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| <br><b>Department of Children &amp; Family Services</b><br><i>Building a Stronger Louisiana</i> | <b>Division/Section</b>  | Executive Division         |
|  | <b>Chapter No./Name</b>  | DCFS Departmental Policy   |
|  | <b>Part No./Name</b>     | 1 – Administrative/Fiscal  |
|  | <b>Section No./Name</b>  | 1-2 Emergency Preparedness |
|  | <b>Document No./Name</b> | 1-2 Emergency Preparedness |
|  | <b>Effective Date</b>    | June 15, 2025              |

## I. STATEMENT OF POLICY

It is the policy of the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) to support the emergency preparedness goals of the state to ensure the safety and welfare of Louisiana residents during emergencies/disasters.

In addition, the policy defines the department's role and responsibilities in carrying out the emergency functions for managing, staffing, and coordinating mass care, emergency assistance, housing, and human services when people are forced to leave their homes in actual or threatened emergencies and disasters.

DCFS and the Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC) are the two primary responsible agencies for Emergency Support Function (ESF) 6. DCFS has the primary responsibility for coordinating mass care, emergency assistance, housing, and human services; and LWC has the primary responsibility for coordinating mass feeding.


The Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness (GOHSEP) State of Louisiana Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) and current Executive Order also assign the department support responsibilities for transportation, communication, emergency management, public health and medical services, agriculture, and recovery. DCFS will respond as required to carry out support responsibilities.

There are many types of events that may result in the implementation of this policy. Large-scale natural and technological disasters include such events as hurricanes, flooding, tornadoes, and hazardous material accidents.

Local government has overall responsibility to protect Louisiana residents during emergencies and disasters. However, some events, whether natural or technological, are of such severity or magnitude as to exceed or overwhelm the capability of local authorities to respond. In such events many departments and agencies at the state level will supplement local response and recovery efforts.

When an emergency/disaster is declared, an evacuation order may be issued for the population of the affected area.

Evacuation is defined as the orderly removal of people from an area threatened by disaster to a place of safety. A hurricane is a likely reason for mass evacuation and presents the most intense evacuation scenario. The number of people requiring evacuation fluctuates with the size of the event and other factors such as weather. When people are evacuated from their homes, temporary shelters are provided through the coordinated efforts of many state and local agencies and voluntary organizations.

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## II. PROCEDURES

DCFS will accomplish its primary emergency responsibility for mass care, emergency assistance, housing, and human services through assignment of DCFS employees in the major operating units of the department to work in shelters, assist in evacuations, and other emergency/disaster duties. These major operating units and their responsibilities are as follows:

### A. Division of Child Welfare

In normal operations, the Division of Child Welfare employees provide the public child welfare functions of the state and administers the federal grants for services directed at meeting the special needs of Louisiana's most vulnerable residents.

In emergencies and disasters, the Division of Child Welfare employees will be assigned to locations as needed. In addition, Child Welfare will be responsible for routine and emergency social services to its clients. The Child Welfare employees will be responsible for staffing the Unaccompanied Minor Shelter, staffing Human Services Branch at shelters as well as providing staff to assist with Unaccompanied Minors at each of the event sites.

### B. Division of Family Support


In normal operations, the Division of Family Support covers plans, develops, and administers the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), all cash assistance, Child Support, and Disability Determinations programs in DCFS.

In emergencies and disasters, the Division of Family Support employees will be assigned to locations as needed. In addition, Family Support also provides special services during and following emergencies and disasters including the dispensing of federal and state financial assistance and administering an amplified SNAP, known as the Disaster Supplemental Nutrition Program (DSNAP).

### C. DCFS \* Office of Management and Finance (OMF)

In normal operations, the DCFS OMF will provide the management support system for the DCFS.

In emergencies and disasters, OMF staff will be assigned to locations as needed. In addition, OMF \*\* will provide, upon direction of the Secretary, the procurement and logistical support required for operations and maintains a record of manpower and equipment used to cope with an emergency/disaster incident. This information may be requested by GOHSEP to help determine the state's contribution in the event a request is made by the Governor for federal assistance.

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## D. DCFS Executive Division

The Secretary of DCFS has overall responsibility for the emergency responsibilities assigned to the DCFS. DCFS emergency preparedness responsibilities are under the authority of the Secretary. The Secretary shall appoint and supervise the DCFS Emergency Preparedness Director, who will prepare and maintain plans, procedures, arrangements, and agreements to ensure that the organization will continue to carry out its mission in an emergency or disaster. \*\*\*

### 1. DCFS Bureau of Emergency Preparedness


The DCFS Emergency Preparedness Director and DCFS Emergency Operations Center (EOC) Team will be responsible for compiling and maintaining a statewide shelter directory and tracking available shelters and the evacuees sheltered in them during emergencies and disasters.

In an emergency when Louisiana residents are evacuated from their homes, the DCFS Emergency Preparedness Director will mobilize DCFS resources and personnel, reassigning them to address critical needs related to mass care, emergency assistance, housing, and human services. The department has established readiness procedures that ensure proper training, availability and notification of DCFS employees and availability of necessary materials and equipment in an emergency.

