

# **American Red Cross Seeks 35 New Disaster Response Volunteers**

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ST. LOUIS - The American Red Cross of Missouri and Arkansas is seeking individuals interested in serving in a new virtual volunteer role: regional disaster duty officer. The position can be done from home anywhere in the Missouri-Arkansas region and serves as a dispatcher, sending out Red Cross response teams to home fires or other local disasters as they happen.

“Previously, we had a local disaster duty officer volunteer in each chapter area, but recently changed to a regional approach expanding the role to have greater responsibilities,” said Chris Harmon, Regional Disaster Officer for American Red Cross of Missouri and Arkansas. “Now, the regional disaster duty officer takes calls from about half of the two-state region, rather than a small number of counties, and they dispatch local on-call teams to provide immediate assistance to those affected by home fires or other disasters.”

This newly expanded role is critical to the success of the organization. The Missouri and Arkansas Red Cross region responds to more home fires than the majority of Red Cross regions in the U.S., due to its robust volunteer team and strong collaboration with local fire departments.

“The disaster duty officer, or DDO, serves as a lifeline and the first point of contact to people affected by fires or other local disasters,” Harmon said. “After taking the initial call and collecting basic information, the volunteer will then dispatch other local volunteers to the home fire or disaster site to assist the individuals impacted.”

The American Red Cross of Missouri and Arkansas needs 35 more volunteers to fill this expanded role.

“We’re looking for individuals who are detail-oriented, like to multi-task, solve problems, and are able to stay calm in what can be a highly stressful or emotional situation,” Harmon added. “Since the role is done from home, volunteers can live anywhere in the region.”

Online training is provided, including working alongside experienced volunteers. Access to a phone, computer and internet is also required. Volunteers in this role will be asked to sign up for two six-hour on-call shifts each week. Shifts are around the clock, seven days a week.

Other volunteer positions also needed:

The need for volunteers isn’t limit to these areas. Many other skills and abilities can be utilized by the Red Cross, both in person and virtually including disaster action team members (disaster responders), as well as blood drive volunteers including greeters and individuals to transport blood to area hospitals using Red Cross vehicles. Additional positions are needed in Public Affairs/Communications, Operations, Administration, Service to Armed Forces, and Volunteer Services.

Visit [redcross.org/volunteer](https://www.redcross.org/volunteer) to learn more, or call 314-516-2732 for more information on the regional disaster duty officer position or other MO and AR volunteer positions. To learn more about volunteer positions before joining, sign up for a virtual webinar at [www.redcross.org/ARCVolunteerFair](https://www.redcross.org/ARCVolunteerFair).