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DRAFT**SECTION I: INTRODUCTION****I-1 Purpose****The Continuity of Operations Plan**

The Area Agency on Aging, Palm Beach/Treasure Coast, Inc. is a part of a coordinated system of local community service agencies within Florida under contract with the Florida Department of Elder Affairs (DoEA). This system serves and protects adults sixty and older. The Area Agency on Aging is the local planning and administrative structure dedicated to this age-specific population in Public Service Area 9 (PSA9), a five county area that includes Indian River, St. Lucie, Okeechobee, Martin and Palm Beach Counties. One of the functions of the Area Agency is to serve as the coordinating body for the aging network in preparing for and recovering after a disaster. Coordinating service delivery efforts following a disaster, in order to normalize elders' lives as quickly as possible, is imperative.

The scope of the Area Agency on Aging of Palm Beach/Treasure Coast's involvement in disaster relief efforts will depend greatly upon the magnitude of the disaster and the capacity of the local service providers to respond, as determined by staff availability, resources, and damage and disruption caused by the disaster. Not only will the Area Agency assist service providers in their relief efforts; DoEA will assist both the Area Agency and its service providers in recovery efforts until local operations are "normalized."

The Area Agency on Aging and Local Service Provider Continuity of Operations Plans are based on the guidelines provided by the Department. The Area Agency on Aging plans will be reviewed on an annual basis. Local Service Provider Plans will be annually reviewed by the Area Agency on Aging. The Area Agency on Aging's contract contain language providing for the activation of their plan by the Secretary of the DoEA. This language is passed on to the Local Service Providers through their contracts with the Area Agencies on Aging.

The Department of Community Affairs is required by law and given authority through Chapter 252, F.S., to prescribe and assign policies, tasks, and responsibilities to the various agencies of state government, cities, and municipalities in order to fully prepare and respond to an emergency. The Department of Community Affairs organizes and employs the resources of all state entities and assigns responsibilities for meeting their specific functions related to emergency preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation procedures. The Continuity of Operations (COOP) plan establishes policy and guidance to ensure the execution of the State of Florida, Division of Emergency Management's mission essential functions in the event that Tallahassee is threatened or incapacitated, and the relocation of selected Division of Emergency Management (DEM) personnel and functions is required.

The Department of Elder Affairs is a support agency to six of the Emergency Support Functions (ESFs) in the State Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan and Continuity of Operations Plan. The Department will be the liaison between the Area Agencies on Aging, Local Service Providers, and state officials when a disaster impacts Florida and its elder citizens. NOTE: The

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Department of Elder Affairs has incorporated its comprehensive emergency management plan into its Continuity of Operations Plan.

This Continuity of Operations (COOP) Plan outlines actions to be taken by the department during a disaster or emergency and focuses on three components:

- a. Assist the Area Agencies on Aging and Local Service Providers in preparing for and recovering from a disaster or emergency;
- b. Provide support to the COOP as support agency to six Emergency Support Functions: 6 – Mass Care; 8 – Health and Medical; 9 – Urban Search and Rescue; 11 – Food and Water; 14 – Public Information; and 15 – Volunteers and Donations; and
- c. Secure its own facilities and personnel; relocate to an alternate facility, if necessary, when a disaster or emergency strikes the Tallahassee area, and return as quickly as possible to serving the needs of Florida’s elders.

Local governments will bear the initial responsibility for disaster response and relief. Minor emergencies will be handled primarily at the local level. The Governor will declare a state of emergency when extraordinary measures are needed to support local efforts on a multi-county, statewide, or major emergency level. Before state agencies can qualify for federal assistance, the Governor must request a formal Presidential Declaration of Emergency.

State agencies have developed and will continue to update internal plans and procedures for any disaster. Internal disaster procedures have been developed and will continue to be updated to ensure the Department and aging network can fulfill the role and function of emergencies. The State Warning Point monitors all state activities 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The Department and the Division of Emergency Management will be able to contact the Emergency Coordinating Officer and/or the Alternate Emergency Coordinating Officer in the event of an emergency on any given day.

