



**Protect the health of your community.
Join. Train. Respond.**



Medical Reserve Corps Recruitment and Retention Tools

- Recruiting New Volunteers**
- New Volunteer Checklist**
- Orientation Presentation**
- Unit Publicity Opportunities**
- OnCall Media Talking Points**
- Volunteer Engagement**
- Community Engagement**

Recruitment of volunteers poses the biggest challenge to Health Department volunteer efforts. Although we are confident that large numbers of volunteers will offer to help at clinics in the wake of a crisis, it is our goal to build a network of trained volunteers before an event occurs. Our volunteer recruitment efforts are two-pronged, and aim to recruit both health care professional and community volunteers. The Medical Reserve Corps is the perfect network to recruit volunteers to before disaster strikes, as the part of the MRC's mission is to have a response cadre. This document will guide you through why people volunteer, finding potential volunteers, methods of outreach, and recruiting new volunteers into your organization.

Understanding the Motivation to Volunteer

Understanding the most common motivations people volunteer can help your organization target these populations for recruitment efforts.

Values-Driven: These volunteers have a concern for and desire to help the community, people in need, or important causes. These individuals need to know how their actions contribute to their community, and that the organization shares their values. They need to feel that their actions are contributing to the greater good, that they are valued and that there are tangible results and outcomes from their service.

Intrinsic validation: These volunteers feel better about themselves while volunteering and the act fulfills a desire to serve. These individuals want to understand what they will attain from their volunteer service, how to measure their value and what the pathway and process is for success. Validation and knowing they are making a valuable difference is important. Like others, being thanked and recognized reinforces their desire to serve.

Curious: These volunteers have a desire to learn about the cause, other people and one's own abilities and limits; they desire to be the first to know and have insider's knowledge. These people often come with their own questions to be answered, but have a general curiosity about what the MRC is. They want to feel satisfied that they gained the understanding and knowledge that they sought. Keeping them engaged can involve new projects and regular recognition.

Achievers: These volunteers are interested in developing and expanding experiences, skills, credentials and opportunities, or aligning behavior with social groups. These volunteers are often very busy and concentrate their efforts on achieving on a path of goals. They need to feel a sense of responsibility and control of their path and often will not wait if opportunities are not quickly available.

A few common themes across all of these segments are the need for a simple and obvious path for training and success, and that most individuals will respond positively to recognition and thanks, even in small amounts.

Sources of Public Health Volunteers

Public health volunteers come from many backgrounds and may or may not be medically trained. Medically trained volunteers can range from students and individuals with first aid training to licensed medical doctors, and therefore need to be credentialed before being placed in a high level role. Non-medical volunteers are equally important as they can meet the needs of the large number of support roles.

Recruitment of volunteers will start with identifying potential sources of ideal volunteer candidates. Outreach should include the following organizations:

1. **Medical Professionals:** Clinics require clinically trained health care professionals to ensure that persons accurately and efficiently receive the appropriate medication.
 - a. Hospital affiliated medical staff – physicians, PAs, nurses, pharmacists, etc.
 - b. Non-hospital affiliated medical staff
 - i. School Nurses
 - ii. Federally Qualified Health Centers
 - iii. Residential care, Home Health
 - iv. Nursing Homes
 - v. Behavioral and psychological health
 - vi. Emergency Medical Services – First Responders, EMTs, AEMTs, Paramedics

Methods of recruiting these providers include:

- attending professional conferences and lectures
 - mass mailings to all licensed health care professionals
 - providing information about volunteering on re-licensure and new license applications.
2. **Community Volunteers:** will provide a large percentage of the needed volunteer base, including approximately 80% of the staff needed to operationalize mass prophylaxis clinics.
 - a. College students
 - i. Nursing, respiratory therapy, medical doctors, public health, pharmacists, community development, etc.
 - b. Retirees
 - i. RSVP: Retired and Senior Volunteer Program
 3. **Organizations:** often volunteers will support more than one organization, while this may seem like a conflict of interest during an extreme disaster, many situations benefit from volunteers who may be cross trained between organizations.
 - a. American Red Cross (ARC)
 - b. United Way
 - c. Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)
 - d. VT National Guard
 - e. VT Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD)
 - f. Faith Based Organizations

How to Reach Potential New Volunteers

Personal recruitment: Having current members invite friends and colleagues personally to your organization is one of the best ways to obtain good personnel. Current members can be the biggest advocate for your organization and its accomplishments. They can help guide a friend through the registration and orientation process and promote the social aspect of volunteering. Encourage member to promote the organization through their personal social media and Front Porch Forum type avenues.

