



FEMA

Fact Sheet

Crisis Counseling Assistance & Training Program

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) implements the Crisis Counseling Assistance and Training Program (CCP) to provide supplemental assistance for local entities, states, tribes, and territories. The Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, 1974 authorizes FEMA to fund mental health assistance and training activities in areas that have received a Presidential major disaster declaration. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) works with FEMA through an interagency agreement to provide technical assistance, consultation, grant administration, program oversight, and training for state and designated tribal mental health authorities.

Program Overview

The mission of CCP is to assist individuals and communities recover from the effects of natural and man-made disasters by providing community-based outreach and psycho-educational services. CCP supports short-term interventions including: assisting disaster survivors understand their current situation and reactions, mitigating stress, assisting survivors review their disaster recovery options, promoting the use and development of coping strategies, providing emotional support, and encouraging linkages with other individuals and agencies who may help survivors recover to pre-disaster functioning.

Supplemental funding for crisis counseling is available to local, state, 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 a disaster declaration.
- **Regular Services Program (RSP):** provides funds for up to nine months following a Presidential disaster declaration.

While SAMHSA provides technical assistance for ISP, grant monitoring responsibilities remain with FEMA. FEMA has designated SAMHSA as the authority responsible for monitoring all RSP programs.

Key Principles

These are CCP's key principles:

- **Strengths Based** – CCP services promote resilience, empowerment, and recovery.
- **Anonymous** – Crisis counselors do not classify, label, or diagnose people; counselors keep no records or case files.
- **Outreach Oriented** – Crisis counselors deliver services in 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 they host.
- **Conducted in Nontraditional Settings** – Crisis counselors make contact in homes and communities, not in clinical or office settings.

- **Designed to Strengthen Existing Community Support Systems** – CCP supplements and never supplants or replaces existing community systems.

Services Funded

CCP provides the following services to achieve its mission:

- **Individual Crisis Counseling:** Helps survivors understand their reactions, improve coping strategies, review their options, and connect with other individuals and agencies that may assist them.
- **Basic Supportive or Educational Contact:** General support and information on resources and services available to disaster survivors.
- **Group Crisis Counseling:** Group sessions led by trained crisis counselors who offer skills to help survivors cope with their situations and reactions.
- **Public Education:** Information and education about typical reactions, helpful coping strategies, and available disaster-related resources.
- **Community Networking and Support:** Relationship building with community resource organizations, faith-based groups, and local agencies.
- **Assessment, Referral, and Resource Linkage:** Adult and child needs assessment and referral to additional disaster relief services, mental health or substance abuse treatment.
- **Development and Distribution of Educational Materials:** Flyers, brochures, tip sheets, educational materials, and web site information developed and distributed by CCP staff.
- **Media and Public Service Announcements:** Media activities and public messaging in partnership with local media outlets, state and local governments, charitable organizations, or other community brokers.

Disaster Crisis Counseling Versus Mental Health Treatment

The key difference between traditional mental health services and crisis counseling is the way services are provided. In contrast to the crisis counseling services provided by CCP, mental health treatment, provides assistance to individuals for an existing pathological condition or disorder.

Typically, the mental health professional and client will discuss various treatment options and agree to certain interventions and treatment goals.

Crisis counseling individual and group encounters serve to engage people and encourage them to talk about their disaster experiences and teaches them how to manage stress. These activities help counselors identify people who may need referrals to behavioral health treatment. Crisis counseling activities enhance social and emotional connections with community members, promoting effective coping strategies and facilitating resilience. Crisis Counselors work closely with community organizations to familiarize themselves and link survivors with available resources.

Program Evaluation and Accountability

CCP Grant awards are contingent upon the local entity, state, tribe or territory meeting the following conditions:

- Provide regular progress and financial status reports to FEMA and SAMHSA.
- Document needs and the manner in which the program addresses the needs of the affected population, including: the types of services offered and coordination of services if other agencies are involved, training for project staff, and a detailed expenditure report.

- Participate 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).