Emergency Support Function # 15 (External Affairs) Annex

Thurston County Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP)

Updated April 2025

Prepared By:

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Primary Agencies:	Supporting Agencies & Organizations:
Communications Office	Public Safety Public Information Officers/PIOs
Emergency Management	Public Information Officers/PIOs from Other Entities
	Washington Military Department Emergency Management Division

Record of Changes

Change #	Date of Change	Point of Contact	Section(s) added, removed, or edited
25-001	April 2025	Cherie Carey, Thurston County Emergency Management	Complete annex revision

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1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose

This document is a supporting annex of the Thurston County Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (*base plan*) and serves to establish policies and procedures for the effective countywide coordination of necessary ESF # 15 External Affairs capabilities in the event of a human, technological or natural caused disaster. Primary and supporting agencies, their general responsibilities, and critical disaster response activities related to ESF # 15 External Affairs are identified herein and serve as a reference for executive officials, Emergency Coordination Center (ECC) staff and incident commanders to coordinate delivery of ESF # 15 External Affairs resources and capabilities during incident response.

This ESF annex ensures that sufficient assets are mobilized during emergencies or major disasters to provide accurate, accessible, coordinated and timely information to impacted communities and populace, first responders, governments, news media, tribes, private sectors, including those with alternate communication needs (such as limited English proficiency, low literacy, and those with disabilities including deaf or hard of hearing, low vision/blindness, or cognitive impairments).

This ESF annex provides resource support and mechanisms to implement the Thurston County Joint Information Center (JIC) Plan (Appendix 1) and supplementing first responder public information officers' operations with JIC resources.

1.2 Scope

This ESF details the establishment of support positions to coordinate communication to various audiences. This ESF applies to all county departments and agencies, cities and towns, special purpose districts, public safety agencies, and nonprofit organizations that may require county public affairs/information support or whose public affairs/information assets may be employed during an emergency or major disaster.

The context of this ESF is emergency or major disaster situations that exhausts or nearly exhausts the capacity of county first responder public affairs/information operations or when support is requested. These incidents are typically complex in nature and/or extend beyond 24 hours.

This ESF supports external affairs activities to include but not limited to:

- Coordinating information prior to dissemination, to the extent possible and practical, with other responding local, state, tribal, and federal organizations
- Providing information to the whole community including limited English proficient populations through a variety of methods, including the news media, state agency, and emergency news websites, social media platforms, and other means.

- Supporting the emergency public information activities of agencies or Incident Management Teams with lead responsibility for specific hazards or incidents, such as oil spills, pandemic disease outbreaks, and wildfires.
- Coordinating county external affairs activities with those of the state government and the private sector during and after an emergency or major disaster.
- Implementing the county's Joint Information Center / System Plan.

As part of incident response operations at the Emergency Coordination Center, ESF-#15 coordinates information and resources to directly support effective delivery of the following core capabilities: Public Information and Warning. Through intersecting activities with other support functions, ESF-#15 provides general support to the following additional core capabilities: Public Information and Warning. Core capabilities are derived from the *National Preparedness Goal* and further described in the base plan. Displayed below is a summary of the primary and supported core capabilities identified for ESF-#15

Primary Response Core Capability/Capabilities	
Public Information and Warning	Deliver coordinated, prompt, reliable, and actionable information to the whole community using clear, consistent, accessible, and culturally and linguistically appropriate methods to effectively relay information regarding any threat or hazard, as well as the actions being taken and the assistance being made available, as appropriate.
Supporting Core Capabilities	
Planning	Conduct a systematic process engaging the whole community as appropriate in the development of executable strategic, operational, and/or tactical-level approaches to meet defined objectives.
Operational Coordination	Establish and maintain a unified and coordinated operational structure and process that appropriately integrates all critical stakeholders and supports the execution of core capabilities.
Operational Communications	Ensure the capacity for timely communications in support of security, situational awareness, and operations by any and all means available, among and between affected communities in the impact area and all response forces.
Situational Assessment	Provide all decision makers with decision-relevant information regarding the nature and extent of the hazard, any cascading effects, and the status of the response.

1.3 Laws & Policy Guidelines

Thurston County government recognizes the importance of providing vital health and safety information to affected populations. The Thurston County Communications Office and Thurston County Emergency Management will do everything possible to ensure that information is

consistent, accurate, complete, and promptly delivered using communication methods that will disseminate the information as widely as possible to affected populations and the general public, including those with alternate communication needs. Therefore:

- Thurston County Communications Office and Thurston County Emergency Management are the lead agencies for ESF #15, and as such, is responsible for developing and maintaining plans and procedures related to ESF #15.
- Thurston County Communications Office and Thurston County Emergency Management will be the lead agencies for public information during emergencies unless the situation warrants otherwise (such as health epidemics, hazardous material spills, wildfires, or other public safety events); in such instances, the Communications Office and Emergency Management will support the entities having jurisdiction with disseminating their public information.
- Public safety agencies will provide specific emergency related messaging content or suggestions on life safety items such as evacuation and health outbreaks.
- All separately elected agencies in government will retain and manage their own independent public information officials and spokespersons.
- Agencies and organizations will maintain responsibility for developing content for public information and resource materials specific to the agency, its programs, and subject matter expertise.

RCW 70.136.080 (Type 1 or 2 hazardous material spill or release—Public meeting) requires that Washington State Department of Ecology hold at least one public meeting for large (type 1 or 2) hazardous materials releases or spills and include the following representatives:

- A representative from the department of ecology.
- A representative from the local organization for emergency services or management, as defined in RCW 38.52.010, in the jurisdiction where the spill or release occurred; and
- A representative for the party responsible for the hazardous material spill or release.

RCW 38.52.070 (Local organizations and joint local organizations authorized—Establishment, operation—Emergency powers, procedures—Communication plans.) requires organizations for emergency management that produce a comprehensive emergency management plan to also include an emergency communications plan for notifying significant population segments of life safety information during an emergency. Communication plans must include an expeditious notification of citizens who can reasonably be determined to be at risk during a hazardous material spill or release pursuant to RCW 70.136.080.

1.4 Situation

1.4.1 General Overview

Thurston County Emergency Management maintains an active public education and outreach program to increase public awareness and readiness for emergencies through education, outreach, and training. resilient community by ensuring residents understand how to prepare,

respond, and recover. During normal day to day operations, Thurston County Emergency Management provides public information via several platforms such as social media, website, text and email notifications. Thurston County Emergency Management maintains an alert and warning system to send WEA, EAS, text, voice and email notifications to the public during emergencies.

The Thurston County Board of County Commissioners maintains communications staff who provide communications coordination among county departments providing information to the public about Thurston County government via news releases, social media and website content.

1.4.2 Hazard Impacts to ESF #15
Disasters profoundly impact the management and dissemination of public information, as people turn to multiple sources—such as social media, local news, and government websites—for updates. However, disruptions to communication systems can hinder traditional outreach efforts. To maintain public trust and ensure safety, a coordinated and timely approach to sharing protective actions is critical.
Any emergency or major disaster has the potential to adversely impact the county's ability to provide health and safety information to residents and communicate with responding agencies, impacted communities, the news media, tribes, volunteer organizations, and the private sector.

See section 1.6.2 of the base plan for a summary assessment of all significant hazards that threaten Thurston County.

1.4.3 Whole Community
ESF #15 is committed to communicating with the whole community during response and recovery operations during emergencies and major disasters. The whole community includes populations with limited English proficiency (LEP), individuals with disabilities, and others with access and functional needs. (See Appendix 2, LEP Communications Plan)

1.5 Planning Assumptions

The County's Communications Manager is the County's Emergency Public Information Officer, and as such, directs the county external affairs activities of ESF #15 unless delegating that task to the Emergency Management Department or another county agency.
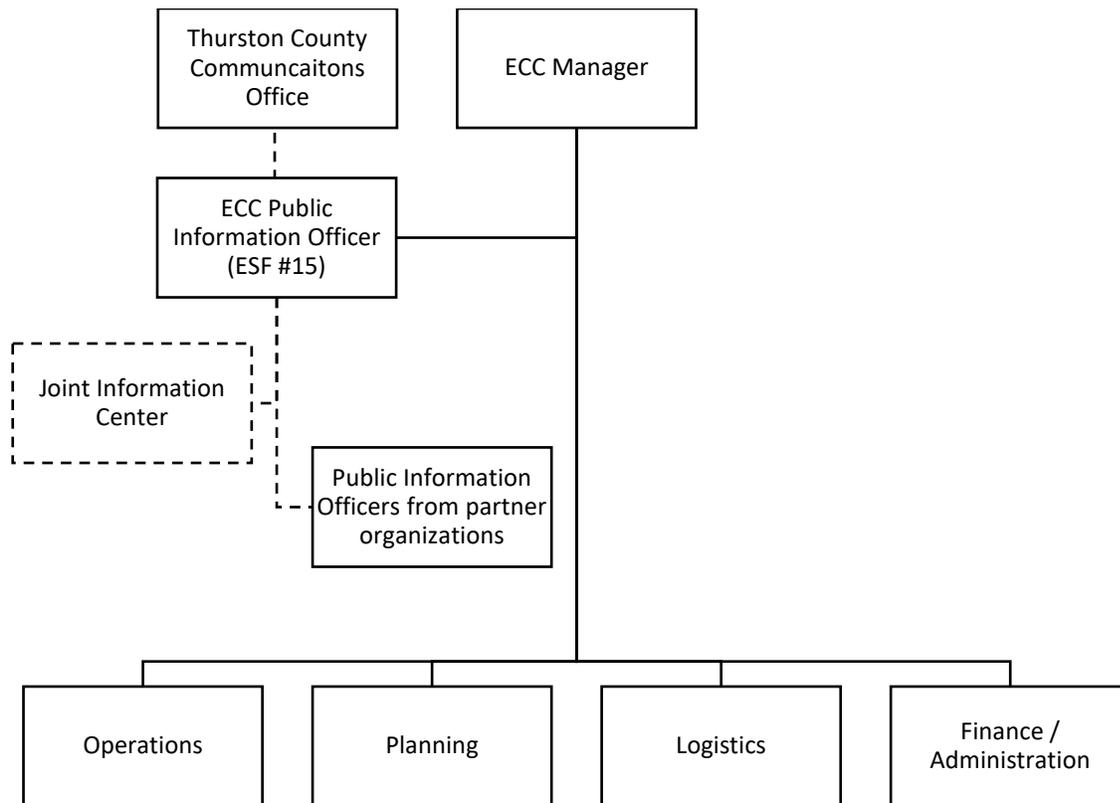
In addition to the planning assumptions listed in section 1.7.1 of the base plan, the ESF-#15 plan annex is based on the following additional assumptions:

- Disruption and damage to the telecommunications infrastructure may occur during an emergency or major disaster. The type and degree of damage will determine the effectiveness and efficiency of the response and recovery efforts.
- Any undamaged communications infrastructure will be overwhelmed and cease to function.
- Rumors or misinformation can cause unnecessary distress. Rumors may provoke inappropriate responses by the public or impede response and recovery efforts.
- Physical co-location of communications may be rendered difficult or impossible, necessitating virtual (remote) JICs.
- Agencies may not have multiple or available communication professionals to support the incident which will impact JIC/JIS coordination.
- Local agencies will coordinate their public messaging including messages regarding support for access and functional needs populations.
- Following an emergency or major disaster, responding agencies will disseminate health and safety information as soon as possible, and by whatever means available.
- Requested telecommunications resources may not be available or may be delayed.
- All Public Information Officers will endeavor to keep all stakeholders informed with clear, accurate, and complete reports of changing situations, including those with alternate communication needs, as soon as possible.
- Public messaging before, during and after the incident will be in a variety of formats and languages and are made accessible to those with alternate communications needs.
- Public messaging will include specific information as to what people with access and functional needs should do in an evacuation and/or sheltering situation that is different from the actions recommended to the general population.
- Public messaging for people with access and functional needs, including those with alternate communication needs, will also focus on community gathering points such as schools, ethnic grocery stores, ethnic media outlets, churches, community centers, advocacy groups and support agencies.

2. Organization

2.1 ESF-#15 Organizational Structure

During disaster operations requiring activation of the Emergency Coordination Center, the ESF-#15 lead fills the role of Public Information Office (PIO) within the command staff reporting directly to the ECC Manager and coordinating directly with the County Communications Office.

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2.2 ESF-#15 Agencies & Organizations

Local agencies that coordinate ESF-#15 support are identified under one of two categories: primary or supporting. Definitions of each can be found under section 2.3.2 of the base plan.

Primary Agency/Agencies		
Thurston County Communications Office	Thurston County Emergency Management	
Supporting Agencies		
Public Safety Agency Public Information Officers (PIOs)	Public Information Officers(PIOs) from Other Entities	Public Information Officer from Washington Military Department Emergency Management Division

3. Concept of Operations

3.1 General

ESF #15 supports the external affairs priorities of county incident management before, during, and after a natural, technological, or human-caused emergency or disaster. The size and scale of the emergency or disaster, and the county response to it, dictates the scope of ESF #15 activities with support categorized into six primary functions: External Affairs, Public Affairs, Intergovernmental Affairs, Joint Information Center / System Operations, Public Education and Information, and Private Sector communications.

3.1.1 External Affairs

Provides accurate, coordinated, and timely information to affected audiences during incidents. Provides communications support and advice to the leaders during an incident. Conducts communications planning.

3.1.2 Public Affairs

Coordinates messages with local, state, tribal and Federal governments. Gathers information on the incident. Provides incident-related information through the media and other sources in accessible formats and multiple languages to individuals, households, businesses, and industries directly or indirectly affected by the incident, including those with disabilities and others with access and functional needs. Monitors news coverage to ensure that accurate information is disseminated. Disseminates incident information to new media (i.e., official websites, social networking platforms) to ensure wide delivery of life-saving information. Maximizes the use of video and digital imagery to communicate during incidents. Handles appropriate special projects, such as news conferences and press operations, for incident area tours by government officials and dignitaries. Provides basic services, such as communications and supplies, to assist the news media in disseminating information to the public. Oversees media relations. Ensures effective communication of incident information to individuals with disabilities and others with access and functional needs through the use of appropriate auxiliary aids and services, such as sign language and other interpreters; captioning of audio and visual materials; and accessible website communications.

3.1.3 Intergovernmental Affairs

Promotes county interaction and implements information sharing with local, state, tribal governments. Informs local, state, tribal, elected and appointed officials on response efforts and recovery programs. Disseminates information with the assistance of state municipal leagues, county associations, and tribal governments.

3.1.4 Joint Information Center/System

Serves as a central point for coordination of incident information, public affairs activities, and media access to information regarding the latest developments.

3.1.5 Public Education and Information

Educates the public prior to and in the aftermath of an incident requiring a coordinated response through news advisories, press releases, prepared materials, fliers, and talking points. Develops new media products for dissemination, such as blog posts, messages for social media, update messages, video, and digital imagery.

3.1.6 Private Sector

Provides strategic counsel and guidance to response leadership in actual or potential incidents. Conducts outreach and education. Promotes operational integration with the impacted private sector entity to support local economic response and recovery. Supports situational awareness by engaging the private sector in information sharing efforts.

3.2 Activation of ESF #15

ESF #15 is typically activated when the County ECC moves to a Level 2 Enhanced Activation status. However, it can be activated at any time deemed necessary by the County Manager, Emergency Services Director or by their designee.

ESF #15 staffing and activation levels are dependent upon the scale, scope, and complexity of the incident. BOCC Public Information Supervisor determines staffing and activation of ESF #15 in consultation with the ECC Manager, Operations Section Chief, and ESF #15 supporting agencies.

Factors considered for activating ESF #15 include, but are not limited to:

- Local government agencies responding to or preparing to respond to the incident;
- The actual or perceived magnitude and severity of an emergency or disaster;
- A need to begin county-level messaging about the incident;
- A desire to enhance situational awareness through monitoring news and local media; or
- A need to respond to information that could undermine confidence in potential or actual county response or recovery activities.

3.3 Critical ESF #15 Response Tasks

To achieve effective disaster response, ESF-#15 coordinates information and resources among primary and supporting agencies to support critical response tasks. The critical tasks identified below align with ESF-#15's primary core capabilities and serve as a foundation to develop intermittent objectives during disaster response to establish or re-stabilize community lifelines.

#	Critical Task Description	Responsible Agencies
Public Information and Warning		
1	Provide timely and accurate information to the public through established channels such as traditional and social media, public alert systems (TC Alert), low tech communication tools (trap lines, community points of information, etc.) and the Thurston County website to manage public expectations on incident response activities.	TCEM and BOCC
2	Maintain the Thurston County website as the primary source for vetted, official incident-related public information and messaging.	TCEM and BOCC
3	Establish and implement a process for approving messaging in coordination with affected agencies, the ECC, JIC Manager, and Lead PIO (incident specific).	TCEM and BOCC
4	Establish communication with PIOs of responding agencies, impacted local jurisdictions, tribes, the State EMD, and the regional office of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).	TCEM and BOCC
5	Collaborate with responding agencies on external affairs related to the emergency or disaster.	TCEM and BOCC
6	Provide timely and accurate information to the public through established channels such as traditional and social media, public alert systems (TC Alert), low tech communication tools (trap lines, community points of information, etc.) and the Thurston County website in order to manage public expectations on incident response activities.	TCEM and BOCC
7	Monitor new coverage and social media platforms for situational awareness, and to the degree possible or necessary. Prepare communications to address or correct rumors.	TCEM and BOCC
8	Provide the whole community with coordinated, prompt, reliable, and actionable information through the use of clear, consistent, accessible and culturally and linguistically appropriate methods to effectively relay information regarding any threat or hazard, as well as the actions being taken and the assistance being made available, as appropriate.	TCEM and BOCC

9	Interrupt regular cable programming to report emergency information, when requested or provided by the JIC.	Local Media
10	Support ECC/JIC operations with video broadcasts from the Media Room at ECC.	Local Media
11	Coordinate public affairs/information messages and operations with the Thurston County JIC.	Public Safety Agency Public Information Officers/PIOs
12	Provide communication (PIO) support to other affected jurisdictions, as requested and able.	Public Safety Agency Public Information Officers/PIOs
13	Take lead on public information coordination for public safety events.	Public Safety Agency Public Information Officers/PIOs
14	Provide PIO support to JIC operations, upon request as resources permit.	Public Safety Agency Public Information Officers/PIOs
15	Coordinate public information through the JIC to ensure consistent messaging throughout incident response and recovery operations.	Public Information Officers/PIOs from Other Entities
16	Maintain lead public information responsibilities for discipline-specific information (such as road conditions) within their jurisdiction.	Public Information Officers/PIOs from Other Entities
17	Use pre-scripted messages for areas of responsibility for quick dissemination.	Public Information Officers/PIOs from Other Entities
19	Coordinate public information specific to the organization, its programs and subject matter expertise.	Public Information Officers/PIOs from Other Entities
20	Disseminate agency specific messaging to other entities, including components of their agency's Continuity of Operations (COOP) program/plan, such as: suspending non-essential functions, relocating personnel, delegations of authority, etc.	Public Information Officers/PIOs from Other Entities

3.4 Supporting Activities

3.4.1 Prevention & Protection

TCEM collaborates with ESF #15 supporting agencies to provide public education and training to the community to encourage individuals, households, and communities to implement prevention and protection measures to build resilience across the county. Activities include but are not limited to:

- Hazard awareness campaigns (e.g. Flood Awareness Week)

- Education on protective measures individuals and families can take for their households (e.g. FireWise)

3.4.2 Mitigation

Thurston County Emergency Management is a participant in the *Hazard Mitigation Plan for the Thurston Region*, providing public information and education as requirement during the hazard mitigation plan development process and follow-on public information and education activities as outlines in the plan and associated initiatives. See the *Hazard Mitigation Plan for the Thurston Region* for specific public information and education actions in support of mitigation.