The DCFS Emergency Preparedness Director shall organize the emergency response activities of all DCFS Divisions before, during, and after the emergency/disaster and make decisions related to overall staff deployment. During an emergency/disaster, the DCFS Emergency Preparedness Director, or a member of the DCFS EOC team, will be at the EOC to provide updates to the DCFS executive staff and Regional Administrators regarding activation of staff and provide guidance to the \* Disaster Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (DSNAP) Coordinators in regards to DSNAP operations and Lead Area Managers (LAM) \*\* regarding operation of the DCFS managed and supported shelters as well as address staffing issues and concerns for parish and other local general population shelters and staffed event sites.

### 2. DCFS Bureau of General Counsel (BGC)

The DCFS BGC provides legal counsel to DCFS executive staff as needed during a state emergency/disaster and foresees areas of potential legal liability.

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### 3. DCFS Bureau of Communications (BC)

The DCFS BC maintains ongoing public information programs concerning the policies and programs of the department. During emergencies/disasters, the public information programs will be coordinated with the GOHSEP Public Information Office. (Refer to [DCFS Policy 1-17](#), DCFS Media Relations).

## E. Departmental Employees

Many DCFS employees will be assigned tasks not routinely encountered in their usual job responsibilities but which are within the realm of their responsibilities as employees of the department for management and coordination of mass care, emergency assistance, housing, human services operations \* and DSNAP operations. These tasks relate to the emergency function of the DCFS engaged as Emergency Support Function ESF-6.


DCFS 1-2, Emergency Preparedness Policy and Procedures, indicates that the Secretary has overall responsibility for the emergency responsibilities assigned to DCFS. Pursuant to the policy, when a declared emergency/disaster occurs, the Emergency Preparedness Director is empowered to make decisions and expend resources. The power includes the ability to make decisions regarding the best use of personnel and providing directives to personnel in order to coordinate the DCFS response to the emergency/disaster. It is imperative that all DCFS employees adhere to this policy while DCFS responds to the situation caused by any declared disaster/emergency. The chain of command established by this policy ensures that the DCFS will be able to quickly and efficiently respond to the needs of Louisiana's residents.

### 1. DCFS ESF-6 Operations

The DCFS, as ESF-6 Mass Care, Emergency Assistance, Temporary Housing, and Human Services, is responsible for all DCFS employees who are subject to assignments working in shelters and other ESF-6 mission assignments/locations during emergencies and disasters.

Many DCFS employees may be required to cross parish lines in fulfilling the DCFS's mass care, emergency assistance, temporary \*\* housing, and human services responsibility, if necessary.

DCFS shall make this policy available to all employees and shall document receipt of the policy by each employee. Upon receipt, each employee will be asked to sign the [Emergency Preparedness Policy Acknowledgement Form](#), which includes the following statement: "I hereby acknowledge that I have

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received a copy of the DCFS Emergency Preparedness Policy, 1-2; and as a DCFS employee, I understand that unless specifically granted an exemption, if needed, I will be required to work at an assigned location and/or on assigned emergency/disaster operations tasks \* as assigned by the LAM or DSNAP Coordinator to work regular work hours or overtime hours. \*\* Such work will be performed in accordance with DCFS Policy and Procedure relating to emergency preparedness.” The signed copy shall be retained in the employee’s personnel file, in accordance with Office guidelines.

## 2. 24-Hour Activation of Shelters and Other Designated Locations

Once activated, and ordered to stand up, shelters and other designated locations shall be staffed around the clock until deactivated, closed, ordered to stand down, or the need no longer exists.

## 3. Notification and Recall Procedures


DCFS Lead Area Managers shall implement DCFS’ notification and recall through DCFS’ mass communications system to notify DCFS employees when they are assigned to work under ESF-6 Mass Care, Emergency Assistance, Housing and Human Services. Notification through DCFS’ mass communication system shall be used to notify employees of response levels; Advise, Alert, Standby, Activate, and De-Activate.

All DCFS employees are responsible for keeping their home phone numbers, cell phone numbers, etc. current with their supervisors.

DCFS employees will respond to call for duty assignments as response levels are communicated through DCFS’ mass communication system.

The State Office and Regional Database Managers and Lead Area Managers will have responsibility for maintaining emergency preparedness databases which contain contact information for DCFS employees. Lead Area Managers and/or DCFS EOC staff will initiate the DCFS mass communications system upon receipt of notice from the DCFS Secretary, or designee that a disaster has been declared, which requires a DCFS response. Upon an employee’s receipt of a notification call via the DCFS mass communication system, the employee shall immediately respond and/or reply to it and follow the instructions provided.

Employees reporting for duty other than for a duty assignment through the DCFS’ mass communication system, notification from the Lead Area Manager or other authorized Emergency Preparedness staff are not eligible for compensation under [DCFS Policy 4-10](#), Human Resources Procedures for Emergency/Disaster Operations.

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#### 4. Personal Disaster Emergency Preparedness Plan Training

All DCFS employees are required to take the SCS CPTP DCFS Personal Disaster Emergency Preparedness Training in SuccessFactors within Louisiana Employee Online (LEO) yearly as part of DCFS Departmental Quarterly Training.

