

Disaster Profile

Yankton Sioux Tribe, Charles Mix County, South Dakota

Situation:

White Swan Community is a housing community of 89 homes owned by the Yankton Sioux Tribe and rented to tribal members near Lake Andes, South Dakota. In March 2019, South Dakota was impacted by two bomb cyclones (a severe winter storm with snow and hurricane force wind) that caused flooding in the Lake Andes area.

In September 2019, Charles Mix County, portions of the town of Lake Andes and White Swan Community flooded following 7-8 inches of rain. The community's lift station, community center, Pow Wow fields and main road were affected. The main highway was impassable until the lake froze in December.

Twenty-four households in White Swan Community were deemed uninhabitable by Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Displaced households were moved to tribal housing in other communities. Most remaining inhabited homes needed basements mucked out and mold remediation.

Multiple partners responded to immediate emergency needs. However, homes flooded multiple times in 2019, were never cleaned or repaired fully, and many continued to be condemned. With no housing to relocate to, community leaders in White Swan Community were eager to find solutions to on-going issues including meeting basic needs.

The Yankton Sioux Tribe:

The Yankton Sioux Tribe of South Dakota is a federally recognized tribe of Yankton Western Dakota people. Their Dakota name is Ihanktonwan Dakota Oyate, meaning "People of the End Village." Historically, the tribe were protectors of the sacred Pipestone Quarry for the Ojibwa.

Sakowin.



The Yankton Indian Reservation, established in 1853, is in Charles Mix County, South Dakota with a checkerboard land base of 36,741 acres. According to the Bureau of Indian Affairs, there are 11,594 enrolled tribal members. Headquartered in Wagner, South Dakota, the tribe is governed by a democratically elected non-IRA tribal council. Its original constitution was ratified in 1891.

The Federal Reserve [profile](#) and the 2013-2017 American Community Survey indicates a population of 6,676 persons. A few noted data points:

- Median household income is \$40,871; compared to the U.S. median of \$57,652 and \$54,126 for South Dakota.
- 82.9 percent of children are eligible for free and reduced lunch; compared to 37.87 percent statewide in South Dakota.
- According to the [CDC's Social Vulnerability Index](#), the area is ranked in the highest vulnerability category.

Individual and Household Survey Results (July 2020):

As of July 16, 2020, 79 households have responded to a survey request that is part of CDP's Early Recovery Needs Assessment Program; these households represent 361 individuals.

Key Demographic Indicators:

- 60 are older adults
- 172 or 48 percent are children under 18
- 57 percent of households are single headed
- 49 individuals indicated a disability
- 23 percent have at least one person in the home with full-time employment
- 66 percent are enrolled in SNAP (South Dakota is at 11.4 percent statewide)
- 63 percent indicated they pay more than 30 percent of their income on housing (compared to 23 percent in South Dakota)
- 56 percent are renters (compared to 32 percent in South Dakota)
- 73 percent have no insurance

Disaster Impact (Homes):

The damage to homes is significant and mold is the number one issue. The majority of these homes are tribal housing.

- 77 percent of households indicated flood damage to the home that still requires some type of repair/rebuild and 46 percent of households have significant issues that need to be addressed.
- 78 percent of households indicated currently living in a damaged home.
- More than 70 percent of the homes continue to have visible or noticeable mold that is causing health issues and concerns.
- Based on [flood.gov](#) calculator and respondent estimates on square footage and level of water, approximately \$750,000 would be needed to repair/replace structure and content damage.

Urgent Needs and Requested Assistance:

About 73 percent of households have identified an immediate need for food followed by cleanup assistance (53 percent), clothing (37 percent) and transportation assistance (23 percent).

Current Response:

Tribal Communities Recovery Grant: \$140,448

CDP funding is providing opportunity to build the local capacity of community champions and to develop a Long-Term Recovery Group (LTRG) that would steward and formalize the recovery process and give the community one voice. The Long-Term Recovery Group will work to assess and prioritize needs, then work to develop resources to meet those unmet needs.

Technical Assistance:

- Individual and Household Survey
- Disaster Case Management
- Disaster Recovery Coordination
- Resource Development
- Long-Term Recovery Group Development

Current Priorities:

1. Meet basic/urgent needs
 - a. Food and safety
2. Stabilize current housing
 - a. Mold remediation
 - b. Repair of damaged homes
3. Disaster Case Management
 - a. Help finding and applying for assistance
4. Resource Development
 - a. LTRG becomes advocate/conduit for information about need
 - b. Housing plan to replace units and ensure safe and secure housing

Recommendations for nonprofits and funders who want to support White Swan Community recovery:

1. White Swan Recovery group, the developed LTRG, has three staff and multiple members; they are serving as a conduit of information to and from the tribal government. Work through them to provide resources and assistance to the tribe.
2. As future housing plans develop through tribal and federal governments, a process that may take two or more years, community members need stable and sanitary housing. Support temporary housing solutions, multiple efforts to mitigate mold concerns and bolster sanitation and case management throughout the entire period.
3. The recovery group is seeking in-kind donations, particularly beds, bedding, appliances and PPE for mold removal.
4. Progress is being made towards additional food supply and support for the tribe. These efforts need assistance with supply, transportation and warehousing of food and other supplies.