

Resource Guide: Youth Involvement in the Medical Reserve Corps



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Guidelines for MRC Units

Youth are making important contributions to our communities in various ways, and increasingly more are participating in MRC activities. This document is intended to serve as a guide for units that want to incorporate youth into MRC activities.

Where to Start:

If you are considering including youth in MRC activities, it is helpful to look at what other units are doing. Medical Reserve Corps units are working with youth by partnering with established youth organizations and/or lowering the minimum age required to become an MRC volunteer. Units that include youth volunteers commonly refer to the youth branch of their MRC unit as a “Jr. MRC.” Communities and schools are also developing Jr. MRC units which are individual units that are registered with the Office of the Civilian Medical Reserve Corps.

1. *Partnering with Youth Organizations:* Many organizations, such as the Health Occupations Students of America (HOSA), the Boy and Girl Scouts, and high school pre-med clubs are looking for opportunities to serve their communities. These organizations already have permission slips, and some provide liability coverage for youth. You can learn which organizations may have students interested in the MRC by contacting the local high school. Contact information for youth organizations can be found on page 15 of this document.
2. *Lowering the Minimum Age to Volunteer:* Some states have lowered the minimum age to become a volunteer for the state to 16. You can check with your state Emergency System for Advance Registration of Volunteer Health Professionals Coordinator to see what the minimum age is. Your housing organization might also allow people under 18 to become volunteers. If this is the case, you may consider opening MRC membership to those under 18. If do this, you may decide to include youth in all MRC activities, or you may choose to create a separate Jr. MRC branch.
3. *Establishing a Jr. MRC Unit:* If a community does not have an adult MRC unit or if the above are not options, a community or school may consider starting a Jr. MRC unit. The unit must follow the same application process as all units, and must fulfill all requirements to become and remain an MRC unit.

Appropriate Activities for Youth:

Involving youth in MRC activities not only gives young people opportunities to work alongside and learn from MRC volunteers, valuable assistance is provided to MRC units and to communities. In addition, adult MRC volunteers often comment that the enthusiasm of the young volunteers is both inspirational and contagious.

Youth have participated in both MRC public health outreach and disaster response. They have organized blood drives, provided health education to peers, staffed MRC booths at health fairs, staffed phone banks, assisted with processing MRC volunteer applications, made quilts for the homeless, and much more. In addition, volunteers under 18 who are licensed EMTs have been able to give flu shots, provide medical assistance in evacuation shelters, and assist local EMS when an ambulance service is understaffed. Youth have also responded alongside local emergency management personnel to school emergencies, and have taken responsibility for ensuring school safety equipment is up-to-date. Young volunteers have also taken advantage of opportunities to shadow adult MRC volunteers while at work or during MRC activities.

The next section of this document lists the activities of individual MRC units that have worked with youth volunteers.

- * Tip: Start with small, simple projects for youth. Once you become acquainted with the volunteers, you will be able to determine if you can involve them in more advanced activities.

Organizing the Youth:

If you are starting a Jr. MRC unit, allow the youth as much as possible to organize the unit, plan the activities, apply for funding, and update the MRC profile. An adult will need to oversee the activities, but many times the youth are very motivated and competent and can accomplish a lot on their own.

During MRC activities, some units mandate the youth are accompanied by a parent or guardian. If you choose not to do this, it is helpful if there are two or more adults available to assist. If you are partnering with an established youth organization, make sure an adult representative accompanies the youth.

- * Tip: The MRC unit may have adult volunteers who have experience with working with youth. They may be interested in assisting you with youth-related projects.

Liability:

Just like with all MRC units, liability coverage for volunteers will vary depending on the state, the individual MRC unit housing organization, and/or the partnering youth organization. Prior to involving youth in any activities, it is important to understand the coverage provided to the youth volunteers.

- * Tip: Just like with adult volunteers, it is important to understand the abilities, limitations and maturity of each youth volunteer. Youth should not be placed in situations they are not equipped to handle. It is also important for leaders to ensure the physical and emotional safety of the youth volunteers; mental health support should be available if ever needed.

Consent:

It is important to obtain parental consent for a variety of reasons: MRC leaders will need to know how to contact a parent or guardian should there be any injuries; leaders should be sure that the parents or guardians know exactly where their children are, what they will be doing, and when they will return; and leaders will need to obtain consent to provide medical treatment should it be needed. A sample consent form is provided in this document.

