

4th Annual NCACDSS Best Practices Awards Nomination Form

Category: CSMIE#4 Tier 2
Cost Savings Measures and/or Improvements in Efficiency

Project Title: Continuity of Operations Database

1. **Project/Program Summary:** Briefly summarize the project's history, purpose, timeline and budget.

In 2005, a format was developed to identify the agency's guardianship clients by use of photograph. The format also contained pertinent information that would be needed in the case of emergency involving these clients. As part of Onslow County's Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP), this idea was expanded into a computerized version that could be utilized away from the agency in time of emergency. Specifically, we began looking at ways the materials could be transferred to any site with computer capability, in the event we were required to evacuate the agency buildings and/or county. This information could be shared with other agencies if a dire need was identified. The guardianship identification system has since been expended to cover our Medicaid-At-Risk, Representative Payee, Foster Care, and Kinship Care clients. It would allow agencies to identify clients if or when evacuation of the county or to special needs shelters was warranted.

2. **Innovation:** Why is the program unique? How does your project differ from similar projects?

Normally, a client is assigned one (1) worker and other workers do not have regular contact with that individual. There may be times when other workers may have to fill in or have contact with clients not on their caseload. Identification of these clients will be easier with utilization of the format identified above. This idea began with the intention of only being used within the agency; however, has evolved into a format that could be utilized by other agencies in the event of a major emergency. This could include medical personnel, emergency management personnel, law enforcement, and other agencies as required. For so many years, we have depended on paper files that had to be transported from the agency and the possibility of a mass evacuation had not been given serious consideration. This computerized format would make the possible destruction of our paper files manageable if it were to occur. We will begin putting other information we normally gather on a computerized form that will ensure the safety of our files.

3. **Project Success and Impact:** What were the objectives? How well were they met? How widespread is the impact of the project/program? What is the anticipated long-term impact? Did the project involve collaboration with other agencies, non-profits, businesses, etc.? Describe the outcome of the collaboration.

This project is in its infancy, and the long-term uses have not been fully developed. At the present time, our efforts only pertain to those within our agency. However, as stated above, information may be shared with other agencies on an emergency basis. The main intent of this project is to allow access during a catastrophic event that required us to evacuate the county or that caused destruction of our written files, but yet still ensure security of client information

4. **Project Effort and Difficulty:** How well did the program use limited resources? What obstacles or challenges did you overcome? How was this done?

The agency was able to use existing resources to work toward completion of this project. The biggest effort was for workers to gather pertinent information and obtain digital photographs of those clients whose information will be maintained in the database. Many of our clients are extremely private, and for some it took an effort to convince them to allow photographs to be taken of them. Staff gave assurances that any information put on the database would be used within our agency and would not be released to anyone else unless an extreme emergency situation arose.

5. **Ability to Replicate Project:** Can this project be duplicated in other counties? What could counties do to minimize obstacles and problems?

This project should be easily replicated in other agencies within our state. The only expense should be the purchase of a digital camera and/or scanner to incorporate the gathered materials into computerized format.