

Public health emergencies are unpredictable. Diseases, extreme weather, bioterrorism and new viruses are just some of the emergencies we plan for and respond to. We can't do it without your help.

As a public health volunteer you will help your community by setting up and running a Point of Dispensing (POD). PODs are public locations where people can pick up life-saving medications during a public health emergency like pandemic flu or a bioterrorism attack.

We have many volunteer positions in our PODs. You can:

- Be a POD Manager and lead a team of volunteers
- Look over forms and help people get the right life-saving medications
- Hand out medications to people. During an emergency, you don't have to be a nurse, doctor or pharmacist to help save lives
- Direct traffic and the flow of people
- Manage POD communication with the Incident Command Center
- Keep all the supplies organized as a logistical leader

We also have some other public health volunteer positions. You can:

- Help manage calls coming into the Incident Command Center
- Gather information from the field
- Team up with other public health professionals to conduct shelter assessments or go door to door after major disasters to survey community needs

Are you ready to sign up? Go to [www.getinvolvedmaricopa.org](http://www.getinvolvedmaricopa.org) now

Want to see volunteers in action? Click here: <https://www.maricopa.gov/2171/Public-Health-Preparedness>

After you sign up we will notify you of all upcoming opportunities, events and trainings via email to be involved and engaged!

Below are some frequently asked questions about the Maricopa County Department of Public Health Emergency Volunteer Program.

**Q.** How is a public health volunteer different from an emergency volunteer?

**A.** Public health volunteers respond to emergencies where health is in danger. Some examples include: bioterrorism like the Anthrax attack of 2001, pandemic flu like H1N1 (also called Swine Flu), diseases that are new and emerging (like SARS in 2002). We also have a support role in community shelters, and mass evacuations.

**Q.** What is a POD?

**A.** A POD is a Point of Dispensing. It's a public location, usually a school or church, where anyone can come pick up medication during a public health emergency. Volunteers run all the positions in a POD.

**Q.** What is the time commitment?

**A.** You can volunteer as little or as much as you want. We have training and exercise events throughout the year.

**Q.** Do I need to have medical certifications?

**A.** No. Everyone is welcome to register as a volunteer. You need to be 18 years old and pass a background check.

**Q.** What's involved with the background check? Will you check my credit?

**A.** No, we will not check your credit. The background check is a criminal background check. Most volunteer agencies do some form of criminal background checks.

**Q.** Are vaccines really mandatory?

**A.** No but it is highly recommended. If you do not have the required vaccinations, you won't be able to serve in any position that works with people in a POD. Recommended vaccines are MMR & TDAP. Public Health can assist you in obtaining or updating your vaccines if you are interested.

**Q.** I'm already a volunteer for a group that responds to emergencies. Can I still join?

**A.** Yes! We can't predict where or when an emergency will happen. If more than one group you volunteer for calls you during an emergency, where you go is always your choice.

**Q.** Is this like CERT?

**A.** Not really. Some CERT teams self-deploy during earthquakes and other community disasters. With the public health volunteer program, you will only deploy when we call you. Many of our volunteers are also CERT members.

**Q.** Will I get any gear?

**A.** We have a volunteer worker identification kit for the volunteers who become fully registered, pass the background check and are trained. It includes a hat, vest and stringed backpack.

**Q.** Why does this program exist?

**A.** In 2001, a very strong Anthrax powder was sent through the mail. Many people came into contact with it and got sick. Some died. Since then, we've been planning and training and practicing what we would do if it happened again. We can also use the POD plan to hand out medications for pandemic flu or another bioterrorism attack. You can read more about it here: <https://www.cdc.gov/about/24-7/protectingpeople/anthrax/index.html>

**Q.** I'm disabled. Can I still help?

**A.** Yes! We can work with you individually to find the best volunteer position for you.

**Q.** I have specialized training and would like to put it to use. Do you have a position for me?

**A.** Yes! We have many positions that need your leadership.

**Q.** Where do I sign up?

**A.** [www.getinvolvedmaricopa.org](http://www.getinvolvedmaricopa.org)

**Q.** I'm having trouble with my application online. What should I do?

**A.** Please call or email the Volunteer Coordinator: [JuneVutrano@mail.maricopa.gov](mailto:JuneVutrano@mail.maricopa.gov) 602-372-2658 for assistance.

**Q.** I am a seasonal resident and am not here full time, can I still volunteer?

**A.** Absolutely, many of our trainings and events occur during the Spring, Summer and Fall months due to the high heat. You can be a seasonal volunteer.