

# Emergency Support Function 15 Operational Plan

December 9, 2020 | COVID-19 Public Health Emergency

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## **Summary**

In accordance with the State Response Framework, Emergency Support Function (ESF) 15 serves as the centrally coordinated effort to make sure that the public has the information they need to make informed decisions during the COVID-19 public health emergency in the State of Connecticut. During a public health emergency, the response is led by the Department of Public Health (DPH) in close coordination with the Office of the Governor (OTG); the Division of Emergency Management of Homeland Security (DEMHS), and; other relevant state agencies depending on the issue at hand. This pandemic is a unique emergency, effecting residents over a long period of time. So, in addition to the public health ramifications, we also closely follow issues like unemployment, mental health, price gouging, and business reopening rules.

As the emergency has been in effect for over 6 months, and will remain that way for the foreseeable future as we are in a second wave, ESF-15 has focused on assigning long-term, core team roles, and communication processes. The goals of this structure are to;

- Ensure the State has a structure that can more easily transition back to more standard operating procedures or expand to further support the lead agencies;
- Create a sustainable work environment for those serving the Governor's Unified Command efforts for the long term;
- Continuously evaluate what support is needed by our lead agencies with a constant eye towards planning for further activation/demobilization; and,
- Make sure that ESF-15 is accessible as quickly as possible to agencies and organizations that need support.

The ongoing goals of ESF-15 continue to be;

- Provide messaging support and encourage collaboration in messaging across state government and with partner organizations;
- Ensure unified messaging across all partners whenever possible;
- Maintain situational awareness amongst all state agency and partner PIOs when possible; and,
- Ensure our messaging continues to reach everyone in the state including our diverse communities and the access and functional needs communities.

## **Communication Flow**

If you need any assistance from the *Coordination Groups* and *Task Areas* listed below, please contact the leads identified for each coordination group or task area. For situational awareness, please CC' ESF-15 lead Eric Scoville on any request. A contact listing is available in Attachment B of this document.

# **ESF-15 Structure**

## **ESF-15 Leadership**

The structure of ESF-15 is maintained and coordinated by the Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security in close coordination with the Office of the Governor. Due to the current activation under a public health emergency, DPH also takes lead roles in this process. See Attachment A for a visual representation of this structure.

**Office of the Governor Communications:** *Lora Rae Anderson* (OTG-COO) BACKUP: Max Reiss

- The Office of the Governor leads the communications efforts in conjunction with DPH. OTG participates in ESF-15 meetings, and provides updates regularly so all stakeholders are aware of what communications programs are on the horizon.

**ESF-15 Lead:** *Eric Scoville* (DEMHS), BACKUP: Kathleen Sullivan

- The ESF-15 Lead will collect daily reports from each state agency and partner organization public information officers (PIO), hold regular conference calls, produce daily memos for OTG staff, and oversee day-to-day ESF-15 Operations and Planning functions. The ESF-15 lead may step-in to facilitate certain ESF-15 components should the leads and back-ups not be available.

## **ESF-15 Coordination Groups**

During COVID-19 activation, ESF-15 has implemented a variety of coordination groups consisting of task forces, working groups, subcommittees and check-ins. These groups meet periodically to implement, advise and develop recommendations for the communication of COVID-19 related information to the entire Connecticut community.

### **1.Active:**

**ESF-15 Diverse Communities Outreach Subcommittee:** *Catherine Blinder* (DCP) and *Kathleen Sullivan* (ADS), BACKUP: *Eric Scoville* (DEMHS)

- The ESF-15 Diverse Communities Outreach Task Force convenes regular meetings to discuss issues specific to immigrant and non-English speaking communities. They also serve as a resource, and the clearinghouse for translation and interpretation for statewide initiatives during the state of emergency. This task force also ensures that issues specific to the deaf-blind, hard of hearing, and disability community are incorporated into the day-to-day work of statewide communications during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Should the need arise, this group can be split apart into two subgroups, one for culturally and ethnically diverse outreach and another for access and functional needs outreach.
- During periods of non-disaster, this task force becomes a working group that continues to meet to build and maintain capacity for future disaster events.

- This committee consists of community members who serve as subject matter experts on outreach to the communities they represent. The leads for this committee can identify points of contact and channels for each community should you need guidance on developing inclusive messaging.

**ESF-15 211 Testing Site Access Subcommittee:** *Alana Kroeber (211)*, BACKUP: *Gemma Fabris (DEMHS)*

- The testing list subcommittee meets to coordinate the public interface for locating public testing locations. The group works and strategizes ways and types of testing sites to be included on the 211 site, discusses public user barriers and access to testing sites, and coordinates to assure the testing list is updated.
- Additionally, this group serves to maintain continuous two-way communication with 211 on testing. This group consists of a lead from the state's COVID-19 testing team; United Way 211; and, DEMHS Public Information, GIS and Planning.

