

Mental Health Support for Residents After a Disaster (for local authorities)

Natural disasters cause more than just physical damage. People affected by disasters often have impacts to their mental health that can cause stress, grief, sadness, insomnia, high-risk coping behaviours, depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress. These effects can be exacerbated for those with pre-existing mental health conditions or those who have experienced trauma.

The Disaster Financial Assistance program provides assistance to local authorities that deliver mental health services to individuals affected by an eligible disaster.

Eligible costs may include:

- Establishing a resource centre in a community.
- Hiring additional qualified mental health clinicians.
- Train local non-profits to deliver Psychological First Aid.
- Critical incident stress management.
- Service increases for crisis phone lines and general health phone lines.
- Street outreach.

Mental Health support can be delivered in two ways:

1. **Adding surge capacity** to existing programs that allows an organization to offer additional resources to individuals impacted by the disaster.

Example 1: An existing community youth resource centre may provide a drop-in program for youth once per week to learn about substance use awareness and coping skills. After an evacuation, the centre provides the drop-in program twice a week to provide increased mental health support required to help youth cope with the disaster.

Example 2: Partnering with a local Friendship centre to offer support to individuals affected by wildfires, which may include traditional healing practices, incorporating wisdom from Indigenous Elders, and other culturally safe approaches.

2. **Adding new programs or services** designed specifically to deliver services to individuals affected by the disaster.

Example: The local library holds wellness workshops for individuals affected by a disaster and contracts with a mental health clinician to deliver the workshops.

Local authorities can include costs related to both options above in their claim as though it is a “contracted service.” Local authorities must:

- Contract the organization(s).
- Pay the organization(s) for services rendered.
- Submit those costs to Manitoba Emergency Management Organization for reimbursement with details on the service provided, including the number of participants, the number of sessions, dates, and types of services provided, along with proof of payment.
- Submit a copy of the contract or agreement between the local authority and the organization, along with any other documentation related to the provision of the service.

A dedicated liaison will be assigned to each local authority to answer claim questions and respond to local needs.