- * Tip: Even if your unit is partnering with a youth organization that has permission slips, you may want to ask the organizations' leaders to have parents and guardians fill out your MRC consent form, as well. This is because your own consent forms will have your MRC unit name. You may also want to obtain copies of the partner organizations' completed consent forms.

Examples of MRC Unit Activities by State



ALABAMA

Contact information for Alabama MRC units:

<http://www.medicalreservecorps.gov/state.asp?state=2>

Mobile Jr. MRC

Mobile Jr. Medical Reserve Corps is established to educate the high school arena on four levels of community risk assessment: disease prevention, behavioral management, environmental, and statistical methods. Students will utilize these fields as primary areas of focus in reference to pre- disaster management and in terms of building a healthier local community.

Impact Club Jr. MRC

Impact Club members volunteer weekly in our community: many read to children in after school programs, others mentor at-risk youth. Members volunteer at a variety of nonprofit agencies such as: Habitat for Humanity, Penelope House, Dumas Wesley Children's Home, Animal Rescue Foundation, area hospitals and at Volunteer Mobile. All of these programs involve building a healthier community. The MRC believes that by creating a healthier pre- disaster unit before a crisis the community will have a more positive outcome post crisis. Impact Club is a youth service program that engages middle and high school students in volunteer opportunities that provide vital assistance to the community while building skills in leadership and civic responsibility. Members reside in Mobile and Baldwin County and attend private, parochial, public schools, and some are home-schooled.



ARIZONA

Contact information for Arizona MRC units:

<http://www.medicalreservecorps.gov/state.asp?state=5>

Pima County Health Department Student MRC

The Student Medical Reserve Corps exists to prepare high school, college and university students in the medical, nursing, medical technology and other related disciplines to assist their communities through the year and in times of need by providing training, leadership and mentoring opportunities. Additionally, Student MRC members may assist the Pima County Health Department in implementing the Surgeon General's priorities of increasing disease prevention, eliminating health disparities and improving public health preparedness.

The Student Medical Reserve Corps handbook is posted on the Pima County Health Department's website at: <http://www.pimahealth.org/volunteering/index.html>.



CALIFORNIA

Contact information for California MRC units:

<http://www.medicalreservecorps.gov/state.asp?state=6>

San Diego MRC

The MRC is exploring the possibility of starting a Jr. MRC in San Diego.



HAWAII

Contact information for Hawaii MRC units:

<http://www.medicalreservecorps.gov/state.asp?state=15>

Kauai Jr. MRC

The Kauai Jr. Medical Reserve Corps, established in January of 2009, is a subset of the adult unit. The junior volunteers are high school students around the island, some of whom are members of HOSA. The local Area Health Education Consortium (AHEC) is a collaborative partner for the recruitment and training of our junior volunteers; many members are also part of the HOT (Health Occupation for Teens) Club. The Jr. MRC volunteers work alongside adult volunteers during MRC events. The adult volunteers also serve as mentors for the Jr.MRC volunteers.



NEW JERSEY

Contact information for New Jersey MRC units:

<http://www.medicalreservecorps.gov/state.asp?state=37>

Manalapan MRC-CERT

The Manalapan CERT has chartered a Boy Scouts Venture Program. The program will be more associated with the CERT portion of the MRC-CERT organization. The venture program is for boys and girls age 14-21 (this team will be limited to 16-21). The activities the youth will participate in are still being determined, though preliminary discussions identify the youth as support for drills and activities as well as developing emergency response skills in this population. Actual assistance during emergencies has not been clarified. The Boy Scouts of America provides liability insurance for a fee.

True to scouting, the venture program incorporates a full scouting curriculum, including camping and community service. The activities related to MRC and CERT will be important but not the only aspect of the organization.



NEW MEXICO

Contact information for New Mexico MRC units:

<http://www.medicalreservecorps.gov/state.asp?state=38>

Alamogordo High School Jr. MRC

The Alamogordo High School Jr. Medical Reserve Corps is being developed as a pilot project for implementing Jr. MRC units across the state of New Mexico. The purpose of the AHS Jr. MRC is to educate and prepare young adults in the Alamogordo area to be productive members of the local emergency response team, educate their peers and the community at large in how to prepare for emergencies, and act as a model for other possible Jr. MRC units in NM. This unit will partner with the NM MRC, New Mexico State University-Alamogordo, Holloman Air Force Base, local emergency management members, and other county agencies to ensure comprehensive preparation for students who will become an integral part of the community disaster response team. All members of the present Health Science Technology program will be active members of the unit. Members will be certified in CPR, as First Responders, then as EMT-Basics through the HST programs of study. Advanced students will become instructors of CPR and First Responders in order to certify their peers in the program. A classroom curriculum is being developed for the Health Science Technology I course that will include disaster management and preparedness training. This first year curriculum will be the foundation of the AHS Jr. MRC program. We believe that high school students will be able to affect and train members of the community that are not readily accessible to or willing to participate with other emergency preparedness teams.

