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

The preparedness phase involves activities that build a response capacity prior to an emergency. Disaster plans guide disaster operations and ensure the continuity of critical services. A comprehensive disaster plan will help the organization survive a disaster and ensure a quick recovery from disaster.

MSSP Contractual Requirements

- *The Contractor shall prepare and implement an emergency preparedness plan that ensures the provision of services to meet the emergency needs of Waiver Participants they are charged to serve during medical or natural disasters: a pandemic, earthquake, fire, flood, or public emergencies, such as riot, energy shortage, hazardous material spill, etc. This plan shall conform to any statewide requirements issued by any applicable State or local authority.*

- *The Contractor shall adopt policies and procedures that address emergency situations and ensure that there are safeguards in place to protect and support Waiver Participants in the event of natural disasters or other public emergencies.*

- *The Contractor shall ensure that emergency preparedness policies and procedures are clearly communicated to site staff and subcontractors in order to provide care under emergency conditions and to provide for back-up in the event that usual care is unavailable.*

- *The Contractor shall develop an emergency preparedness training plan to be provided to all staff at least annually or as needed when new staff are hired. The training shall consist of:*

  - *Familiarity with telephone numbers of fire, police, and ambulance services for the geographic area served by the provider*

  - *Techniques to obtain vital information from older individuals who require emergency assistance*

  - *Written emergency procedures for all staff that have contact with older individuals*

- *The Contractor shall develop a method for documenting the emergency preparedness training provided for all staff.*

- *The Contractor shall develop a program for testing its emergency preparedness plan at least annually.*

- *Contractor must establish a documented plan to enable continuation of critical business processes and protection of the security of electronic DHCS PHI or PI in the event of an emergency. Emergency means any circumstance or situation that causes normal computer operations to become unavailable for use in performing the work required under this Agreement for more than 24 hours.*

- *Contractor must have established documented procedures to backup DHCS PHI to maintain retrievable exact copies of DHCS PHI or PI. The plan must include a regular schedule for making backups, storing backups offsite, an inventory of backup media, and an estimate of the amount of time needed to restore DHCS PHI or PI should it be lost. At a minimum, the schedule must be a weekly full backup and monthly offsite storage of DHCS data.*

Six Disaster Planning Steps

1. Define Your Organization's Disaster Mission

   - Maintain participant services

   - Ensure participant needs are met for a safe recovery

   - Provide care management to participants based on their pre and post emergent needs

   - Resume services as quickly as possible

   - Join with local emergency preparedness partners to coordinate referrals to local emergency services and to provide any additional services

2. Establish an Office Safety Plan

   - Assess the adequacy of emergency supplies on hand to help you in the response to any emergency

   - Perform a hazard hunt and mitigate any obvious problems

   - Know how and where to turn off gas, electricity, and water at your site

   - Some Senior Centers and Adult Day Health Care centers become temporary shelters if participants need to "shelter-in-place" during the emergency

   - Basic emergency supplies include a battery-powered radio, flashlights, spare batteries, blankets, extra water, high energy snack foods, an adjustable wrench for turning off gas, and a first aid kit

   - Take photographs documenting the interior and exterior of your office to assist in recovering costs due to facility damage or equipment loss

   - Develop an evacuation plan and conduct evacuation drills

3. Create an Emergency Communications Plan

   - How will you communicate with staff and outside facilities and vendors if telephone service is unavailable?

   - Identify local amateur radio operators. Each neighborhood fire station has 'ham' radio available.

   - Prepare to use runners (messengers on foot or bicycle).

   - Devise a plan for notifying staff (e.g., a telephone tree) if the disaster happens after hours. Keep a staff roster with addresses and telephone numbers at home.

   - Maintain a list of emergency agencies such as fire department, law enforcement agencies, and other disaster authorities

4. Establish a Recovery & Service Continuity Plan

   - Identify a temporary work site

   - Identify critical services and mutual aid or vendor agreements necessary to continue those services

   - Consider regularly used supplies and identify other suppliers/vendors to use in an emergency, or ensure an ongoing backup supply of these items

- Protect and back up vital records as indicated in the Site Manual

5. Staff and Participant Preparedness

- Assist participants in developing family disaster plans

- Educate participants and their families regarding the basics of emergency preparedness

- Prepare for possible staff and caregiver burnout by utilizing respite or other supportive services

6. Assign Staff to Emergency SEMS Roles

- <u>Management and Command</u> – the Site Director fulfills this role by taking charge, delegating responsibilities, and providing overall direction

- <u>Operations</u> staff perform actions to get people to safety, restore services, meet needs or help with recovery

- <u>Planning</u> staff obtain information and provide assessments regarding the emergency and related needs of participants

- <u>Logistics</u> staff work on obtaining the resources the site and participants require

- <u>Finance</u> staff track expenditures, hours worked, and document events as they occur

SECTION 4: DISASTER RESPONSE

During this phase, the SEMS Incident Command System functions are initiated, the government's emergency operations centers activated, and emergency instructions are issued to the public. Response actions include activating the disaster plan, assessing disaster impact and then initiating activities to save lives or ensure the immediate safety of older adults.

