



Mass Care and Emergency Human Services Preparedness Terminology and Definitions Guide

Background

In Wisconsin, counties use various terms to refer to their jurisdictions' emergency plans, including emergency operations plan (EOP), emergency response plan (ERP), and comprehensive emergency management plan (CEMP). When we use the term "county emergency operations plan (CEOP)," we are using it as a generic reference to all of these variations. In addition, there is currently no single, standard, or universally understood term that encompasses the emergency support function addressed in this guide.

- Some counties talk about mass care in Annex E – Evacuation and Shelter and emergency human services in Annex F – Human Services.
- Other counties address these functions in Emergency Support Function (ESF) 6 – Mass Care, Emergency Assistance, Housing and Human Services.
- The term "human services" is used generically and collectively to include human services provided by an assortment of governmental and non-governmental organizations and not exclusively by county human services authorities.
- For the purposes of this guide, "emergency" means an incident or event outside your human services agency's typical day-to-day work and duties.
- As government entities, we share responsibility for a larger emergency planning and response role.

Access and functional needs

As detailed in the United States' emergency management plan, the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) subscribes to the National Response Framework's definition of functional needs, using the acronym "C-MIST." The C-MIST concept was developed by June Isaacson Kailes for identifying access and functional needs as a part of the California Department of Social Services Functional Assessment Service Team training program.

- C – communication. This identifies individuals who have limitations that interfere with the receipt of and response to information, such as people with limited hearing or vision, limited speaking ability, limited English proficiency, cognitive disabilities, or mental health issues.
- M – maintaining health. This identifies individuals who are not self-sufficient or require medical assistance or treatment, such as special diets, durable medical supplies or equipment, and medications.

- I – independence. This identifies individuals requiring support to be independent in daily activities, including people who need adaptive facilities, equipment, supplies, or who normally use the services of a personal assistant.
- S – safety, self-determination, and supervision. This identifies individuals who generally know best how to take care of themselves. However, some might require caregivers to adequately cope with unusual situations, or some might be unable to identify themselves, or may lack the cognitive ability to assess a situation and react appropriately.
- T – transportation. This identifies individuals who cannot drive or do not have a vehicle and those who are not ambulatory.

Community shelter

A community shelter is a facility that provides temporary housing (typically in group facilities such as school gymnasiums) and basic services. Examples of offerings at community shelters can include meals, health and behavioral health services, human services, information, and referrals for people displaced from their homes by an emergency or disaster, including people with access or functional needs.

Displaced people

Displaced people have left their homes due to an emergency or disaster. They may have taken residence in a community shelter, or they may have found alternative accommodations in the community. Their displacement may be a short-term inconvenience, or it may be a catastrophic event for the affected population, resulting in the need to acquire replacement housing and substantial support, and additional services to re-establish their homes and normalize their lives.

Emergency assistance

Emergency assistance is a spectrum of supportive services provided to displaced people including:

- Support to individuals with disabilities and others with access and functional needs in community shelters.
- Support to children in disasters.
- Support to mass evacuations.
- Support for the rescue, transportation, care, shelter, and essential needs of service animals and household pets.
- Essential community relief services.
- Tracking displaced people.
- Reunification of children with their parent(s) or legal guardians, and adults with their families.

Family assistance center

A family assistance center is a facility that mobilizes because of a mass casualty incident in which a significant number of survivors or family members that need information and assistance.

- In an incident such as an airline crash, the transportation carrier operates the family assistance center.

- County government may operate the center in other types of mass casualties, doing so via the health and medical services or fatalities management annexes or emergency support functions (Annex H or ESF 8).

Short-Term housing

In the context of mass care and emergency human services, housing means short-term housing, including options such as the following:

- In the event of a presidential disaster declaration, developing a plan of action to provide housing assistance from governmental programs for:
 - Rental assistance.
 - Temporary housing.
 - Loans for the repair or replacement of primary residences.
- In the absence of a presidential disaster declaration, developing a plan of action to provide the short-term or interim housing assistance from voluntary organizations, covering the period from when survivors emerge from community shelters until they are either permanently re-housed or leave the area.

Human services

Disaster assistance programs that help survivors address unmet disaster-caused needs or non-housing losses through loans and grants (in the event of a presidential declaration) or through coordination of assistance from non-governmental sources include:

- Governmental – such as FoodShare and disaster unemployment assistance.
- Non-governmental – such as clean-up and home repair assistance, case management, disaster recovery donations.

Mass care

Mass care involves providing a community shelter or more non-traditional temporary housing at hotels, or publicizing locations of warming and cooling facilities. Mass care also includes assisting with the following:

- Providing fixed, field, mobile, or catered meal sites.
- Distributing bulk items, such as emergency supplies, clothing, cleaning supplies, and tarps.
- Helping people who are displaced to get needed services offered through governmental or non-governmental organizations.

Reception center

A reception center is an ad-hoc facility mobilized in the immediate wake of an event to gather (for less than 24 hours) displaced people for identification, assessment, and possible referral to continuing emergency services or community shelter.

- On-site services are typically limited to water, snacks, and information.

- A reception center might be mobilized in a public or private building, tent, highway rest area, parking lot, or even a mass transit vehicle in accordance with the needs of the event and the resources available.

Warming or cooling facilities

A warming or cooling facility is a location where residents can find temporary respite from extreme conditions such as a heat emergency, cold emergency, or long-term power outage. Examples include:

- A warming or cooling center is a facility such as a community senior center where residents can go during a heat or cold emergency that may provide additional services, such as meals, social activities, or transportation, along with possibility extended hours of operation.
- A warming or cooling site is a public facility, such as a mall or library where residents can go during normal business hours in a heat or cold emergency.

Shelter

The term “shelter” can suggest to many people such permanent facilities as homeless shelters or domestic violence shelters. Residents of these types of shelters who are evacuated in an emergency should be served in community shelters.