Bosque School Jr. MRC

The Bosque School MRC is developing out the school's need for a medical response system for students and faculty. The MRC volunteers will operate under the supervision of a medical director. The group is recognized by the Bosque School, and will have ten members ages 16-18. In addition to providing medical response to students and faculty, the MRC intends to meet the following goals: to provide opportunities for members to learn about medical professions; to participate in public health outreach and emergency response activities; to establish a First Responders class for faculty and students; and to assist the New Mexico Department of Health and the Albuquerque Area MRC in emergency response activities and public health outreach activities. We also aim to provide educational opportunities for members via medical direction. In the state of New Mexico it is possible to become an EMT First Responder at the age of 16 and an EMT Basic at 17. Upon receiving licensure, MRC members will serve as the medical element for our school athletic programs. The Bosque MRC will also serve as a contact for anyone at Bosque School interested in pursuing EMT licensure.

Capital High School Jr. MRC

The Capital High School Jr. Medical Reserve Corps is being developed under the Alamogordo Jr. MRC pilot project for implementing a Jr. MRC unit in Northern New Mexico. The purpose of the CHS Jr. MRC is to educate and prepare young adults in the Santa Fe area to be productive members of the local emergency response team, educate their peers and the community at large in how to prepare for emergencies, and act as a model for other possible Jr. MRC units in the Santa Fe, NM. This unit will partner with the AHS Jr. MRC, St. Vincent Hospital, Santa Fe Community College, local emergency management members, and other county agencies to ensure comprehensive preparation for students who will become an integral part of the community disaster response team. All members of the present Health Care Career Pathway program will be active members of the unit. Members will be certified in CPR, as First Responders, then as EMT-Basics through the HST programs of study. Advanced students will become instructors of CPR and First Responders in order to certify their peers in the program. A classroom curriculum is being developed for the Health Science Technology I course that will include disaster management and preparedness training. This first year curriculum will be the foundation of the CHS Jr. MRC program. We believe that high school students will be able to affect and train members of the community that are not readily accessible to or willing to participate with other emergency preparedness teams. This program is part of the HST School Resiliency Pilot Project established through the Alamogordo High School Jr. MRC.

Hatch High School Jr. MRC

The Hatch Valley High School Jr. Medical Reserve Corps is being developed as a pilot project for implementing Jr. MRC units across the state of New Mexico. The purpose of the HVHS Jr. MRC is to educate and prepare young adults in the Hatch Valley area to be productive members of the local emergency response team, educate their peers and the community at large in how to prepare for emergencies, and act as a model for other possible Jr. MRC units in NM. This unit will partner with the Alamogordo High School Jr. MRC, , local emergency management members, and other county agencies to ensure comprehensive preparation for students who will become an integral part of the community disaster response team. All members of the present Health Science Technology program will be active members of the unit. Members will be certified in CPR, First Aid and CERT. A classroom curriculum is being developed for the Health Science Technology I course that will include disaster management and preparedness training. This first year curriculum will be the foundation of the HVHS Jr. MRC program. We believe that high school students will be able to affect and train members of the community that are not readily accessible to or willing to participate with other emergency preparedness teams. The HVHS will be part of the HST School Resiliency Pilot Project.

New Mexico Jr. MRC Venture Program – Crew 2704

The Albuquerque – University of New Mexico MRC has chartered a Boy Scouts Jr. MRC Venture Crew. The Jr. MRC Venture Crew is open to all young men and women from NM Jr. MRC units. Because liability is covered by the Boy Scouts, the Jr. MRC Venture members are able to participate in MRC-related response and public health

outreach activities in NM. They also have the opportunity to participate in all Boy Scout activities.

Because some of the Jr. MRC units in NM are providing first responder and EMT training for their youth (in NM a person can become a first responder at 16 and an EMT at 17), the Albuquerque – UNM MRC provides medical direction to licensed Jr. MRC Venture members for MRC activities.

