



# Midland Area Agency on Aging Disaster Plan

## I. INTRODUCTION

### A. Purpose

Midland Area Agency on Aging has a legislative mandate to advocate on behalf of older persons who reside within Planning and Service Area-G. As such, the Agency works in cooperation with federal, state, county, municipal, voluntary and other non-profit programs to provide for the needs of older disaster victims.

## II. POLICIES

Midland Area Agency on Aging (MAAA) will work in cooperation with the American Red Cross, Emergency Management Offices/Agencies, Local Health Departments, as well as other organizations, in rendering assistance to older victims of disasters, including but not limited to tornado, high winds, chemical, nuclear, flood, blizzards, pandemic. The Agency will, to the best of its ability, assure that service needs of older persons are met in times of disaster.

Section 310 of the 1992 Amendments to the Older Americans Act provides that the Assistant Secretary for Aging may provide reimbursement to any state, upon application, for funds to be made available to Agencies on Aging for delivery of support services during a major disaster declared by the President. This action is taken according to the Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act. The Agency, in the event of a disaster, will contact the State Unit on Aging to request needed funds.

## III. SITUATIONS AND ASSUMPTIONS

### A. Conditions

Given the variety of threats, the Agency and service providers are dedicated to safeguarding people and property through emergency preparedness, training and a coordinated response to emergencies/disasters.

### B. Planning Assumptions

1. The Agency is required to have emergency/disaster plans and expedite the delivery of services when an emergency/disaster occurs. The Agency will work with federal/state/municipal/volunteer organizations to meet the needs of older adults affected by an emergency/disaster.
2. The disaster assistance efforts of the Agency will complement the existing relief efforts provided by federal/state/municipal/volunteer organizations. The Agency and service providers will enter into coordination agreements and working relationships with emergency service disaster agencies, volunteer relief (i.e. Red Cross, Salvation Army) and local community-based organizations. The Agency disaster plan will be activated by the Agency upon notification by the Agency and/or local emergency management officials. Activation of disaster plans requires an assessment of the need to mobilize the Agency resources and personnel. This will be done in coordination with state/local emergency management agencies and/or FEMA during Presidential declared disasters. This assessment will determine the type of action necessary to serve the needs of disaster victims, particularly older persons.

## **IV. CONCEPT OF OPERATION**

### **A. General**

In this section of the disaster operations plan, the actual functions and activities of the Agency is described to effectively respond to emergency/disaster situations affecting older persons. When an emergency/disaster is reported, the response process that the Agency will follow is outlined below.

### **B. Organization**

1. The primary responsibility to respond to current and pending emergencies/disasters is the Agency's Executive Director. After notification of an Emergency/Disaster from local or state emergency management offices, the Executive Director will take the lead in determining, managing, and coordinating emergency/disaster related activities. If the Executive Director cannot be reached to respond to an emergency/disaster, the following protocol will be followed.
  - i. Fiscal Manager
  - ii. Choices Supervisor
  - iii. Nutrition Manager/Transportation Manager
2. The Executive Director can be contacted at the Agency office or by cell phone during normal working hours. During non-working hours, the Executive Director and/or alternates may be reached on their cell phones. Each employee is supplied with an up-to-date listing of cell phone numbers of all staff members and an up-to-date list is available in the Emergency Plans folder on the Company computer drive.
3. In the event an emergency/disaster destroys the Agency's office and/or its communication system, the Executive Director and/or alternates can be reached by cell phone. Depending on the disaster situation, the Agency may operate out of an alternate location and the location and telephone numbers will be provided to the public. Access will be provided to the Company computer drive through the remote server. The Executive Director and/or alternates will work with all organizations and available resources to provide assistance to older persons in need.
4. Emergency/disaster response operations will differ depending on whether the emergency/disaster is a local/state/federal declaration of disaster. The Executive Director will work with whatever level (state/federal) to meet the needs of older persons.
5. When a Presidential Declaration of a Major Disaster has been made, federal assistance will become available to support state operations. The Executive Director will take action to mobilize services through the Agency to provide assistance to older persons. The Executive Director will conduct the following activities:
  - i. Telephone calls will be made to the State Unit on Aging to assure appropriate assistance is being provided, sufficient resources are available and to respond to any problems/questions that may arise. Inquire into emergency funding for services provided.
  - ii. The Executive Director will ask the Agency staff to keep records of services delivered and compile projections of funding that will be needed.

