



## Child Care Assistance

Section 408(e) of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, P.L. 93-288, as amended, 42 U.S.C. 5121 et. Seq. gives FEMA the authority to award Child Care Assistance through the Other Needs Assistance (ONA) provision of the Individuals and Households Program (IHP). This provision assists eligible disaster survivors experiencing increased disaster-caused financial child care costs. FEMA may provide Child Care Assistance to address disaster-caused child care expenses for eligible households with:

- Children age 13 and under; and/or
- Children up to age 21 with a disability, as defined by federal law, who need assistance with activities of daily living (ADL). ADLs are routine activities that people tend to do every day without needing assistance. There are six basic ADLs: eating, bathing, dressing, toileting, transferring (walking), and continence.

Eligible child care expenses include standard child care service fees (i.e. the cost that is established in a contract between the child care provider and the applicant). Child care registration fees and health inventory fees are also eligible expenses for applicants who require a new child care service provider.

FEMA will award a one-time payment for the household's increased financial burden for up to eight cumulative weeks of child care, plus any eligible expenses, or the maximum amount of assistance for Child Care Assistance, whichever is less. The maximum amount of Child Care Assistance is established by the state, territorial, or tribal government. Funds awarded for Child Care Assistance count toward an applicant's financial ONA maximum for that disaster, which is an annually adjusted amount based on the U.S. Department of Labor's Consumer Price Index. The date of eligibility for Child Care Assistance begins on the date of the incident period for the declared disaster and continues through the end of the IHP 18-month period of assistance unless it is extended.

### **Conditions of Eligibility**

In order to qualify for Child Care Assistance, the applicant must:

- Meet the IHP general eligibility conditions:
  - The applicant must be a U.S. citizen, non-citizen national, or qualified alien;
  - FEMA must be able to verify the applicant's identity; and
  - The applicant's insurance, or other forms of disaster assistance received, cannot meet their disaster-caused needs.
- Have necessary expenses and serious needs that are directly caused by a declared disaster.
- Have a disaster-caused financial burden for child care, regardless of whether child care expenses were required prior to the disaster, through an increase in child care costs and/or a decrease in gross household income and certify they cannot utilize child care services provided by any other source (e.g. other federal assistance, private employer services, etc.).

- Have a post-disaster child care provider that is licensed, regulated, or registered under applicable state, local, territorial, or tribal government law.
- Submit documentation required to determine a disaster-caused need for Child Care Assistance and amount of eligible expenses.

## Required Documentation

- Pre- and post-disaster gross household income documentation;
- Pre-disaster receipts, contract, or signed letter from the child care provider for child care expenses, if receipts cannot be located;
- Post-disaster receipts or estimates for child care fees, registration, and/or health inventory fees;
- A post-disaster child care provider's license, if the information cannot be located within a respective state, local, territorial, or tribal government's license provider database;
- A post-disaster child care contract or agreement;
- Individualized Educational Plan (IEP)<sup>1</sup>, 504<sup>2</sup> plan, or medical professional's statements, if applicable, to verify disability for children up to age 21 who need assistance with ADLs; and
- A signed, written statement from the applicant.

## Limitations and Exclusions

If a child is a member of multiple households, FEMA will only award Child Care Assistance to the primary custodial parent or guardian responsible for child care costs after the disaster.

FEMA will not provide assistance for any of the following:

- Fees for extra-curricular activities and additional services (e.g. school photographs, field trips).
- Fees not related to the day-to-day child care services provided to the eligible child (e.g. prepared lunches, snacks, facility-provided linens, etc.).
- Fuel expenses related to transporting the child to and from the child care provider (e.g. school bus service).
- Education services (e.g. after-school tutoring).
- Medical care or services.
- Recreational camps or clubs (e.g. after-school clubs, overnight camps).

*FEMA's Mission: "Helping people before, during, and after disasters."*

<sup>1</sup> A document developed for each public-school child who needs special education. An IEP defines the individualized objectives of a child who has been determined to have a disability, as defined by Federal regulations. As long as a student qualifies for special education, the IEP is mandated to be regularly maintained and updated up to the point of high school graduation, or prior to the 21st birthday.

<sup>2</sup> This type of plan falls under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. A 504 plan outlines how a child's specific needs are met with accommodations, modifications and other services. These measures "remove barriers" to learning.

*April 2019*