3.4.3 Recovery

During transition from response to recovery, ESF #15 may remain activated as needed to support countywide recovery efforts outlined in the *Thurston Region Disaster Recovery Framework*. Supporting activities specific to ESF #15 may include, but are not limited to:

- Managing public expectations on recovery operations and disaster assistance.

- Updating the whole community on status of programs and available resources.

- Facilitating ongoing communication coordination through the JIC/JIS.

3.4.4 Preparedness Activities

Thurston County Emergency Management maintains a comprehensive public information and education program to encourage the whole community to participate in emergency preparedness. Preparedness activities include, but are not limited to:

- Establishing processes for developing, disseminating, monitoring, and evaluating emergency public information during response and recovery operations for emergencies or major disasters.

- Identifying and preparing public information materials for use during response and recovery operations for emergencies or major disasters.

- Make Thurston County residents aware of the TC Alert notification system and emphasize the importance of personal preparedness.

- Developing public messaging prior to an event to inform people with access and functional needs of response activities and any actions that would differ from the public.

- Participating in development regional preparedness campaigns for multi-jurisdictional messaging for regional events.

- Develop public messaging in multiple formats and languages to make it accessible to as many individuals as possible, including those with access and functional needs (such as pre-scripted, pre-translated information and materials for quick dissemination to individuals with limited English proficiency, people with disabilities and others with access and functional needs).

- Develop relationships with community-based organizations serving limited English proficient populations, including ethnic media, to act as "force multipliers" for message dissemination during emergencies or major disasters, including: a. vetting pre-scripted and pre-translated messages with trusted community leaders in various cultural community and disability groups; and b. identifying advocacy groups, ethnic organizations, community centers and other resources to disperse public messages to access and functional needs populations.

- County departments coordinate to identify communication personnel, with responsibilities for providing public information during emergencies or major disasters, to assist in implementing the JIC Plan.

- Develop and maintain a list of trained, professional emergency communicators from various agencies and organizations in the county, who could be called upon to assist in communication responsibilities.

- Develop a training and exercise program for agency Public Information Officers/ communications specialists on ESF #15, JIC/JIS, and the JIC plan.

- Develop a public education program that focuses on the personal resiliency of access and functional needs populations.

- In accordance with Presidential Executive Order 13347, provide technical assistance to support the needs of individuals with disabilities served by State, local, and tribal governments, private organizations, and individuals in emergency preparedness planning. As well as facilitate the implementation of emergency preparedness plans as they relate to individuals with disabilities, with government agencies, private organizations, and individual partners.

4. Responsibilities

4.1 Thurston County Emergency Management (Primary Agency)

- Thurston County Emergency Management is responsible for activation of the Thurston County Emergency Coordination Center (ECC) and establishing and maintaining the Thurston County Joint Information Center (JIC).

- The Thurston County JIC is co-located with the ECC, while the ECC is operational. As response of the emergency or major disaster transitions to long-term recovery, the functions of the Thurston County JIC may transfer to a state or federally established JIC.

- Thurston County Emergency Management has primary responsibility for sending Emergency Alert System (EAS) and/or Wireless Emergency Alert System (WEAS) messages as requested by the ECC Manager.

- Thurston County Emergency Management is responsible for maintaining the Thurston County Emergency Management website and associated social media platforms with timely and accurate incident related information.

- Thurston County Emergency Management is responsible for coordinating public messaging in alternative formats and languages (as able) to inform people with access and functional needs of support resources and situation updates.

4.2 Thurston County Board of County Commissioners Communications Department (Primary Agency)

- Lead agency for day-to-day public information/news services for Thurston County government. Maintain Thurston County website and other related social media sites. Post information on the county's intranet site specifically for county employees.

- Responsible for relocating the necessary staff and operations to the Thurston County Joint Information Center (JIC) following an emergency or major disaster declaration.

- Coordinate with Thurston County Emergency Management to provide accessible alerts using existing communications systems. Develop public messaging in multiple formats and languages, as possible. Use pre-scripted, pre-translated messages when possible. Follow pre-scripted messages with detailed translated messages as able, depending on availability of service providers.

- Coordinate use of interpreter and translation service provider contracts to assist with providing accurate and timely messages to access and functional need populations.

- Coordinate responsibilities with supporting agencies such as non-governmental partners (such as businesses, faith-based organizations, etc.).

- Provide regular updates to executive leadership on external affairs efforts and issues.

- Facilitate communications between County Commissioners Office, and other elected officials on PIO/JIC operations and incident-related information.

4.3 Local Agencies

Local and tribal governments, and special purpose districts, are responsible for providing their communities with information on the emergency or disaster, what protective actions their residents should take, such as sheltering in place or evacuating affected areas, and where to find assistance such as overnight shelter, food, water, and animal care.

At the city or town, or other entity level, ESF #15 responsibilities align with local resources and structures but often integrate closely with the county to ensure cohesive messaging and support.

4.4 Nongovernmental Organizations

Non-Governmental Organizations play a vital role in ESF #15, particularly in disseminating information, building community trust, and supporting public outreach. While NGO's often lack the official authority of governmental entities, their established relationships with communities make them key partners in emergency communication.

5. Resource Requirements

Staff for ESF #15 initially will be provided by the County Communication Department communications team and Emergency Management staff trained in public information and ESF #15 procedures. As an emergency or disaster grows and greater demands are placed on ESF #15, additional staffing will be sought from other county department communications teams through a request from the ECC Manager. In a major disaster overwhelming the county, assistance may be sought from the state.

5.2 Resource/Capability Gaps

Resource and capability gaps in Emergency Support Function (ESF) 15 often result from insufficient planning, resource limitations, or unforeseen challenges during disasters. These gaps can hinder effective communication and public outreach, with some key issues including:
- Limited Trained Public Information Officers (PIOs): Many jurisdictions lack PIOs with specialized training in crisis communication, media relations, and rumor control. Smaller cities and rural areas often rely on part-time staff or volunteers with limited formal training.
- Shortage of Specialized Staff: Few social media specialists, linguists, or community outreach liaisons are available to meet the diverse needs of audiences.
- Challenges Reaching Vulnerable Populations: Limited resources make it difficult to engage non-English speakers, individuals with disabilities or functional needs, and those without access to technology.
- Lack of Cultural Competence: Messaging may fail to resonate with diverse communities due to insufficient cultural sensitivity or limited resources for rapid language translation.
- Infrequent Training and Exercises: A lack of regular joint training and exercises can result in misalignment of response strategies across organizations.
- Rumor Control Challenges: Countering misinformation and disinformation in real time remains a persistent issue.

5.3 Mutual Aid

There are currently no formal mutual aid agreements for ESF #15. However, a strong working relationship with the Thurston Area Public Information Emergency Network (TAPEN) is essential for addressing resource needs effectively and ensuring collaborative communication efforts before, during and after a disaster.

The purpose of TAPEN is to integrate incident information and public affairs into a unified organization that provides consistent, coordinated, accurate, accessible, timely and complete information to the public and stakeholders during emergencies.

5.4 State & Federal Aid

Requests for State or federal resources to augment county external affairs support are coordinated with WA-EMD through the Washington State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC). If a local or tribal government requests assistance to provide emergency public information to its community, WMD-EMD may do the following:

- Collaborate with the requesting organization to provide vital health and safety information to affected communities from the SEOC/JIC.

- Find and deploy public information staff to help the affected jurisdiction with its on-site emergency public information activities.

- Activate/execute statewide contracts for translation and interpretation services.

6. Supporting Plans & Procedures

6.1 Thurston County Joint Information Center/System Procedural Guide (Appendix 1)
Provides guidance and procedures to form, operate, and demobilize a Joint-Information Center (JIC) during a large-scale emergency in Thurston County. The Thurston County JIC serves to coordinate the dissemination of emergency public information by coordinating the activities of representatives from various agencies that may include local, state, and federal jurisdictions, as well as non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The Thurston County JIC Procedural Guide is included as Appendix 1 (JIC Procedures) to this annex.

6.2 Thurston County Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Communications Plan (Appendix 2)
Outlines how ESF #15 will communicate with LEP populations before, during, and after an emergency or major disaster. The LEP Plan meets the requirements of RCW 38.52.070 and federal policy guidance document titled Guidance to Federal Financial Assistance Recipients Regarding Title VI Prohibition Against National Origin Discrimination Affecting Limited English Proficient Persons, 76 Fed. Reg. 21755-21768. The Thurston County Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Communications Plan is included as Appendix 2 (LEP Communications Plan) to this annex.

7. Terms and Definitions
- Agency Spokesperson- An emergency response staff member with responsibility for delivering emergency public information regarding their own agency.
- Emergency Alert System (EAS)- A national public warning system commonly used by states and local authorities to deliver important emergency information, such as weather and AMBER alerts, to affects communities.
- Emergency (or disaster)- shall mean an event or set of circumstances which demands immediate action to preserve public health, protect life, protect public property, or to provide relief to a stricken community overtaken by such occurrences or reaches such a dimension or degree of destructiveness as to warrant the Board of County Commissioners declaring a local emergency pursuant to RCW 36.40.180 and 38.52.070. Emergency or disaster does not mean an emergency as used in RCW 38.52.430 which is

an incident requiring normal police, coroner, fire, rescue, emergency medical, utility, or public works response.

