

YOUTH INVOLVEMENT IN DISASTER RESPONSE



Frequently Asked Questions About Youth in Lutheran Early Response Team (LERT) Trainings and Deployments

› **Can LCMS youth receive LERT training?**

High school age LCMS youth (ages 14–17) are encouraged to participate in LERT training and deployments. They can receive training in any basic LERT class that is held in their LCMS district.

LCMS youth volunteers must obtain their parent/guardian's permission to participate in training and deployments.

To schedule a training session in your area, contact your District Disaster Response Coordinator (DDRC) at your LCMS district office. They are responsible for coordinating all LCMS LERT training in your district.

› **What safety precautions does the LCMS LERT program take when working with youth volunteers?**

Due to the hazardous nature of some disaster response work, LCMS youth volunteers are encouraged to work in general labor responses, after the situation has been stabilized. They are not permitted to work on hazardous tasks such as chainsaw work, mold abatement, flood muck out, roof work, etc.

LCMS Disaster Response recommends that there be a working ratio of one (1) adult to four (4) youth. At least two (2) adults (one male and one female) should be with every group of youth.

Congregations that send LERT-trained youth to a disaster deployment must also send LERT-trained adults to work with their group. Unchaperoned groups are not permitted at LERT functions.

Criminal background checks are required of all persons who will be working with LCMS youth volunteers.

General Questions About LERT Training for Youth Leaders

› **How can I encourage LERT training in my congregation?**

LERT volunteers are always part of a LERT team. Your youth volunteers will be part of your congregation (or circuit) LERT team and will participate with them in their activities. Encourage your congregation's leaders to host LERT training and to have a team to organize acts of mercy both for the congregation and for its neighbors.

› **How much does LERT training cost?**

LERT class fees vary across the Synod. The registration fee, typically \$35, helps cover the cost of lunch and snacks, training materials and a LERT T-shirt; \$15 of that fee will be sent to LCMS Disaster Response to help cover the cost of materials and shipping. You will receive your certificate of participation, volunteer ID card and T-shirt from LCMS Disaster Response after the training is complete. Your LERT trainer will distribute all the LERT materials for the class.

› **How long will training last?**

The training sessions are generally scheduled from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturdays. Your district LERT trainer may choose to divide the sessions between a Friday evening and Saturday morning if preferred.

› **What will we study?**

There are three main sections: 1) An introduction to the LCMS Disaster Response program; 2) Congregation preparedness; and 3) Lutheran Early Response Teams.

› **Who can be trained?**

Anyone who is interested is welcome to attend the training session. Only LCMS members who are 14 years old or older, however, will receive a certificate of completion for LERT training.

› **Where should I start?**

Contact your District Disaster Response Coordinator (DDRC) for information on LERT trainings and deployments. Your DDRC coordinates all LERT activities in your LCMS district. You can always see LERT volunteer opportunities at lcms-lert.org.

Need more general information? Contact LCMS Disaster Response at disaster@lcms.org or visit our Facebook page at facebook.com/LCMSDisasterResponse.

Take a look at our LERT volunteer site: lcms-lert.org. That is where our LERT volunteers see opportunities for LERT training and deployments. It is the place your DDRC will coordinate and communicate LERT activities in your district.

