



**FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
BUREAU OF PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE**

**PROPOSED DISASTER-RELATED MISSIONS  
FOR FAITH-BASED AND COMMUNITY-BASED  
ORGANIZATIONS**



Below is a list and short description of health and medical disaster preparedness and response related functions (Emergency Support Function 8 – ESF8) that could be filled by faith-based and community-based organizations before, during and after disasters and other emergencies. Also included in this list are several Department of Health (DOH) Coalitions these organizations could join to assist with local planning, training and exercises to protect the health and safety of their members and other residents and visitors in the event of a disaster or other emergency in their community or neighboring communities. (Hyperlinks are included to provide more information about these volunteer opportunities and points of contacts.)

- **Cities Readiness Initiative (CRI) – Adopt-A-POD (Point of Dispensing) Closed Site:** A site for dispensing lifesaving medications to faith-based members in a city or county following a disease outbreak. Local county health departments designate these sites and provide risks, guidance and oversight to organizations who are interested in adopting a closed POD. An agreement would need to be developed between and signed by the organization and the county health department. Currently, there are 14 CRI counties: Brevard, Broward, Duval, Hernando, Hillsborough, Lake, Leon, Miami-Dade, Orange, Osceola, Palm Beach, Pasco, Pinellas and Seminole. The following links will provide organizations additional information about the Cities Readiness Initiative, as well as contact information for local county health departments.

*Cities Readiness Initiative:*

<http://www.floridahealth.gov/programs-and-services/emergency-preparedness-and-response/community-preparedness/cities-readiness-initiative/index.html>

*Map of location of Florida's Cities Readiness Initiative (CRI) Programs:*

<http://www.floridahealth.gov/programs-and-services/emergency-preparedness-and-response/community-preparedness/cities-readiness-initiative/documents/cri-county-map.pdf>

*County Health Department Contact Information:*

<http://www.floridahealth.gov/programs-and-services/county-health-departments/find-a-county-health-department/index.html>

- **Special Needs Shelter Designation - Post Disaster Events:** A facility designated by county emergency management agencies and staffed by county health departments to serve residents and visitors who have medical and health-related needs and cannot safely remain in their home during a disaster or other emergency. Special needs shelters are designed to meet the needs of persons who require medical assistance that exceeds services provided at a general population shelter. Special needs shelters are intended to provide, to the extent possible under emergency conditions, an environment that can sustain an individual's level of health in the event of a disaster or other emergency.

Post disaster or emergency, special needs shelters located in schools must complete services and be closed for schools to reopen. Depending upon the number of residents displaced from a storm or other emergency, counties may need to designate alternate sites for individuals who require use of a special needs shelter, until they are able to return to their home or alternative housing can be arranged. The facility would have to meet specific requirements to be designated as a special needs shelter and an agreement would need to be made between the organization and the county emergency manager.

More information on special needs shelters is available at the following links:

*Special Needs Shelter Program:*

<http://www.floridahealth.gov/programs-and-services/emergency-preparedness-and-response/healthcare-system-preparedness/spns-healthcare/index.html>

*Special Needs Shelters Points of Contact by County:*

<http://www.floridadisaster.org/disability/snshelterlist.html>

*2014 Statewide Emergency Shelter Plan:*

(Facilities must Americans for Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements for an Emergency Shelter – See Appendices C, F2, G, and L Part I and Part 2.)

<http://www.floridadisaster.org/Response/engineers/SESPPlans/2014SESPPlan/document/s/0%20-%202014-SESP-Complete%20Document%20FINAL.pdf>

Local emergency management office contact information is available at the following link:

[http://www.floridadisaster.org/County\\_EM/ASP/county.asp](http://www.floridadisaster.org/County_EM/ASP/county.asp)

- **Florida Crisis Consortium/Disaster Behavioral Health Response Teams**

**Membership:** Disaster Behavioral Health Response Teams are formed by the Florida Crisis Consortium, in conjunction with the Florida Department of Health. These teams work with communities (at the request of local jurisdictions) to assess and manage behavioral health needs that occur as a result of a disaster or other emergency, and also assist communities and emergency responders with the lessening of emotional, psychological, and physical effects of a disaster or other emergency, natural or man-made. Disaster Behavioral Health Responders apply the concepts of psychological first aid to help those affected overcome the initial impact of shock, denial, and depression when confronting disasters and other emergencies. More information about the Disaster Behavioral Health Response Teams and the Florida Crisis Consortium is available at the following link:

<http://www.floridahealth.gov/programs-and-services/emergency-preparedness-and-response/healthcare-system-preparedness/documents/FCC-Flyer2014v2.pdf>

For more information about how you can join the Florida Crisis Consortium and become a member of the Disaster Behavioral Health Response Teams, contact:

[DBH@flhealth.gov](mailto:DBH@flhealth.gov)

- **Florida Children's Preparedness Coalition:** The Florida Children's Preparedness Coalition is a multi-agency and multi-organization coalition created to ensure the emergency preparedness and response needs of children are planned for and integrated across the state of Florida. This partnership enables a lasting and long-reaching impact in successfully addressing children's needs when a disaster or other emergency strikes. This group is also tasked with leveraging the many state, local, tribal and federal resources identified to serve children.