Printed materials: There are opportunities to leave brochures and posters in offices or other public areas for the general public to review. This is a relatively inexpensive and effective method of distributing information that can be customized based on the organization. Locations for posting should be considered closely and should target those members of the community you wish to recruit.

Website/Social Media: Similar to printed materials, an organization website or social media such as Facebook offer an opportunity to post information about your organization, membership opportunities, the registration process, articles and pictures of recent events.

TV, Radio and Newspapers: Working with a local reporter from a radio station, television channel, or community newspaper can provide a great opportunity for publicity of your organization and its activities. Inviting media to events can provide them with local stories that feature your unit and the community positively. Using this earned media to mention current recruitment needs allows for air time for little cost. Consider seeking a locally-oriented talk show from a radio station or local community network for an interview. These shows have active local audiences and are run multiple times a week or through multiple outlets. Concerns about a media interview can be avoided through preparation and planning of the content you want to highlight in the interview.

Community Bulletin Boards: Many communities have bulletin boards for placing posters and fliers. This can provide an inexpensive method of getting your unit and event information out. Make sure the design of any fliers or posters is not too busy, too graphic or too much reading material. The message should provide clear instructions on who to contact with questions. Any pictures used should include uniformed members and you should obtain permission to use pictured participants before publishing.

Booths and Exhibits: Most communities will hold various events or shows and will allow your organization to host a booth for educational and recruitment efforts. This can be a home and garden show, a fair and field days, a civic engagement fair, a career fair, a farmer's market and many more. These booths can be staffed or unstaffed based on your available resources. Staffed is preferred as there is a person there from your organization to interact with attendees and answer questions. Photos and educational information can generate interest and an opportunity for conversation and interaction, leading to a recruitment opportunity.

Recruitment Team

Each unit should have at least one person who is the point of contact for new applicants. Utilizing multiple volunteers to form a welcoming team can reduce the burden on a unit coordinator and further

engage volunteers. Recruitment team members should be welcoming, easy to talk to, and understand the things that are important to the unit. Essential tasks for the welcoming person/team include:

- Reply quickly to welcome new applicants and answer any questions.
- Schedule new members for orientation and inform them about upcoming events.
- Assist new members with registering in the RMS, completing a background check, taking a picture for their badge, and providing a unit uniform
- Inform new members of the core competency training requirements and about participation in quarterly call-downs.

Ultimately recruitment opportunities and volunteer interests will be varied based on different regions. Survey current volunteers on how they found out about the unit or what things catch their interest when it comes to community activities. A variety of outreach methods is a strong way to reach new participants, but if you receive volunteers predominately through one avenue, focus your efforts there.

Welcoming a new member to your unit is an important way to further capture a volunteer's interest and get them engaged in your activities right away. The following will help you develop a plan to welcome and orient new MRC members.

- Send welcome email – this should be done shortly after a member expresses interest in joining the MRC or after they have registered in RMS (if that is how you found out about them).
 - Include RMS registration instructions
 - Provide list of upcoming events: trainings, meetings, exercises.
 - If you have not yet had a welcome meeting, offer the new member a couple of options for when this could take place.
 - Provide your name, MRC title, and contact information

Dear _____,

Thank you for your interest in joining the _____ Medical Reserve Corps Unit.

Please register for the _____ MRC in Responder Management System.

Go to <https://rms.vermont.gov/>

Select Register on the right side of the page

While filling out the registration form, make sure to select Add Organization in the top left of the Organizations box. Under the list of Medical Reserve Corps Units, please choose the _____ Medical Reserve Corp. Then, you will be asked for information about who you are, how you can be reached, and your credentials.