- Emergency Coordination Center (ECC)- A central location from which overall direction, control and coordination of a community's response to a disaster will be established. The ECC is generally equipped and staffed to perform the following functions: collect, record, analyze, display and distribute information; coordinate public information and warning; coordinate government emergency activities; support first responders by coordinating the management and distribution of information and resources and the restoration of services; conduct appropriate liaison and coordination activities with all levels of government, public utilities, volunteer and civic organizations and the public.
- Amateur Radio/HAM Radio- Amateur radio, also known as ham radio, is the use of radio frequency spectrum for purposes of non-commercial exchange of messages, wireless experimentation, self-training, private recreation, radio sport, contesting, and emergency communications.
- Joint Information Center- A facility established as the central point of contact for news media and interested parties to coordinate incident information activities. Public information officials from all participating federal, state, and local agencies should collocate at the JIC.
- Joint Information System- Integrates incident information and public affairs into a unified organization to provide consistent, coordinated, accurate, accessible, timely, and complete information to the public and stakeholders during incident operations.
- Non-Governmental Organization (NGO)- These may include non-city and county, state, or federal agencies that ordinarily work with disaster managers or these may include private companies and non-profit organizations in fields including but not limited to: transportation, energy, and health care.
- Operational- Ready for, or in condition to, undertake a destined function.
- Public Information Officer (PIO)- Person designated and trained to provide and coordinate disaster-related public information and media relations.
- Recovery- A short and long-term process. Short-term recovery operations restore vital services to the community and provide for the basic needs of the public. Long-term recovery focuses on restoring the community to its normal, or improved, situation.
- Virtual Joint Information Center- A virtual JIC serves the need for timely information gathering and disseminating in a response by collecting information from responders, and communications staff across a wide area and developing essential tools in a virtual setting.

8. Attachments

Attachment 1 – TAPEN Roster **TLP:GREEN**

Attachment 2 – News Release Template

Attachment 3 – JIC Plan

Appendix 1 – LEP Plan

News Release

THURSTON COUNTY
Creating Solutions for Our Future

County Manager
Leonard Hernandez

County Commissioners

Carolina Mejia – District One
Gary Edwards – District Two
Tye Menser – District Three
Wayne Fournier – District Four
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Thurston County Joint Information Center

PROCEDURAL GUIDE

Thurston County Emergency Management

Thurston County Emergency is responsible for the Joint Information Center Procedural Guide and is authorized to make changes. All maintenance to the Joint Information Center Procedural Guide will be tracked and recorded in the following table to ensure the most recent version is disseminated and implemented. The Joint Information Center Procedural Guide is required to be evaluated, revised, and signed annually.

Maintenance that is administrative in nature may be approved by the Emergency Management Manager with notification of the Director of Emergency Services. Substantial revisions must be approved by the Director of Emergency Services

Change Number	Date of Change	Summary of Changes
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CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

1. During an emergency, the priority of emergency management agencies is the protection of lives and property. The goal of a Joint Information Center (JIC) is to provide accurate, timely, and coordinated information to the public and news media. This document provides guidance and procedures to form, operate, and demobilize a JIC during a large-scale emergency in Thurston County.

2. An all-hazards JIC serves to coordinate the dissemination of emergency public information by coordinating the activities of representatives from various agencies that may include local, state, and federal jurisdictions, as well as non-governmental organizations (NGOs). In providing accurate, timely, and coordinated information the JIC serves to fill information gaps, correct misinformation, and quell rumors during emergencies.

1.2 SITUATION AND ASSUMPTIONS

1. An emergency may occur at any time and may affect single or multiple jurisdictional areas. Some incidents will occur with enough warning to allow for activation and preparation prior to the onset of emergency conditions. Other incidents will be no-notice incidents that occur without warning.

2. In a major incident, local, national, and international media will be on-scene and social media will be used by those in and out of the affected community to identify needs, report damages and locate loved ones.

3. Many federal, state, and local organizations may become involved in the emergency. Until the JIC is operational, each participating organization will use its internal public information/affairs plan. While the JIC represents a single location where the informational needs and demands of the public and media are met, the JIC concept assumes that each individual will continue to represent perspective of his/her own agency while receiving the benefits of coordinated information.

4. Under the JIC concept, each agency representative will share and coordinate information with all other participating agencies prior to its release to media and the public. This ensures the public receives more accurate, consistent, timely and thoroughly vetted emergency information.

5. Local media, including radio, television, and social media, will perform an essential role in providing emergency instructions and up-to-date information to the public. Regional, national and international media may also cover the story and will need access

to information and comment from local officials, and sufficient context to understand local impacts of the emergency.
6. Both traditional and social media may provide useful information that assists in protection of life and property, or rumors that hinder protection. A consistent, reliable source of coordinated information will support the dissemination of useful and accurate information and combat harmful rumors.
7. An emergency situation may require the JIC to operate in alternate locations or without standard services, such as telephone or internet. The JIC must be flexible enough to continue providing information to the public in such situations.

2. CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

1. The JIC is a physical or virtual location under the Joint Information System (JIS) where Public Information Officers (PIOs) from those response and recovery agencies that are involved in an emergency cooperate to ensure that consistent, accurate information is coordinated and released to the public and the media.
2. The JIC serves as the central point for media access to the most up-to-date information about and emergency. The Thurston County JIC model generally follows the operational concepts laid out in the National Incident Management System and Incident Command System. Thurston County will conduct public education and outreach to build awareness of hazards and readiness and maintain current contact information for PIOs and other qualified personnel to be contacted when a JIC is activated.
3. Before activation, public information response will be handled by the local agency with jurisdiction over the area in which the impacts are occurring. (Phase 1)
4. As the incident continues, it may expand to involve multiple jurisdictions, with a need for coordinated responses, or become more complex, generating more demand for public information than individual jurisdictions can meet. These jurisdictions may contact Thurston County Emergency Management to request assistance. (Phase 2)
5. In response to the Request for Assistance, the County Manager or Director of Emergency Services may authorize JIC activation. (Phase 3)
6. When activated, the JIC is responsible for the following activities:
    a. Facilitating coordination among agency PIOs.
    b. Working with Thurston County departments on the release of information.
    c. Establishing an information release and press briefing schedule for the media.
    d. Preparing news releases and fact sheets.
    e. Coordinating news conferences.
    f. Responding to media inquiries.
    g. Monitoring print, broadcast, and social media to ensure the accuracy of information being reported and address rumors or misinformation.

3. ORDER OF OPERATIONS

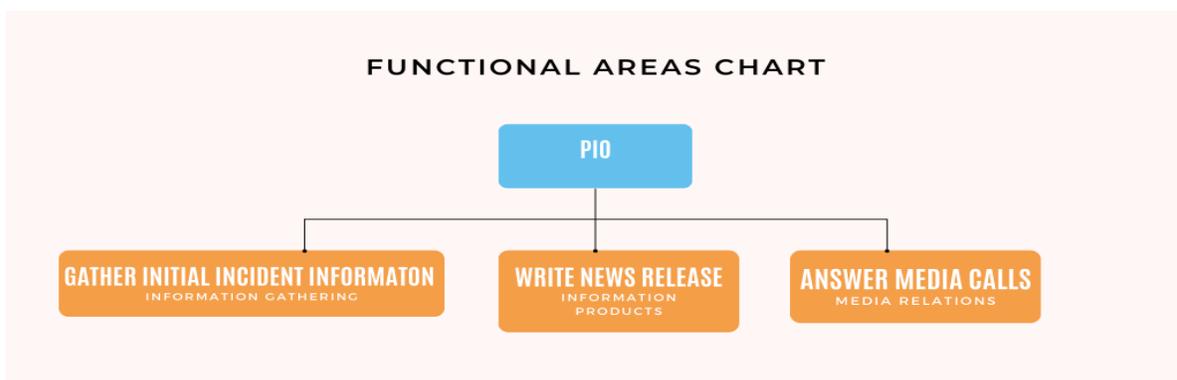### 3.1 JOINT INFORMATION CENTER ACTIVATION

1. The JIC will be opened in response to emergency incidents in Thurston County requiring a unified voice in emergency risk and crisis communications. The JIC and Media Center will be opened and staffed at the direction of the County Manager, or the Director of Emergency Services. Once the decision to activate the JIC is made, Thurston County personnel will notify appropriate public information contacts and initiate JIC operations following the JIC Activation Checklist.

3.2 JOINT INFORMATION CENTER LOCATION

1. The Joint Information Center will be co-located with the Thurston County Emergency Coordination Center (ECC) for physical disasters and will be administratively managed by Thurston County Emergency Management.
2. In the event that an incident damages the ECC, makes travel to the ECC impractical or impossible, or otherwise requires it, the JIC may be activated at an alternate satellite location or be activated and operated as a virtual JIC via electronic communications.

3.3 STAFFING

1. The JIC, as with all elements in the Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan, can be expanded or reduced to meet the evolving needs of the incident. Staffing falls into three general functional areas outlined in the chart below. Personnel will be assigned to or removed from each functional area depending on needs.

FUNCTIONAL AREAS CHART

PIO

GATHER INITIAL INCIDENT INFORMATON
INFORMATION GATHERING

WRITE NEWS RELEASE
INFORMATION PRODUCTS

ANSWER MEDIA CALLS
MEDIA RELATIONS

2. During the initial stages of an emergency, it is anticipated that the JIC will operate in 12-hour shifts, 24 hours per day. JIC personnel may consist of public information officers (PIOs) from key local/county, state, and federal departments, as well as other public and private organizations and agencies that may be involved in the incident response. The JIC should reflect the size and nature of the incident and be scalable and flexible for use

in any incident. JIC personnel, depending on the incident, may include the following positions (further described in Appendix B):

   a. Lead PIO
   b. JIC Manager/Director
   c. Backup PIO
   d. Research and Writing Unit
   e. Media Relations Unit (including media monitoring)
   f. Social Media and Web Unit, which may include:
       i. Virtual Operations Support Team (VOST), if activated: The VOST will assist in social media monitoring but will not physically report to the JIC.
   g. Liaison Unit, which may include:
       i.   ECC Liaison
       ii. Neighbor County Liaison(s), if needed: JIC personnel may be assigned and sent to work directly with county PIO staff.
       iii. Neighbor City Liaison(s), if needed: JIC personnel may be assigned and sent to work directly with county PIO staff.
       iv. Members of Thurston Area Public Information Officers Emergency Network (TAPEN).
       v.   Private Sector/NGO Liaison.