Four Disaster Response Actions

1. Activate Disaster Plan

    - Activate emergency response plans

        - Prepare to take the actions required to cope with the disaster

        - Check on staff and participants

        - Determine if office relocation is necessary

        - Assess communications capability

    - Set up command by gathering staff and setting up the site's operations center

    - Designate staff to assume the SEMS functions of Management

2. Assess Disaster Impact

    - Initiate contact with participants, prioritizing those that are isolated, frail elders living alone, and those with complex medical needs

    - Contact vendors to assess their ability to continue to provide services – using alternate vendors if necessary

    - Deploy staff into the community to check on the status of vulnerable participants if standard methods of communication fail

    - Ascertain service priorities to be pursued and communicate to staff

    - Notify CDA of disaster plan activation and provide a summary of the initial assessment within 24 hours of the onset of the disaster

3.   Mobilize Resources and Service Plans

    - Restore essential services and ensure the provision of disaster assistance to participants

    - Determine if any participants need to be evacuated and coordinate with first level responders

    - Respond to participant requests resources, then establishing resource priorities

    - Develop emergency care plans if needed to ensure the health and welfare of participants, utilizing informal supports first

    - Maintain ongoing liaison with local (city or county) emergency services through the EOC, providing them with updates and procuring resources if needed

4.   Record and Document

    - Maintain a disaster activity log with the following:

- Critical agency meetings
- Decisions and actions
- Inter-agency contacts and agreements
- Expenditures (in the event DHCS or federal agencies authorize reimbursement)

SECTION 5: DISASTER RECOVERY

The recovery phase begins once the immediate disaster response concludes with people out of harm's way. Recovery includes government and community-based disaster aid programs. MSSP sites play a central role in the recovery process because of their relationships and pathways in (1) assessing participant disaster needs and (2) getting services to participants with special needs. <u>It is this phase when organizations serving seniors are the most engaged in disaster work.</u>

The Role of the MSSP Site

The MSSP role is a sustained, long-term commitment to provide human services to restore the community and its residents to a state of well-being. As a primary spokesperson for the needs of MSSP participants, MSSP plays a role in the following areas:

- Identify, assess and monitor disaster needs of participants by updating the care plan – determining any new needs

- Advocate for participants, ensuring they receive appropriate disaster services

- Provide regular health and safety checks via phone or in person

- Purchase Waiver Services that cannot be provided through another source such as the AAA, Medi-Cal, FEMA, Red Cross

- Continue providing care management, ensuring they receive services to remain safe

- Assess the availability of contracted vendors post-disaster

- Ensure a coordinated response – MSSP sites continue activities with all the other disaster recovery agencies as appropriate (i.e., Red Cross, Interfaith Groups, other Community-Based Organizations, FEMA, and other local and State government agencies)

- Expand Services to Meet Needs - As disaster assistance dollars become available, MSSP sites continue working with the local AAA and county agencies to identify available services

- If there are unmet needs and services that need to be expanded beyond what is available through community resources or currently established in the waiver, CDA can complete an Appendix K form to advise CMS of expected changes to its waiver operations or request a temporary amendment to its approved waiver. This process includes actions that CDA can take under the existing Section 1915 (c) authority in order to respond to an emergency and may be completed retroactively, as needed.

Delivering Disaster Recovery Services

MSSP sites should communicate with their local AAA regarding various services available to participants through the AAA or disaster relief organizations. In many cases, the AAA will allow expansion of existing service provider contracts to meet disaster needs, such as nutrition, transportation, and case management.

Older adults may require the following disaster recovery services in addition to ordinary MSSP waiver services:

- Information/Assistance/Referral Services – refer participants to the *AAA Emergency Relief Hotline* and provide information about how to contact care managers from their respective agencies if site phone disruption occurs.

- Outreach Activities – contact their participants to assess their recovery and adequacy of food, water and other necessary supplies.

- Licensed Appraiser Services - refer participants to outside resources, such as the AAA to obtain estimates for disaster-related home damage. This includes information and referrals to protect participants from unscrupulous vendors taking advantage of the disaster confusion.

- Home Cleanup and Restoration - work with participants to obtain available loans and/or grants for home cleanup and restoration necessary to restore the home.

