



MEMORANDUM

DATE: May 14, 2020

TO: Tim Burch, Director, Clark County Department of Family Services
Amber Howell, Director, Washoe County Human Services Agencies
Alexis Tucey, Deputy Administrator, Division of Child and Family Services

FROM: Ross Armstrong, Administrator, Division of Child and Family Services

RE: Instructional Memo: COVID-19 Guidance Memo #4

The Division of Child and Family Services continues to work through the ever-changing response to COVID-19. We are committed to continuing to send out information as we receive it in a way that is helpful.

EXTENSION OF COVID-19 GUIDANCE MEMO #1:

The provisions previously outlined, set to expire on May 15, 2020, are **extended indefinitely**. DCFS will issue a memo when federal guidance and/or Governor's orders require modification or suspension of any of the provisions.

Please refer to the March 17th COVID-19 Guidance Memo #1 regarding the following topics:

- Response Times
- Contact Required: State Regulation and Policy
- Visits to Juvenile Justice, Mental Health, or Other Facilities
- Emergency Shelters
- Alternative Nevada Initial Assessment

SAFELY PHASING BACK TO NORMAL OPERATIONS

The Governor has released the [Nevada United: Roadmap to Recovery](#) framework. It establishes a phased in approach to recovery. DCFS urges child welfare jurisdictions to begin planning for a phased in approach to near normal operations. The DCFS plan is attached for reference. Special attention should be placed on strategies to increase in-person caseworker and family visitation and other activities that encourage timely permanency in a manner that minimizes risk to the child, the family, and agency team members. As usual, it is important that these practice decisions are focused on the best interest of the child and evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

DCFS encourages child welfare agencies to continue to work with their local emergency management teams and health officials to regularly monitor the status of isolated or widespread outbreaks. Different geographic or programmatic areas of your agency may be in different stages of readiness for recovery.

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION FROM JURISDICTIONS

In order for DCFS to track jurisdictional modifications to current practice through this crisis, the Family Programs Office requests copies of all policies, procedures, instructional memoranda, or other communications to child welfare staff, and requests jurisdiction permission to share modified operations with the other jurisdictions to facilitate practice improvement. The Children's Bureau has regularly been requesting updates on policy or practice changes so that they can make decisions on the current federal flexibility. Without access to up-to-date practice or policy modifications, or safety and practice barriers, the Children's Bureau may adjust federal policy without a complete picture of the situation on the ground.

Specifically, DCFS is requesting the following information:

- Modifications to policy/practice based on Stafford Act flexibility.
https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/cb/stafford_act.pdf
- Steps you are taking to support Independent Living/Court Jurisdiction youth and/or youth aging out of foster care https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/cb/housing_support_covid19.pdf
- Any other policies, procedures, memos, trainings, or staff communications outlining any changes to practice due to the pandemic

Please provide this information to Kathryn Roose (kroose@dcfs.nv.gov) by May 22, 2020.

REQUESTS FOR ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE

The Division of Child and Family Services, Family Programs Office understands that the COVID-19 emergency continues to be an evolving situation. Agency needs or abilities may change in the event of sharply increasing staff, placement, or provider shortages. Any agency experiencing difficulty in executing essential functions should coordinate with their local Public Health Preparedness team to coordinate with the State of Nevada Emergency Operations Center for resources. For statutory, regulatory, or policy concerns or deviations, please contact Kathryn Roose at the Family Programs Office by phone (775) 301-7141 or by email (kroose@dcfs.nv.gov). Any child welfare agency may submit an emergency policy or procedure for review by the Family Programs Office for review.

RESOURCES FROM THE CHILDREN'S BUREAU

The Children's Bureau has set up an informational website for child welfare agencies:

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/resource/covid-19-resources>

The Administration for Children and Families (ACF) has set up an informational website for Human Services Leaders:

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/oro/priorities/covid-19-resources-for-human-services-leaders>

- This website provides links to all federal guidance letters and information sent by the Children's Bureau and ACF on responses and flexibility in light of the pandemic.

EXPIRATION OF MODIFICATIONS

This guidance in this memo shall remain in effect until further notice. The Division reserves to right to issue superseding guidance based on federal direction or changing circumstances within the State of Nevada.

CC: Kathryn Roose, Deputy Administrator, Division of Child and Family Services