

Disaster and Terrorism Branch Partners

New Jersey has developed critical partnerships and working relationships between:

- NJ State Police
- Office of Emergency Management
- Department of Health
- Department of Homeland Security and Preparedness
- Federal Bureau of Investigation
- NJ Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster
- American Red Cross
- Salvation Army
- Public Health
- First Responders
- County Mental Health Administrators
- County Offices of Emergency Management
- Academic Institutions



State of New Jersey
Phil Murphy, Governor
Sheila Oliver, Lt. Governor

Department of Human Services
Sarah Adelman, Commissioner



Become a
**DISASTER RESPONSE
CRISIS COUNSELOR**



**Disaster & Terrorism
Branch**
NJ DHS Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services

A Program of the
NJ Department of Human Services
Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services



About the Disaster and Terrorism Branch

The **Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services** within the **New Jersey Department of Human Services** houses a specialized behavioral health **Disaster and Terrorism Branch** which is responsible for administering and directly providing emergency response behavioral health programs to assist the residents of New Jersey.

The Branch has the capacity to provide ongoing and on-demand training for emergency responders from many backgrounds including, but not limited to, behavioral health, human services, first responders, healthcare, public health, emergency management and faith based organizations, to further increase the state's capacity to address the psychosocial needs of communities affected by disasters and overwhelming events.

Responses have included declared disasters:

- COVID-19 Pandemic
- September 11th
- Hurricane Ida
- Hurricane Irma/Maria in the U.S. Virgin Islands
- Anthrax Postal System Attacks
- Hurricane Floyd
- Hurricane Ivan along the Delaware River
- Tropical Storm Irene
- SuperStorm Sandy

Also non-declared disasters:

- Paramus School Bus Crash
- Seton Hall Dormitory Fire
- Edison Gas Line Explosion
- Haitian Earthquake

What is a Disaster Response Crisis Counselor?

New Jersey is one of the first states to certify its behavioral health first responders in preparation for response to disasters and traumatic events. The development of a cadre of paraprofessionals enhances the capability of activating a timely and effective behavioral health response. A **Disaster Response Crisis Counselor** is a volunteer who becomes part of an Emergency Response Network and responds to the needs of communities in the event that a disaster strikes. The counselors are trained in disaster response, disaster behavioral health and crisis counseling among other topics and they collaborate with the various response partners who participate in the statewide emergency response network.

The counselor does not need to have a clinical background as the crisis counseling program does not provide traditional mental health services.



The training will provide the technical support and knowledge needed to become a Disaster Response Crisis Counselor emphasizing psychological first aid and information and referral services.

How To Become a Disaster Response Crisis Counselor

The credentialing process consists of a series of steps including the application and possible interviews. Participants are also required to attend designated training and to undergo fingerprinting and background checks within two years of starting the application process.

You must complete the four required trainings listed to apply to become a Disaster Response Crisis Counselor.

1. **Introduction to Disaster Behavioral Health and Crisis Counseling**
2. **National Incident Management System (NIMS 700)/ Incident Command System (ICS 100)**; *Note: NIMS and ICS training can be taken online*
3. **Cultural and Ethical Issues in Disaster Response and Recovery**
4. **Psychological First Aid**

For more information or to apply, go to:

www.njdrcc.org

You can also contact your County Mental Health Administrator for more information.