

# WASHINGTON STATE MULTI-AGENCY COORDINATION GROUP

## Factsheet: Staffing Resources for Healthcare Surge

### **Background:**

A surge in COVID-19 cases has contributed to critical capacity challenges across the healthcare 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 Healthcare Multi-Agency Coordinating Group (MAC-G) provides support across the care spectrum to avoid crisis situations. The Healthcare MAC-G is a key partner in the Department of Health's current COVID-19 incident response.

### **Current Needs:**

Healthcare 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 needed include nurses, certified nursing assistants, respiratory therapists, and other healthcare related positions.

### **Resource Options:**

Volunteers, contracted staff and federal staffing resources may be available to support healthcare surge needs. Each is described below.

#### *Volunteers*

Local emergency management and public health agencies should know about Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) capabilities within local communities. If none are available locally, volunteer resources may be requested from the state. More information [here](#).

#### *Contracted staff*

Many healthcare facilities already have staff augmentation contracts, but those contracts may be unable to meet current needs. DOH has leveraged the federal General Services Administration (GSA) contract for experienced out-of-state healthcare personnel to provide round-the-clock support at healthcare 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, details outlined in the contract.

#### To access this resource:

- Hospitals are encouraged 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 emergency manager should enter the request into WebEOC and attach a [Healthcare Surge Resource Support Request](#) clearly stating "For GSA Contract."
- When DOH receives the request, it will be evaluated for fulfillment. Requesters are expected to pursue all available strategies to mitigate health care capacity issues at the local level if possible. More information here <https://doh.wa.gov/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 healthcare needs due to the COVID-19 emergency. Assessment findings 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. Direct requests for federal resources from local agencies will not be processed. 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 healthcare surge support and resources, please email [Healthcare.Prep@doh.wa.gov](mailto:Healthcare.Prep@doh.wa.gov).

10/14/2021