



THE PARTNERSHIP
FOR INCLUSIVE DISASTER STRATEGIES

CMIST: Identifying Needs and Supporting Independence

— www.disasterstrategies.org —

What is CMIST?

CMIST is a memory tool for understanding the access and functional needs of people with disabilities who have been impacted by disasters, originally developed by June Isaacson Kailes and Alexandra Enders.

C = Communication

M = Maintaining Health

I = Independence

S = Services, Support, and Self-Determination

T = Transportation



General Instructions

CMIST was originally developed to identify items and services which might be needed by disabled people staying in shelters, but it can be adapted for sheltering in place.

As you go through the form with a consumer:

- Pay close attention to their answers
- Ask additional questions if you think of other things they may need.
 - Example, if they request a bedside commode, suggest adding screens for privacy around their cot or bed.

Tracking Solutions and Accountability

The CMIST form includes questions about:

- Who is responsible for taking action
- When they expect to complete their task(s)
- Who will follow up until they do

This improves the process by monitoring and managing expectations, and making adjustments as needed.

As decisions are made about which agency/organization will take action, CIL staff should be ready to question the timeframes and solutions they propose.

General Information

The CMIST form begins with a General Information section. This is where you will enter the consumer's important details.

Be sure to note:

- Consumers' name and contact information
- Preferred communication (e.g., phone/email, text/call)
- Emergency contact, if the consumer has one
- Address, if they are sheltering in place
- Address of shelter, if they have evacuated
 - Location inside the shelter

C = Communication

Access to Information in Shelters

In this section, you will work with the consumer to identify communication devices and services they'll need in the shelter.

This may include:

- Video Relay Services
- Documents and forms in large-font and high-contrast
- Screen reader-compatible formats

Access to Information in Shelters

Note:

- Whether the needed services/devices are already present in the shelter
 - If not already present, identify responsible parties for unmet needs and follow up.
- Who will follow along with the consumer until their needs are met

Replacement of Auxiliary Communication Equipment

- Document lost items needing replacement, such as:
 - Tablets or phones
 - Backup batteries and power cords
 - Hearing aids or eyeglasses
- Record which agency/organization will be responsible for replacing these items
- Note the timeline for replacement/delivery, and who will monitor these expectations until they are met

Communication Support

- Ensure shelters provide communication support to disabled people
 - Examples: A tablet or phone with icon-based communication tools or language translation apps; pen and paper
- The disabled disaster survivor may wish to designate a family member or friend to interpret sign language, or translate languages other than English for them.

Communication Support

As soon as possible: The shelter should arrange for ongoing communications support

All CIL staff must be ready to educate anyone providing services on disabled individuals' right to self-determination, and to respect their choice as they would anyone else's.

M = Maintaining Health

Dietary Requirements and Food Allergies

- Document dietary needs (e.g., low/no sugar, gluten-free, vegetarian).
 - Note: There is a different section in the form for non-food allergies.
- Ensure food allergies are noted and communicated to shelter workers and shelter managers.

Supplies and/or Equipment for Everyday Use *Not* Related to Mobility

Identify:

- Necessary supplies and/or equipment
- Whether they're already available in the shelter.
 - If not, note who will be responsible for providing them, timeframe for doing so, and who will follow-up with consumer until their needs are met.

Assistance Needed with Attendant Care Usually Provided At Home

- Fill in the home services provided as described by the consumer.
 - Enter additional information about the attendant.
 - Note the consumer's back-up plan, if they have one.

Assistance Needed with Attendant Care Usually Provided At Home

If the consumer's attendant is not available, or not allowed entry into the shelter, note:

- Who will be responsible for providing these services in the shelter
- When services are expected to begin

Showers and Toilets

Shelters are required to have or provide ADA-compliant showers and toilets.

- A survey must be conducted and non-compliance must be noted.

Showers and Toilets

If they do not, one of two things must happen:

1. Portable, compliant showers and toilets must be brought onto the shelter site and properly placed so that paths of travel to and from the portable units are accessible, or
2. The shelter must be moved to a facility that has compliant showers and toilets.