The immediate goals of the Florida Children's Preparedness Coalition include: statewide health care coalition involvement, creation of state preparedness guidance for children, and the development of children's preparedness awareness resources.

For more information about the Children's Preparedness Coalition and minutes from coalition meetings can be found on the coalition's website at:

<http://www.floridahealth.gov/programs-and-services/emergency-preparedness-and-response/prepare-yourself/childrens-preparedness/childrens-preparedness-coalition.html>

- **Healthcare Coalitions in Florida: Building Local Capacity:** Healthcare Coalitions are collaborative networks of healthcare organizations and their respective public and private sector response partners that serve as a multi-agency coordinating group to assist with preparedness, response, and recovery activities related to healthcare organization disaster operations. There are currently fifteen healthcare coalitions active in Florida.

For more information about Florida's healthcare coalitions, contact the Bureau of Preparedness and Response at: 850-245-4040, email at:

[BPR\\_HealthcareCoalitions@flhealth.gov](mailto:BPR_HealthcareCoalitions@flhealth.gov) or visit

<http://www.floridahealth.gov/programs-and-services/emergency-preparedness-and-response/healthcare-system-preparedness/healthcare-coalitions.html>

- **Florida Medical Reserve Corps Membership:** The Florida Medical Reserve Corps Network Program is a national network of local groups of volunteers committed to improving the health, safety and resiliency of their communities. MRC volunteers include medical and public health professionals, as well as others interested in strengthening the public health infrastructure and improving the preparedness and response capabilities of their local jurisdiction. MRC units identify, screen, train and organize the volunteers, and utilize them to support routine public health activities and augment preparedness and response efforts. The Florida Medical Reserve Corps Network includes 32 community based MRC units and one State MRC Unit, serving all 67 Florida counties. Twenty-eight are County Health Department MRC units. The Florida MRC volunteers serve under the direction of local County Health Officers, Emergency Support Function 8 (ESF8) Public Health and Medical, and the Florida MRC Program Office.

Register to join the Florida Medical Reserve Corps at [www.servfl.com](http://www.servfl.com)

**EVERBRIDGE SERVFL:** The State Emergency Responders and Volunteers of Florida (SERVFL) is the State of Florida's online system for notification, information sharing and managing public health and medical disaster responders (volunteers and staff teams). The SERVFL registry supports a variety of personnel who may be utilized during disasters, all-hazard response efforts, and public health activities.

For more information regarding SERVFL, visit <http://www.floridahealth.gov/programs-and-services/emergency-preparedness-and-response/disaster-response-resources/notification-systems/index.html>

Below are additional preparedness activities related to ESF-8 and MRCs that faith organizations could take on as a disaster-related mission:

**Active Bystander Training** – Faith-based organizations can also serve as training centers for the Active Bystander training course for their congregations or members of their community. Instruction is provided by qualified Florida Medical Reserve Corps instructors.

**Annual Flu Shots and Health Screenings:** Faith-based organizations can provide locations for DOH staff and Florida MRC volunteers to administer annual flu shots and health screenings for their members, to reduce the spread of the flu in their community.

Contact information for Florida’s DOH MRCs and SERVFL is available at the following MRC “*Contact Us*” link: <http://www.floridahealth.gov/programs-and-services/emergency-preparedness-and-response/disaster-response-resources/mrc/mrc-contact-us.html>

- **Get a Plan/Prepare Yourself Program:** It is important to establish a Disaster Preparedness and Evacuation Plan Program within an organization to ensure its members - particularly those who are vulnerable have written and exercised disaster preparedness and evacuation plans. This will help to ensure their personal and family members’ safety and minimize loss of lives and property in the event of a disaster or other emergency. The plan should also include Special Needs Shelter registration and evacuation assistance for members who have medical, functional or access needs and do not have access to transportation or family support to shelter in place in their residence; or to evacuate to a shelter or to a safe location outside of the impacted area. As part of the program, Faith-based organizations can also send e-mails related to preparedness during Florida’s hurricane season and post flyers related to public health (Hand Washing), Flu Shots, and Hurricane Season to promote preparedness.

For more information on preparing your organization and your members for disasters and other emergencies, visit the following websites:

<http://www.floridahealth.gov/programs-and-services/emergency-preparedness-and-response/documents/prepareguide-eng.pdf>

<http://flgetaplan.com/>

[www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov)

<http://www.floridahealth.gov/programs-and-services/emergency-preparedness-and-response/prepare-yourself/index.html>

For information about these proposed disaster related health and medical missions, partnerships and volunteer opportunities with the Bureau of Preparedness and Response contact us by phone at 850 245-4040 or email at [BPR.CommResCHDSupport@flhealth.gov](mailto:BPR.CommResCHDSupport@flhealth.gov).