

Tips and Considerations

Section 1: Disaster Preparedness and Response Plan
Tribally Operated Centers



FY 2023-2025 Tribal CCDF Plan Preprint

How to Develop an Emergency Preparedness Disaster Response and Recovery Plan for Tribally Operated Centers

Background

In past disasters, and in response to the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, the provision of emergency child care services, and the process of rebuilding and restoring the child care infrastructure has emerged as essential services. Tribal Lead Agencies are required to establish a Child Care Disaster Plan for the Tribal Service Area.¹ They must describe how they will address the needs of children, including the need for safe child care before, during, and after a state of emergency declared by the Governor, Tribal Chair, or Tribal Chief Executive or a major disaster or emergency (as defined by Section 102 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. 5122).

General Tips and Considerations for Tribal Lead Agencies with Small and Medium Allocation Sizes Who Operate Tribally Operated Centers Only

Child Care Disaster Plan Coordination

Establish an effective disaster plan through coordinating and collaborating with appropriate stakeholders. Engage partners in plan development and reviews.

- ◆ Contact your Tribe's emergency response unit established during the COVID-19 pandemic and schedule a meeting to discuss planning for a community-wide disaster preparedness plan.
- ◆ Contact your Tribe's emergency management department and ask for a copy of the emergency preparedness plan, review for the plans for child care services. Update and ask for it to be included in the master plan.
- ◆ Invite center staff to the disaster plan development meetings to gather their input on the plan and procedures to ensure they meet the children's, families', and Tribally operated center staff needs.
- ◆ If your Tribe does not have a designated emergency management department, work with your Tribal leadership and the local emergency response programs such as the police or fire departments to develop a plan.
- ◆ Consult with Indian Health Services (IHS) in the development of your disaster plan and review their resources.



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1.10.1 Describe how the child care disaster plan was developed in collaboration with appropriate stakeholders.

Potential Community Partners

- ◆ Local Fire and Police Departments
- ◆ Mental Health Consultants
- ◆ Tribal/County Emergency Management
- ◆ State or Tribal Child Care Licensing Agencies
- ◆ Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies
- ◆ Parents, Community Members, and Staff

¹ Child Care and Development Fund, (658E(c)(2)(U); 98.16(aa))

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- ◆ Document lessons learned during the COVID-19 pandemic to develop or update your Tribal Lead Agency's disaster plan.
- ◆ Develop a communication plan with all partners, response agencies, and staff to ensure timely notification of an emergency.
- ◆ Develop a meeting schedule for the planning committee, at least annually to access the current plan and update as needed.
- ◆ Add a meeting after each noted emergency or practice drill to debrief the effectiveness of the procedures as a part of your community's plan.
- ◆ Host a community roundtable discussion to gather community member input into the disaster plan.
- ◆ Include using the Tribe's or Tribal Lead Agency's website as a means of communication with families during and after a disaster.

Disaster Plan Guidelines for Child Care Subsidies and Child Care Services

Determine how the Child Care Disaster Plan includes the Tribal Lead Agency's guidelines for the continuation of child care subsidies and child care services, which may include the provision of emergency and temporary child care services during a disaster, and temporary operating standards for child care after a disaster.

Continuation of Child Care Subsidies

- ◆ Consider including provisions within your disaster plan to extend eligibility redetermination for families affected by a disaster.
- ◆ Develop an online system that allows for families to submit applications online, for example, a link to fillable pdf forms that can be downloaded and emailed or a system where the answers are saved, and the family could just press submit.
- ◆ Determine who will maintain the recordkeeping process during an emergency, for example move your Tribal Data Tracker onto a laptop that could be portable if Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) staff had to work from home.
- ◆ If applicable, consider creating a waiting list that is maintained by the CCDF Administrator that is updated as children are placed in child care, taking into consideration priorities set by the Tribal Lead Agency.
- ◆ Maintain close communication with families and staff to provide support as needed.
- ◆ Notify your Office of Child Care (OCC) Regional Office of the emergency and how it affects your CCDF operations, including the use of temporary child care services and temporary operating standards.
- ◆ Notify the state licensing agency (if your Tribally operated center is state licensed) of the emergency and how it affects your CCDF operations, including the use of temporary child care services and temporary operating standards.