Onate High School Jr. MRC

The Onate High School Jr. Medical Reserve Corps is being developed as a pilot project for implementing Jr. MRC units across the state of New Mexico in accordance with the HST School Resiliency Pilot Project. The purpose of the OHS Jr. MRC is to educate and prepare young adults in the Las Cruces area to be productive members of the local emergency response team, educate their peers and the community at large in how to prepare for emergencies, and act as a model for other possible Jr. MRC units in NM. This unit will partner with the NM MRC, Alamogordo High School Jr. MRC, New Mexico State University-Las Cruces, White Sands Missile Range, local emergency management members, and other county agencies to ensure comprehensive preparation for students who will become an integral part of the community disaster response team. All members of the present Health Occupations program will be active members of the unit. Members will be certified in CPR, as First Responders, through the MedStart Academy programs of study. Advanced students will become instructors of CPR and First Responders in order to certify their peers in the program. A classroom curriculum is being developed for the Health Occupations I course that will include disaster management and preparedness training. This first year curriculum will be the foundation of the OHS Jr. MRC program. We believe that high school students will be able to affect and train members of the community that are not readily accessible to or willing to participate with other emergency preparedness teams



OHIO

Contact information for Ohio MRC units:

<http://www.medicalreservecorps.gov/state.asp?state=41>

Ashtabula County MRC

The Ashtabula County MRC is a new MRC in a very rural county in Northeast Ohio. They have been in discussion with a couple schools in their county to use their school as a VRC or a POD and use the students, faculty and staff to help stand it up when needed. High School students are required to have so many community service hours before they graduate, and this would help them obtain the hours. They are also considering looking at the school as a closed POD and they would be able to offer prophylaxis to students, staff and families and take care of their particular portion of the county and it would be one less burden off the health dept. The only item they need to work out is dealing with the liability issues for students. They have one school in the county that is a VOED and they

have nursing assistant training, security training, dental training, EMS training, all these areas would be important for their operation. Yearly training would be important followed by standing up flu clinics and inserting the students and having the school stand up their facility each year for distributing flu shots to the public. This idea is still in the planning stages with a few liability issues to work out but they hope they can implement for the next flu season.



OKLAHOMA

Contact information for Oklahoma MRC units:

<http://www.medicalreservecorps.gov/state.asp?state=42>

Oklahoma MRC

Health Occupations Students of America youth spearheaded an effort to include youth in Oklahoma MRC activities. This resulted in the lowering of the minimum age of participation in the MRC to 16.



TENNESSEE

Contact information for Tennessee MRC units:

<http://www.medicalreservecorps.gov/state.asp?state=50>

Chattanooga-Hamilton County Health Department MRC

The Chattanooga-Hamilton County Health Department MRC has over 125 HOSA/HEALTH SCIENCE students registered with our MRC. Each student must complete a registration form and, if the student is under the age of 18, a parent or guardian must sign the form also. The students receive the same training as the adult volunteers and are completely trained in MRC Core Competencies which does include ICS 100.a and NIMS 700. These students possess skills such as CPR Certification, screening for medical conditions, checking vital signs, taking blood pressure, etc. The students have required projects through their Health Science curriculum which take them into elementary schools to educate elementary students on proper hand washing, how to cover their cough and sneeze, as well as education about certain health concerns such as asthma and obesity. Health Science students have also developed and presented Fire Prevention and Safety (Stop, Drop and Roll) to developmentally challenged students in middle and high school.

The HOSA/HEALTH SCIENCE students at Hixson High School assisted public health in the operation of a flu clinic at Hixson High School in December. Under the supervision of the HOSA instructor and public health nurses, the students advertised the flu clinic, provided pre-education for the students and assisted in the actual operation of the clinic. While under supervision, students provided help with completing registration forms, education, traffic flow, medical screening and exit review. The students also have

the information and training to educate their peers and the community at large in how to prepare for emergencies.

Southeast Tennessee Regional MRC

The Southeast Tennessee Regional MRC trained over 400 HOSA students in "MRC 101" and some ICS courses; the MRC Coordinator had the opportunity to present several certificates at the Tennessee HOSA conference to students that had completed training. Some groups stated interest in getting more involved, especially within their respective schools, so the MRC will discuss various opportunities with the youth and school administration.



TEXAS

Contact information for Texas MRC units:

<http://www.medicalreservecorps.gov/state.asp?state=51>

Fort Bend County Medical Reserve Corps

The Fort Bend County MRC provides MRC orientations to youth from Alvin High School. Youth receive the same MRC training as adult MRC volunteers. Youth ages 14-17 must be accompanied by a parent or responsible adult to all training and deployments. So far the youth have assisted the MRC with a school health fair, and the MRC is planning on additional outreach activities with the youth.



