Emergency Preparedness
ADRC Operations Manual

I. Introduction

ADRCs need to identify and plan for their roles in natural disasters and other emergencies, including roles in emergency preparedness planning, response, and recovery. Since ADRCs serve individuals who may be more vulnerable and require assistance in certain emergency situations, they play an integral role in community planning and preparation.

Although ADRCs are not emergency service providers, they must be prepared and have the ability to recognize, manage, and respond to emergencies in a proficient manner.

II. Requirements for Recognizing and Responding to Emergencies

A. Recognizing and Responding to Customer Emergencies

All ADRC staff need to be trained on how to identify a call or contact as an emergency. This includes being able to:

1. Identify what constitutes an emergency.
2. Apply emergency procedures to handle the call or interaction.
3. Remain calm.
4. De-escalate the situation, if possible and necessary.
5. Identify emergency-related health symptoms such as a heart attack, stroke, suicidal ideation, or domestic violence.
6. Collect needed information about the emergency situation, along with contact information about the caller.
7. Connect the customer with local emergency service providers.
8. Follow up with the customer, as needed.

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When a situation involving immediate risk is identified during business hours, ADRC staff should follow protocols established in the 911 service, crisis intervention service, or other emergency resources in the community in order to ensure that customers are connected promptly with the appropriate emergency service providers.

After-hours phone calls should be answered, at a minimum, with a message instructing callers about whom to contact in case of an emergency.

B. Access to Adult Protective Services

All ADRC staff need to know the (Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation: What to Look For, P-01550) and be able to identify ADRC customers who may be at risk of abuse, neglect, self-neglect, self-harm, or financial exploitation and who need adult protective services (APS).

When ADRC staff identify customers who may need elder abuse or adult protective services, they should provide or facilitate access to those services through cooperation with the elder-adult-at-risk agency or the adult-at-risk agency that provides the services in their area. ADRC customers who are referred to APS should be put directly in contact with the appropriate agency, without being required to initiate another contact. Best practice is to also provide the customer with the appropriate agency contact information in case they get disconnected during a call transfer.

ADRC staff who receive a referral for ADRC services from APS must act on that referral within one business day.

Note: Disability and elder benefit specialists are strictly limited in their ability to make referrals to APS, due to client confidentiality policies specific to their program areas. For more detailed information about these policies, refer to the Disability Benefit Counseling (P-03062-05) and Elder Benefit Counseling (P-03062-06) sections of the Operations Manual.

C. Community-Level Emergency and Disaster Preparedness and Response

ADRCs need to identify and plan for what their role will be in the case of a natural disaster or other widespread emergency. ADRCs should proactively engage in planning activities to prevent or minimize disruption of ADRC services in the event of a natural disaster or other emergency. ADRCs should have a continuity of operations plan (COOP) that clearly identifies how the agency will operate in an emergency.

ADRCs that are interested in a template for developing a COOP are encouraged to use the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) COOP Planning template.

ADRCs should utilize the ADRC Visual Communication Tool (P-02918) in their daily operations as well as emergency preparedness plans. This is a tool that should be shared with other community partners and providers.

III. Operational Policies and Procedures

A. Statutory References

Wis. Stat. § 46.283 Resource Centers

Wis. Stat. § 46.90 Elder Abuse Reporting System

Wis. Stat. Chapter 51 State Alcohol, Drug Abuse, Developmental Disabilities and Mental Health Act

Wis. Stat. Chapter 55 Protective Service System

B. Agency Requirements

ADRCs that are organizationally part of county government may provide APS, but may not use ADRC grant funds for this purpose. ADRC grant funds may not be used to pay for APS call lines, investigations, annual review of protective placements, or any other APS service that is not specifically identified in the ADRC scope of services. ADRC staff positions that have both ADRC and APS responsibilities must comply with the requirements for shared positions and the Conflict of Interest (P-02923-03) policy.

If the ADRC is not the county agency designated to provide APS, then the ADRC must have a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the designated agency or agencies regarding how these services are to be coordinated. The MOU must specify staff contacts, hours of operation, and referral processes and procedures. See the Adult Protective Services and Aging and Disability Resource Center Guidelines (P-00824) for a suggested MOU template.

In the event of a natural disaster, public health emergency, or other community-wide emergency event, the ADRC must have necessary equipment available to operate remotely should an alternative work location(s) become necessary. This should include, but is not limited to, access to cell phones and computers such as tablets or laptops.

ADRC services should be considered essential. Therefore, ADRCs should make efforts to identify employees and contractors necessary for the provision of these services during a natural disaster or other emergency.

C. Supervision

Supervisors need to communicate the agency's emergency preparedness plans on a regular basis with staff and make sure that staff are aware of any specific role they may play in the event of an emergency.

D. Allowable Funding Sources and Expenses (P-03062-16)

ADRC grant

With DHS approval, temporary modifications may be made to the requirements under the ADRC scope of services in the case of a natural disaster or other emergency including, but not limited to, service delivery and permissible uses of ADRC grant funds.

E. Policy Requirements

Confidentiality (P-02923-06)

Conflict of Interest (P-02923-03)

F. Training Requirements

ADRCs are strongly encouraged to participate in training opportunities related to emergency preparedness and emergency management. Training is available through FEMA. Additional information can be found in the National Preparedness Course Catalog.

Emergency preparedness training may be offered by DHS or other partner agencies. Although not required, ADRCs should consider having staff trained in first aid, CPR, and use of an AED, should the need arise. ADRCs are also encouraged to have staff trained in suicide prevention, such as QPR (question-persuade-refer) or another crisis response method.

IV. Additional Resources and Tools

Ready.gov

Ready Wisconsin

COOP Plan Blank Template

ADRC Visual Communication Tool (P-02918)

Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation: What to Look For (P-01550)