



**UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
OFFICE OF CHILD CARE & REGULATORY SERVICES**

TERRITORY-WIDE CHILD CARE DISASTER PLAN

Revised December 2025



PURPOSE

This plan formalizes the United States Virgin Islands Department of Human Services (VIDHS) Office of Child Care and Regulatory Services (OCCRS) structured response process before, during and after disasters/emergencies. The OCCRS is the lead agency for Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) programming in the U.S. Virgin Islands (hereinafter referred to as “the territory”).

The OCCRS administers the territory's Licensing, Quality Improvement and CCDF Subsidy & Referral functions for public, private and parochial providers of childcare services. They license monitor, provide training, quality improvement opportunities, perform eligibility and enrollment activities for CCDF benefits and provides in public awareness and education for the community.

This plan addresses the need for safe child care before, during, and after a major disaster, a state of emergency declared by the Governor or any such event that, at the discretion of agency leadership warrants implementation of some or all components of this plan.

APPLICABILITY

This Disaster Plan provides guidance to all licensed registered, legally exempt childcare programs and providers daycare, group day care home, kids club, family day care home, afterschool, residential home program, & summer camp) receiving funds under the Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG) Act of 2014. It is a component plan of the VIDHS Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) and provides specific guidance to the OCCRS when the territory faces disasters/emergencies and emergency response protocols are activated.

COORDINATION AND COLLABORATION WITH KEY PARTNERS

The Office of Child Care and Regulatory Services is a division within VIDHS, the agency designated as the territory's Emergency Support Function 6 (ESF6) – Mass Care, Emergency Assistance, Housing and Human Services lead. The OCCRS' territory-wide disaster plan follows the protocols prescribed as a part of the territory's emergency operation plan response. The VI's Territorial Emergency Operations Plan (TEOP) is executed by fifteen emergency support functions with the guidance and coordination of the Virgin Islands Territorial Emergency Management Agency (VITEMA) and the Federal Emergency management Agency (FEMA). Emergency support functions are carried out collaboratively between governmental and nongovernmental agencies as well as private and nonprofit entities designated as a part of Virgin Islands voluntary organizations active in disasters (VIVOADS).



The key support agencies for ESF6 and VIDHS, including OCCRS are: American Red Cross (ARC), VI Department of Agriculture (VIDA), VI Department of Education (VIDE), VI Police Department (VIPD), VI Department of Sports, Parks, and Recreation (DSP&R), VI Department of Public Works (DPW), VI National Guard (VING), VI Department of Health (VIDOH), VI Waste Management Authority (VI), VI Fire and Emergency Medical Services (VIFEMS), and VITEMA. The Commissioner of the Department of Human Services serves on the decision making board on next steps for the territory wide disaster plan development and implementation.

The Territory has implemented National Incident Management System (NIMS), as outlined in VIDHS protocol, as the standard incident management structure within the U.S. Virgin Islands. Incident Command System (ICS) is the standard for on-scene emergency management throughout the Territory.

The Office of Child Care and Regulatory Services, an agency within VIDHS has comprehensive responsibility, authority and oversight of the territory's child care facilities licensure, monitoring of health and safety, quality improvement and CCDF subsidy enrollment, eligibility, disbursement and management. With these functions unified under VIDHS OCCRS, the territory's public, private and parochial schools as well as Early Head Start and Head Start are informed by, subject to and benefit from this plan. The territory does not have a State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care but the Lead agency effectively acts as a similar coordinating body.

CONTINUATION OF CHILD CARE SUBSIDIES AND SERVICES

All CCDF program functions are carried out by the OCCRS. In times of emergencies/disasters, the OCCRS ensures continuity of operations, execution of mission essential functions and continuation of the following core CCDF program functions as described below:

- a) *Ensure that licensed programs receiving CCDF funds are safe and operational* - OCCRS must visit each facility and assess damage from the disaster to the property and equipment in conjunction with VING, and VIFEMS. The Licensing Unit assesses the programs' facilities and their staffing to ensure the programs are safe to reopen and continue operation in a safe and healthy environment. Determinations will be made by the assessing agencies about whether the child care provider can operate from the existing facility.
- i) OCCRS will provide technical assistance to child care providers to allow them to identify new locations to provide services, if necessary; to prioritize repairs to facilities and equipment; to secure funding and other support needed to reopen; to access donated supplies and materials for program where necessary; to obtain services need to restore facility (ex. cleaning, repair services and building inspection); to restore records



