

V. Susan Alford, State Director

**South Carolina
Department of Social Services
2017 Annual Progress and Services Report
Update to the Disaster Plan
2015 – 2019 Child and Family Services Plan**

Disaster Plan Response

Severe winter weather occurred in South Carolina on February 25, 2015 - February 28, 2015. The Governor of South Carolina issued an Executive Order declaring a State of Emergency for thirty-one (31) of the forty-six (46) counties in the state. The SCDSS Disaster Plan was effectively implemented as outlined in the Disaster Plan. Local and national media and weather outlets were monitored, and constant communication was maintained with ESF -6 Mass Care Lead (the SCDSS is the Lead in ESF-6) within the South Carolina Emergency Management Division. The SCDSS coordinated with ESF-6 by disseminating any important information related to openings and closing of warming and overnight shelters to our Constituents. There was no impact on the SCDSS or demand on disaster readiness procedures such as evacuations or feeding operations. Disaster/Emergency Phone numbers were distributed state wide via the SCDSS website.

During the recent South Carolina Floods in October 2015, mass care operations proved challenging for a variety of reasons. From this event, shelter demand reached a maximum of twenty-one (21) shelters open at peak with nine hundred and forty-one (941) occupants. We were fortunate enough to have been in a response posture due the threat of Hurricane Joaquin. We had early and ongoing communications with all local, state, and private parties. This continued throughout the event. The worst of the storm happened over the weekend which was fortuitous, with schools, childcare, and adult facilities closed.

We've rewritten our Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) and are finalizing draft changes now. The intent is to enable opening shelters in any hazard with or without Volunteer Organizations Active during Disaster (VOAD) assistance. We lay out a framework for service delivery to include all partner agencies. This enables better vision and reporting, quicker identification of gaps, and more synchronized efforts to support our citizens.

We've begun a state shelter task force to look deeper at hurricane and other hazard processes and procedures. To anticipate the needs of the population we serve.

Detailed planning location by location has begun in earnest, following the process used by the South Carolina Department of Public Service (SCDP) in developing their traffic control plan. Once complete, these forms include detailed feeding, staffing, and communications plans for each shelter.

Training has continued for the SCDSS and supporting state agencies, with approximately 1,300 state employees receiving ARC sponsored training this year. During FFY 2016 the number is 2130 people trained, and that number changes monthly as people complete the training, but reporting is done monthly.

As the lead agency for mass care, how do you plan to address these concerns?

The state has to revise and improve our systems. That's the goal of both the sheltering and feeding task forces. Much of this has to do with understanding our capabilities and limitations, identifying gaps, and conducting detail planning for the worst case scenario, a major hurricane affecting the entire state.

The state has adequate staff, food, and shelter locations – but from what we've experienced getting everything to come together quickly at the point of need is our challenge. We're fixing it through the SOP revisions and associated detailed planning.

