



FEMA

Fact Sheet

Crisis Counseling Assistance & Training Program

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) implements the Crisis Counseling Assistance and Training Program (CCP) as supplemental assistance to state, local, tribal, and territorial governments. Section 416 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, (P. L. 93-288, as amended, 42 U.S.C. 5183), implemented through 44 C.F.R. § 206.171, and 2 C.F.R. Part 200, authorizes FEMA to fund mental health assistance and training activities in areas that have received a Presidential major disaster declaration that includes Individual Assistance (IA) and a non-Federal entity has submitted an approved Federal award application.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) Center for Mental Health Services (CMHS), within Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), works in partnership with FEMA through an interagency agreement to provide technical assistance, consultation, grant administration, program oversight, and training for state mental health authorities and designated tribal authorities.

Program Overview

The mission of the CCP is to assist individuals and communities in recovering from the psychological effects of natural and human-caused disasters through the provision of community-based outreach and educational services. The CCP supports short-term interventions to assist disaster survivors in understanding their current situation and reactions, mitigating stress, reviewing their disaster recovery options, promoting the use or development of coping strategies, providing emotional support, and encouraging links with other individuals and agencies who may help survivors in their recovery process.

Services are provided at no cost and are available to any survivor, regardless of FEMA IHP applicant eligibility, who has been impacted by the disaster. These services are provided in accessible locations, including survivors' homes, shelters, temporary living sites, and places of worship. Services can be provided in a group setting or one-on-one and include supportive crisis counseling, education, development of coping skills, and linkage to appropriate resources.

Disaster Crisis Counseling Versus Mental Health Treatment

The key difference between traditional mental health services and crisis counseling is the way services are provided. Mental health treatment, as typically defined within the mental health community, implies the provision of assistance to individuals for a diagnosable disorder. Typically, the mental health professional and client will discuss various treatment options and agree to certain interventions and treatment goals.

In contrast, crisis counseling seeks to prevent the onset of diagnosable disorders by helping survivors understand that they are experiencing common reactions to extraordinary common occurrences. Crisis counselors treat each individual and group encounter as if it were the only one, keep no formal individual records or case files, and find opportunities to engage survivors, encourage them to talk

about their experiences, and teach ways to manage stress. Counselors help enhance social and emotional connections to others in the community, and promote effective coping strategies and resilience. Crisis counselors work closely with community organizations to familiarize themselves with available resources, refer and link survivors to behavioral health treatment, and other needed services, program evaluation, and accountability.

Supplemental funding for crisis counseling is available to state, local, and territorial mental health authorities and designated tribal authorities through two grant mechanisms:

- **Immediate Services Program (ISP)**
 - Provides funds for up to 60 days of services immediately following the approval of IA for a disaster.
 - SAMHSA provides technical assistance.
 - FEMA monitors the Federal award in coordination with SAMHSA.
- **Regular Services Program (RSP)**
 - Provides funds for up to nine months from the date of the notice of award.
 - SAMHSA is responsible for monitoring all RSP programs in coordination with FEMA.

Key Principles

The CCP is guided by the following key principles:

- **Strengths Based** – CCP services promote resilience, empowerment, and recovery.
- **Diagnosis-Free** – Crisis counselors do not classify, label, or diagnose people; no records or case files are kept.
- **Outreach Oriented** – Crisis counselors deliver services in the communities rather than waiting for survivors to seek their assistance.
- **Culturally Sensitive** – The CCP model embraces cultural and spiritual diversity as reflected in culturally relevant outreach activities that represent the communities served.
- **Flexible** – Services may be conducted in nontraditional settings, crisis counselors make contact in homes and communities, not in clinical or office settings.
- **Capacity Building** – Services are designed to strengthen existing community support systems, the CCP supplements, but does not supplant or replace, existing community systems.
- **Practical more than Psychological** – Crisis counselors help survivors in developing a plan to address self-identified needs and suggest connections with other individuals or organizations who can assist them.
- **Unified Identity** – The CCP strives to be a single, easily identifiable program, with services delivered by various local agencies.

Services Funded

The following services may be funded under a CCP award:

- **Individual Crisis Counseling:** Helps survivors understand their reactions, improve coping strategies, review their options, and connect with other individuals and agencies who may assist them.
- **Basic Supportive or Educational Contact:** Provides general support and information on resources and services available to disaster survivors.
- **Group Crisis Counseling:** Hosts group sessions led by trained crisis counselors offering

skills to help survivors cope with their situations and reactions.

- **Public Education:** Offers information and education about typical reactions, helpful coping strategies, and available disaster-related resources.
- **Community Networking and Support:** Builds relationships with community resource organizations, faith-based groups, and local agencies.
- **Assessment, Referral, and Resource Linkage:** Assesses needs of adults and children and provides referral to additional disaster relief services or mental health or substance abuse treatment.
- **Development and Distribution of Educational Materials:** Distributes flyers, brochures, tip sheets, educational materials, and web site information developed by CCP staff.
- **Media and Public Service Announcements:** Works in partnership with local media outlets, state, local, tribal, and territorial governments, charitable organizations, or other community brokers to develop and share public messaging.

Funding is contingent upon the state, local agency, tribe, and/or territory meeting the following conditions:

- Providing regular progress and financial status reports.
- Documenting needs and the manner in which the program addresses the needs of the affected population, the types of services offered, and coordination of services if other agencies are involved, training for project staff, and a detailed expenditure report.
- Participating in at least one site visit by FEMA and SAMHSA during the period of the grant. If any questionable activities are noted or observed, corrective action is immediately taken, up to disallowing the costs.

FEMA's Mission: "Helping people before, during, and after disasters."

April 2019