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1.10.2.1 Describe how the Child Care Disaster Plan includes the Tribal Lead Agency's guidelines for Continuation of Child Care Services.



Temporary Child Care Services

- ◆ Create a system of communication with the local child care resource and referral agency to assist families in finding emergency care for their children if needed.
- ◆ Determine possible temporary locations, ensure this information is included in your final disaster plan. Care can be provided in various settings such as shelters, schools, or other non-permanent facilities.
- ◆ Consider identifying pre-approved qualified caregivers that can be brought into or live near a disaster area to provide emergency child care services. This can eliminate concerns about emergency providers not having appropriate background checks or clearances and provides access to certified, trained, pre-screened child care providers willing to help in the aftermath of a disaster.

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- ◆ Recruit elders in the community who would consider becoming emergency caregivers, provide health and safety training, and pay for required background checks. Keep a file of approved elders for quick response to families' needs.
- ◆ Use CCDF quality improvement set-aside to meet the health and safety standards this could include minor repairs or remodeling necessary to assist in re-opening the Tribally operated center.
- ◆ Use temporary care to protect children from disaster-related hazards and support families who may not be attending work or school due to the need of temporary relief in the immediate aftermath of a disaster.
- ◆ Consider using social media to keep families and staff updated on the emergency.
- ◆ Develop a procedure to transition children and families to a certificate program if the Tribally operated center is deemed unsafe for a period. Meet with your finance department to develop financial procedures to ensure timely payments and program integrity and accountability.

Temporary Operating Standards

- ◆ To reduce barriers to needed services, allow for temporary operating standards that provide families and children with protection from disaster-related hazards.
- ◆ Monitor the Tribally operated center as they are operating under temporary operating standards frequently to ensure children are safe in care.
- ◆ Meet with staff prior to resuming services to determine which operating standards the Tribal Lead Agency is comfortable in modifying. Brainstorm possible solutions with the staff to solve challenges. For example, allow for portable handwashing sinks in classrooms that do not have regular running water for handwashing and brushing teeth.
- ◆ Work with your comprehensive background check (CBC) processor to find ways to expedite CBCs for new staff to fill the gap in child care caused by the disaster.
- ◆ Review your state's CCDF plan to gain information on their temporary operating standards. You could use this as a basis for your Tribal community's emergency preparedness plan.

Post-Disaster Recovery

Post-disaster recovery planning could be defined as developing a set of strategies to assist your Tribal community in rebuilding after a disaster occurs. There are several activities that communities can engage in to address post-disaster recovery. In your plan, your Tribal Lead Agency will provide a description of their procedures for the coordination of the post-disaster recovery of child care services.

Coordination

- ◆ Schedule a coordination meeting immediately after a disaster to begin planning for restoring or rebuilding child care facilities and infrastructure to bring back child care services as quickly as possible.
- ◆ Conduct damage and needs assessment with community partners to assist with developing an action plan, coordinate services, and begin rebuilding to quickly resume child care services.
- ◆ Keep in contact with your OCC Regional Office of your plans for post-disaster recovery and any amendments you may need to make within your Tribal CCDF Plan to assist in the recovery. For example, you may need to add an "Other" activity within Section 3: Quality Improvement to allow for quality funds to support a mental health professional as a part of recovery.



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1.10.3.1 Describe Tribal Lead Agency procedures for the coordination of the post-disaster recovery of child care services

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Reunification

- ◆ Keep up-to-date emergency contact information for children, families, and staff to allow for easy communication.
- ◆ Maintain CCDF program files regularly and monitor for people who have been removed from contact lists, such as in the case of a custody change, restraining order, or family's wishes.
- ◆ Ensure staff have been notified of custody changes or restraining orders by the family as they occur to ensure the children are not picked up by unauthorized people.
- ◆ Consider storing family and staff information in a cloud-based, password protective, service to allow for access from any location.
- ◆ Gather resources that could provide respite, services, goods, or medical assistance to families after an emergency as a part of your disaster planning for quick access as needed.