3. JIC Personnel may be required to perform additional duties as needed.

3.4 INFORMATION COLLECTION, COORDINATION, AND DISSEMINATION

1. Proper and timely gathering of reliable and accurate information is critical. To ensure coordination and proper dissemination of information, participants will follow these guidelines:

    a. JIC staff will gather information from the ECC, the incident commander, and their respective departments as assigned. This information will be coordinated with the Lead PIO and assigned to the Research and Writing Unit for the release.

    b. Information will be released via email, social media, websites, news briefings, written hard copy, fax, telephone, the Emergency Alert System (EAS), HAM amateur radio, or any other method available and appropriate to reach the public, including public officials/VIPs and at-risk populations. JIC staff will distribute information via the channels assigned by the Lead PIO or a designee, as appropriate to the audience and medium (e.g., social media content via the Social Media and Web Unit). News releases should be short, factual, and to the point, and include a phone number and contact name for the media and the public to call for more information.

c. All public information materials will be assigned a sequential number prior to distribution, using the designation for the incident and "JIC" with a three-digit number starting with "001." Immediately after the distribution, all information will be centrally logged using WebEOC.

d. The initial news releasing announcing an operational JIC and all subsequent releases will be distributed to those agencies listed on the News Release Distribution Lists.

e. To illustrate the cooperative effort of the emergency response, news release/updates will be released on Thurston County JIC letterhead, rather than using individual logos and agency names.

3.5 NEWS CONFERENCE

1. News conferences provide an interactive forum to exchange information with the public and media, creating an opportunity for direct two-way communication to supplement the one-way dissemination afforded by news releases and similar products.

2. The Lead PIO and/or JIC Director will schedule regular news conferences to be coordinated with the County Emergency Coordination Center (ECC) operational rhythm. Conference times should be scheduled to accommodate the media whenever possible.

   a. A media advisory with the time and location of the news conference shall be issued.

   b. Arrange for American Sign Language (ASL) interpretation services. ==Translation services contract==

   c. A spokesperson from each participating agency should be present at the news conference to answer questions. If agency spokespersons are not available, this responsibility may fall to the Lead PIO.

   d. Before the news conference, presenters will discuss and coordinate their statements and anticipated questions.

   e. A moderator, designated prior to the conference, will give welcoming remarks, provide ground rules for the conference, introduce the presenters, manage media Q&A, and close the news conference with information about the next scheduled release of information and/or media availability.

   f. Each spokesperson may make a statement with updated information from his/her agency.

   g. Presenters will meet after the conference to discuss any follow-up actions or news responsibilities.

   h. News briefings may be videotaped by the JIC staff or livestreamed and posted online (contingent on availability of equipment).

3.6 RUMOR CONTROL

1. The JIC serves as the outlet for public information. In any situation involving the dissemination of information to many people, misinformation and rumors may occur. JIC staff will monitor news broadcasts and social media for rumors and other misleading information.

    a. The JIC is intended to serve as the primary source of information to the media and public.

    b. Media monitoring staff should monitor all media coverage. Rumors and misinformation will be reported immediately to the Lead PIO or other members of the Leadership Team.

    c. The Lead PIO or designee will investigate the rumor and decide how to best respond. Response can made with a news release, media briefing, live interview, personal contact with reporter(s), social media response, or in another appropriate manner.

    d. Personnel monitoring social media will refrain from immediately engaging and responding. Rumors and misinformation should be reported to the Lead PIO or other member of the Leadership Team. County-specific information collected should be reported to appropriate staff in the ECC and/or the County PIO to vet before any responses are made.

    e. A daily media monitoring report will be prepared by the JIC and distributed to senior leaders via email and WebEOC entry.

    f. The Virtual Operations Support Team (VOST), when deployed, will assist in social media monitoring and report information updated as well as potential misinformation to the Lead PIO an/or Social Media unit.

3.7 SECURITY

1. Due to security considerations, access to the JIC will be limited to JIC personnel and authorized emergency management personnel. The JIC Manager/Director, Lead PIO, or designee will establish a list of people allowed access to the JIC. This list will be furnished to the ECC Logistics Section, which oversees access to the ECC.

3.8 FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

1. JIC participants will sign in at the ECC following procedures established for ECC personnel. JIC staff will be paid by the agency in which they are employed. ECC staff will work to make sure that JIC staff accurately report their time.

3.9 JOINT INFORMATION CENTER MOBILIZATION

1. The JIC Director and/or Lead PIO, with the concurrence of the respective agencies, the ECC and the incident commander, will decide to deactivate the JIC. The JIC will issue a news release at the time and date from which the JIC is no longer operational. Once deactivated, JIC staff may participate in a critique of JIC operations. Upon deactivation, the JIC staff will, at a minimum:
   a. Ensure all equipment and personnel are returned to pre-emergency position.
   b. Ensure all generated information is given to the ECC Planning Section for documentation.
   c. Coordinate the critique of response actions and ensure the following are addressed:
      i. Inoperable equipment.
      ii. Obstacles encountered in achieving incident tactical and strategic objectives.
      iii. Notification difficulties.
      iv. Other lessons learned.

3.10 DISABILITY ACCOMODATION INFORMATION

Thurston County is committed to ensuring that all people have equal access to County services and programs.

Thurston County will generally, upon request, provide appropriate aids and services leading to effective communication for qualified persons with disabilities so they can participate equally in Thurston County programs, services, and activities, including qualified sign language interpreters, documents in Braille, and other ways of making information and communications accessible to people who have speech, hearing, or vision impairments.

3.11 PLAN MAINTENANCE

1. Custodial care of this document lies with Thurston County Emergency Management. At a minimum, this document will be reviewed and updated annually, with the lead responsibility for reviews and updates resting with the Thurston County Board of County Commissioners Public Information Supervisor.

3.12 TRAINING AND EXERCISE

This plan or portions of this plan maybe trained and/or exercised annually to provide controlled practical experience and to assess any weaknesses in the plan.

4. APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: JIC ACTIVATION CHECKLIST

1. Phase 1: Local unit handles emergency information calls
2. Phase 2: Agency requests help from other agencies.
3. Phase 3: County Manager, Director of Emergency Services authorizes JIC activation. The Board of County Commissioners Public Information Supervisor is designated as Lead PIO and, depending on the scope of the incident, may assign other Thurston County staff as part of the Lead PIO Team.
   a. Follow internal agency protocols for sending out emergency notification and information. (Lead PIO Team)
   b. Begin JIC staff call-out. (Lead PIO Team)
   c. Staff travels to JIC location. (All JIC Staff)
      i. If Lead PIO in consultation with ECC leadership, determines there is a need to activate a Virtual JIC, the lead PIO Team will notify JIC Staff and establish the JIC via an electronic meeting platform (Zoom or Teams). The JIC Activation Checklist will be picked up at step "f."
   d. Set up facility and equipment. Set up work areas with maps, fax machines, supplies, log sheets, message boards, telephones, copiers, computers, and printers, along with any necessary login credentials to access systems. JIC personnel should being their Wi-Fi enabled, work laptop computers, work mobile phones, and power cords for both. (JIC Manager if staffing allows, otherwise all JIC Staff)
   e. Verify that JIC equipment is operational. (JIC Manager, all JIC Staff)
   f. Assign JIC roles. (JIC Manager)
   g. Coordinate JIC operational rhythm with ECC. (ECC Liaison)
   h. Execute actions to achieve public information objectives as laid out in IAP consultation with Unified Command, Incident Commander, or designee.
   i. Develop and maintain a log of key events and actions taken. (ECC Liaison)

APPENDIX B: JIC OPERATIONS ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

LEAD PIO

1. Public Information representatives from different departments of county, city, state and federal government will comprise the JIC Operations Team. The Board of County Commissioners Public Information Supervisor will serve as the Lead PIO for all disasters. Transfer of the Lead PIO may take place at any time during the incident, response, and/or recovery, based on change in incident command.

2. Lead PIO has the same level of authority as the other agency representatives or spokespersons and will be responsible for the following:
   a. Ensure JIC Activation Checklist has been completed.
   b. Assigned personnel to research and write media releases, fact sheets, talking points, and backgrounders.
   c. Coordinate and review all information prior to its release. Obtain approval for all joint releases from Incident or Unified Command.
   d. Brief JIC staff on most recent and/or critical information.
   e. Schedule news conferences as information warrants in coordination with the Incident Commander and/or JIC Director. Determine a moderator and spokesperson(s) for the conference.
   f. Arrange interviews and tours, if needed.
   g. Ensure JIC deactivation is complete.
   h. Ensure that the ECC Liaison has copies of all generated information at the end of the event.
   i. Ensure that all documentation is forwarded to lead agency.

AGENCY OR DEPARTMENTAL PIO REPRESENTATIVE/SPOKESPERSON

1. It is anticipated that staff from many agencies may be integrated as JIC personnel. The JIC Manager/Director will adjust staffing patterns as the situation develops.

2. When the Agency Representative/Spokesperson represents his/her agency or jurisdiction as a spokesperson in the JIC, he/she is responsible for the following:
   a. Establish contact with agency decision makers and distribute information to the JIC pertaining to his/her agency.
   b. Participate in the development of news releases/fact sheets.

c. Represent respective agency in news conferences, and/or arrange for representatives and technical experts to be at briefings as needed.

d. Respond to inquiries from the pubic and media regarding his/her agency.

e. Brief JIC staff of critical information from his/her department.

f. Give copies of all information generated to the ECC Liaison at the end of the event.

JIC/ECC LIAISON

1. The JIC/ECC Liaison serves as the point of contact for the Lead PIO or designee to receive and verify information from various ECCs and will be responsible for the following:

   a. Establishing and maintaining contact with EOCs through WebEOC or other available means.

   b. Attend briefings and meetings as necessary.

   c. Maintain flow of information to/from Research and Writing Unit.

JIC MANAGER/DIRECTOR

1. This position will be filled by an experienced PIO designated by the Lead PIO in consultation with the Incident Commander and/or ECC Manager or his/her designee.

