

Disaster Case Management to Be a Permanent Process

As Iowans worked to recover from the floods of 2008, they were faced with a number of federal and state assistance programs. For many seeking help, it was hard to know where to turn.

As a result, the state established a case management system to help Iowa families find the help they needed. The system used local organizations to work with disaster victims, helping them find the right programs to assist in their recovery.

The system, although not perfect, was successful in helping tens of thousands of Iowans and caught the eye of federal emergency management officials. As a result, the system has become a national model and there are even discussions at the federal level to incorporate the case management system into the federal disaster response.

To make sure we have learned from the 2008 experience, the Iowa House and Senate approved House File 2422 this week to make the case management system a permanent process available in the future.

The current Rebuild Iowa Office, which is to sunset in 2011, will lead the effort to set up the framework for the system working with the Department of Human Services (DHS) and the Iowa Homeland Security and Emergency Management Division. Once the framework is in place, DHS will be in charge if another disaster should occur.

Business Case Management

The legislation also creates a task force to work with business leaders on a similar system for small and large businesses affected by future disasters. This component was missing in 2008.

The bill now goes to Governor Culver for his signature.