Recovery

- ◆ Include families impacted by an emergency or disaster in your definition of protective services in your Tribal CCDF Plan to allow for enrollment and possibly waiving family contribution to payment.
- ◆ Partner or hire a mental health consultant who can work with families, children and staff impacted by the emergency at no cost to them.
- ◆ Conduct a continuous quality improvement (CQI) review of all actions taken before, during and after the disaster or emergency.
- ◆ Implement a resource and referral system for parents and staff to request information within your Tribal CCDF office.
- ◆ Refer parents to the state's resource and referral agency to find temporary child care as the Tribally operated center(s) rebuild, recover, and reopen if temporary care is not available by the Tribal Lead Agency.

Disaster Procedures

The Final Rule requires the Tribal Lead Agency's disaster plan for your service area includes specific required procedures. As a Tribal Lead Agency who operates a Tribally operated center, you will need to ensure you meet those requirements.

- ◆ Establish a planning committee of staff, parents, and leadership to develop the Tribally operated center's procedures for each requirement.
- ◆ Consider using the Emergency Preparedness Manual for Early Childhood Programs: <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/safety-practices/emergency-preparedness-manual-early-childhood-programs/emergency-preparedness-manual-early-childhood-programs> to develop each of your procedures.
- ◆ Share emergency procedures with your local disaster response team to ensure they are aware of steps your Tribally operated center will take regarding evacuation or shelter in place.
- ◆ Consider creating an abbreviated version of the Emergency Preparedness Plan within your parent handbook that can be distributed to parents, staff, and volunteers. Review with staff and families annually.
- ◆ Ensure your procedures address each child's needs, with additional considerations for infants and toddlers and children and staff with disabilities or chronic medical conditions.
- ◆ Ensure emergency evacuation routes are posted throughout the facility.
- ◆ Consider including emergency procedures for when children are outside on the playground or off site for a walk or field trip.



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1.10.4.1 Describe how the Tribal Lead Agency ensures that providers who receive CCDF program funds have procedures in place.

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- ◆ Require staff to take the sign-in/sign-out roster with them as they evacuate or shelter in place to ensure all children are accounted for.
- ◆ Include in the emergency plans the location for emergency supplies.
- ◆ Create emergency kits stored in each classroom for quick access to emergency supplies.
- ◆ Incorporate into the procedures who will notify emergency response and families.
- ◆ Develop a communication system to notify families quickly and efficiently. For example, have a text messaging system that allows the Tribally operated center to send one message to all families and staff with one text.
- ◆ Include a system to ensure emergency equipment (i.e., smoke and carbon monoxide alarms, fire extinguishers) are inspected and tagged at least every 12 months within your emergency response plan.
- ◆ Design a system to ensure all children's and staff necessary medication is taken with during evacuation and shelter in place.
- ◆ Create a timeline for review and updates to your child care emergency preparedness plans to ensure effectiveness.

Emergency Preparedness Training

To ensure the safety of children, families and staff, the Tribal Lead Agency must train their child care staff and volunteers in emergency preparedness procedures. The training must include practice drill procedures.

- ◆ Develop an emergency procedures training plan for staff and volunteers to ensure they are aware, practice, and evaluate the procedures.
- ◆ Provide an orientation for all volunteers and include emergency preparedness information.
- ◆ Partner with your emergency response providers to simulate scenarios that allow your staff and children to become familiar with the process. For example, have the local fire department arrive at the Tribally operated center during an unannounced fire drill.
- ◆ Create a process to track completion of training for all staff and volunteers to ensure your Tribal Lead Agency is meeting the requirements.
- ◆ Provide training for staff who provide care for all age groups including infants and toddlers and children with disabilities or with chronic medical conditions.
- ◆ Consider having support staff who will go to assist infant and toddler classrooms or children with disabilities or chronic medical conditions once notification of an emergency takes place.

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1.10.5.1 Describe how the Tribal Lead Agency requires child care staff and volunteers (for providers who receive CCDF program funds) to complete emergency preparedness training and practice drill procedures.



Resources

For information on the requirements in developing a Child Care Disaster Plan for your Tribal Service Area please see:

- ◆ Tribal Disaster Preparedness Resources: <https://childcareta.acf.hhs.gov/tribal-disaster-preparedness-resources>

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**Tribal Child Care
Capacity Building Center**

ADMINISTRATION FOR
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