2. The JIC Manager manages personnel, administrative, and logistical functions of the JIC and will be responsible for the following:

   a. Contact respective NGO, county, city, state, and federal departments to arrange adequate staffing and assist with setup of the JIC facility.

   b. Ensure that the key events log is updated with essential information.

   c. Update a news release log and maintain a file of the releases. (Include release number, subject, and time of release).

   d. Receive incoming documentation from JIC staff and ensure that it is distributed appropriately.

   e. Arrange for breaks for JIC staff while maintaining adequate coverage for phone lines and WebEOC.

   f. Assign/reassign staff as necessary to maintain 24-hour staffing.

   g. Along with Lead PIO, brief JIC staff of all relevant new information.

   h. Detect and verify any significant rumors/misinformation.

   i. May sign off on outgoing news releases if they are time-sensitive and Lead PIO is not available.

MEDIA RELATIONS UNIT

1. The Media Relations Unit will provide assistance and coordinate activities between the media and the JIC (note: Media Relations is usually responsible for being a conduit, not

providing live or recorded media interviews unless using preapproved FAQ responses) and will be responsible for the following:

    a. Greet media upon arrival.

    b. Request media sign in with name, phone number, and affiliation.

    c. Provide a media kit with JIC contact information and current products to each member of the media in the ECC.

    d. Act as the main liaison between the media and the staff of the ECC, including distribution of media advisories and news releases.

    e. Coordinate requests for interviews and tours with the Lead PIO Team, and answer FAQs with pre-coordinated responses/information.

    f. Gather and post copies of all finalized materials received from the JIC for media in the ECC.

    g. Assist with the videotaping of news briefings and use of livestreaming equipment (if available).

    h. Advise the Lead PIO Team of misinformation or rumors among media.

    i. Compile information for and prepare media monitoring report.

    j. Capture any unanswered questions during the news briefing for follow-up.

    k. Ensure all news releases are time-stamped, distributed, and logged.

RESEARCH AND WRITING UNIT

1. The Research and Writing Unit develops products (e.g., news releases, media advisories, talking points, etc.) for distribution through the JIC and will be responsible for the following:

    a. Update talking points with information from ECC Liaison. Distribute talking points to JIC/ECC staff and others as needed.

    b. Develop products aimed to provide timely, accurate, and actionable guidance to public on the specific hazard or disaster.

    c. Ensure news releases, fact sheets, maps, media advisories, and updates are distributed to JIC staff.

SOCIAL MEDIA/WEB UNIT

1. The Social Media/Web Unit provides updates through social media and will be responsible for the following:

    a. Update social media for the county ECC

        i. Facebook

        ii. Twitter

        iii. Instagram

        iv. Other social platforms

v. When appropriate, partner agencies should be encouraged to provide health and safety information, infrastructure status, volunteer callouts, and other disaster-related information on their accounts.

b. Coordinate social media messaging with Emergency Support Functions (ESF) and Command Staff.

c. Monitor social media and establish contact with the VOST (if activated), responding when appropriate, providing information to ESFs for follow-up if needed.

APPENDIX C: INITIAL JIC EQUIPMENT LIST

1. Contact Logistics Branch for technical support/setup.
2. Technical needs:
   a. Laptop or workstation for each function (at least one should have access to the Thurston County network)
   b. Power cords with USB charging ports
   c. Network cable or Wi-Fi access
   d. USB drives (thumb drive, flash drive, jump drive)
   e. Printer
   f. Digital cameras and media card readers
3. Office needs:
   a. Phone lines (at least one for media/public calls, one for ECC staff to call into JIC, one for outgoing calls)
   b. Pens, highlighters, dry erase markers
   c. Sticky note pads
   d. Note pads
   e. Tape
   f. Scissors
   g. Paper clips
   h. Stapler, staple remover
   i. Three-hole punch
   j. Binders

APPENDIX D: GLOSSARY AND ACRONYMS

1. Agency Spokesperson- An emergency response staff member with responsibility for delivering emergency public information regarding his/her own agency.

2. Emergency Alert System (EAS)- A national public warning system commonly used by states and local authorities to deliver important emergency information, such as weather and AMBER alerts, to affects communities.

3. Emergency- Or disaster shall mean an event or set of circumstances which demands immediate action to preserve public health, protect life, protect public property, or to provide relief to a stricken community overtaken by such occurrences or reaches such a dimension or degree of destructiveness as to warrant the Board of County Commissioners declaring a local emergency pursuant to RCW 36.40.180 and 38.52.070. Emergency or disaster does not mean an emergency as used in RCW 38.52.430 which is an incident that requires normal police, coroner, fire, rescue, emergency medical, utility or public works response.

4. Emergency Coordination Center (ECC)- A central location from which overall direction, control and coordination of a community's response to a disaster will be established. The ECC is generally equipped and staffed to perform the following functions: collect, record, analyze, display and distribute information; coordinate public information and warning; coordinate government emergency activities; support first responders by coordinating the management and distribution of information and resources and the restoration of services; conduct appropriate liaison and coordination activities with all levels of government, public utilities, volunteer and civic organizations and the public.

5. Amateur Radio/HAM Radio- Amateur radio, also known as ham radio, is the use of radio frequency spectrum for purposes of non-commercial exchange of messages, wireless experimentation, self-training, private recreation, radio sport, contesting, and emergency communications.

6. Joint Information Center- A facility established as the central point of contact for news media and interest parties to coordinate incident information activities. Public information officials from all participating federal, state, and local agencies should collocate at the JIC.

7. Joint Information System- Integrates incident information and public affairs into a unified organization that provides consistent, coordinated, accurate, accessible, timely and complete information to the public and stakeholders during incident operations.

8. Non-Governmental Organization (NGO)- These may include non-city and county, state, or federal agencies that ordinarily work with disaster managers or these may include

private companies and non-profit organizations in fields including but not limited to: transportation, energy, and health care.

9. Operational- Ready for, or in condition to, undertake a destined function.
10. Public Information Officer (PIO)- Person designated and trained to provide and coordinate disaster-related public information and media relations.
11. Recovery- A short and long-term process. Short-term recovery operations restore vital services to the community and provide for the basic needs of the public. Long-term recovery focuses on restoring the community to its normal, or improved, situation.
12. Virtual Joint Information Center- A virtual JIC serves the need for timely information gathering and disseminating in a response by collecting information from responders, and communications staff across a wide area and developing essential tools in a virtual setting.

Appendix 1
(Limited English Proficiency Communications Plan)

Emergency Support Function 15 Annex

Thurston County Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP)

THURSTON COUNTY
W A S H I N G T O N
SINCE 1852

Update 2023

Prepared By:

Thurston County Emergency Management

In Partnership With:

Thurston County Emergency Management Council (EMC)

Thurston County Disaster Assistance Council (DAC)

RECORD OF CHANGES

Change #	Date of Change	Point of Contact	Section(s) added, removed, or edited
25-001	January 2025	Brandon Cheney, TCEM	Reformatted as Appendix 2 to ESF #15

Table of Contents

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Purpose

To ensure that sufficient assets are mobilized during emergencies or disasters to provide accurate, coordinated, and timely life safety information to impacted individuals with limited English proficiency (LEP).

B. Scope

This Plan is an appendix to the ESF #15 (External Affairs) Annex of the Thurston County Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP). Roles, responsibilities, and procedures outlined in this plan include but are not limited to activities coordinated by ESF #2 (Communications), ESF #6 (Mass Care and Human Services), ESF #8 (Public Health and Medical Services), ESF #13 (Public Safety, Security and Law Enforcement) and ESF #15 (External Affairs).

This Plan does not relieve local city, town and tribal emergency management organizations or other agencies of their responsibility to communicate and provide information on the emergency or disaster to their residents including LEP populations during times of emergency or disaster.

C. Legal Authority

This Plan meets requirements of Washington State Substitute Senate Bill (SSB) 5046, which passed the legislature in 2017 and was codified in chapter 38.52 RCW. This Plan will assist with addressing requirements of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 concerning access to services for people with LEP, and Executive Order 13166, Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency, which directs recipients of federal funding to take reasonable steps to ensure that people with LEP have meaningful access to their programs and activities.

D. Process to Develop Plan

This Plan was developed by Thurston County Emergency Management with assistance from a contractor and input from the Thurston County Emergency Management Council (EMC) and Disaster Assistance Council (DAC). Concepts within the plan, such as messaging strategies, were discussed with members of the Hispanic Roundtable of South Sound and the Washington State Coalition for Language Access (WASCLA), attendees of the 2018 Hispanic Roundtable Community Summit, and representatives of local faith communities.

II. POLICIES

A. General

It is the policy of Thurston County Emergency Management (TCEM) to provide timely meaningful access for LEP persons to all agency programs and activities. All personnel shall provide free language assistance services to LEP individuals whom they encounter or whenever an LEP person requests language assistance services. TCEM will inform members of the public that language assistance services are available free of charge to LEP persons and that the agency will provide these services to them.

B. LEP Communications

1. Emergency managers will keep life safety information simple, clear, and brief to promote ease and accuracy of translation.

2. When emergencies or disasters impact the entire county, TCEM will communicate life safety information in multiple languages, including languages spoken by significant population segments (defined in III.B.8). For non-countywide emergencies or disasters, emergency managers will apply a four-factor analysis (see III.B.9) to determine the obligation to provide language assistance services.

3. It is recommended – but not required – that any individual providing translation or interpretation services should be certified through either the Washington State Court Interpreter Program, the Washington Department of Social and Health Services or the American Translators Association. Certification provides a level of assurance about the quality of the work provided by the translator or interpreter.

C. ESF-2

1. ESF 2 coordinates establishment and maintenance of an effective communications and warning systems for use in a disaster. This ESF also monitors the overall status of the county's communications infrastructure and coordinates provision of redundant, temporary communication as required.

2. The County relies on the hazard warning capabilities of federal and state government, industry, and the media. Citizens are expected to be aware of a hazardous situation for which there is significant media attention, such as severe weather or flooding. When there is a demonstrated need, particularly if timeliness is crucial to protect life and property, the county may supplement existing warning systems. Supplemental measures will depend on the nature of the hazard, the quality and quantity of information available, resources available, media attention, and other situational factors. Supplemental measures, including, but not limited to the use of ADA compliant technology will focus on enhancing

or amplifying the information being provided through existing sources and, to the extent practicable, upon participatory systems activated at the neighborhood or community level.