Please join us at one of our next meetings: _____ (list date, time, & location of next few meetings) _____

Welcome to _____ MRC!

If you have any questions please contact me at:

Name

MRC Title

Phone & Email contact

- Hold a welcome meeting with new member – this can be done a few weeks after they've expressed interest.
 - Orientation PowerPoint: Overview of national MRC, local MRC, potential activation activities, possible roles, ICS management structure.
See the Vermont MRC Orientation on the RMS: https://verv.vermont.gov/document_library.php
→ Click Medical Reserve Corps Folder → Click Standard Operating Guidelines → Download Vermont MRC Orientation. This presentation can be adjusted to fit the needs of your unit.
 - Explain the Responder Management System, the importance of registering for communication purposes, responding to exercises and events, and maintaining updated information.

- Explain Call down drills and the importance of responding: everyone needs to be familiar with the system and how it works ad in the event of a real emergency we can successfully notify and request volunteers. RMS outgoing number 866-998-3678.
- Explain training guidelines: ICS 100, ICS 700, Family or Personal Preparedness, Point of Distribution Overview, Psychological First Aid. If any of these courses have been completed they may provide a copy of the certificate for proof of completion. Also provide opportunities to complete these trainings – online or in-person.
- Provide list of upcoming events: trainings, meetings, exercises
- Fill out background check
- Take picture for ID badge and provide Uniform
- Provide a copy of your unit’s volunteer handbook
- Provide Ready.gov family preparedness plan and build-a-kit; <http://www.ready.gov/emergency-planning-checklists>

Volunteer organizations can use media opportunities as free publicity to encourage community awareness, new member recruitment. Consider using several approaches to capture a larger audience.

- **Media Relations:** Before reaching out to media, consider the other organizations involved in your event. Work with them to create consistent messaging between organizations, this will build a stronger partnership and public message. Partners may include: the Health Department, Public Safety Agencies (Fire, EMS, Law Enforcement), schools, American Red Cross, area hospitals, etc.
 - **Identify your local media audience:** newspaper, radio, tv, websites. Reach out to each of these organizations for contact information. Maintain this list so that you have the contact information ready any time a new event comes up.
 - **Event/Exercise Press Release:** Use a press release to inform the media and public of an upcoming event or the success of a completed event.
 - Items to include:
 - What the event is and the importance of the event/how it benefits the community.
 - Location and date of the event. Be careful when disclosing location, this may open the door to media wishing to be present during the event; this could be great during a health fair but may pose challenges when setting up a POD or Medical Surge site. Work with partners to determine if media can be invited, where they should go, and at what point during the event they should attend.
 - Media and interested member point of contact. Who should the media reach out to if they have questions? If someone is interested in joining the MRC, who should they contact.
 - Media will often take clips from your press release, so be informative, interesting and motivating in a clear and concise press release.
 - Use pictures of similar past events or if the release follows the event, take pictures during the event. Be sure to have those pictured sign a photo release form.
 - **Media Advisory/Alert:** This is similar to a press release but acts as an invitation for media to attend an event. This is directed towards the media and is event detail based: media setup time and location, who will be there and what will be happening.
- **Event Calendars:**
 - **OnCall for Vermont:** Provide the details of an upcoming event to the DEPRIP MRC staff, so they can post the details to the event calendar. You can share the event link on social media.
 - **Front Porch Forum, local newspapers, tv, radio:** These groups often have event calendars or a place to post upcoming events. Take advantage of this free resource!
- **Social Media:** If your unit has a Facebook page, website or other form of social media, post upcoming events, interesting happenings in the Emergency Preparedness and Public Health world, and information on joining the unit. Consider: Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter. Visit the OnCallforVT.org Media Center for logos, banners, and videos for use on social media.

