

Eligibility Criteria for Disaster Mental Health Workers

Disaster Mental Health workers are required to meet eligibility standards, competencies and training requirements outlined by the Disaster Mental Health program.

Volunteers who meet one of the following criteria are eligible to participate as a Disaster Mental Health worker:

A. CURRENTLY LICENSED MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS:

- At minimum, holds a Master's Degree in one of the mental health professions listed below; and
- Holds a current, unencumbered license from, or is registered with, any U.S. state or territory as a social worker, psychologist, professional counselor, marriage and family therapist, or psychiatrist (any level license/registration, including non-clinical licenses such as Licensed Masters Social Worker or LMSW)

B. CURRENT SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS AND SCHOOL COUNSELORS:

- At minimum, holds a Master's Degree in school psychology or school counseling; and
- Holds a current, unencumbered license or certification as a school psychologist or school counselor issued by an appropriate state board.

C. CURRENT PSYCHIATRIC NURSES:

- Have a state license as a registered nurse; and
- Have a minimum of two years of experience working in a psychiatric setting, verified by a letter from a current or previous employer.

D. RETIRED MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS:

- Meet the above educational criteria for specified profession; and
- Held a license (any level license) from any U.S. state or territory as a social worker, psychologist, professional counselor, marriage and family therapist, psychiatric nurse or psychiatrist, or a certificate as a school psychologist or school counselor, within the five years* prior to on-boarding as a Disaster Mental Health worker; and
- Maintained a license or certification in good standing upon retirement and without any disciplinary action taken by the issuing U.S. state or territory licensing or certification board.

*If a prospective Disaster Mental Health volunteer has been retired for more than five years, the corresponding Disaster Mental Health Division Advisor should be consulted.

EXCEPTION: An individual enrolled in the Disaster Mental Health program prior to May 2010 who does not meet these eligibility criteria can continue to work in the Disaster Mental Health activity given good standing with his/her chapter and a positive performance history while working on local and/or national relief operations.

Disaster Mental Health workers are expected to work within their areas of competence when serving the Red Cross. The licensing or certification of mental health professionals is determined by the issuing U.S. state's or territory's regulations which must be followed by the Red Cross.

Graduate Student Teams

Graduate students are eligible to work in the Disaster Mental Health program when they meet both the following criteria:

- Enrolled in a graduate program leading to a master's or doctoral degree in a Disaster Mental Health-eligible field of study (for example: social work, psychology, professional counseling, school counseling, school psychology, marriage and family therapy, psychiatric nursing, or psychiatry);
- Supervised on-site by a faculty or field supervisor.

Prior to deployment, the graduate student team and supervisor must complete the required Red Cross Disaster Mental Health trainings. The faculty or field supervisor must meet ALL of the following criteria:

- Be a current Disaster Mental Health worker and meets all eligibility standards, competencies and training requirements outlined by the Disaster Mental Health program;
- Assume responsibility for the graduate student's work;
- Be able to provide on-site direct supervision of the student when both individuals are deployed on a local or national relief operation;
- Be able to review work and provide consultation of the student's work multiple times a day; and
- Supervise a maximum of five graduate students at any time.