

Demand for Disaster Response Nurses Set to Rise Amid Growing Global Disasters

Global Increase in Climate and Health Emergencies Drives Demand for Skilled Disaster Response Nurses

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-- Over the past five decades, the number of global disasters has surged it has been driving an urgent need for specialized disaster response nurses. These healthcare professionals are among the first on the ground in emergencies, responding to natural and environmental disasters, biohazard and nuclear incidents, and various human-made crises.

For those inspired to pursue this challenging and rewarding specialty, comprehensive resources are available detailing the [path to becoming a disaster response nurse](#), including essential certification requirements, training timelines, and career opportunities.

Path to Becoming a Disaster Response Nurse

While some relief organizations may accept non-credentialed volunteers for support roles during emergencies, becoming a disaster response nurse requires formal training and licensure. Aspiring disaster response nurses must complete an accredited nursing program and obtain licensure as either Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs), [Registered Nurses \(RNs\)](#), or Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs).

LPN programs can be completed in as little as 12 months for full-time students.



How to Become a Disaster Response Nurse



Nursa - Download the app today and find PRN jobs for registered nurses (RNs), licensed practical nurses (LPNs), certified nursing assistants (CNAs), and allied health workers

RN paths vary, including a two-year Associate's Degree in Nursing (ADN) or a four-year Bachelor's of Science in Nursing (BSN). Accelerated BSN programs are also available, allowing those with prior degrees to complete training in as little as one year.

Certification in Disaster Response Nursing

Although the American Nurses Credentialing Center retired the National Healthcare Disaster Certification (NHDP-BC™) on December 31, 2022, certified clinicians can still renew this credential through professional development and by applying with the American Nurses Credentialing Center. Renewal costs \$250 for American Nurses Association members and \$350 for non-members.

Navigating Legal Elements in Disaster Nursing

A career in disaster response nursing comes with unique legal and ethical challenges. The American Nurses Association (ANA) underscores these in its issue brief, "Who Will Be There? Ethics, the Law, and a Nurse's Duty to Respond in a Disaster." The ANA calls for stronger legal protections for nurses, noting that some states mandate licensed healthcare professionals to respond to disasters.

The Uniform Emergency Volunteer Health Practitioners Act (UEVHPA), adopted in various states, aims to alleviate these concerns by providing legal safeguards for medical practitioners acting within their scope and in good faith.

Volunteering and Employment Opportunities for Disaster Response Nurses

Numerous organizations actively seek disaster response nurses, including:

American Red Cross: Offers local and international volunteer opportunities for LPNs, RNs, and APRNs.

Doctors Without Borders (MSF): Engages credentialed health professionals for short- and long-term missions in emergency settings worldwide.

International Medical Corps: Provides critical healthcare in disaster-stricken regions.

CERT and ESAR-VHP Programs: FEMA's CERT program trains volunteers for disaster scenarios, while the ESAR-VHP program registers healthcare professionals for rapid response.

Building a Career in Disaster Response Nursing

For those serious about this career, nurse Jamla Rizek, a seasoned disaster response nurse, advises creating a profile on USAJobs.gov to apply for federal roles under the National Disaster

Medical System (NDMS) and Disaster Medical Assistance Teams (DMAT).

Rizek notes that setting up job-specific alerts and utilizing the resume builder on USAJobs.gov can streamline the application process for government disaster response positions.

The critical role of disaster response nurses continues to grow, offering skilled nurses opportunities to make impactful, lifesaving contributions on a global scale.

[Nursa](#) connects healthcare professionals with urgent and flexible job opportunities, empowering nurses to make a meaningful impact in communities affected by crises. Specializing in mobilizing disaster response and emergency care personnel, Nursa is dedicated to meeting the increasing demand for skilled nursing support during natural disasters, health emergencies, and other critical events.

Through an innovative platform, Nursa streamlines the deployment process, making it easier for healthcare providers to find and fill essential roles when and where they're needed most.

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