



## DISASTER HEALTH PROFESSIONAL RECRUITMENT INFORMATION

October 2016

### PLEASE HELP THE PEOPLE IN THE AFTERMATH OF HURRICANE MATTHEW

The Red Cross is providing shelter, feeding, health and mental health support to thousands affected by Hurricane Matthew on the east coast. Health and mental health professionals are needed to support clients and responders with disaster related health and mental health needs. Please consider deploying as a Red Cross volunteer to support the Hurricane Matthew response.

Please keep in mind that *disaster relief operations are fluid and staff needs change daily*. At the time that you read this message, the needs may have changed. If you are not asked to deploy at this time, please consider contacting your local chapter to be ready to deploy during the next disaster operation.

#### RED CROSS VOLUNTEERS AGREE TO:

- Work in a shelter or other service site, which may involve walking or standing for long periods of time – 12 hour shifts are typical
- A **9-day deployment commitment** (7 days of working plus 1 day for travel on each end)
- Follow Red Cross principles and procedures
- Take Red Cross trainings. Specific instructions to access these trainings will be provided

#### AM I ELIGIBLE?

A Red Cross **Disaster Health Services** volunteer must have a current, unencumbered license in at least one of the following professions:

- Registered Nurse (RN)
- Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN)
- Licensed Vocational Nurse (LVN)
- Emergency Medical Technician (EMT)
- Paramedic
- Medical Doctor (MD)
- Doctor of Osteopathy (DO)
- Physician Assistant (PA)
- Nurse Practitioner (NP)
- Advanced Practice Registered Nurse (APRN)

A Red Cross **Disaster Mental Health** volunteer must be:

- Independently-licensed, master's level (or higher) mental health professional in one of the following professions: psychiatry, psychology, social work, professional counseling, marriage and family therapy, OR
- State-licensed or state-certified as a school counselor and school psychologist, OR
- An RN with two years experience working in a psychiatric setting

If you are not eligible, don't worry. There are many volunteer opportunities within Red Cross that are equally important and rewarding. To explore activities such as Client Casework or Mass Care, use this link: [Volunteer](#). Your chapter may recommend another good volunteer role for you.

#### TRAVEL AND HOUSING

- All deployment-related travel costs are covered by the American Red Cross. You will be provided with travel arrangement instructions upon approval to deploy.
- Volunteers are likely to be housed in staff shelters that provide a cot for sleeping and shower and restroom facilities.

#### WHAT DO I NEED TO DO RIGHT NOW?

1. Please provide us with your information by clicking on the below link:  
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/redcrossdisasterhealthprofessional>
2. Once you have completed the survey, a member of our deployment team will contact you:
  1. To confirm continued interest and availability
  2. To answer questions and brief you on the situation
  3. To give you further instructions

### Why does it take so long to get deployed? Why is there so much paperwork?

- Essential information and background checks are needed to ensure the safety and welfare of Red Cross clients, volunteers and partners. Preparing disaster relief workers to respond in the aftermath of disaster can be extremely challenging. Chapter staff is often overworked and are often volunteers themselves.
- The Red Cross places high value in getting the right people, to the right place, doing the right thing, at the right time. Sometimes that means taking more time before deployment in order to save time moving people later.
- Local Red Cross chapters are managing large amounts of requests from the community and from prospective volunteers.

### What is different about volunteering with the Red Cross?

- **Be patient and flexible.** Situations in disaster change rapidly and service delivery needs are fluid. You may be asked to work at one site providing one type of service and then be switched to another site within a short period of time.
- **90% of Red Cross workers** are volunteers just like you.
- **You won't have an office.** Most disaster health and mental health work is done in non-traditional settings, like shelters and service centers. You may be providing support out in the community.
- **Disaster Health Services** uses a community health RN-led model to support individuals and communities with disaster-related unmet health needs.
  - Helping people feel safe and secure
  - Obtaining food and water
  - Addressing physical health needs (e.g., first aid, medications)
  - Connecting to family, friends, and other social support networks.
- **Disaster Mental Health provides non-traditional mental health services.**
  - Psychological first aid, triage, crisis intervention, assessment and basic support
  - Early intervention is primarily focused on assisting disaster survivors and response workers in meeting their most basic needs.
  - Helping people feel safe and secure
  - Obtaining food and water
  - Connecting to family, friends, and other social support networks
  - Psychotherapy is not appropriate
- **The work is very rewarding .... And very frustrating.** You're working with people who have immediate needs for physical & emotional support, food, shelter and other basics. The most crucial need is information, which you often don't have because the situation is constantly changing. We do the best we can with the limited resources we have.

### Why do I need special training?

- The Red Cross has a specific role in disaster response which is different from the regular work of most health and mental health professionals. Training is needed to understand this role.
- In order to minimize frustration, it helps to understand the disaster response system and organization of the Red Cross.
- For Disaster Health Services volunteers: Most direct health care interventions are not appropriate in the early aftermath of disaster, but your specialized skills and experience can be helpful in identifying those who are at risk for longer-term complications.
- For Disaster Mental Health volunteers: What if I'm already a trauma specialist? Most trauma interventions are not appropriate in the early aftermath of disaster, but your specialized training can be helpful in identifying those who are at risk for longer-term complications.

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR INTEREST IN VOLUNTEERING!**