- **When to get media coverage:** Events are an obvious time to get media coverage, but the more you can get the word out, the more you can recruit and create better community awareness. Try other stories like:
 - Feature a volunteer’s experience: this can be a feel-good and motivational story.
 - Feature a grant award announcement: when NACCHO hands out their capacity building award, highlight the accomplishment of the group and how the money will positively affect the community.
 - Highlight important dates: National Volunteer Week, anniversary of the start of the unit, or an annual volunteer appreciation lunch/dinner. Highlight unit accomplishments and use the event as a retention tool for volunteers by expressing your appreciation.
 - “Piggyback” on a national event: In the event of a serious health or natural disaster, highlight how the Medical Reserve Corps is preparing to respond to these types of events if it were to strike your town. Invite new people to learn more and become prepared themselves!

Additional Publicity and Media Relations Resources:

Corporation for National and Community Service, Media Guide.

http://www.nationalservice.gov/pdf/Media_Guide.pdf

Guide to working with TV, Newspaper, and Radio. Tips on interviewing; ideas for when to contact the media; Samples of press releases and tips on crafting them.

University of Kansas, Community Tool Box: Learn A Skill. <http://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents>

Broad Tool Box focused on community building skills with many chapters covering: Communications CH.6, Increasing Membership CH.11, Social Marketing CH. 45, Rewarding Accomplishments and Honoring Participants CH.41.

Points of Light, National Volunteer Week Marketing Resource Guide.

Includes messaging templates, media outreach tips, and tips for recognizing National Volunteer Week (mid-April)

WildApricot.com: Build. Connect. Grow. Membership & more. Event Promotion Guide.

OnCall Talking Points

What is OnCall for Vermont?

- OnCall for Vermont is the hub for health-focused volunteering, training and response in Vermont. Building upon our state's rich history of volunteerism and neighbors helping neighbors in times of need, this campaign brings together the Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) and Emergency Medical Services in order to provide Vermonters with a simple and easy path to becoming a health volunteer.
- The OnCall campaign is intended to bring awareness to Vermonters about the public health volunteering opportunities available and then give them the tools they need to decide which opportunity best fits their availability and what they are trying to get out of the experience.

Why was this recruitment campaign launched?

- Through feedback from the EMS community and emergency preparedness planning within the Health Department, it has been identified that the State needs more volunteers.
 - EMS volunteers are needed on a regular basis to support the 911 system across the State. Vermont's rural population relies heavily on the volunteer efforts of EMS agencies.
 - During large public health events additional volunteers are needed to support the existing response systems such as the health department and hospitals. MRC volunteers also support ongoing public health initiatives to keep people healthy and thus more resilient before a disaster.

Emergency Medical Services Talking Points

Vermont EMS Facts:

- There are roughly 177 first response and transporting EMS agencies that support Vermont. 80% of those agencies rely on volunteers in some capacity.
- There are ~ 2800 EMS providers in the State that include: Emergency Medical Responders (EMR), Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT), Advanced Emergency Medical Technicians (AEMT), and Paramedics.
- EMS providers provide timely care in critical times of need. This is a regular time commitment in a dynamic environment.

What does it take to become an EMS provider?

- You do not need to have any medical skills. You will take an EMR or EMT course that is usually done over several months that will provide you with the training you need.

For EMS Providers, things to talk about:

- Why did you become an EMS provider?
- Why do you continue to be involved in EMS?

- How do you feel your organization supports the community?
- Is there something that if you had known before you joined the EMS community, you would have joined sooner?

Medical Reserve Corps Talking Points

Vermont MRC Facts:

- The 7 Medical Reserve Corps units in Vermont are made up of 170 volunteers. These volunteers have backgrounds from nurses, EMTs, and physicians, to administrative personnel, teachers, and business professionals.
- Medical Reserve units are community-based groups of volunteers who supplement local emergency and public health resources with their existing skills. They receive training in emergency preparedness, prepare for and respond to emergencies, and support Health Department initiatives.

What activities have the Vermont Medical Reserve Corps units been involved in?