**ESF-15 Vaccination Messaging Subcommittee:** *Eric Scoville (DEMHS)*, BACKUP: *Michael Bolduc (DPH)*

- The vaccination messaging subcommittee meets as needed to help DPH, identify, plan for and operationalize any communication recommendations coming from the Governor's Vaccination Advisory Council. This group meets on a monthly basis or as needed and indicated by DPH. Additional committees may be formed to work on specific tasks such as integration with 211.

**RESF-15 Integration Subcommittee:** *Eric Scoville (DEMHS)*, BACKUP: NA

- This group is in the process of being formed for COVID-19 related messaging as well as other future emergencies. The purpose is to identify regional and local partners that can disseminate and provide messaging support, identify diverse community outreach opportunities and serve as subject matter experts for their region. This group will continue to meet to build capacity.

## **ESF-15 Task Areas**

### **1. Active:**

**FEMA JIC Liaison:** *Eric Scoville (DEMHS)*, BACKUP: *Lora Rae Anderson (OTG)*

- DEMHS plays a key convening and logistical role during any emergency situation and liaises with FEMA on a regular basis. The DEMHS PIO should be included in all emergency communications efforts and meetings and be considered a central clearing house for emergency management information.

**Website Support:** *Diana Shaw (DSS)*, BACKUP: *Joe Cunningham (DEEP)*

- The website support team provides website support to the Office of the Governor for the [www.ct.gov/coronavirus](http://www.ct.gov/coronavirus) website as well as any of the existing or new microsites.
- If you need something updated or posted on the CT-Coronavirus website or a microsite, please reach out to one of these team members.

**COVID-19 Education and Ad Campaigns:** *Lora Rae Anderson (OTG)*

- OTG is running point on the ad campaigns about basic public health messages coming from the State during COVID-19.
- Anyone who offers to work on broad public health campaigns should be referred to OTG first.
- Campaigns funded through individual agencies for COVID-19 related messaging are encouraged but OTG should be made aware so they can be considered in the overall messaging calendar.

**COVID-19 Response Facebook and Twitter:** *Chloe Cummings (OTG) Co-Lead: Jim Polites (DRS)*

- In addition to the Office of the Governor’s social media accounts, the state COVID-19 response effort has a dedicated Twitter and Facebook account. These accounts are partially active and many of the state’s ongoing digital advertising campaigns are leveraging these pages.
- Message amplification from other state agencies is no longer occurring on these platforms; the accounts are periodically monitored for direct messages and questions.
- The lead may designate individuals to support certain elements of maintaining these pages.

**Video Production:** *Brian Foley (DESPP), BACKUP: NA*

- The State Police do in-house video production for the state. Agencies that have needs for video production related to general COVID-19 messages may contact them. Subject to availability.

**Rumor Control:** *Kaitlyn Krasselt (DCP), BACKUP: Brian Foley (DESPP)*

- In all times of emergency, including this one, there is a risk that misinformation and disinformation may be spread. The rumor control team works across all other teams to identify and correct any misconceptions. Additionally, rumors are corrected in collaboration with 211, at the Governor’s Press Conferences and press releases.
- If you have a pervasive public rumor that needs to be corrected, please reach out to this team with the rumor and counter message.

**Resource Distribution Team:** *Gary Kleeblatt (DCF), BACKUP: David Brennan (DCF)*

- The resource distribution team periodically compiles resource emails from different sources and sends them to identified distribution lists. Depending upon need, the frequency of these resource emails may increase. These emails may include messaging templates, flyers, posters, releases, graphics and images as well as other resources that may be useful for message amplification.
- The frequency of these “resource lists” may increase or decrease depending upon need. You can forward any important resources for this list to the team for inclusion.

**2. Inactive:**

**JIC Phone Line and Email:** *Jessica Tyburski (OTG), BACKUP: Chloe Cummings (OTG)*

- The JIC has a dedicated email and phone line that a team of people answers in shifts, and fields out to agency legislative and media contacts as appropriate.
- Public inquiries should be directed to 211 and legislative/press inquiries should be directed to the agencies that have insight into that subject matter area.

## ***Updates and Evaluation***

As the State progresses through COVID recovery efforts and future resurgence of COVID-19, the above roles may change, expand or consolidate. ESF-15 leadership will:

- Convene regular meetings under the leadership of the ESF-15 lead;
- Communicate with each other as ad-hoc issues arise; and,
- Consider any potential changes to the ESF-15 structure, periodically updating this document.

