



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

General guidance for volunteer organizations:

- Realize that your traditional 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 the [Department of Enterprise Services COVID-19 PPE](#) page.
- If congregating is necessary for your task, consult public health partners and exercise extra measures.
- 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 volunteers come in for a shift, especially if they will handle 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](#)