

Ebola

The information in this PDF is no longer current or being updated. For current information on Ebola, visit CDC's [Ebola website](#).

Ebola Information for Leadership of Volunteers Working with West African Communities in the United States



Are your volunteers concerned about being exposed to Ebola when working with West African communities in the United States?

Volunteers are at very low risk of being exposed to Ebola when working with West African communities in the United States.

The risk of being exposed to Ebola in the United States is very low, even when working with West African communities.

Two imported cases, including one death, and two locally acquired cases in healthcare workers were reported in the United States. CDC and partners are taking precautions to prevent additional cases of Ebola in the United States.

West Africans in the United States may face stigma because the current Ebola outbreak is associated with a region of the world. Stigma involves stereotyping and discriminating against an identifiable group of people, a place, or a nation.

What your organization and volunteers can do to counter stigma:

- Raise awareness of the potential problem.
- Learn the FACTS about Ebola and then share accurate information about how the virus spreads.
- Explain that Ebola is caused by a virus, not a person.
- Speak out against negative behaviors, including negative social media statements about groups of people, or exclusion of people who pose no risk from regular activities.
- Share the need for social support for people who have returned from the region or are worried about friends or relatives in the affected region.

Get the Facts on Ebola:

www.cdc.gov/ebola

What to tell your volunteers about Ebola

People of West African descent are not at more risk than other Americans if they have not recently traveled to the region.

- Remember, ethnic or racial backgrounds have nothing to do with getting infected with the Ebola virus.
- Viruses like Ebola can't target a particular population.

A person is only contagious after Ebola symptoms begin.

Ebola is spread by direct contact with blood or body fluids of a person who is sick with or who has died from Ebola, or with objects like needles that have been contaminated with the virus. It is also possible that Ebola virus can be transmitted through the semen of men who have survived Ebola.



People who have recently returned from West Africa and have no symptoms of Ebola do not put others at risk.

- Countries in West Africa are screening at airports to help ensure that people sick with Ebola do not get on planes.
- CDC is implementing entry screening at U.S. airports for travelers arriving from Guinea.
- CDC recommends that travelers who have been in Guinea, Sierra Leone, or Liberia watch their health for 21 days after leaving that country and call their health department or seek health care if they develop symptoms.
- Additional public health actions may be recommended depending on travelers' possible exposures to Ebola.
- Even if travelers were exposed, they are only contagious after they start to have symptoms.

Volunteers don't need to take any special precautions or wear any personal protective equipment while volunteering for West African communities in the United States. Tell your volunteers:

- They can follow their normal volunteer procedures.
- If they don't normally wear personal protective equipment (gloves, mask) when volunteering, they don't need to take any special precautions.
- They can follow their normal "stay healthy" routine.
 - Wash hands with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
 - Do NOT handle items that may have come in contact with a person's blood or body fluids.

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If your volunteers come across someone who has just returned from West Africa and is sick, have them immediately contact your volunteer organization. Your volunteer can urge them to seek medical care. If there is any chance that someone has been exposed to Ebola and is sick, you or the volunteer should immediately call 9-1-1. Tell the operator about the possible Ebola exposure.