- Relocation Housing – contact the AAA for programs that assist with arranging temporary housing for older adults or as an alternative to public care shelters. Care managers should assist participants with housing referrals after disaster shelters close.

- Mental Health Services – many AAAs maintain a list of agencies available to provide counseling to older disaster victims with post-traumatic stress or other emotional needs. If counseling is unavailable from the AAA, the MSSP Care Manager can purchase mental health services using the Therapeutic Counseling waiver service.

- Legal Services - provide older adults with insurance settlements or filing other appeals for assistance. The care manager can contact the local AAA for information on available legal resources.

- Equipment Repair and Replacement – help facilitate replacement or repair of damaged/missing personal equipment (i.e., hearing aids, dentures, eyeglasses, wheelchairs, batteries, etc.). When appropriate, the care manager utilizes waiver services for Minor Home Repairs and Adaptive Equipment, Non-medical Home Equipment, Personal Care and Professional Care Assistance to purchase and/or repair items. Care managers also assist in filling prescriptions for necessary medications.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: MSSP Disaster Task List

Appendix B: Disaster Relief Organizations

Appendix C: Disaster Relief Resources

Appendix D: My Local Contacts

APPENDIX - A

MSSP Disaster Task List

Priority	Task	Complete

Pre-Disaster

1. Develop policies and procedures to address natural/man-made disasters including a clear definition of your site's disaster mission

2. Develop a disaster plan which includes a(n):

   - Office Safety Plan

   - Emergency Communications Plan

3. Develop a directory of critical local contacts (Appendix B)

4. Ensure site vendors have emergency plans to provide Waiver Services

5. Develop a disaster preparedness training plan for staff

6. Develop a program to test the disaster preparedness plan

7. Develop procedures to backup DHCS Personal Health Information

8. Establish a recovery & service continuity plan

9. Assign staff to emergency SEMS roles

Disaster

1. Activate Disaster Plan

2. Assess Disaster Impact

3. Contact CDA within 24 hours of the onset of a disaster with a summary of assessment

4. Mobilize resources and service plans

5. Maintain a disaster activity log

6. Assess the need for disaster recovery services after disaster is contained

APPENDIX - B

Disaster Relief Organizations

__Organization__	__Organization Information__
(FEMA) Federal Emergency Management Agency Recovery Centers	Provide coaches to advise older adults on how best to present their case for disaster assistance and will escort seniors between service points as well as follow-up. www.fema.gov/disaster-recovery-centers
FEMA Public Assistance Program	Reimburses local and state governments and eligible private non-profit organizations for structural damage and for the costs of disaster work. www.fema.gov/public-assistance-local-state-tribal-and-non-profit
FEMA Individual Assistance Program	Offers disaster assistance to families and individuals in the form of cash grants, low interest loans and crisis counseling. www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/24945
American Red Cross	Provides food, disaster shelters, mental health services, and emergency financial assistance to disaster victims. www.redcross.org
(VOAD) Volunteer Organizations Active in Disasters	Non-governmental disaster relief. www.calvoad.org/
Church World Service	Assists communities and individuals with emergency preparedness, immediate response, and long-term recovery. cwsglobal.org/our-work/emergencies/
Salvation Army	Provides food, shelter, clothing, financial support, material support. Also serves as a collection and distribution agency. www.salvationarmyusa.org/usn/
California Community Foundation	Provides case management services, financial assistance, mental health services, and basic needs assistance for those who have been victimized by a California wildfire. www.calfund.org/wildfire-relief-fund/

APPENDIX - C

Disaster Relief Resources

Resource	Resource Contact
California Governor's Office of Emergency Services	http://www.caloes.ca.gov/
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention	https://emergency.cdc.gov/
National Institutes of Health	https://medlineplus.gov/disasterpreparationandrecovery.html
Administration for Community Living	https://www.acl.gov/programs/emergency-preparedness
Disaster Preparedness for People with Disabilities	http://www.redcross.org/images/MEDIA_CustomProductCatalog/m4240199_A4497.pdf

My Local Contacts

* MSSP sites that serve multiple counties need to identify each County OES office in their region

** Local Amateur Radio Emergency Services (ARES), Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service (RACES), and other amateur radio groups can be found on the internet

*** Check with your local Red Cross or County Office of Emergency Services to determine if a local Community Disaster Preparedness Group exists your area.

Contact Type	Contact Name	Phone	Alternate Phone	Contact Person
Local American Red Cross Chapter				
County OES*				
County OES*				
Local OES				
Local Fire Station				
Local Hospital				
Local Police				
County Area Agency on Aging				
Local Amateur Radio**				
Community Disaster Group***				
Local Interfaith Coalition				
Local Salvation Army				
Local Senior Center				