



## About Volunteering

Local health, safety and preparedness begins with you

### Why Should I Volunteer?

You've worked hard in your career to master a variety of skills – in medicine, public health, safety, logistics, communications or a number of other areas. Volunteering with the Medical Reserve Corps is a simple and effective way to use and improve those skills, while helping to keep your family, friends and neighbors safe and healthy. For example, you may put those skills to use during an emergency, or while providing some services for the most vulnerable members of your community.

Volunteering can give the great satisfaction of helping others. For many individuals, volunteering gives them a sense of purpose and meaning in their lives. It helps to broaden their social networks, and that can have many positive effects. Volunteering provides opportunities for social interactions with fellow volunteers while supporting an important activity in the community. Interacting with others with a common interest is also a great way to create new relationships.

Volunteering can also have a significant effect on your own health. Research presented by the Corporation for National and Community Service shows a strong relationship between volunteering and health: those who volunteer have lower mortality rates, greater functional ability, and lower rates of depression later in life than those who do not volunteer. See ***The Health Benefits of Volunteering: A Review of Recent Research*** for more information (<http://www.nationalservice.gov/about/volunteering/benefits.asp>).

Imagine a community – or a nation – in which everyone volunteered. Everyone would expand their skills and knowledge. Everyone would be healthier. And everyone would have a more meaningful life. This is a future we all can work towards.

### What Would I Do As A Volunteer?

MRC volunteers train - individually and with other members of the unit - in order to improve their skills, knowledge and abilities. Sometimes the training is coursework, and other times it is part of a drill or exercise conducted with partner organizations in the community. Continuing education units and credits are even available for some programs.

Many MRC volunteers assist with activities to improve public health in their community – increasing health literacy, supporting prevention efforts and eliminating health disparities.

In an emergency, local resources get called upon first, sometimes with little or no warning. As a member of an MRC unit, you can be part of an organized and trained team. You will be ready and able to bolster local emergency planning and response capabilities.

The specific role that you will play, and the activities in which you will participate, will depend upon your background, interests and skills, as well as the needs of the MRC unit and the community.

## Who Do I Volunteer With?

Every MRC unit is led by a local MRC Unit Coordinator, who matches local volunteer capabilities and schedules with local needs for both emergency responses and public health initiatives.

Many MRC members are just like you – nurses, doctors, pharmacists, therapists, public health officials and other community members who believe in keeping your local area healthy, prepared and resilient. They share your commitment to helping others and making a difference.

You may also work closely with staff members from the local health department, emergency management agency, hospital or other organizations that partner with the MRC. In fact, the services that you provide may help these other organizations to meet their mission.

**It's up to you. Join your local Medical Reserve Corps unit and be a Community HERO!**

**For more information please contact -**

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**TriCounty Medical Reserve Corps Coordinator**