

## **NACCHO-MRC Capacity Building Cooperative Agreement FAQ's**

The Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) is a community-based, civilian volunteer program that helps build the public health infrastructure of communities nationwide. Each MRC unit is organized and trained to address a wide range of challenges from public health education to disaster response.

In 2006, NACCHO was awarded a cooperative agreement to assist the U.S. Surgeon General's Office of the Civilian Volunteer Medical Reserve Corps in enhancing MRC units' ability to meet local, state, and national needs through collaboration, coordination, and capacity-building activities. These activities include:

- Coordinating the distribution of grant funding;
- Developing a national marketing strategy;
- Publishing a quarterly national newsletter;
- Assisting in the planning of regional and national meetings; and
- Developing materials, resources, and tools to strengthen the knowledge and skills of MRC members.

In addition, NACCHO's relationship with almost 3,000 local health departments further serves as an avenue to promote the MRC program at the local level.

Together, the Office of the Civilian Volunteer Medical Reserve Corps and NACCHO work closely to support local MRC units and their relationships with partners and supporters around the country. [More»](#)

For more information about the Medical Reserve Corps or to find an MRC unit in your area, please click [here](#).

### **What is NACCHO?**

The National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) is the organization representing the nation's 2,850 local health departments. NACCHO promotes national policy to support public health, develops resources and programs to enhance the capacity of local health departments, connects health officials with their colleagues across the country in order to tackle common issues, and promotes health equity.

NACCHO works in many areas of public health, including Public Health Preparedness, Environmental Health, Community Health, and Public Health Infrastructure and Systems.

For more information about NACCHO, as well as its programs and resources, see [www.naccho.org](http://www.naccho.org).

### **How has NACCHO worked with the Medical Reserve Corps (MRC)?**

In 2005-2006, NACCHO convened a work group of MRC leaders and key partners from across the country and tasked them with developing a list of core competencies for MRC volunteers. The list was distributed at the MRC National Conference in April 2006. The Core Competencies Matrix, an updated version providing additional guidance on the training and development of MRC members and units, was developed in 2007. The Core Competencies Matrix is available at:

[www.naccho.org/topics/emergency/MedicalReserveCorps.cfm](http://www.naccho.org/topics/emergency/MedicalReserveCorps.cfm).

### **What are the goals of the Cooperative Agreement between NACCHO and the MRC Program?**

The overarching goal of the Cooperative Agreement awarded to NACCHO in August 2006, and renewed in 2007 and 2008, is to strengthen the ties between the MRC program at all levels and the nation's public health system. NACCHO works closely with the MRC program office, regional, state, and local MRC coordinators, and other key partners to ensure a successful collaboration that supports the capacity of local MRC units. The Cooperative Agreement includes three primary objectives:

*1. Promote the MRC through NACCHO networks*

NACCHO will promote the visibility of the MRC to public health leaders and practitioners by including MRC information in NACCHO's newsletters, organizing MRC-related sessions for conferences, conducting online training for health departments about working with the MRC, and developing a national MRC newsletter.

*2. Support MRC operations with capacity-building assistance*

NACCHO will provide travel scholarships for attendance at regional and national MRC meetings, and capacity-development "mini-grants" to new and existing MRC units. NACCHO, MRC regional coordinators, and the MRC program office worked together to develop eligibility criteria, an application process, time line, and dissemination plan for funds. NACCHO will also continue to provide assistance with the implementation of core competencies for volunteers and the planning for regional meetings.

*3. Support the exploration into utilizing local MRC units and volunteers as a federal deployable asset*

NACCHO will work with the MRC Deployment Work Group to provide input to the MRC Program Office on the benefits and challenges of utilizing local MRC units and volunteers as a federal deployable asset in the event of a disaster or other public health emergency of significant proportion. If it is found that a deployable asset is necessary, NACCHO and this Work Group will also assist in the development of procedures and protocols to pre-identify, screen, train, organize and utilize MRCs to support a Federal/HHS disaster or public health response outside of a unit or member's local jurisdiction.

### **What about MRC units that are not housed in health departments?**

Although NACCHO primarily represents local health departments, this Cooperative Agreement will benefit *all* MRC units regardless of the organization that houses them. All MRC units will be eligible to apply for the capacity building assistance grants. Through this project, we hope to help strengthen the relationships between all of the organizations involved in the MRC mission.

**What does this Cooperative Agreement mean for local MRC units?**

Local MRC units can expect support from NACCHO on issues such as:

1. Funding support for travel to MRC national and regional conferences.
2. Capacity Development mini-grants.
3. Technical assistance in the implementation of core competencies for volunteers.
4. Additional marketing assistance on local, regional, and national levels, as well as a new avenue to promote the MRC through the nation's public health infrastructure.
5. Guidance on working with local health departments for units housed within other agencies, organizations, or institutions.

**Whom can I contact to learn more?**

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