



Reunification Considerations

In the event of an emergency, programs must be prepared to reunite children and youth with their parents/caregivers safely and securely. This resource serves only as a sample for schools as they develop their reunification plans. This document may assist programs in developing a plan specific to their unique needs.

Population	Description	Reunification Considerations
Children & youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Dependents</i> are children and youth under the age of 18 • <i>Unaccompanied minors</i> are children who have been separated from both parents/legal guardians, and other relatives and are not being cared for by an adult who, by law or custom, is responsible for their care. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unaccompanied minors must be placed with those with legal authority for them until reunited with parent or legal guardian. The OST program staff would be the legal authority in the case of an emergency or disaster. • Some children may not be able to self-identify due to their age, English proficiency, disability, and/or trauma. • Determination of legal custody may delay reunification of some children with parents/guardians. OST programs should have up-to-date parent/guardian information on file. • Plans should include procedures for children who have been orphaned as a result of a disaster, for those in the foster care and juvenile justice systems, and for those in the care of health facilities.
Children & youth with disabilities and others with access and	<p>Individuals with access and functional needs may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children with disabilities • Populations having: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Limited English proficiency ○ Limited access to transportation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children with disabilities and others with access and functional needs living independently in community settings may be at higher risk of loss of communications with caregivers and family/guardians during a disaster. • Provision of physical and programmatic access, and effective, meaningful communication access to facilitate reunification for people with disabilities and individuals with access and functional needs is required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act.



functional needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Limited access to financial resources to prepare for, respond to, and recover from the emergency ● Others who meet the at-risk category 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mechanisms to request accommodations for effective communication access and alternative formats should be in place for survivors and their families. ● Reunification messaging must reach all individuals with access and functional needs, including those who are the most difficult to reach, by working with trusted leaders to deliver messages in the appropriate format.
Employer(s)/ Employee(s) (OST workforce) Volunteer(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Person or entity that hires an individual to work (employer) and an individual who agrees to work for an individual or entity (employee). ● Individual that offers time to provide services to others without receiving monetary or salary compensation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reunification may be a priority for businesses/organizations working to resume operations, particularly those that contribute to disaster response/recovery functions. ● Some businesses/organizations may: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Have resources to launch their own reunification operations ○ Coordination with mass care providers is beneficial ● Organizations with Continuity of Operations Plans may minimize the need for reunification.
Missing adult(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A non-disaster-specific term routinely used in most communities that refers to an individual over 18 years of age (adult) or less than 18 years of age (child) who has been legally reported as missing with law enforcement agencies by relatives and/or friends. ● <i>Displaced adult</i> is defined in the Stafford Act (Section 774) as “an individual 21 years of age or older who is displaced from the habitual residence of that individual as a result of a declared event.” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Law enforcement officials may request assistance from OST providers to coordinate information from missing persons’ lists with information in reunification systems and shelter registrations. ● Privacy considerations may hinder information sharing among organizations and databases unless procedures to share information are in place prior to the emergency or disaster. Consent to Release Information in Case of Emergency forms are important. ● Although there are legal requirements to reunify children with parents/guardians, some adults listed as missing may not want to be reunified with families/friends, and there are no such requirements to do so. Reunification providers should respect the wishes of those not wanting to be reunified.

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