

Guide for Emergency Management Planning For Youth and Family Services Contractors

Introduction

The Youth and Family Services Division (YFSD) works with its partner contractors to ensure that the most vulnerable residents of Multnomah County receive essential services such as emergency shelter, housing assistance and emergency energy bill payment assistance. In the event that there are disruptions in the normal operations of the County or its contractors due to emergency events, the purpose of this plan is to ensure that essential services continue to be available to clients without interruption.

Emergency events may include, but are not limited to: inclement weather, natural disaster, acts of terrorism, or any other event that may interfere with some or all of the operations of YFSD or its contractors.

Although in rare cases the County may offer assistance during emergency situations, it is the contractor's ultimate responsibility to meet the obligations of their contract, such as providing shelter, and continue their essential operations during an emergency. The contractor shall create and maintain emergency plans and ensure that the plans cover all contingencies.

In the event of contractor failure to meet its contractual obligations during an emergency, a designated contractor staff person must immediately notify their contract liaison at the County. Contractors assume any and all liability for interruption in services due to failure of their Emergency or COOP plans.

Definitions

Inclement weather: Ice, snow, winds or other weather which forces the shut-down or limitation of services.

Natural Disasters: Earthquake, flood, volcanic eruption or other types of disaster which forces the shut-down or limitation of services.

Shelter: Any facility which provides temporary lodging for individuals or families experiencing homelessness.

COOP Plan: A written plan detailing how essential operations will be maintained during an emergency. At a minimum, the COOP plan should include components such as which services are deemed as essential, how long specific services can be interrupted, roles and responsibilities of assigned staff during the activation of the COOP, contact lists, etc.

Emergency Plan: Written plan and procedures outlining the response plan for contractors during emergencies. At a minimum, plan should include components such as evacuation, relocation, back-filling staff shortages, communication, etc.

Essential Services

In accordance with the YFSD Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP), certain YFSD services are deemed essential as follows:

- Shelter: No shelter services may be interrupted for longer than 4 hours. The maintenance of overnight shelter is the highest priority.
- Housing: In the event of emergency, housing services including case management and rent assistance payment is expected to be resumed within 30 days or at as soon as possible after the emergency event, whichever comes first. Payment of rent assistance to keep clients housed is the highest priority.
- Emergency Bill Payment: Bill payment services are expected to be resumed within 30 days or as soon as possible after the emergency event, whichever comes first. Payment of already authorized bills is the highest priority, particularly where utilities have been shut off.

Emergency Procedures

All YFSD contractors are required to have written emergency plan and a written COOP plan. It is the responsibility of the contractor to ensure that employees and volunteer are trained in these plans and prepared for emergencies. Plans and procedures should be reviewed and updated annually. These plans should be available to the County upon request.

Information about any closure of County offices will be available on the Multnomah County webpage and the County's Inclement Weather & Disaster Information Line 503-988-5523. Information may also be shared via local news media.

211info will coordinate information regarding severe weather services such as shelters, rides, donation drop-offs, etc. Contractors should maintain regular contact with 211info to share or receive information about the emergency.

Contractor shall identify contact people who will be available during an emergency event. Contact people should maintain communication with shelters and other essential services staff throughout any emergency incident and be prepared to report to YFSD on operations as requested.

Contractors are expected to provide their YFSD contract liaison with telephone numbers and e-mail addresses where agency representatives can be reached in the event of an emergency situation. Contractor contact information may be shared during emergencies with their contract manager, members of the YFSD Incident Management Team, members of the County's Emergency Management Team or other authorized County personnel for the purposes of verifying that the contractor's operations are proceeding either under normal operations or under the contractor's COOP plan.

Emergency Preparedness

Contractors should ensure that their agency is prepared for emergencies and other complications that may arise from said emergency such as long-term loss of power, inability to utilize cellular phones, lack of clean drinking water, etc. Agencies should be prepared for these types of emergencies and may consider tools such as:

- "Go kits" for essential personnel
- Radios and/or wifi access to e-mail
- Supplies of clean drinking water and food
- Back-up generators, flashlights, lanterns
- Alternate heat sources, extra blankets
- Back-up locations for evacuation of shelters or offices
- Creation of agency Incident Management Team

Resources

Contractors are encouraged to use the following resources for information on emergency planning, development of COOP plans, and other valuable information.

FEMA <http://www.fema.gov/plan-prepare-mitigate>

Red Cross <http://www.redcross.org/prepare>