- iii. The Agency staff will monitor the emergency/disaster situation and report on circumstances as they change.
  - iv. Depending on the magnitude of the emergency/disaster and the number of older persons involved, contacts may be made hourly, daily and /or weekly. Site visits to the emergency/disaster areas will be made upon request and as needed to assess the emergency/disaster situation.
  - v. The Executive Director will regularly communicate and update Agency staff activities to the State Unit on Aging service providers and all other organizations involved in relief efforts.
6. If a Local, State or Federally declared disaster is of catastrophic proportion, the Agency staff and the Executive Director will:
- i. Contact the Emergency Management Agency to meet with local officials to evaluate the impact on older persons and the need for additional resources.
  - ii. Resolve issues, access needed materials/supplies and advocate/mediate for additional services and resources.
  - iii. Maintain contact with FEMA, state agencies and volunteer emergency/disaster relief organizations.
  - iv. Keep the State Unit on Aging apprised about the emergency/disaster situation and the Agency's activities in the delivery of services.
  - v. Develop and implement methods for funding reimbursement, program and financial reporting and accurately document service delivery.
  - vi. Provide assistance with issues that arise in the daily delivery of services to older disaster victims.

## **V. ORGANIZATIONAL ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

In the event of a disaster, each MAAA employee will follow this emergency plan. In this capacity, a MAAA employee may be assigned any task, at any time. **The Executive Director will direct assignments of duties to MAAA staff and will coordinate emergency assistance needed.**

### **A. Responsibilities of Executive Director:**

1. The Executive Director will activate the call tree and determine the safety and availability to return to work.
2. The Executive Director will contact the local Emergency Response Coordinator.
3. The Executive Director will be available to assist Managers and Site Supervisors with questions and concerns.

### **B. Responsibilities of the CHOICES Division:**

1. The CHOICES Supervisor will coordinate efforts to insure needs of individual clients are met within the parameters of program guidelines in a timely and safe manner.
2. CHOICES Coordinators will report findings and issues to CHOICES Supervisor.
3. The CHOICES Supervisor will ensure case information is organized and accessible to identify current MAAA clients in designated disaster/emergency areas, utilizing CIL Suite Database, NFocus, or Peer Place to help identify and sort clients.

4. Care Managers and Service Coordinators will contact clients to identify needs and problem solve to secure needed resources. If phone lines are not working and travel to client's homes is deemed inadvisable CHOICES staff and are not expected to make home visits. If unable to make contact with specific clients, emergency information will be shared with appropriate emergency responders. The CHOICES Supervisor will also assess the impact of the disaster on service providers/vendors upon whom our clients rely. CHOICES staff will monitor client's status post disaster as well as work with vendors providing needed services to ensure that client's needs are met. CHOICES Supervisor will be responsible for providing the routine updates to the Executive Director.
5. The Choices Supervisor will report findings and issues to the Executive Director.

**C. Nutrition Manager:**

1. The Nutrition Manager will coordinate efforts to ensure needs of individual clients are met with-in the parameters of program guidelines in a timely and safe manner.
2. The Nutrition Manager will report findings and issues to the Executive Director.
3. The Nutrition Manager will contact Senior Centers that would be supplying congregate meals or Home Delivered Meals in their service areas and ensuring phone calls are made to clients to check on their status and to rely how meals will be distributed. If phones are not working attempts will be made to visit providers to learn of needs starting with home-delivered meals providers and then congregate meal providers to ensure that food service systems are not disrupted. Available MAAA staff will make on-site assessments of each center.

**D. Long Term Care Ombudsman:**

1. The Long Term Care Ombudsman will contact all long-term care facilities affected by the disaster to ensure that residents are receiving appropriate care.

