



## Guidelines for Volunteer Organizations and Volunteers During COVID-19 Outbreak in Tennessee

As Governor Bill Lee has declared a state of emergency in the midst of the COVID-19 outbreak, Volunteer Tennessee understands that those who are not infected with the virus or who may have already recovered from the virus, may want to help. These general guidelines for volunteer organizations and volunteers are designed so you can effectively help others through this crisis. All volunteer activities should adhere to critical health and safety protocols in order to:

- Protect Volunteers
- Protect Residents
- Protect Clients
- Protect Service Agencies

For the latest updates in regard to COVID-19, please visit:

- [Centers for Disease Control](#)
- [Office of Governor Bill Lee](#)
- [TN Department of Health](#)

### General Guidance for Volunteer Organizations:

- Realize that traditional services may shift. Inform existing volunteers of any changes and provide updates on your agency's volunteer policy regarding COVID-19. Refer to your national networks and alliances for aid with policy for your volunteers as it relates to COVID -19.
- Realize that some of your volunteer populations may be at a higher risk of becoming infected with COVID-19. You may have regular volunteers, who may need to change or suspend their service out of precaution as well as acquire new volunteers, who want to help. Please be gracious and understanding
- Be sure to keep up to date with the latest information and best practices from the Centers for Disease Control.
- The CDC recommends that gatherings of no more than 10 take place. Please consider the following actions:
  - Do not congregate volunteers to register or provide instructions for tasks.
  - Decrease the size of volunteer groups to complete tasks in order to adhere to the CDC guidelines.
  - Have volunteers practice social distance rules during tasks (at least 6 ft.), when possible.
- If congregating more than 10 people is necessary for your tasks, consult public health partners and exercise extra measures.
- Clean and sanitize gathering spaces or meal distribution sites regularly. Dispose of cleaning materials properly and contain any contaminated materials.
- Hang posters with best practices (social distancing, hand washing, symptom awareness, etc.) in visible areas.
- Provide sufficient and accessible infection control supplies (e.g. hand-hygiene products, tissues, Clorox wipes, receptacles) in as many locations as possible.
- Screen all volunteers and clients as able and before using them.
- Have an isolation space ready in case anyone shows up with symptoms or becomes ill during time of service.
- Make sure you have the proper Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) available and make sure you train volunteers on its proper use before allowing them to do any tasks that require PPE.



## General Guidelines for Volunteers:

- DO NOT volunteer for any activity, if in the last 14 days you have:
  - Experienced symptoms that could be related to COVID-19
  - Been around anyone who has COVID-19
  - Traveled to any foreign country
  - Been on a cruise or been in an airport
- DO NOT attempt to volunteer for any activity, if you are feeling sick for any reason or at a higher risk from serious illness from COVID-19.
- DO NOT volunteer if you live or have frequent contact with people at a higher risk of contracting the virus.
- DO NOT show up to volunteer for any activity without confirming that:
  - There is a need
  - The activity will be conducted
  - Volunteer support is welcomed
- DO NOT take part of any volunteer activity when you are uncomfortable with the level of risk.
- DO call ahead to the service agency and ask if any additional safety precautions should be taken before, during and after the shift. Ask about any risk that may be associated with the task.
- DO plan for extra time to be needed for volunteer screening by the agency, prior to your service.
- DO practice universal infection control precautions.
  - Clean and wash your hands before, during, and after volunteering for a minimum of 20 seconds.
  - Avoid physical contact with others and maintain a social distance of 6 feet.
  - Cover your cough and sneezes with your elbow or tissue.
  - If soap and water are not readily 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 clean any used spaces thoroughly before and after, including table top surfaces and door knobs/handles.
- DO use proper Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) if needed/provided for the task.
- DO expect that shifts or opportunities may be cancelled; especially volunteer opportunities working with vulnerable populations. Please be gracious and understanding.
- DO consider these volunteer centers in your area for volunteer opportunities amid COVID-19 concerns.:
  - West Tennessee:
    - [Volunteer Memphis](#)
  - Middle Tennessee:
    - [Hands on Nashville](#)
  - East Tennessee:
    - [Volunteer East Tennessee](#)
    - [United Way of Greater Chattanooga](#)
- DO think creatively about volunteer opportunities, if you are not able to volunteer in a traditional way. Tips for virtual volunteer opportunities can be found at the following websites:
  - [Office of First Lady Maria Lee](#)
  - [Points of Light](#)