

Mercy Medical Center Volunteer Services FAQs

Mercy is always looking for caring, compassionate individuals to join its family of volunteers.

There are many volunteer opportunities available throughout the organization, including wayfinding, patient support, clerical support, hospitality services and pet therapy.

For more information or if you have additional questions, please call (515) 247-3246 or visit www.mercydesmoines.org.



Q: How do I begin the process of applying to volunteer at Mercy?

A: All prospective volunteers must attend an hour-long Volunteer Open House at Mercy's Central Campus or Mercy Medical Center – West Lakes prior to initiating an application. For a list of dates and times of upcoming Open House sessions, visit www.mercydesmoines.org/volunteers and click on "Becoming a Mercy Volunteer" or call our office at (515) 247-3246. Seating is limited and pre-registration is required.

Q: I know I want to volunteer. Do I still need to attend an Open House?

A: Yes. Volunteering in a hospital/medical environment is considerably different from other volunteer opportunities. When you attend an Open House, you will meet staff from Mercy's Volunteer Services Department, learn more about the application process, receive your application materials and hear more about volunteer opportunities.

Q: Can I have an application mailed to me or can I pick one up from your office?

A: No. Our application materials can only be provided to those who attend an Open House.

Q: Are there age requirements to volunteer at Mercy?

A: Yes. Volunteers must be at least a freshman in high school. Some volunteer opportunities may be limited due to additional age requirements.

Q: I am under 18. Does my parent need to come with me to an Open House?

A: Parents/guardians are strongly encouraged to attend the Open House session with any prospective volunteer who is under the age of 18. It will provide them with an opportunity to better understand the application process and the expectations we have of Mercy volunteers, and several of the application documents do require the signature of a parent/guardian. If a parent/guardian cannot attend, a prospective volunteer under the age of 18 can take forms home, obtain signatures and return them to the Volunteer Services office.

Q: What time commitment does Mercy expect of its volunteers?

A: Volunteering is rewarding and fun, but requires a significant service-based commitment on your part. At Mercy, our patients, visitors and staff benefit greatly when volunteers serve on a regular, long-term basis. Therefore, we ask volunteers to carefully assess their availability and commit to a regular shift schedule for at least six months. An average shift is four hours per week, although shifts may vary by assignment.

Q: I have to volunteer for 20 hours for a class. Can I volunteer at Mercy?

A: If you only plan to volunteer long enough to meet this class requirement, Mercy is probably not the best fit for you. Mercy volunteers are asked to commit to a regular shift schedule for at least six months.

Q: I have court-ordered community service. Can I volunteer at Mercy?

A: No. We cannot accept court-ordered service volunteers.

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Q: Does Mercy conduct background checks?

A: Yes. Mercy conducts very thorough background checks on individuals applying to volunteer. Those with felony convictions cannot be accepted into Mercy's volunteer program. Individuals with other types of criminal records are considered on a case-by-case basis.

Q: I don't have a Social Security Number. Can I still apply to volunteer?

A: No. A valid Social Security Number is required because no other form of identification can be substituted for our verification process.

Q: What does a New Volunteer Health Screening consist of?

A: All potential volunteers are required to complete a Health Screening as part of the volunteer application process. This protects the health and well-being of Mercy's volunteers, staff, patients and visitors. The Health Screening consists of meeting with a nurse in Mercy's Employee Health Services office who will review your health history, administer the tuberculosis (TB) skin tests and review your immunization history.

Q: I just had a physical/annual exam. Can I use this information for my Health Screening?

A: You are welcome to bring any documentation you have regarding your health history, immunization history or TB testing history with you when you meet with the EHS nurse. He or she will review the information you provide and determine if it meets Mercy's requirements or if additional information is needed.

Q: Should I schedule a health review with my doctor?

A: No. The Health Screening we do is very specific to volunteers at Mercy Medical Center and is provided at no cost to you.

Q: Is there a dress code for volunteers?

A: Yes. Volunteers are asked to wear business-casual attire and are provided, at no cost, a volunteer jacket and ID badge.

Q: I work at Mercy. Can I volunteer?

A: Absolutely! It is wonderful of you to donate your non-work time to Mercy; however, some restrictions apply to where Mercy employees can volunteer. Current employees cannot volunteer in any capacity in which they are employed at Mercy and may not perform any duties that are essentially similar or related to their regular, paid work. In addition, employees must be in good standing with no corrective action pending. To initiate the volunteer application process, contact the Volunteer Services office to register for an Open House.

Q: How long does it take to complete the process?

A: Due to many variable factors, we cannot provide a definitive timetable. Some applicants complete the process in as little as two weeks while others take a longer period of time.

Q: What if I don't agree to complete parts or any of the screening process? Can I still volunteer?

A: According to laws and regulations, all prospective volunteers are required to complete our screening process, which includes, but is not limited to, a thorough background check, Health Screening and orientation(s). Those who do not complete the screenings will not be able to volunteer at Mercy Medical Center. This process, though rigorous, helps to ensure the health and well-being of our volunteers, staff and the patients and families we serve.

Q: If I don't turn in my application at the Open House, where can I send it at a later date?

A: You may send your completed application materials to: Volunteer Services, Mercy Medical Center, 1111 6th Avenue, Des Moines, IA 50314. You may also fax your application to (515) 643-2859.