

WASHINGTON STATE MULTI-AGENCY COORDINATION GROUP

How Health Care Facilities Can Access Staffing Resources for Health Care Surge

Background

A surge in COVID-19 cases has contributed to critical capacity challenges across the health care system in Washington. Hospitals and long-term care facilities are working to identify and mitigate surge needs every day. The Department of Health (DOH) is collaborating with other state agencies, health care coalitions, long-term care organizations and the state hospital association. This Health Care Multi-Agency Coordinating Group (MAC-G) provides support across the care spectrum to avoid crisis situations. The Health Care MAC-G is a key partner in the Department of Health's COVID-19 incident response.

Current Needs

Health care facilities across our state are facing critical staffing shortages. This includes EMS agencies; hospital emergency departments, ICU and acute care teams; long-term care and skilled nursing facilities; and home care services. Hospital capacity is extremely tight, and essential staffing levels are required to keep all beds available to treat patients. The types of staff that facilities need include nurses, certified nursing assistants, respiratory therapists, and other health care-related positions.

Resource Options

Volunteers, contracted staff and federal staffing resources may be available to support healthcare surge needs. Here's how to access these resources.

- **Volunteers:** Local emergency management and public health agencies should know about Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) capabilities within local communities. If none are available locally, you may request volunteer resources from the state. Read more about [emergency volunteer health practitioners](#).
- **Contracted staff:** Many healthcare facilities already have staff augmentation contracts, but may be unable to meet current needs. DOH has leveraged the federal General Services Administration (GSA) contract for experienced out-of-state health care personnel to provide round-the-clock support at health care facilities in Washington. These are not federal resources; they are contracted staff who we have access to through a federal government contract with a company called "ACI Federal."

- Costs for ACI staff are approved by the GSA and are fair market value.
- If contracted staff are working solely on COVID activities, costs may be considered 100% cost reimbursement eligible through the Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) until December 31, 2021.
- If staff are diverted to non-COVID activities by the requesting facility, FEMA may determine the entire cost is not eligible, as outlined in the contract.

To access this resource for contracted staff:

- We encourage hospitals to execute their own contracts with ACI Federal through their local emergency management (EM) or other relevant government agency with a “.gov” email address. [Guidance is available on the GSA website.](#)
 - If a hospital is not able to execute a contract directly with ACI, DOH can execute the contract on their behalf. In this case, the local county emergency manager will enter the request into WebEOC and attach a [Health Care Surge Resource Support Request](#) clearly stating "For GSA Contract."
 - When DOH receives the request, we will evaluate it. We expect requesters to pursue all available strategies to mitigate health care capacity issues at the local level if possible. [Read more about hospital surge.](#)
- **Federal staffing resources:** Federal healthcare resources are limited across the country. However, the National Disaster Medical System (NDMS) may conduct an assessment of critical health care needs due to the COVID-19 emergency. These assessments inform federal Emergency Support Function 8 (ESF8) and FEMA in how to best fill a state’s resource request (for example, using NDMS or Department of Defense staffing resources).
 - This process follows a rigid state-to-federal resource request protocol. NDMS will not process direct requests for federal resources from local agencies.
 - It is important to note that federal staffing resources are scarce, demand is extremely high, and there are limitations in scope.

For more information on health care surge support and resources, please email Healthcare.Prepare@doh.wa.gov.



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