**Attachment A – Structure:**



**Attachment B – Components:**

Component	Status	Current/Historic Lead
ESF-15 Committee (Main Group)	Active Virtually	<p><b>Eric Scoville, DEMHS</b> Cell: 860-597-8204 Email: <a href="mailto:Eric.Scoville@ct.gov">Eric.Scoville@ct.gov</a></p> <p><b>Kathleen Sullivan, ADS</b> Cell: 860-874-5295 Email: <a href="mailto:Kathleen.Sullivan@ct.gov">Kathleen.Sullivan@ct.gov</a></p> <p><b>Lena Holleran, DOH (Scribe)</b> Cell: 860-803-5120 Email: <a href="mailto:Lena.Holleran@ct.gov">Lena.Holleran@ct.gov</a></p>
ESF-15 Diverse Communities Outreach Task Force (AFN and Culturally Diverse Communities)	Active Virtually	<p><b>Kathleen Sullivan (ADS)</b> Cell: 860-874-5295 Email: <a href="mailto:Kathleen.Sullivan@ct.gov">Kathleen.Sullivan@ct.gov</a></p> <p><b>Catherine Blinder (DCP)</b> Cell: 860-985-8904 Email: <a href="mailto:Catherine.Blinder@ct.gov">Catherine.Blinder@ct.gov</a></p>
ESF-15 Testing List Subcommittee	Active Virtually	<p><b>Alana Kroeber, 211</b> Cell: 860-227-8722 Email: <a href="mailto:Alana.Kroeber@ctunitedway.org">Alana.Kroeber@ctunitedway.org</a></p> <p><b>Gemma Fabris, DEMHS REP</b> Cell: (860) 770-5464 Email: <a href="mailto:Gemma.Fabris@ct.gov">Gemma.Fabris@ct.gov</a></p>
ESF-15 Vaccination Messaging Subcommittee	Active Virtually	<p><b>Eric Scoville, DEMHS</b> Cell: 860-597-8204 Email: <a href="mailto:Eric.Scoville@ct.gov">Eric.Scoville@ct.gov</a></p> <p><b>Mick Bolduc, DPH Immunizations</b> Cell: 860-712-8804 Email: <a href="mailto:Michael.Bolduc@ct.gov">Michael.Bolduc@ct.gov</a></p>
ESF-15 Website Support	Active Virtually	<p><b>Diana Shaw, DSS</b> Cell: 860-305-4583 Email: <a href="mailto:Diana.Shaw@ct.gov">Diana.Shaw@ct.gov</a></p> <p><b>Joseph Cunningham, DEEP</b> Cell: 860-597-8204 Email: <a href="mailto:Joseph.Cunningham@ct.gov">Joseph.Cunningham@ct.gov</a></p>
Education and Ad Campaign	Active Virtually	<p><b>Lora Rae Anderson, OTG</b> Cell: 860-247-8711 Email: <a href="mailto:LoraRae.Anderson@ct.gov">LoraRae.Anderson@ct.gov</a></p>
COVID-19 Social Media	Active Virtually- Direct Messages	<p><b>Chloe Cummings, OTG</b> Cell: 570-677-7372 Email: <a href="mailto:Chloe.Cummings@ct.gov">Chloe.Cummings@ct.gov</a></p> <p><b>Jim Polites, DRS</b> Cell: Email: <a href="mailto:James.Polites@ct.gov">James.Polites@ct.gov</a></p>
ESF-15 Memo	Active Virtually	<p><b>Eric Scoville (DEMHS)</b> Cell: 860-597-8204 Email: <a href="mailto:Eric.Scoville@ct.gov">Eric.Scoville@ct.gov</a></p>
COVID-19 Video Production	Active Virtually (as needed)	<p><b>Brian Foley (DESPP)</b> Cell: 860-463-9777 Email: <a href="mailto:Brian.Foley@ct.gov">Brian.Foley@ct.gov</a></p>
COVID-19 Rumor Control	Active Virtually	<p><b>Kaitlyn Krasselt (DCP)</b> Cell: 860-377-0246 Email: <a href="mailto:Kaitlyn.Krasselt@ct.gov">Kaitlyn.Krasselt@ct.gov</a></p> <p><b>Brian Foley (DESPP)</b> Cell: 860-463-9777 Email: <a href="mailto:Brian.Foley@ct.gov">Brian.Foley@ct.gov</a></p>
Resource Distribution	Active Virtually	<p><b>Gary Kleeblatt (DCF)</b> Cell: 860-622-9824 Email: <a href="mailto:Gary.Kleeblatt@ct.gov">Gary.Kleeblatt@ct.gov</a></p> <p><b>David Brennan(DCF)</b> Cell: 860-550-6421 Email: <a href="mailto:David.Brennan@ct.gov">David.Brennan@ct.gov</a></p>

Attachment B – Components:

<b>COVID-19 Email and Phone Line</b>	<b>Paused</b>	<b>Jessica Tyburski (OTG)</b> Cell: 203-577-8002 Email: <a href="mailto:Jessica.Tyburski@ct.gov">Jessica.Tyburski@ct.gov</a> <b>Chloe Cummings (OTG)</b> Cell: Email: <a href="mailto:Chloe.Cummings@ct.gov">Chloe.Cummings@ct.gov</a>
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