



For Applicants: Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Is there an age requirement to volunteer at BIDMC?

A. Volunteers must be age 15 or older by the time that their volunteer service would begin.

Q. Do I need to bring anything to my volunteer interview?

A. Please bring any health records or completed forms that you have not previously sent in. For applicants who are 18 or older, we will need to make a photocopy of a government ID in order to do a background check.

Q. Where should I park?

A. Please park in the main entrance garage, 330 Brookline Ave. We will validate your parking.

Q. What if I can't find my immunization record or don't have one?

A. Contact your doctor's office, or, if you are a student, your school or university should have a copy of your immunization record. If you still cannot get access to your records, please make an appointment at BIDMC Employee Health Clinic – 617-632-7815. Specify that you are applying to be a volunteer. If you have any questions about health screening requirements, you can call the clinic or email

EOHS@bidmc.harvard.edu

Q. What is a TB test?

A. It is a skin test that checks for exposure to tuberculosis (TB). It involves a small injection into the top layer of skin on your forearm. Volunteers can receive the TB test free of charge at our Employee Health Clinic. You can get the test from your doctor, but you will be responsible for the cost. The TB test is an annual requirement for volunteers.

Q. What if I've had a TB test within the year?

A. Please provide us with documentation of results.

Q. Do I have to get a flu vaccination?

A. Yes. All volunteers and staff are required to have an annual flu vaccination. It is provided free of charge at BIDMC. If you have it done somewhere else, you will just need to show proof to our Employee Health Clinic.

Q. What if I don't want the flu vaccination for religious reasons or I'm allergic?

A. Contact our Employee Health Clinic – 617-632-7815.

Q. I don't have a Social Security number. Can I still volunteer?

A. If you are 18 or older, you will need to provide us with your social security number. We are not able to complete a background check without one.

Q. Why do you have to complete a background check on me?

A. We want to be sure that our patients are safe while in our care and that staff and volunteers are working in a secure environment. We do not include a credit check as part of the background check.

Q. What is the time commitment to volunteer?

A. We ask for a minimum commitment of at least 50 hours in a 12-month period, though time commitments vary for some positions. Because of the time and resources involved in screening and onboarding, we typically do not place volunteers who can only commit to fewer than four months, with the exception of our Summer Health Corps volunteers. Most volunteers come once per week for a 3-4 hour shift, during the school year or year-round.

Q. Do I have to volunteer every week?

A. It depends on the placement you choose. Some placements have volunteers who come every other week or even once a month. We understand that students may have occasional scheduling conflicts due to exams and school breaks, and that all volunteers have family commitments and take vacations. It will be important that you let our office know if you will be absent.

Q. I am only available on weekends or evenings. Can I volunteer?

A. We have a limited number of opportunities during evenings and weekends. These opportunities tend to fill quickly and there is less need for volunteers during these hours. If you have any flexibility with your schedule, we encourage you to note it on your application.

Q. Who should the references be from?

A. For your two references, please select anyone other than a relative. For volunteer applicants who are currently students we encourage one of the references to be from a recent teacher, coach, counselor, or advisor.

Q. What should the references write?

A. After you submit your application, your references will receive an online reference form to fill out. The form will ask them to state their relationship to you, rate you on several important characteristics, and to write a brief comment about why they feel you are well suited to be a volunteer at BIDMC. You should notify your references that they will be receiving this survey, and assure them that it should take no more than 10 minutes.

Q. Does Volunteer Services oversee internships?

A. No. If a student is interested in an internship, they must reach out to the employee they want to intern with directly. The employee will then reach out to Human Resources to establish the internship. Some schools have a relationship with BIDMC to arrange internships.

Q. Will I be able to shadow any nurses or doctors as a volunteer?

A. No. Volunteers serve to meet the non-clinical needs of the patients, families, and hospital. While you may serve alongside clinical and non-clinical staff, you will not be able to shadow them, and Volunteer Services is not able to arrange shadowing or internships.

Q. Will my volunteer experience lead to a job opportunity at BIDMC?

A. Volunteering will not lead directly to an offer of employment. All employment opportunities are handled by our Human Resources/Talent Management Department. You may visit the careers page at <https://jobs.bidmc.org/> to find out more information about current job openings.

Q. What kind of training will I get?

A. Volunteers who have been accepted for an assignment must review several educational modules as well as the handbook on the volunteer portal. They will also have a one-on-one orientation with the Director to review policies, have a tour, get questions answered, and get their uniform. Training for specific assignments varies but often involves shadowing a current volunteer.

Q. Are there any costs associated with volunteering?

A. No. We provide a polo shirt free of charge. If your assignment requires scrubs, those will be provided. Volunteers receive free parking, and a cafeteria voucher worth \$5 each time they volunteer.

Q. I applied, but still haven't heard anything. What should I do?

A. We receive many applications and review them on a first come first serve basis. We cannot guarantee a placement for all that apply, but if we think we have an opening that matches your availability and interests, we will contact you. There also may be a delay if we are still waiting for your references.

Q. What if I have a question not listed here?

A. Call the Volunteer Services office at 617-667-3027, or email volunteerservices@bidmc.harvard.edu for assistance.