



STATE OF WASHINGTON

## SERVE WASHINGTON

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### Guidelines for Volunteers and Volunteer Organizations during COVID-19 outbreak in Washington

During this national emergency, we understand individuals who are not suffering from the coronavirus may want to help. However, all volunteer activities **must** follow critical health and safety protocols so we can protect volunteers, residents, clients, and agencies.

#### General guidelines for volunteers:

**DO NOT** attempt to volunteer if you have any of the symptoms identified by the Centers for Disease Control and the Department of Health. Please review them at <https://www.doh.wa.gov/Emergencies/Coronavirus>.

**DO NOT** show up to volunteer for any activity without confirming there's an activity need, that the activity will take place, and that the group needs and expects volunteer support.

**DO NOT** volunteer if you live with or are in frequent contact with people in higher-risk categories for the virus.

**DO** ask about any risk that may be associated with the task and **DO NOT** take part if you feel uncomfortable with the risk level.

**DO** practice universal infection control precautions:

- Clean and wash your hands for a minimum of 20 seconds before, during, and after volunteering.
- Avoid physical contact with others and maintain a social distance of six feet.
- Cover your cough and sneezes with your elbow or a tissue.
- If soap and water are not available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

**DO** call ahead to the service agency and ask if you should take any additional safety precautions before, during and after the shift.

**DO** give yourself extra time for the volunteer organizations or agencies to screen you and clear you to volunteer.

**DO** follow the organization's direction to clean all spaces thoroughly before and after use, including table surfaces and door knobs/handles.

**DO** use proper personal protective equipment the organization offers you to complete the task.

**DO** practice social distancing (stay six feet apart), **especially** when you interact with the general public and deliver items/food or process meal pickups.

**DO** expect that organizations can cancel volunteer shifts or opportunities, especially shifts related to working with vulnerable populations. Please show grace and understanding.

**DO** volunteer if you can and find opportunities in your area by visiting [Serve Washington Volunteer Opportunities](#) page to find a volunteer center near you.

**DO** find ways to give back to your community whether it's in-person, virtual, or through in-kind or cash donations.

### **General guidance for volunteer organizations:**

- Realize that the way you traditionally provide services may shift.
- Regularly clean and sanitize gathering spaces or meal distribution sites. You need to properly dispose of cleaning materials and discard any contaminated materials.
- Do not compete in the market for scarce supplies that healthcare organizations and providers need every day to perform their duties. These include gloves, masks, sanitizing cleaner/wipes, etc.
  - The State of Washington is seeking to fill shortages of specific personal protective equipment and infection control products. A full list of products can be found on [Department of Enterprise Services COVID-19 PPE](#).
- If congregating is necessary for your task, consult public health partners, exercise extra measures, and communicate to volunteers the precautions you are taking.
- Keep six feet social distance rules in place during volunteer tasks.
- Hang posters in facilities with best practices/social distancing/hand washing, etc.
- Provide sufficient and accessible infection control supplies (e.g. hand hygiene products, tissues, disinfecting wipes, and receptacles for disposal) at all locations.
  - When in doubt, visit [CDC](#) or [Washington State Department of Health](#) for recommendations.
- Make sure all volunteers understand any risks associated with the task you would like them to do and understand if they are not comfortable with that level of risk.
- Screen all volunteers and clients, if possible, before you allow them to volunteer.
  - We highly recommend you take a volunteer's temperature as they come in for a shift, especially if handling food.
  - Consider having an isolation space ready in case anyone shows up with symptoms.
- Have proper personal protective equipment available and train volunteers how to use them before letting them do any tasks that require the equipment.
- Modify volunteer opportunities so they follow social distancing recommendations, such as:
  - Deliver food to someone by setting food on the doorstep. Make sure the resident does not open the door to collect food until the delivery person leaves.
  - In a food distribution setting, reduce the number of volunteers on duty to maintain recommended distance – no hand-to-hand hand-off of goods. Place goods on a controlled table, line, and room or area entry. Maintain enhanced cleaning.

- Perform wellness checks on volunteers or other groups by using a phone tree or similar methodology. Conduct wellness checks on the elderly and vulnerable populations through phone calls, text messaging, or talking through their front door.
- Provide infrastructure support, such as maintaining school gardens, sanitizing play grounds, and other projects where there is access to “empty” areas. Follow social distancing during these projects.
- Assist with coordinating in-kind donations related to COVID-19 community needs (food donations, supply drives, blood drives, etc.).
- Assemble hygiene and disaster preparedness kits for high-need populations, such as the homeless, those living in shelters, and other low-income communities.

For background and up-to-date information, please visit the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevent Coronavirus Disease](#) webpage.

For local up-to-date information, visit your county emergency management webpage.

### **External Resources:**

- [Washington State Official COVID-19 Website](#)
- [Washington State Department of Health COVID-19](#)
  - [WA DOH Facebook](#)
  - [WA DOH Twitter](#)
- [Washington Nonprofits Coronavirus Resource Page](#)
- [Energize Inc: “Supporting Volunteer Efforts During Coronavirus”](#)
- [CDC Foundation: Guidelines for Nonprofits](#)
- [Council of Nonprofits: The Nonprofit Community Confronts the Coronavirus](#)

### **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Guidance:**

- [Workplace, School, and Home Guidance](#)
- [People at Risk for Serious Illness from COVID-19](#)
- [How COVID-19 Spreads](#)
- [Symptoms](#)
- [Steps to Prevent Illness](#)
- [Testing](#)
- [Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- [What to Do If You Are Sick with COVID-19](#)
- [Stigma Related to COVID-19](#)
- [Facts about COVID-19](#)
- [Information for People at Higher Risk and Special Populations](#)
- [Communication Resources](#)

### **Information for community events and gatherings:**

- [Interim Guidance for Mass Gatherings and Large Community Events](#)
- [Interim Guidance for Community- and Faith-Based Organizations](#)

**EPA:** [Disinfectants for Use Against COVID-19](#)