



DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH
CITY OF CHICAGO

August 30, 2017

Chicago Medical Reserve Corp Volunteers

*The compassion and generosity of the American people is never more evident than during and after a disaster. It is individuals, non-profits, faith- and community-based organizations, private sector partners, and governmental agencies working together that will most effectively and efficiently help survivors cope with the impacts of Tropical Storm Harvey.

The State of Texas is asking volunteers to **not self-deploy**, as unexpectedly showing up to any of the communities that have been impacted by Hurricane Harvey will create an additional burden for first responders. The National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (NVOAD) has also noted the situation may not be conducive to volunteers entering the impacted zone and individuals may find themselves turned away by law enforcement.

At this time, potential volunteers are asked to register with a voluntary or charitable organization of their choice, many of which are already in Texas and supporting survivors on the ground.

The NVOAD, <https://www.nvoad.org/>, and Texas VOAD <http://txvoad.communityos.org/cms/node/10>, websites are offering links to those who wish to register to volunteer with community- and faith-based organizations working in the field.

The Texas Board of Nursing has implemented their disaster licensing procedure but specifically states they are NOT soliciting volunteers. They ask potential volunteers to sign up via their state volunteer registry, <https://www.bon.texas.gov/hurricaneharvey.asp>.

Most importantly, please be patient. Although the need is great, and desire to help strong, it is important to avoid donating material goods or self-deploying to help until communities are safe and public officials and disaster relief organizations have had an opportunity to assess the damage and identify what the specific unmet needs are. Volunteer generosity helps impacted communities heal from the tragic consequences of disasters, but recovery lasts much longer than today. There will be volunteer needs for many months, and years, after the disaster.

Tropical Storm Harvey is still dangerous, with the potential to impact additional areas of Texas and Louisiana. As the situation changes, needs may also change in these areas. Continue monitoring traditional and social media channels to learn more.

The Chicago Department of Public Health will continue to collaborate with lead agencies to monitor specific needs and any requests.



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Thank you for being a Chicago Medical Reserve Corps volunteer.

*FEMA. (2017). *How to Help Disaster Survivors In Texas* [Fact Sheet]. HQ-17-072.

Retrieved from <https://www.fema.gov/news-release/2017/08/29/how-help-disaster-survivors-texas>

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