VIRGINIA

Contact information for Virginia MRC units:

<http://www.medicalreservecorps.gov/state.asp?state=53>

Loudoun MRC

In 2008 the Loudoun MRC started a Jr. MRC program. The minimum age to volunteer is 16. The unit has youth fill out permission slips and provides a special pre-orientation for youth.



WASHINGTON

Contact information for Washington MRC units:

<http://www.medicalreservecorps.gov/state.asp?state=56>

Snohomish County MRC

The unit is actively recruiting youth over the age of 16 to participate in the unit. They foresee them taking part in all trainings and exercises. They will utilize youth in actual events as support staff and in the call center. The MRC recently partnered with emergency management to offer a TEEN CERT class for students in the YMCA Minority Achiever's program, which is part of their summer Career Clusters (career exploration) program.



WISCONSIN

Contact information for Wisconsin MRC units:

<http://www.medicalreservecorps.gov/state.asp?state=57>

Southeast Wisconsin Medical Reserve Corps

The SE WI MRC partners with HOSA to provide information on the MRC as well as training and exercise opportunities for HOSA students. HOSA students are not full MRC members and are not eligible to participate in response activities, but can benefit from training and exercising with the MRC and its community partners, as well as network for internship and work opportunities. This also enables our unit to spread the word about the MRC and encourage preparedness and volunteerism with these students as they reach adulthood.



WEST VIRGINIA

Contact information for West Virginia MRC units:

<http://www.medicalreservecorps.gov/state.asp?state=58>

Cabell/Wayne MRC

The Cabell/Wayne MRC is developing a Junior MRC. The youth corps that had been started previously needed to be reworked and better guidelines put into place. The new Jr. MRC will be open to youth between the ages 13 and 18.



WYOMING

Contact information for Wyoming MRC units:

<http://www.medicalreservecorps.gov/state.asp?state=59>

Natrona County MRC

The minimum age to volunteer for the Natrona County Medical Reserve Corps is 13. Those members under 18 receive the same First Aid, CPR, Emergency Management and Advanced Care training as the adult volunteers. On a local level the youth assist at special

events and during deployment they can help with clerical and administrative needs (with parent permission).



US ARMED FORCES BASE

Naples, Italy

The former Region II Coordinator indicated he had assisted starting up a school-based MRC unit in the American school on base. I have contacted the new Region II coordinator to see if she can provide any more information about the program.

Youth Organizations

Health Occupations Students of America: www.hosa.org

Boy Scouts of America: <http://www.scouting.org/>

Girl Scouts of the USA: <http://www.girlscouts.org/>

Boys and Girls Clubs of America: <http://www.bgca.org/>

National 4H Council: <http://4-h.org/>

Civil Air Patrol Cap Teens: <http://www.gocivilairpatrol.com/html/teens.htm>

Camp Fire USA: <http://www.campfireusa.org/start.asp>

Sample Permission Slips/Consent Forms

The following form was developed by the University of New Mexico (UNM) Center for Disaster Medicine (CDM) for youth participating in MRC activities. The CDM is the housing organization for the Albuquerque-UNM MRC, which works with youth by partnering with youth organizations.

MRC Unit/Housing Organization Consent Form

This form must be returned to *MRC Unit/Housing Organization* prior to participating in any Medical Reserve Corps activity if you are under 18 years of age.

I grant approval for my child, _____, Age _____, Grade Level _____, Date of Birth _____, to participate in *MRC Unit/Housing Organization*-sponsored classes and Medical Reserve Corps activities and release *MRC Unit/Housing Organization*, the Medical Reserve Corps and any instructors, activity leaders, and assistants from any liability arising from his/her participation in said activities. I understand *MRC Unit/Housing Organization* does not provide health or medical insurance for participants. Consent is hereby given to the *MRC Unit/Housing Organization* and Medical Reserve Corps instructors, activity leaders, and supervisors to give or seek medical aid required in the case of emergency.

My son/daughter has permission to participate in the following activity:
_____ on this date: _____

Health Insurance Company:

Policy Number: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent's Name (print): _____

Phone: (_____) _____

Name and Phone of additional person who may be contacted in case of emergency:

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Please return to:
MRC Unit/Housing Organization address
Or fax to:
(xxx) xxx-xxxx

You may also bring this consent form the day of the activity.