- and administrative services; to obtain waivers, if needed, and become re-licensed.
- b) *Track families receiving subsidies impacted by the disaster* – OCCRS would maintain contact with customers utilizing updated contact information stored utilizing redundancies that safely archive information off site (telephone numbers, email addresses, physical addresses); utilizing the Joint Information Center (JIC) to provide CCDF families and the general public with status of available child care services and means of making contact with the lead agency to access child care services.
 - c) Provisions to extend eligibility re-determinations for families – During a State of Emergency, the lead agency will suspend the need for families to recertify until infrastructure access and operations return to normal. Children and families that are eligible continue to be eligible throughout the duration of a State of Emergency.
 - d) The lead agency working collaboratively with GVI's Office of Management and Budget, Department of Property & Procurement and the Department of Finance will ensure that CCDF payments continue to be provided in the aftermath of a disaster.
 - e. The lead agency will assist new enrollees or prepare for an influx of families who may need assistance after a disaster. A territory-wide taskforce is put in place after disasters to support with these efforts.
 - f. The lead agency will implement a waiting list if the Lead Agency does not have one, as appropriate.

COORDINATION OF POST DISASTER RECOVERY OF CHILD CARE SERVICES

OCCRS supports child care providers in recovering from disasters by delivering technical assistance, training, and resources to strengthen emergency preparedness and response. OCCRS works closely with emergency management, licensing, and public health officials to assess damage and provider status in affected areas. OCCRS helps ensure business continuity by guiding providers on insurance coverage, safeguarding records and assets, and accessing financial assistance or micro-loans through partnerships with business associations and community development organizations. Additionally, OCCRS collaborates with VITEMA to clarify reimbursement eligibility and facilitates the rapid setup of temporary child care services when facilities are disrupted.

REQUIREMENTS FOR CCDF PROVIDERS AND OTHER CHILD CARE PROVIDERS

Preparedness Procedures and Accommodations

All childcare programs (formal and informal), regardless of their size, or type, must develop a disaster plan that can immediately be activated based on the alerts and declarations made by the Governor of the territory and the Virgin Islands Territorial



Emergency Management Agency's (VITEMA). Disaster plans must include procedures for childcare staff to implement if they must:

- Leave the premises quickly to attain a safe distance from all events danger(s) (evacuation)
- Leave the facility location and re-establish the learning environment in another location (relocation)
- Remain safely on site (shelter-in-place)
- Remain safely on site, preventing the exit or entrance of persons unto the site. (lock down)

Disaster plans must include procedures for accommodation of infants and toddlers, children with disabilities, and children with chronic medical conditions.

Family childcare providers **must have a plan** that protects the **health and safety of their own family, as well as the children for whom they are providing care.** They must minimize the impact of disasters on the facility in which they both live and work. Generally, childcare providers must also help their employees plan for their own families while transporting and caring for the childcare center's children, especially if relocation is required.

Staff and Volunteer Emergency Preparedness

OCCRS licensing regulations require that all childcare providers ensure that all persons (staff, contractors and volunteers) at their facilities during the administering of childcare services participate in annual disaster preparedness training, including virtual seminars, in- person tabletops and practice drills.

- Staff in all programs must conduct individual emergency evacuation drills monthly and other types of drills at least twice a year.
 - (1) Record the days and times when drills are conducted, including evening, overnight and weekend hours, if your center cares for children during those hours.
 - (2) Document the type of drill, date time of day, name of the person supervising the drill, number of children and staff in attendance, and length of time taken for all individuals to complete the drill.
 - (3) The children must be able to safely exit the building within three minutes.

OCCRS licensing staff will monitor compliance with these requirements and document them during annual Standard by Standard evaluations. Additionally, OCCRS will host annual training on disaster and emergency planning for child care programs to assist providers in creating or updating their disaster plans to ensure safety before, during, and after an emergency. OCCRS's ongoing collaboration with other partnering emergency agencies creates additional opportunities for VITEMA to offer all programs with planning and preparedness training, ensuring child care providers are resilient to disasters.

Communication and Reunification

All program Emergency Preparedness Plans must include procedures for notifying parents/guardians after the emergency ends and how children will be reunited with their families as the evacuation, relocation, sheltering-in-place or lock-down is lifted. Consider how your program will reunify children with their families by Collecting and keep



emergency contact information, and health requirements for all children, families, staff and volunteers., Create and use a child emergency information form for each child for this purpose. This information must be in a ready-to-go file for easy access and mobility in an emergency.

The Territory’s emergency operations plan requires that all childcare programs, when evacuating or relocating from their original sites must travel with a complete list/log of all children and staff reasonably expected to have been on site at the time the evacuation of relocation commenced.

Continuity of Operations

Childcare providers must have procedures for Continuity of Operation (COOP) in order to continue providing child care after a natural or man-made disaster, including access to copies of records, phone numbers, documents, or computer files, and supplies necessary for continued operation.

Reviewed :

Approved :

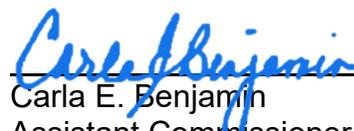


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01-12-2026
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12.29.2025
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