3. In accordance with RCW 38.52.110 (1), in responding to a disaster, or the threat of a disaster, the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) is directed to utilize the services, equipment, supplies, and facilities of existing departments, offices, and agencies of the state, political subdivisions, and all other municipal corporations thereof including but not limited to districts and quasi municipal corporations organized under the laws of the state of Washington to the maximum extent practicable, and the officers and personnel of all such departments, offices, and agencies are directed to cooperate with and extend such services and facilities upon request notwithstanding any other provision of law.

4. As assets and personnel may be overwhelmed, Thurston County can only endeavor to make every reasonable effort to respond to a hazardous event based on the situation, and on information and resources available at the time.

D. ESF-6 & ESF-8

1. Mass care, Housing and Human Services (ESF-6) will be provided to the whole community as needed during emergencies and disasters. The whole community includes individuals with disabilities and others with access and functional needs, including the limited English Proficiency. Pursuant to Title VI of the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Civil Rights Act, the Fair Housing Act, and SSB 5046, all agencies and organizations providing mass care, housing or human services will comply with state and federal laws.

2. Public Health and Medical Services (ESF-8) is committed to communicating with the Whole Community as needed during emergency response and disaster recovery operations.

E. ESF-15

Thurston County government recognizes the importance of providing vital health and safety information to affected populations. TCEM and BOCC will work to ensure that information is consistent, accurate, complete, and promptly delivered using communication methods, within County guidelines, to disseminate information to affected populations and the general public, including those with alternate communication needs.

F. Plan Updates

This Plan will be reviewed and updated with the Thurston County Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan. Thurston County Emergency Management staff, with input from the EMC, DAC, community-based organizations serving LEP individuals,

and incident or exercise after-action reports, will update the plan as-needed to reflect current demographics, systems, methods, and resources.

III.   SITUATION

A. Emergency/Disaster Conditions and Hazards

   1. Reference the Hazard Mitigation Plan for the Thurston Region and local jurisdiction initiatives, CEMP, and Hazard Identification and Vulnerability Analysis (HIVA) for detailed information on the hazards with a potential to impact Thurston County.

   2. People with access and functional needs may not be able to access (e.g. hearing or visual impairment) or understand (e.g. cognitive impairment or limited English speaking) conventional warning systems (e.g. sirens, emergency alert systems) advising them of the need to evacuate during a short-notice event such as a flash flood, wildfire, or hazardous materials spill

B. Planning Assumptions

   1. All public information staff will endeavor to keep stakeholders adequately informed with clear, accurate, and complete reports of changing situations as soon as possible including connecting with those with alternate communication needs. (ESF-15)

   2. Public messaging before, during, and after the incident will be in a variety of formats and languages and made accessible to those with alternate communication needs. (ESF-15)

   3. Public messaging will include specific information as to what people with access and functional needs should do in an evacuation and/or sheltering situation that is different from the actions recommended to the general population. (ESF-15)

   4. Public messaging for people with access and functional needs will also focus on community gathering points such as schools, local grocery stores, media outlets, churches, community centers, advocacy groups, and support agencies. (ESF-15)

   5. In the event public instructions need to be interpreted or translated, the provision of interpreters or translators will be coordinated through the Thurston County Emergency Coordination Center (TCECC) and The Crisis Clinic. (ESF-2)

   6. Evacuating displaced and other populations may include those with limited English proficiency. (ESF-6)

   7. Preparedness, response, and recovery efforts must incorporate and address the unique needs and circumstances of vulnerable populations, including LEP individuals. Therefore, specific measures will be taken to ensure that these

populations will have accessibility to information, health services, and other services. (ESF-6, ESF-8)

8. LEP Language Groups Within Thurston County

    a. RCW 38.52.070(3)(a)(ii) defines "significant population segment" as "each limited English proficiency language group that constitutes five percent or one thousand residents, whichever is less, of the population of persons eligible to be served or likely to be affected within a city, town, or county." This provision further states that, "The office of financial management forecasting division's limited English proficiency population estimates are the demographic data set for determining eligible limited English proficiency language groups."

    b. According to Office of Financial Management (OFM) 2016 estimates, Thurston County has two LEP language groups considered significant population segments, **Spanish and Vietnamese**. Table 1 displays jurisdiction and significant language group populations.

Table 1 – 2016 Significant LEP Population Segments in Thurston County

Jurisdiction Name	Jurisdiction Population	Language Group	Language Group Pop.	% of Jurisdiction Pop.
Thurston	300,500 *2022 estimate*	Spanish	4,191	1.5%
		Vietnamese	1,329	0.5%

Source: OFM Estimate of population with limited English proficiency (LEP) for the state and counties, 2016

9. Obligation to Provide Language Access – Four-Factor Analysis

    a. <u>Factor 1</u>: Number or proportion of LEP persons eligible or likely to be served.

        i. Emergency management serves the whole community, so we assume the proportion of LEP persons our emergency management organizations are likely to serve, encounter, or receive notifications of life safety information during an emergency to be the same proportion as LEP persons in the general population. See Table 1. **We assume Thurston County will serve 2.0%, or approximately 5,520, LEP persons.**

        ii. The exact number notified of life safety information will vary depending upon the nature and scope of emergencies or disasters that occur. We will share preparedness information and general communications to the entire population, including LEP persons, so we will be prepared to communicate to all significant population segments in an emergency or disaster. We will be prepared to serve or notify the language group populations listed in Table 1.

b. <u>Factor 2</u>: Frequency with which LEP individuals encounter organization and programs.

i. The frequency with which LEP individuals encounter the emergency management organization and its programs, including notifications of life safety information during an emergency, varies. Thurston County emergency management programs have had **infrequent** direct interaction with LEP individuals. Police, fire, 9-1-1, public health departments, healthcare providers, schools, and other front-line public service agencies report more frequent encounters with LEP individuals in day-to-day operations.

ii. Since SSB 5046 went in effect, emergency management organizations have tracked impacts to LEP individuals in emergency and disaster after action reports. Data produced by these after-action reports will provide a more comprehensive understanding of the frequency with which LEP individuals are impacted by situations resulting in life safety emergency communications. This data will inform plan updates.

c. <u>Factor 3</u>: The nature and importance of the program, activity, or service provided by the program.

i. Life safety information is of **vital** importance.

d. <u>Factor 4</u>: Resources available to the agency and costs.

i. The resources listed in **V. Resource Requirements** are available to TCEM within the existing budget.

IV.   CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

A. General

While emergencies and disasters may vary in size and significance, the population and diversity, and multi-jurisdictional environment, and concentration of critical infrastructure in Thurston County can magnify their impacts. These emergencies and disasters take a "Whole Community" approach, with an effective decision making and resource management structure, along with coordination among health and medical service providers and supporting agencies which is critical to successfully addressing the consequences of emergencies and disasters. (ESF 6)

B. Communications (ESF-2)

1. *Coordination:* The TCECC may be activated to provide coordination, and technical and administrative support to the incident. The TCECC would coordinate as needed with Washington State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC). Coordination with both ESF-2 and ESF-15 will take place for both internal and external communications. This includes communications with LEP populations and in accordance with the OFM Forecasting Division.

2. *Multiple forms of communication:* Pursuant to the National Incident Management System (NIMS) operating principles and protocols, public information efforts should generally focus on incident specific information. Several forms of communications may be utilized. Public information, advisories, and warnings will be in a variety of formats and languages, and made accessible to those with alternate communication needs as defined in ESF 15.

3. *LEP consideration:* Provision of communication-related activities will take into account LEP populations and be planned for according to state and federal regulations and guidance.

C. LEP and ESF-6, Mass Care, Emergency Assistance, Housing & Human Services

1. Some members of our community, including but not limited to those with limited English proficiency, will be more vulnerable during and after a disaster.

2. ESF-6 primary and support agencies will work collaboratively with partners to:

   a. Monitor disproportionate impacts to vulnerable populations

   b. Develop strategies and operations that ensure equal access to human services.

   c. Mitigate barriers that may be preventing access.

   d. Address communication and medical, mental health and other human services needs of these most vulnerable residents.

   e. Use ethnic and community media and coordinate with community-based organizations to communicate and gain situational awareness.

   f. Develop and distribute language and graphic translations of shelter and human service needs.

   g. Plan for unaccompanied minors and adults requiring care/supervision.

      i. Work with appropriate law enforcement and legal authorities to develop a disaster protocol for temporary care of unaccompanied children/minors and adults requiring care.

   h. Plan for access to reunification tools such as the Red Cross Safe and Well website.

D. LEP and ESF-15, Public Affairs

1. Public information may need to be translated for LEP populations to include American Sign Language (ASL). Interpreters and translation services will be coordinated through the TCECC utilizing available resources through Thurston County departments, TCOMM 911 (language line), and local organizations (i.e.,

community groups, faith communities, schools, etc.) providing such services. If local resources are not available, the TCECC will request translation services from the SEOC.

2. Local cities, towns and tribal governments within Thurston County are responsible for providing their residents with information on the emergency or disaster including the whole community and limited English proficient (LEP) populations.

E. Communicating Life Safety Information to LEP Individuals

1. Strategies for **oral notification** include using:

   a. Contracted certified interpreters (fee involved).

      i. In-person interpretation services (state master contract):
         https://fortress.wa.gov/ga/apps/ContractSearch/ContractSummary.aspx?c=03514

      ii. Telephone-based interpretations (state master contract):
         https://fortress.wa.gov/ga/apps/ContractSearch/ContractSummary.aspx?c=05614

      iii. American Sign Language interpreters (state master contract):
         https://fortress.wa.gov/es/apps/ContractSearch/ContractSummary.aspx?c=08114

      iv. Department of Social and Health Services Certified/Authorized:
         https://fortress.wa.gov/dshs/dshsltc/FindInterpreter

      v. Washington State Courts Interpreter Program:
         http://www.courts.wa.gov/programs_orgs/pos_interpret

      vi. Washington State Coalition for Language Access:
         http://www.wascla.org/directory

   b. Qualified bilingual staff or volunteers.

   c. Ethnic media.

   d. Recordings. Emergency managers may record interpreted messages for transmission across multiple platforms. This may include broadcasting recorded messages on public address systems, on social media, and playing recordings for LEP individuals encountered during door-to-door notifications.