**E. Aging Disability Resource Center (ADRC)**

1. The ADRC staff will contact clients in the disaster area to assess and ensure that their needs are being met.

**VI IMPLEMENTATION FOR WHEN A DISASTER IS DECLARED**

**A. Fire and Emergency Evacuation**

1. The first individual aware of a fire or smoke in the center is to alert the Site Supervisor who will alert others by activating the fire alarm system. If the center is not equipped with an alarm system, participants should be alerted in a calm manner by general announcement.
2. If you are in the vicinity of the fire when it is discovered, do not attempt to extinguish it unless you have been trained in the proper use of a portable fire extinguisher and the fire is very small in size and it can be easily controlled without placing yourself or others in danger. Remember, the primary concern is not the loss of property, but the safety of our participants, volunteers and staff.
3. In the event of a fire or emergency that requires evacuation of the building, instruct the seniors to leave the building by the nearest available exit. Make sure everyone has exited the building. If time permits and without placing anyone in danger, call to the fire department by

dialing 911 before evacuating the building. If time does not permit a call, call 911 immediately after evacuating the building.

4. The Site Supervisor should check the guest log to ensure all participants have evacuated the center.
5. Contact the Executive Director to report the incident.
6. Do not reenter the building until the all clear has been made by the fire department.
7. If unable to resume the day's activities, the Site Supervisor will ensure that all participants and volunteers have transportation to return to their home.

#### **B. Floods**

1. Flooding may be caused either by a natural disaster or faulty plumbing.
2. When the potential for flooding is due to a natural cause contact the Executive Director for instructions whether or not to close the center.
3. If there is a problem with faulty plumbing contact the Executive Director. If the water service is shut off the center may need to close until the water source is restored.
4. If unable to resume the day's activities, the Site Supervisor will ensure that all participants and volunteers have transportation to return to their homes.

#### **C. Inclement Weather Procedures**

When the weather is severe, all efforts should be made to listen for weather reports regarding the changing weather conditions in your area. MAAA's first priority is to ensure that all participants, volunteers and staff are kept safe.

*\*Please see Inclement Weather Internal Policy #21 – Attachment 2*

#### **D. Tornado Warning**

1. The Site Manager or designee shall move all seniors to the designated safe area within the center.
2. If anyone is outside, make sure they return to the building and move to the safe areas. Do not let anyone leave.
3. Double check the guest log to make sure all seniors are in the safe area.
4. Stay away from all glass and windows.
5. Use any protective covering available to protect from flying objects.
6. Remain in the designated safe area until the warning has expired.
7. Call the Executive Director to report the incident whenever time permits.
8. If an injury occurs, call 911 for the emergency response team.

9. If unable to resume the day's activities, the center manager will ensure that all participants and volunteers have transportation to return to their homes.

#### **E. Severe Thunderstorm Warning**

1. If outside, return to building for protection and shelter.
2. If inside, stay away from windows in case high gusty winds occur with the storm which may cause windows to break.
3. If unable to resume day's activities, the Site Supervisor will ensure that all participants and volunteers have transportation to return to their homes.

#### **F. Pandemic**

The purpose of this section is to address the following issues related to a pandemic:

- Creating a culture of infection control in the workplace that is reinforced during the annual influenza season, to include, if possible, options for working offsite while ill, systems to reduce infection transmission, and worker education.
- Establishing contingency plans to maintain delivery of services during times of significant and sustained worker absenteeism.
- Where possible, establishing mechanisms to allow workers to provide services from home if public health officials advise against non-essential travel outside the home.

##### **1. Communications:**

The Executive Director will oversee the following:

- i. Monitor issues and information related to pandemics to keep our plan up to date.
- ii. Recommend any changes to the plan as circumstances warrant.
- iii. Communicate with public health agencies, emergency responders and others regarding our plan, and understand their capabilities should an outbreak occur.
- iv. Attend external training/seminars about pandemic influenza outbreaks in order to remain current about the pandemic threat in our community.
- v. Providing training for staff as necessary
- vi. Implement this plan should it become necessary.

