

NEWS from the North Dakota Department of Human Services
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Crawford to lead disaster preparedness for ND Department of Human Services

BISMARCK, N.D. – The North Dakota Department of Human Services has hired Joseph “Jay” Crawford to lead the department’s disaster preparedness, response, and recovery efforts.

He will be responsible for the department’s significant state role, as well as internal agency preparedness, and will report to the department’s Executive Director Carol K. Olson.

The department is the lead agency in the State Emergency Operations Plan for planning and coordinating evacuation, sheltering, and mass care activities for the state when the scope of a disaster exceeds, or is expected to exceed, local resources and a state response is requested.

In this role, Crawford will represent the department at the State Emergency Operation Center and will coordinate efforts with the North Dakota Department of Emergency Services and FEMA. He will serve as the liaison to the North Dakota Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster, and will represent North Dakota and serve as its liaison when federal Small Business Administration and FEMA officials conduct preliminary damage assessments in communities.

In addition to his disaster response work, he will be responsible for the department’s continuity of operations plans. Thousands of individuals, many of them vulnerable, rely on department services, programs, and other assistance, and most health and human service providers in North Dakota rely on the department for uninterrupted funding support.

The department can administer two specific disaster relief programs if they are needed. Crawford will help coordinate those programs and will serve as a resource for state, tribal, and local disaster relief efforts to help them meet the unique needs of individuals with disabilities.

Previously, the department’s Legal Services Unit was responsible for disaster preparedness, response, and recovery efforts.

Crawford has extensive experience in risk management and insurance, occupational safety, employer disaster preparedness planning, and environmental protection. He holds a master’s degree in environmental science from North Dakota State University.

Prior to joining the department, he was employed by Bismarck State College (BSC) as an OSHA Safety and Health Consultant. He worked in the commercial insurance field in the private sector prior to joining BSC. From 1986 to 1996, Crawford was the Manager of Loss Control and Risk Management for the N.D. Insurance Reserve Fund. He served as the Director of the Division of Waste Management and Research for the N.D. Department of Health from 1975 to 1985.

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