Access to a Climate-Controlled Space

- Essential for individuals with disabilities affecting temperature regulation.
- If a space cannot be provided where the consumer can control the thermostat independently, ask the Shelter Manager to arrange for non-congregate sheltering (e.g., hotel)

Allergies (Other Than Food)

- Ask about non-food allergies (e.g., environmental/chemical sensitivities, insect stings, etc.).
- Ask the Shelter Manager if there is a policy in place to maintain an environment free of allergens and irritants, including perfumes and other fragrances, and if it will apply to shelter residents and staff.
- If the consumer states they cannot stay in the shelter, ask the Shelter Manager to arrange for non-congregate sheltering

Support for Neurodivergence, Dementia/Alzheimer's, and Mental Health

- Shelters are required to provide a quiet area and should provide sensory items (e.g., weighted blankets, noise-canceling or noise reducing headphones, privacy screens, etc.)
- If some or all of these supports are not already available, ask if modifications will be made to provide them.
- If consumer states they cannot stay in the shelter, ask the Shelter Manager to arrange for non-congregate sheltering.

Additional Mental Health Support

- Document requests for additional support (e.g., anxiety management).
- Referrals for mental health services in the shelter should ONLY be made at the consumer's request.
 - If these services are being provided on site, the consumer can present themselves to a mental health worker and ask for assistance.
- If services are not being provided on site, coordinate with Shelter Manager for access to mental health services.

I = Independence

Replacement of Durable Medical Equipment

Identify durable medical equipment / additional equipment the consumer:

- Lost due to the disaster
- Did not have but needed before the disaster
- Will need while staying in the shelter
- Will need for Activities of Daily Living (ADLs)

Document who will provide the equipment, the timeline for delivery, and who will follow-up.

Access to Power Sources

- Note whether the consumer will require a power source to charge battery-powered assistive devices.
- If power is available in the shelter, ask the Shelter Manager to arrange for moving the consumer near an electrical outlet, or to provide any requested items for charging powered equipment.

Service and Emotional Support Animals

- Note items needed for any service or emotional support animals, and as always, who is responsible for providing them, and how long it will take.
- The consumer will also need to know the location of the designated area for exercising their animal and for animal relief.
 - Ask the Shelter Manager to show the consumer where designated animal exercising and relief areas are located.

Supplies/Services Necessary for Sheltering in Place

- Work with consumers to identify support needs (power, food, water, transportation).
- Document who will provide services and maintain follow-up.

**S = Services, Support, and
Self-Determination**

When a Consumer Loses Access to Services and Supports

- Document any services and supports the consumer may need but lost due to the disaster or emergency.
- Provide detailed descriptions to ensure appropriate solutions.

T = Transportation

Access to Evacuation Transportation

- Identify how the consumer will get to an evacuation shelter.
- Document any assistance your CIL will provide.

Transportation To/from Appointments

- For consumers receiving Medicare/Medicaid, transportation to health-related appointments may be provided through their benefits.
- Transportation to other appointments, and/or back home, may be provided by Red Cross, state, county or city government agencies, or other sources.
- Be sure to note who will be responsible for scheduling and paying for transportation.

Actions Taken / Additional Notes

Actions Taken / Additional Notes

- Note all actions taken, by whom, timeline for resolution/delivery of items/provision of services.
- Follow up with status at 12-24 hours, 48 hours, and continue until need is met/access is provided.

Actions Taken / Additional Notes

Communication: USSAAC will replace consumer's communication tablet/apps.

Maintaining Health: Per consumer request, spoke with Shelter Manager to inform them of dietary requirements to share with feeding planners.

Independence: CIL will provide loaner powerchair; consumer filed insurance claim.

Services/Supports/Self-Determination: No needs identified.

Transportation: Rides to health-related appointments will be coordinated by state Medicare/Medicaid. Shelter Mgr will arrange/pay for all other rides.

Using CMIST Throughout Response and Recovery

- Identifying consumers' needs is a process that will continue while they are in shelters, or sheltering in place, and throughout the Response and Recovery phases.
- Update this form as needed, and continue documenting actions here.
- If you prefer, you can start a new CMIST form for the Recovery phase.



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Thank you!

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