

JASPER COUNTY EMERGENCY VOLUNTEER PROGRAM



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Historically, medical personnel and citizens spontaneously volunteer following emergencies or disasters. Spontaneous volunteers are often unfamiliar with local emergency response systems and may not be as effective in the provision of emergency medical services as members of organized response groups. The Jasper County Health Department Emergency Volunteer Program provides an opportunity for local health care professionals and others to strengthen communities by being pre-identified and prepared to respond as a volunteer following a large-scale emergency.

Mission:

The mission of the Jasper County Health Department Emergency Volunteer Program is to establish teams of local volunteers who contribute their time and expertise promoting healthy living throughout the year and preparing for and responding to emergencies.

What will I be doing as a volunteer?

Volunteers are needed for both emergency and non-emergency purposes.

During a public health emergency, volunteers would be needed to help staff in an emergency vaccination clinic or pharmaceutical distribution clinic. Many functions will be needed to run a clinic. We will match volunteers' skill levels and interests to the need. Some functions will include: vaccinating or distributing pharmaceuticals to mass people, medical screening, running patient education sessions, directing people-flow, providing mental health consultation, registering patients, entering data from forms, stocking supplies, handling the press/media, etc.

During times of non-emergency, volunteers can be local "ambassadors" for public health. We will match volunteers' skill levels and interests to the need. Some activities might include: assisting with flu clinics, children's health screenings, providing education sessions or presentations on special health topics, assisting patients with specific health-related programs, helping with health fairs, promoting immunization campaigns, as well as other possibilities that may be presented.

Do you have to have medical skills to volunteer?

Not necessarily. We have a need for medical volunteers to perform specific medical functions. But non-medical volunteers can fulfill other important needs such as: translation assistance, computer assistance, clerical support, health education, stocking medical supplies, managing clinic flow, public information contact, supporting medical programs, logistics during an emergency, etc. Everyone's skills are valued and needed, even without a medical background.

What kind of training will volunteers receive?

All volunteers without a current license to practice in the healing arts will receive training and certification in First Aid from a nationally recognized provider (such as the Red Cross, the American Heart Association, etc.) This training/certification helps cover the volunteer for liability purposes and will be given at no cost to the volunteer. All volunteers will also receive training in blood-borne pathogens and standard precautions.

Other training topics may be offered to volunteers such as: Disasters (for medical and mental health professionals), Incident Command System, and Bioterrorism. Specific targeted training topics will be offered for the different emergency volunteer positions. Training exercises simulating a public health emergency will also be part of the volunteers' training.

What is the difference between Jasper County Health Department's Volunteer Program and other emergency support organizations, such as the American Red Cross or the Salvation Army?

The volunteers in Jasper County will be called to support the emergency system during a **public health emergency**. Volunteers would staff emergency vaccination or pharmaceutical distribution clinics during such an emergency, providing critical staffing needs in the medical area.

Do you have to live in Jasper County to be a volunteer?

No. Residents of the surrounding counties are welcome to volunteer.

What does it mean when a volunteer is considered "Active" status?

Only volunteers who are "Active" status will be called to volunteer in an emergency. To be considered active status, a volunteer must:

- Complete an application and the interview process
- Attend the required training sessions (*not all training sessions are required*)
- Participate in the required training exercises
- If you are currently licensed, maintain licensure or notify the Volunteer Coordinator if the license has expired

How many hours will I be volunteering?

During a public health emergency, it will depend on the magnitude of the situation and the need. It will also depend on how many hours the emergency clinic may operate in a 24-hour period. Shifts will be scheduled for all clinic workers and volunteers.

Non-emergency volunteer opportunities will vary in the amount of hours a volunteer is needed, however there is room for flexibility to accommodate volunteers' schedules.

Will being a Volunteer interfere with my regular job?

Non-emergency volunteer activities should be done in accordance with the volunteer's schedule, and should not interfere with a volunteer's regular employment. During a public health emergency, volunteers may be needed during times that they would normally work at their job. Volunteers should discuss this possibility with their employer and understand their employer's policies and procedures for outside volunteering, so that a Volunteer will be prepared to respond in an emergency. Volunteers who could give even just a few hours will be appreciated.

To Learn More:

To learn more about the Jasper County Health Department Volunteer Program or to apply as a volunteer, visit www.jasperhealth.org or contact Jasper County Health Department at 618-783-4436.