Agency Managers and Supervisors will have the following responsibilities:

- i. Identify and communicate to the Executive Director which employees, vendors, suppliers and systems are essential to maintaining operations at their locations.
- ii. Ensure that all employees are adequately trained on emergency procedures in the case of a pandemic and in the prevention of illness.
- iii. Encourage all employees to be vaccinated annually for influenza.
- iv. Assist the Executive Director in the implementation of this plan, if necessary, at their locations.

##### **2. Work at Home Considerations**

- i. Flexible work policies will be developed as much as possible
- ii. Employees are encouraged to stay home when ill, when having to care for ill family members, or when caring for children when schools close, without fear of reprisal.
- iii. Tele-commuting or other work-at-home strategies will be developed

### 3. Infection Control Measures

Infection control is an essential component of pandemic management and a component of public health measures. Essential measures include:

- i. Hand washing and use of hand sanitizers shall be encouraged by MAAA. Hand washing areas, hand sanitizers, tissues, hand soap and disposable towels shall be provided by MAAA.
- ii. Workers are encouraged to obtain appropriate immunizations to help avoid disease. Granting time off work to obtain the vaccine is considered when vaccines become available in the community.
- iii. Social distancing including increasing the space between employee work areas and decreasing the possibility of contact by limiting large or close contact gatherings will be considered.
- iv. We will clean all areas that are likely to have frequent hand contact (doorknobs, faucets, handrails) routinely and when visibly soiled. Work surfaces will also be cleaned frequently using normal cleaning products.
- v. Additional examples of infection control measures include:
  1. Stay at home if you are sick.
  2. Cover your coughs and sneeze into a tissue.
  3. Enhance existing housekeeping service by wiping down and disinfecting work areas frequently.
  4. Use Personal Protective Equipment where appropriate to minimize exposure (i.e. face masks, gloves, protective eye ware).

## **VII. ANNUAL REVIEW**

The Agency will review this plan on an annual basis, or update as needed.

## **VIII. AGENCY AND CLIENT RECORDS**

The Agency saves all data through a combination of onsite and offsite backup, and a local server. The Agency also saves all data to an offsite cloud.

## **IMPORTANT CONTACTS**

**State of Nebraska**

State Unit on Aging

[cynthia.brammeier@nebraska.gov](mailto:cynthia.brammeier@nebraska.gov)

1-402-471-2307 / 1-402-432-2857/ 1-800-942-7830

**Nebraska Emergency Management Agency**

402-471-7421

**County Emergency Management Numbers:**

Adams County

402-461-2360

Clay County

402-762-4939

C – 402-224-0199

Hall County

308-385-5360

Hamilton County

402-694-2818

Howard County

308-754-4933

C – 308-750-5357

Merrick County

308-536-4443

C – 308-550-1685

Nuckolls County

402-225-2361

Webster County

402-746-2722

**American Red Cross**

**Central and Western Nebraska Chapter – Grand Island**

404 E 3<sup>rd</sup> Street

308-382-3790 or 888-382-3790

Counties served in PSA:

Adams, Clay, Hall, Hamilton,

Howard, Merrick, Nuckolls, Webster

**South Heartland District Health Department**

Phone 402-462-6211

**Central District Health Department**

Phone 308-385-5175



**Disaster Checklist**

Place a check next to each contact made.

\_\_\_\_\_ Emergency Management Division  
(Applicable County/City)

\_\_\_\_\_ AAA Staff/Contractors

\_\_\_\_\_ Red Cross

\_\_\_\_\_ Senior Centers (Applicable)

\_\_\_\_\_ Service Providers (Applicable)

\_\_\_\_\_ Nebraska State Unit On Aging

\_\_\_\_\_ Governing Board Chairperson

\_\_\_\_\_ Nursing Facilities

\_\_\_\_\_ Assisted Living Facilities

\_\_\_\_\_ Ministerial Association

\_\_\_\_\_ Contact Care Management/Medicaid Waiver Clientele

\_\_\_\_\_ Nebraska Emergency Management Agency