I-2 Applicability and Scope

It will be the role of the Area Agency on Aging to:

1. Serve as a resource for the dissemination of educational materials, on an on-going basis, to its local service provider network, community senior groups, and any others seeking such materials;
2. Establish an Eldercare Coordinating Component (ECC) that will coordinate the disaster preparation and recovery efforts of the network of health and human service agencies that provide services to elders in Palm Beach County;
3. Assist each of the CCE lead agencies and OAA providers in Martin, St. Lucie, Indian River and Okeechobee counties in coordinating their disaster and recovery plans with the plans of their county Emergency Management Offices;

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4. Maintain coordinated disaster preparation and recovery procedures for the PSA 9 provider network; and
5. Provide back-up support to other PSA's across Florida when called upon by DoEA.

I-3 Supersession

This document supersedes the Area Agency on Aging, Palm Beach/Treasure Coast, Inc.'s Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan.

I-4 Authorities

- a. Chapter 252; Chapter 252.365(s), (2), (3), Florida Statutes
- b. Executive Order 01-262 (Emergency Management) dated September 11, 2001.
- c. Chapter No. 2002-43, Florida Statutes
- d. Executive Order 01-262, Dated September 11, 2001
- e. Executive Order 01-300, Dated October 11, 2001

I-5 Policy

In accordance with Chapter 252.365(1), (2), (3), Florida Statutes, an Emergency Coordinating Officer (EOC) and Alternate (AEOC) have been selected for the agency. The responsibilities of the Emergency Coordinating Officer and Alternate are as follows: coordinating with the Division of Emergency Management (DEM) on emergency preparedness issues, preparing and maintaining emergency preparedness and post disaster response and recovery plans for the agency, maintaining rosters of personnel to assist in disaster operations, and coordinating appropriate training for agency personnel.

These individuals shall be responsible for ensuring that Local Service Providers (LSPs) have Continuity of Operations Plans. The Agency will be responsible for reviewing and approving the LSP plans.

Florida is the most vulnerable and hurricane-prone state in the nation. Based on that fact, hurricane history in Florida and the United States was rewritten in 1992. Hurricane preparedness and response falls within two categories: "before Andrew" and "after Andrew." Hurricane Andrew created the "new standard by which all other disasters are measured." As a result of the extensive preparation, response efforts, and leadership of South Carolina emergency management during Hurricane Hugo, Florida followed that plan which kept the state from experiencing higher casualties during Hurricane Andrew. To ensure the Department of Elder Affairs, Area Agency on Agings and Local Service Providers can continue to provide its mission essential functions, the Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) was developed to ensure this critical service to the aging network in all-hazards environments.

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Florida's aging population based on the 1999 census indicates that 82% of Floridians over the age of 65 live in coastal counties and are more susceptible to evacuation during a hurricane or other disaster. A portion of Florida's older population has special needs, which must be addressed before, during, and after a disaster.

This Continuity of Operations Plan can be implemented as a result of any natural or manmade disaster, which may include hurricanes, tornadoes, civil disturbances, contractual disputes, epidemics, massive migrations, fires, nuclear power plant accidents, sick building syndrome, train derailments, terrorism, bio-terrorism, and hazardous materials.

The local service providers represent the most visible and accessible component of the aging network. Normally, aging network services can assist only a small portion of the general population of senior citizens. However, older adults who would never approach a service provider under ordinary circumstances will call for information and assistance after an emergency. Family and friends, who have always provided the support services needed by an older adult, will now turn to community services for action.

DoEA has established eight disaster-planning requirements for local service providers:

1. Designation of an Emergency Coordinating Officer.
2. A procedure for contacting all at-risk provider consumers, on a prioritized basis, prior to and immediately following a disaster.
3. A procedure for receiving referrals from other service agencies, conducting outreach, and delivering services to older Floridians, other than existing consumers, needing emergency relief assistance.
4. A procedure for after-hours coverage of Elder Helplines and other network services, if necessary.
5. A procedure to dispatch the Emergency Coordinating Officer or other staff members to shelters in areas outside of the disaster area, to assist older Floridian evacuees with special needs, if necessary.
6. A procedure to help at-risk consumers register with the Special Needs Registry of local emergency management agencies.
7. A procedure for nutrition providers to distribute meals to consumers prior to disasters; a procedure to distribute meals to older Floridian disaster victims and persons residing with older Floridian disaster victims after the disaster, if necessary.
8. A procedure to assign staff to Emergency Operations Centers and/or disaster assistance centers to ensure that older Floridian victims in the disaster area receive help, as coordinated through local officials.

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The Area Agency Emergency Coordinating Officer will review all provider disaster plans, and request yearly updates.