- MRCs in Vermont have been involved in:
 - 2015 tuberculosis testing clinics in Chittenden County
 - 2013 Eastern Equine Encephalitis testing in Rutland County
 - 2012 Statewide whooping cough vaccinations
 - Seasonal flu vaccination clinics
 - Emergency preparedness planning activities: medical surge plans and exercises with hospitals; points of distribution planning and exercises with the Department of Health, local mass casualty exercises.
 - Annual community events: Maple Fest in St. Albans, Maple Leaf Half Marathon in Manchester
 - Public Health Initiatives: senior disaster preparedness, community health assessments, community CPR education events

For MRC members, things to talk about:

- Why did you get involved in the MRC?
- How does the MRC benefit the community?
- What training have you received as a member?

Develop training and activity plan 6 months – 1 year ahead. Do not need complete details, but at least topic and date of training.

- Hold trainings on a regular schedule. Ex. the 1st Tuesday every other month. This allows volunteers to schedule that regular meeting into their busy schedules and will increase member attendance.
- Invite community guest speakers to trainings
 - VDH District Office Epi Designee to talk about current relevant diseases. Provides an opportunity to inform members on current and valid information from VDH.
Ex. Ebola, Measles, Seasonal Flu, EEE
 - Emergency Manager to talk about disaster response procedures in your town.
 - Local Disaster Mental Health Representative to talk about crisis mental health in your area and available resources.
 - Hospital Representative to talk about their Emergency Response plans and how they could utilize MRC volunteers.
 - Unit members may also be interested in presenting on the organization they work for or a health topic of importance to them.

Hold an annual member appreciation potluck – this gives members a chance to get to know each other and creates a team.

- Hold the event at a local park and encourage members to bring their families.
- Use the event to recognize those who have given a significant amount of time or participation in events, long memberships, and those who recruited new members.
- Ask local grocery stores or restaurants for food donations.

Encourage members to provide ideas for event participation or training topics. The more interested a volunteer is in an event or topic, the more likely they are to attend and encourage others to come.

If a member is not attending meetings or events, give them a call. Ask them:

- Why they haven't been attending?
- What could change to help them come to events/meetings? Location, time/day of the week, topic, activity.
- What activities they would participate in?

Provide incentive for completing core competency training: go-kit or a day supply to add to their preparedness kit.

Ask members to take an active role in the group

- Create a group of welcome team members – these members can rotate through new members to welcome/orient them to the unit. They can provide RMS registration support, provide list of upcoming trainings and where to complete online trainings, provide background check form, take badge picture.
- Create a group that will remind members of upcoming trainings. Split a unit of 20 up between 4 members, so that each person calls 4 people to remind them of the upcoming training and try to get an attendance count. The personal touch will encourage members to participate.

□ **Local Hospitals**

- Ask to be involved in Medical Surge plans and exercises
- Find out what trainings are needed by members in order to volunteer during a hospital need. This may include HIPAA and Blood borne pathogens. Explain that all trainings are tracked on the RMS, and members with specific trainings/skills can be requested.
- What needs does hospital have for community/staff health or engagement? Some units have:
 - Supported the IRS required Community Health Assessment
 - Provided hospital staff seasonal flu vaccinations
 - Participated in community free clinic events organized by hospital

□ **Local Emergency Preparedness Committee (LEPC)**

- Provide presentation on what your MRC does, previous activities, and offer the unit up as a resource to the community.
- At each meeting give a quick updates of recent activities and ask attendees to think of and request MRC for identified gaps or community activities.

□ **Colleges**

- Identify colleges in your area with healthcare, emergency management, public health, and nursing programs.
- Talk with program managers about presenting annually to classes about the importance of emergency preparedness and healthcare and use the opportunity to pitch the Medical Reserve Corps.

□ **Regional Planning Commission**

- Meet with Emergency Preparedness staff to discuss regional goals or initiatives that the MRC might be able to support.

□ **Council/Agency on Aging and Visiting Nurse Association**

- Senior preparedness and resiliency is an important topic in many communities. Talk to your local council or agency on aging about how your unit can support senior preparedness and education in your area.
- Work with these agencies to develop list/map of people who may need extra support in a severe weather event. Identify those who rely on power or regular access to medication and may be at increased risk during a power outage, flood, or snowstorm.