

**For:** All FSA Employees

**Pandemic Planning for FSA**

**Approved by:** Administrator



**1 Overview**

**A Background**

The second wave of the 2009-H1N1 influenza began in the U.S. in late summer and is expected to increase in the early fall 2009. In anticipation of the regular seasonal influenza and with the ongoing spread of H1N1, it is critically important that FSA management continue and strengthen our efforts to protect our employees and ensure the continuity of our agency's essential operations. To ensure that the agency is prepared, the National Office has developed an FSA Pandemic Plan to:

- help managers with developing a business continuity plan for their office
- provide pandemic planning information necessary to assist with carrying out agency functions in a time of reduced staffing.

Previous agency planning was developed around the potential spread of the avian flu. Avian flu planning had different characteristics, patterns, and infection predictions than H1N1. Previous planning also followed World Health Organization (WHO) Global Pandemic Phases and the Stages for Federal Government Response as trigger levels. The current FSA Pandemic planning follows a 3-tiered approach for business continuity, safety, and well being of employees.

**B Purpose**

This notice instructs State Offices to:

- designate a State Office Human Pandemic Coordinator and backup
- update State Office Pandemic Plans to include the 3-tiered approach outlined in the FSA Pandemic Plan template
- ensure that all employees are familiar with the State Pandemic Plan.

Disposal Date	Distribution
October 1, 2010	All FSA employees; State Offices relay to County Offices

## 2 FSA Pandemic Planning for State Offices

### A Concept of the FSA Pandemic Plan

The FSA Pandemic Plan was developed to provide for business continuity based on a 3-tiered approach. The plan provides managers with guidance to identify agency critical functions and employees that perform these functions. Additionally, the plan provides planning assumptions and guidance to prepare for the potential of future similar situations, and also provides guidance for employees and family members. Employees are also encouraged to monitor the government's latest health advice and guidance at [www.flu.gov](http://www.flu.gov).

### B Three-Tiered Approach to Ensure That Essential Functions Are Maintained

By using a 3-tiered approach, managers will be able to:

- identify agency critical functions in advance of a pandemic
- move from 1 tier to the next when it becomes impossible to support the lower tier because of absenteeism of critical employees.

**The following 3 tiers must be included in all local plans.**

- **Tier I:** Tier I functions are programs within FSA that support the National Essential Functions (NEF) as outlined in Homeland Security Presidential Directive 20 (HSPD-20). This tier must always be supported to meet FSA's obligations in support of HSPD-20. Tier I functions are administered at the National Office and Kansas City. However, to ensure consistency in FSA planning, Tier I functions as outlined in the National plan and the template should be included in local plans.

**Tier II:** Tier II functions are program responsibilities within FSA that are determined to be agency essential functions that must be supported to ensure that the agency delivers essential programs that our customers depend on. State Offices shall identify and include these critical functions in their local plans.

For Tier II planning purposes, managers should assume that absenteeism at times may be as high as 40 percent within their office.

- **Tier III:** Tier III functions are normal day-to-day agency operations whereby managers should be prepared to prioritize these functions if absenteeism prevents all daily functions from being performed. For Tier III functions, managers should consider that absenteeism may be as high as 20 percent of the employees within the office to function.

2 FSA Pandemic Planning for State Offices (Continued)

C State Office Action

To identify Tier II functions, State Offices shall complete the following forms by **October 15, 2009**:

- **FSA-782** to identify the essential agency Tier II functions
- **FSA-783** to identify contact information and telephone tree for all employees and will identify critical employees
- **FSA-784** to identify vital records.

These forms are available on the FFAS Employee Forms/Publications Online Website at **<http://165.221.16.90/dam/ffasforms/forms.html>**.

**State Offices shall immediately:**

- designate a State Office Human Pandemic Coordinator and backup, and e-mail this information to Cindy Foister, DAFO, at **[cindy.foister@wdc.usda.gov](mailto:cindy.foister@wdc.usda.gov)** by October 9; include a CC to Star Bryant, DAFO, at **[star.bryant@wdc.usda.gov](mailto:star.bryant@wdc.usda.gov)**

**Note:** This person will be responsible for ensuring the Pandemic Plan is kept updated and will serve as a contact for the National Office.

- review and update State Pandemic Plans following the FSA Pandemic Plan template

**Notes:** A template has been provided on the DAFO Intranet website at **<http://intranet.fsa.usda.gov/fsatraining>**.

States may include additional local policy and guidance to enhance their plan to ensure that FSA agency critical functions can be performed with minimal interruptions.

- inform all employees of the State Pandemic Plan and provide guidance for employee safety and well being and preparations for continued operations during a pandemic
- ensure that operations plans are complete and instructions are provided to all employees concerning the continuity of essential functions and services and the safety and well being of employees

**2 FSA Pandemic Planning for State Offices (Continued)**

**C State Office Action (Continued)**

- continue to follow normal flu season protocols until the National Office issues new guidance
- be prepared to implement revised protocols when directed
- provide a copy of the State Pandemic Plan to all County Offices to ensure that they are familiar with the State Pandemic Plan.

**Note:** Do **not** include FSA-783 because it contains personally identifiable information (PII) when completed.

**D Contacts**

For questions or assistance with developing State plans, contact any of the following:

- Jerry Epting, FSA National Pandemic Coordinator, by either of the following:
  - e-mail to **jerry.epting@wdc.usda.gov**
  - telephone at 202-720-7696
- Star Bryant, DAFO Pandemic Coordinator, by either of the following:
  - e-mail to **star.bryant@wdc.usda.gov**
  - telephone at 202-720-0183
- Cindy Foister, DAFO Pandemic Coordinator backup, by either of the following:
  - e-mail to **cindy.foister@wdc.usda.gov**
  - telephone at 202-720- 7228.