

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Lincoln -The Nebraska Emergency Management Agency was awarded a grant for more than \$400,000 from the Federal Emergency Management Agency to make disaster-related crisis counseling services available in Butler, Cass, Colfax, Dodge, Douglas, Nemaha, Sarpy, Saunders, and Washington counties. Applications have been made to expand the program to 12 additional counties and the Santee Sioux Nation.

The crisis counseling program funds outreach workers who will be available to support emotional and psychological recoveries of Nebraskans impacted by the floods. Outreach workers will be employed by Regional Behavioral Health Authorities and will identify themselves as being part of the Nebraska Strong Recovery Project. The program is being implemented by the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services' Division of Behavioral Health with the assistance of the University of Nebraska Public Policy Center.

By phone survivors who live in Butler, Cass, Colfax, Dodge, Douglas, Nemaha, Sarpy, Saunders, and Washington counties may call the Rural Response Hotline at 1-800-464-0258. Callers can get tips on how to handle disaster-related distress, along with referrals to local treatment centers, support groups and community-based organizations.

For in-person assistance, trained counselors have started going door-to-door in the nine counties affected by flooding. Counselors offer emotional support to distressed survivors and can make several home visits, if needed, before referring them to longer-term treatment. The counselors work in pairs. Each carries a badge from the contracted mental health providers—Regional Behavioral Health Authorities.

Whether by phone or in person, survivors can find relief by talking about the challenges to their recovery from flooding. If needed, counselors can make immediate referrals to local resources.

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