If a DCFS employee is unable to comply with this policy due to a lack of personal preparedness, they may be subject to disciplinary action. DCFS Human Resources will issue and maintain employee signature pages, or a similar manner of record outlining their receipt of this policy.

#### 5. Exemption Policy


While DCFS recognizes its responsibilities during emergencies/disasters, the department also recognizes that certain employees may have circumstances that would limit their ability to be of service;

- a. An employee who judges that the severity of their personal/family situations outweigh the obligations of the state to respond to emergency situations may submit a form [DCFS-FRE Formal Request for Exemption](#) to be exempted from the requirements of this policy. This request should contain sufficient information to explain why the employee is not able to perform this job duty. DCFS reserves the right to verify the existence of personal/family demands.
- b. If the request for a temporary or permanent exemption is for personal health reasons and/or medical condition, form [DCFS-EJ-1 Emergency Duty Exemption Request](#) shall also be submitted with the request for exemption. An employee must answer all questions on the request for exemption or the request maybe rejected due to insufficient information.

An employee shall submit the completed form with attachments by 15 DEC of the current year, directly to the DCFS \*Office of Management and Finance (OMF)/Human Resource Section \*\* at [PEExemption.HR.DCFS@La.Gov](mailto:PEExemption.HR.DCFS@La.Gov). The employee should also submit a courtesy copy of the form to the immediate supervisor.

**Note: An employee who develops a new condition/situation should submit their Formal Request for Exemption as soon as the condition/situation develops. Any medical information submitted will be kept confidential to the extent possible.**



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Requests for exemptions will be processed within fifteen (15) working days provided all supporting documentation is made available with the submission of the request. If additional documentation is necessary, the request will be processed within fifteen (15) working days following receipt of additional documentation.

\* OMF Human Resources Section will convene a committee that will serve as the approving authority to review all exemption requests. Once a decision is made on a request for exemption, OMF \*\* Human Resources Section will:

- a. Record the decision on the [DCFS FRE Formal Request for Exemption](#) form.
- b. Maintain the original form and notify the employee of the decision.  
**(Note: The employee should submit a courtesy copy of the approved exemption letter only to his/her immediate supervisor; however, no specific medical information should be included.)**
- c. Enter the decision into a database and share the updated database with the Emergency Preparedness Director, Emergency Preparedness Deputy Director, Emergency/Disaster Lead Area Managers, Human Resource Liaisons, Regional Administrators and State Office Section Directors.

Appeals of exemption decisions must be submitted within 15 working days of receipt of the decision along with documentation to support the appeal to the DCFS Undersecretary or designee. All decisions rendered by the DCFS Undersecretary, or his/her designee are final.

An approved request for exemption is valid from the date of approval through the **31<sup>st</sup> of DECEMBER** of that year or earlier as determined appropriate by the approving authority. An exemption is not normally granted for more than one (1) year. This approval will take into consideration the circumstances of the employee and the duration of the condition/situation that prompted the employee to request an exemption. In cases where the physician certifies that the condition is likely to be permanent, a permanent exemption may be granted. It is the employee's responsibility to advise their supervisor and the DCFS Human Resources Section in writing of changes that would impact the original exemption decision. It is also the employee's responsibility to reapply for an exemption either prior to or following the expiration date of an exemption approval. In the event a permanent exemption is granted, documentation will be recorded and maintained by DCFS Human Resources.

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#### 6. DCFS Human Resources Procedures for Disaster Operations

Refer to [DCFS Policy 4-10](#), Human Resources Procedures for Emergency Disaster Operations for policy and procedures relating to overtime compensation for DCFS employees who are designated to work in an emergency preparedness, response or recovery activity.

An employee's inappropriate actions, poor performance, etc., during an emergency/disaster event may result in disciplinary action according to [DCFS Policy 4-07](#), Disciplinary Corrective Actions and Separations.

### III. FORMS AND INSTRUCTIONS

[DCFS-EJ-1 Emergency Duty Exemption Request](#)  
[DCFS-FRE Formal Request for Exemption](#)

### IV. REFERENCES

The current Executive Order as part of the State Emergency Operations Plan (EOP), signed by the Governor, affirms GOHSEP's statutory responsibilities regarding emergency management and assigns primary and supporting functional responsibilities to state departments and agencies. Each department assigned an emergency function must coordinate its efforts through the GOHSEP Emergency Operations Center (EOC) during an emergency/disaster. The EOC, the command and communications center for response operations, during an emergency/disaster is located at the Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness, 7667 Independence Blvd., Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

[State Emergency Operations Plan](#) (EOP), As the primary state agency assigned mass care, emergency assistance, housing, and human services coordination responsibilities, the DCFS has developed the DCFS ESF-6 Mass Care, Emergency Assistance, Housing, and Human Services Annex which is an Annex to the State EOP. The Annex contains the department's concept of operations and the assignment of responsibilities in the mass care, emergency assistance, housing, and human services function. The DCFS is responsible for fulfilling its obligations as presented in the State EOP and the Department's Annex.

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