2. Strategies for **written notification** include using:

   a. Contracted certified translators (fee involved).

      i. Written translation services – see Category 6 or Category 9 (24-hour emergency service) (state master contract):
         https://fortress.wa.gov/ga/apps/ContractSearch/ContractSummary.aspx?c=04312

      ii. Department of Social and Health Services Certified/Authorized:
         https://fortress.wa.gov/dshs/dshsltc/FindInterpreter

iii. Washington State Coalition for Language Access:
http://www.wascla.org/directory

b. Qualified bilingual staff or volunteers.

c. Translation of vital documents in advance. "Vital documents" are generally documents that affect access to, retention in, or termination or exclusion from a recipient's program services or benefits.

d. On-demand / real-time translation.

e. Pre-translated templates. Emergency managers may use pre-translated templates generated by government agencies or community-based organizations that allow the emergency manager to enter dates, times, locations, and other incident-specific details.

f. Machine translation. Emergency managers will seek review of machine-translated messages by certified translators or bilingual persons prior to dissemination.

g. Translated materials. As applicable to the situation, translated written notifications may be shared through wireless alerts, websites, ethnic and other news media, social media, partner organizations, email lists, reader boards, and trap lines. Print and electronic media, news releases, bulletin and sandwich boards, posting of signs can provide an effective method of disseminating emergency information. Electronic media can be helpful in issuing bulleting to inform the public or emergency conditions with or without formal activation of the EAS.

3. Methods for **disseminating** life safety information include:

a. Emergency Alert System:

   i. KAYO Radio, Olympia, 96.9 FM
   ii. KXXO Radio, Olympia, 96.1 FM
   iii. KAOS at The Evergreen State College, Olympia, 89.3 FM
   iv. COMCAST, Olympia

b. Thurston Community Alert

c. Social Media Platforms:

   i. Facebook: ThurstonEM
   ii. Twitter: ThurstonEM

d. News Media:

   i. El Mundo Newspaper, http://www.elmundous.com (Spanish, print and online)

i. KDDS La Grande Radio, 99.3 FM, https://kdds.lagranderadio.com (Spanish)
ii. KLDY La Estacion de Familia Radio, 1280 AM, https://laestaciondelafamilia.org (Spanish)
iii. KLSY La Estacion de Familia Radio, 93.7 FM, https://laestaciondelafamilia. (Spanish)

e. Door-to-Door Notifications:

   i. Depending on the nature of the incident, law enforcement, fire, other partner agencies, and/or volunteer resources may conduct door-to-door notifications through neighborhoods, farms, orchards, production facilities, parks, hotels, etc. Care would be taken to keep unprotected workers from entering hazardous areas to disseminate warning.

   ii. Those providing door-to-door notifications will access telephonic interpretation services, recorded oral messages, pictographic messages, and/or translated written messages as needed to communicate effectively. When possible, bilingual persons will provide notifications in neighborhoods known to have LEP populations.

f. Public Address Systems:

   i. Fire District and Law Enforcement apparatus can provide warnings along specific routes using public address systems and sirens. These would be effective as an alternative to door-to-door notification.

g. Organizations that may assist with LEP communications include but are not limited to:

   i. Disaster Assistance Council (DAC) participants, including but not limited to The Crisis Clinic of Thurston and Mason Counties, United Way of Thurston County, Medical Reserve Corp, The Salvation Army, American Red Cross, TCEM, Thurston County Food Bank, Tenino Food Bank, South Sound 211, Chehalis Tribe, and Senior Services for South Sound (multiple languages)
   ii. Rochester Organization of Families (ROOF) (Spanish)
   iii. Hispanic Roundtable of South Sound (Spanish)
   iv. CIELO (Spanish)
   v. Saint Michael Parish (Spanish, Vietnamese, and other languages)
   vi. Thurston County Public Health and Social Services
   vii. Local schools
   viii. Local churches and other places of worship

h. Trap Lines, or pre-selected locations where emergency communications will be posted on a bulletin board, may include:

   i. Fire stations
   ii. Schools

   iii. Grocery stores
   iv. Community centers
   v. Churches and other places of worship

V. RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS

A. Thurston County Emergency Management has the following resources available to provide life safety notifications in languages understood by local LEP language groups:

1. Thurston Community Alert is Thurston County's emergency notification system and houses the Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS). The system, which also houses the EAS, can be activated by TCOMM911, TCEM, and select fire and law enforcement officials. TCALERT is capable of translating messages into 40 languages, including Spanish and Vietnamese.

2. Access to at least one bilingual county staff member or volunteer trained in emergency management.

3. Access to telephonic or other certified interpretation/translation services.

4. News media contacts, including local Spanish-language radio stations.

5. Social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Next Door.

6. Local organizations, such as the Disaster Assistance Council (DAC), Rochester Organization of Families (ROOF), Saint Michael Parish, CIELO, and Hispanic Roundtable of South Sound, that may assist with developing and/or disseminating information to LEP individuals. DAC participating agencies include but are not limited to: United Way of Thurston County, The Crisis Clinic of Thurston and Mason Counties, Medical Reserve Corp, The Salvation Army, American Red Cross, TCEM, Thurston County Food Bank, Tenino Food Bank, South Sound 211, Chehalis Tribe and Senior Services for South Sound.

7. The Emergency Alert System (EAS) operates through local radio and cable TV stations and is intended to provide local officials with the means to disseminate prompt, reliable emergency information, instructions, and warnings in the event of an emergency or disaster.

   i. KAYO Radio, Olympia, 96.9 FM
   ii. KXXO Radio, Olympia, 96.1 FM
   iii. KAOS at The Evergreen State College, Olympia, 89.3 FM
   iv. COMCAST, Olympia

VI. REFERENCES

The content and format of this Plan was informed by LEP planning tools and guidelines from the Washington State Military Department Emergency Management Division (WA

EMD), U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) and Departments of Homeland Security (DHS) and Justice (DOJ), including:

DOJ. (2004). Limited English proficiency resource document: Tips and tools from the field. Retrieved from: https://www.lep.gov/resources/tips_and_tools-9-21-04.htm

DOJ. (2016). Tips and tools for reaching limited English proficient communities in emergency preparedness, response, and recovery. Retrieved from: https://www.justice.gov/crt/file/885391/download

GSA. (2016). Foreign language services ordering guide. Retrieved from: https://www.gsa.gov/cdnstatic/Foreign_Language_Services.pdf

"Guidance to Federal Financial Assistance Recipients Regarding Title VI Prohibition Against National Origin Discrimination Affecting Limited English Proficient Persons; Notice; final policy guidance," 76 Federal Register 74 (18 April 2011), pp. 21755-21768.

WA EMD. (2017). Limited English proficiency communication resources.

WA EMD. (2018). LEP communications planning framework, draft 4.1

VII.   TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

BOCC – Board of County Commissioners

CEMP – Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan

Communication Plan – A section in a local comprehensive emergency management plan that addresses emergency notification of life safety information. RCW 38.52.010(1)

DAC – Disaster Assistance Council

DHS – United States Department of Homeland Security

DOJ – United States Department of Justice

EAS – Emergency Alert System

EMC – Thurston County Emergency Management Council

ESF – Emergency Support Function

HIVA – Hazard Identification and Vulnerability Analysis

Interpretation – Interpretation is the act of listening to something in one language (source language) and orally translating it into another language (target language).

IPAWS – Integrated Public Alert and Warning System

LEP – A limited English proficient (LEP) individual is one who does not speak English as his/her primary language and who has a limited ability to read, write, speak or understand English. Not all individuals whose primary language is not English should be considered as having limited English proficiency.

Life Safety Information – Information provided to people during a response to a life-threatening emergency or disaster informing them of actions they can take to preserve their safety. Such information may include, but is not limited to, information regarding evacuation, sheltering, sheltering-in-place, facility lockdown, and where to obtain food and water. RCW 38.52.010(13)

NIMS – National Incident Management Systems

OFM – Washington State Office of Financial Management

Qualified Interpreter – For an individual with limited English proficiency, means an interpreter who via a remote interpreting service or an on-site appearance: (i) Adheres to generally accepted interpreter ethics principles, including client confidentiality; (ii) has demonstrated proficiency in speaking and understanding both spoken English and at least one other spoken language; and (iii) is able to interpret effectively, accurately, and impartially, both receptively and expressly, to and from such language(s) and English, using any necessary specialized vocabulary, terminology and phraseology.

Qualified Translator – A translator who: (i) Adheres to generally accepted translator ethics principles, including client confidentiality; (ii) has demonstrated proficiency in writing and understanding both written English and at least one other written non-English language; and (iii) is able to translate effectively, accurately, and impartially to and from such language(s) and English, using any necessary specialized vocabulary, terminology and phraseology.

ROOF – Rochester Organization of Families

SEOC – Washington State Emergency Operations Center

Significant Population Segment – each limited English proficiency language group that constitutes five percent or one thousand residents, whichever is less, of the population of persons eligible to be served or likely to be affected within a city, town, or county. RCW 38.52.070(3)(a)(ii)

SSB – Substitute Senate Bill

TCALERT – Thurston Community Alert

TCOMM911 – Thurston 911 Communications

TCECC – Thurston County Emergency Coordination Center

TCEM – Thurston County Emergency Management

Translation – Translation is the replacement of a written text from one language (source language) into an equivalent written text in another language (target language).

Vital Documents - Documents that affect access to, retention in, or termination or exclusion from a recipient's program services or benefits.

WA EMD – Washington State Military Department Emergency Management Division

WASCLA – Washington State Coalition for Language Access