



MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS RECRUITMENT INFORMATION
For American Red Cross
Flood Disaster Relief Operations DR 063-17 in Louisiana
August 2016

PLEASE HELP THE PEOPLE OF LOUISIANA!

The Red Cross has been providing shelter, feeding, health and mental health support to thousands affected by the floods in the Gulf States. As of August 15, 2016, there are **over 10,000 people staying in approximately 60 shelters**. Many more DMH workers are needed to support clients and responders who continue to struggle to cope with significant losses. Please consider going to the operation and volunteering as an event-based volunteer.

As you read the DMH recruitment information below, 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.

PLEASE RESPOND IMMEDIATELY IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN VOLUNTEERING!

THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP!

COMMITMENT

- To work in shelter or other service site which may involve walking or standing for long periods of time
- Time commitment – 7 days of work on the job (add 2 days for travel at both ends = 9 day commitment)
- Willingness to be flexible and provide services in a way that may be different than what you're used to
- To view **DMH Introduction** – a half hour self-paced online course
<http://www.redcross.org/take-a-class/disaster-training>
 - Click on "Online Training Modules" tab in the center of the page.
 - Click on "Disaster Mental Health: Introduction" to launch the course.
- To be trained in **Disaster Mental Health Fundamentals** – a webinar that will be scheduled soon; more information when contacted

AM I ELIGIBLE?

Red Cross DMH Volunteers must be:

- Independently-licensed, master's level (or higher) mental health professionals (psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, professional counselors),
- State-licensed or state-certified school counselors and school psychologists, or
- RNs 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. Please contact your chapter to explore activities such as Client Casework or Mass Care. Your chapter may recommend a good volunteer fit for you.

WHAT DO I NEED TO DO RIGHT NOW

1. Contact dmh@redcross.org with the following information:
 - a. Professional name
 - b. Email address
 - c. Professional license/certification
 - d. State in which you live
 - e. Airport(s) that you would fly from
 - f. Earliest date you can leave
 - g. Date you must be home
 - h. A phone number and good times to reach you

2. A member of our DMH deployment team will contact you
 - a. To confirm continued interest and availability
 - b. To answer questions and brief you on the situation
 - c. 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.
- **Our co-workers are also our clients.** 90% of Red Cross staff are volunteers just like you. They need your support.
- **You won't have an office.** Most mental health work done in disaster is done in non-traditional settings, like shelters and service centers. You may be providing support as you're going for a walk or sitting under a tree.
- **Provide 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
 - Addressing physical health needs (e.g., first aid, medications)
 - 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 emotional support, food, shelter and other basics. The most crucial need is information, which often you don't have because the situation is constantly changing. We do the best we can with the limited resources we have.

What if I'm already a trauma specialist – 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 mental health professionals. Training is needed to understand that role.
- In order to minimize frustration, you need to understand the disaster response system and organization of the Red Cross.
- 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.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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