Guide: Volunteering from Home

In times of disaster or social isolation, it’s often tough, and for some, even impossible, for people to leave their homes and volunteer out in the field. With COVID-19 requiring us to practice social distancing and stay at home, it is important for youth and young adult volunteers to have the option of serving virtually. Club leadership, youth, and young adult volunteers as well as the regional workforce that support youth are encouraged to use this guide to both organize and partake in activities.

This guide focuses on Volunteering from Home (VFH) and is categorized into our various lines of service and departments. Our goal is to provide a range of activities in which youth and young adult volunteers can engage remotely. Volunteer opportunities and activities vary region by region, so be sure to check with your local team to identify what options are available.

Remember to share your work throughout your time volunteering from home (VFH) with our national youth platforms as well as your regional communication channels (additional details below). If you have any inquiries regarding this guide, please email YouthInvolvement@redcross.org.

Your service will support the American Red Cross mission, so do not forget to log your hours on Volunteer Connection. Consider downloading the Volunteer Connection mobile app (Apple & Google Play), so you can submit your volunteer hours in the palm of your hand!
CONTEST TIME!

Get Social and Share your #VFH Stories

- Follow and tag @americanredcrossyouth on Instagram and Facebook
- **April 2020 Instagram and Facebook Competition:**
  - **When:** April 2-10, 2020
  - **Where:** On Instagram or Facebook; you can choose one or both platforms
  - **Rules:** Promote the following national Red Cross youth accounts on Facebook (American Red Cross Youth Network) and Instagram (@americanredcrossyouth):
    - Get three people to follow/join (must not have already been following).
      - If you are participating on Facebook, ensure that the new members of the group answer all questions in order for their join request to be processed.
    - Tag these new followers in the comments below our April 2nd post.
  - **How to Win:** Participants are entered into a drawing, and 3 winners will be randomly be selected.
    - Winners will receive a shout-out on our main Instagram and Facebook pages and will be featured in a segment to share how they are supporting the Red Cross mission while #VFH, inspiring others to do the same!

Fun for All

- **Cutout Clara:** Consider involving Cutout Clara in your new volunteering from home routine. Share pictures of your #VFH activities with captions like “Cut out Clara and I are #stayingsafe and #savinglives by…”
  - **Cutout Clara Template**
- **Pathways:** Tell us your Red Cross story. Fill out this editable template and share it with us on Instagram or email your pathways to our email address, youthinvolvement@redcross.org, to see it highlighted on our social channels.
- **COVID-19 Awareness:** Help spread positive and sourced information on personal social media accounts about preparedness surrounding COVID-19. Sources to use would be American Red Cross national and regional accounts, International Federation of Red Cross Red Crescent (IFRC), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Consider asking the regional communications team how best to help spread the information to the community that is being distributed regionally.
- **Chapter Blog:** Write a blog for your region! Work with your regional Communications team to see if there are opportunities to write a blog post or share your #VFH experiences.
  - A great example of this is to help spread the word about the critical need for blood donations (see below).
Biomedical Services

- **Tweets to Thank**: Members of your group can use social media to thank blood donors. Help promote donating blood during this blood shortage!
- **In-person, vital Biomedical opportunities (region-based):**
  - **URGENT NEED for Blood donors**: With the shortage of blood supply due to COVID-19, and blood drives being cancelled across the country, we have an urgent need for blood donors to give their time and blood more than ever before. All youth and young adults that are able are strongly advised to support biomedical services needs and donate blood by visiting [https://www.redcrossblood.org/](https://www.redcrossblood.org/) and signing up for an appointment. Youth must be at least 17 years old in most states to donate blood, or 16 years old with parental consent if allowed by state law. For general guidelines and eligibility requirements, review [https://www.redcrossblood.org/donate-blood/how-to-donate/info-for-student-donors.html](https://www.redcrossblood.org/donate-blood/how-to-donate/info-for-student-donors.html).
  - **New opportunity - Blood Donor Screener**: Youth volunteers who are healthy and able to come to blood drives or blood centers are encouraged to apply to be blood drive greeters and/or temperature takers. Open for volunteers 18+ years of age.
  - **Other Biomedical Services opportunities are available, but vary between regions. Roles such as the Transportation Specialist help us deliver lifesaving blood have their own set of requirements. Contact your local Volunteer Services department to find specific requirements for the Blood Donor Screener (if available) and other local opportunities.**

Disaster Cycle Services

- **Virtual Disaster Training Options**: Now is a great time to spruce up your disaster training! Review training materials available either as a Club or individual, and develop a plan of training you want to have completed in the next few months.
- **Virtual Preparedness Presentations**: Partner with adult volunteers or AmeriCorps members to deliver virtual Be Red Cross Ready presentations to the community and partners that we had to postpone or cancel presentations. Check with your local Preparedness team to see if this is available in your region and how you can support these efforts.
- **Virtual Disaster Recovery**: Young adults (ages 18–24) can be trained to provide casework services remotely. Reach out to your local Disaster Cycle Services (DCS) team to see what casework needs are available in your region and what training may be required before taking on a new opportunity in recovery and casework.
Service to the Armed Forces (SAF) and International Services Department (ISD)

- **Military Entrance Processing Stations (MEPS) Card Program**: Provide military recruits and their families with information to assist them in knowing what to do if faced with an emergency.
- **Missing Maps**: Help first responders locate and deliver lifesaving aid to vulnerable communities around the world by mapping vulnerable places in the developing world.
  - Host a [virtual Missing Mapathon](#)! Invite your club members and friends to digitally connect and map the most vulnerable places in the developing world, utilizing applications such as Kast to synchronize screens and Google Hangouts or Zoom to discuss while mapping. For more information on how to coordinate a virtual mapathon, reach out to your local International Services Department.
- **IHL Youth Action Campaign**: Join the movement and help educate others on the laws of armed conflict using social media to spread awareness.
  - Host virtual movie nights to promote Global Youth Services Day, April 17-19, 2020, (using applications such as Kosmi or Kast for synchronization of screens). Utilize platforms such as Google Hangouts, Skype, Microsoft Teams, Zoom, etc. to have a discussion about the film.
  - **Raid Cross**: an experiential IHL training course, via video call.

Volunteer Services

- Consider taking courses on EDGE about Volunteer Connection, communication skills, and a variety of other topics. Register for trainings [here](#).
  - [How to Get Started](#)
  - We recommend starting with the following courses: Using Edge as a Learner, Social Basics and Everyone is Welcome. If you have taken these, feel free to browse for endless courses.
- **Youth Diversity Pledge**: 45–60-minute session educating youth and young adults to be advocates for the American Red Cross through education surrounding diversity and inclusion; script, video and agenda included in packet.
- Become a [Volunteer Intake Processing Center (VIPC) Intake Team Member](#).
  - Open to all youth and young adult volunteers that fulfill the requirements, the VIPC team welcomes new volunteers, monitors applications, reminds them of forms, encourages communication, provides technical support in Volunteer Connection and reports hours to leadership.
- Reach out to your local Volunteer Services team to see if you can support VS team needs:
  - Are there any volunteers to call and thank or write birthday/Red Cross anniversary cards to?
  - Are there any Volunteer Connection clean-up projects you may be able to support remotely?

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Impact Starts Here
Fundraising and Development

- See if you can help with grant research or support any specific fundraising appeals.
- Support Giving Day efforts!
  - Help spread the word and share how to donate.
  - Help write thank you cards/emails to donors for Giving Day.