



Local Health Departments Rely on Medical Reserve Corps Volunteers to Respond to Emergencies



The Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) was created in 2002 after the terrorist attacks of 9/11. Authorized by the Pandemic and All-Hazard Preparedness Reauthorization Act of 2013, and up for reauthorization in 2018, the

program is a federal responsibility under the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response at the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), and is part of the nation's disaster health response system at the local and regional level. MRCs are made up of highly skilled volunteer doctors, dentists, nurses, pharmacists, and other community members. MRC personnel fill a critical role in increasing local health departments' capacity to respond to emergencies and other health needs. Two-thirds of the nation's 918 MRC units are housed in local health departments.

To ensure the public's safety, NACCHO recommends that Congress provide \$11 million for the Medical Reserve Corps in FY2019, rejecting the President's FY2019 budget level of \$6 million.

Medical Reserve Corps Snapshot

MRC volunteers perform the following functions to ensure the safety and well-being of America's communities:

- Assisting in emergency response during a natural disaster, terrorist attack, or disease outbreak.
- Staffing exercises to test local capacity to quickly dispense medicines in an emergency.
- Operating flu clinics to reduce spread to vulnerable populations.
- Educating the public on personal preparedness.

Fast Facts

- A total of 100 MRC units deployed during Hurricane Harvey in 2017, with more than 5,000 volunteers.
- The average number of volunteers in an MRC unit is 221.
- The MRC Network covers 91% of the U.S. population.

MRC Resources

- 73% of MRC units reported receiving funding from only one or two sources.
- The majority of funding is for training volunteers and supplies.
 - MRC units reported a 14% decrease in their median operating budget from 2015 to 2017.
 - Small-sized MRC units saw their median operating budget decrease by nearly half (49%).
 - Large-sized MRC units saw their median operating budget increase by 31%.

MRC FUNDING
FY2014: \$11 million
FY2018: \$6 million
FY2019 President's Budget: \$4 million
FY2019 NACCHO Request: \$11 million (same as FY2014)

Summary of Reported 2017 Hurricane Season Activities

Hurricane	# of MRC Units	# of MRC Volunteers	# of MRC Activities	# of Volunteer Service Hours	Estimated Total Economic Value
2017 Hurricane Season Total	100	5,069	231	106,354	\$3,995,630
Harvey	41	4,029	81	94,599	\$3,566,033
Irma	58	880	110	9,993	\$370,970
Maria	14	212	48	2,524	\$84,115

Stories from the Field During Hurricane Harvey

The total economic value of volunteer hours provided by MRC units during the 2017 Hurricane Season was nearly \$4 million.

Brazoria County MRC, Alvin, TX – Forty-nine volunteers served more than 16 days setting up and supporting two shelters for county residents, and an animal shelter for domestic and farm animals. Twenty-five volunteers also set up and operated the evacuation hub for Brazoria County, serving a total of 124 hours. The unit also supported recovery efforts and participated in shelter debriefing discussions to collect lessons learned.

Harris County Gateway to Care MRC, Houston, TX – Medical and non-medical volunteers supported multiple shelters for those displaced by the hurricane. The unit also disseminated 6,500 buckets to the public with cleaning supplies, food, bottled water, clothing, and items for babies and toddlers. In addition, volunteers supported a food fair for one community impacted by the hurricane, as well as two health fairs signing people up for resources while sharing preparedness information for the upcoming hurricane season.

Okeechobee MRC, Okeechobee, FL – Twenty-six volunteers served more than 11 days in the response to Hurricane Irma. The units served 30 hours in preparation for the hurricane by preparing a response trailer, shelter supplies, and generators. Volunteers served 90 hours supporting Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) distribution of meals ready-to-eat, water, ice, and tarps.

About NACCHO

NACCHO is the voice of the nearly 3,000 local health departments across the country. These city, county, metropolitan, district, and tribal departments work every day to ensure the safety of the water we drink, the food we eat, and the air we breathe. Learn more at <http://www.naccho.org>.

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The National Connection for Local Public Health

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The mission of the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) is to improve the health of communities by strengthening and advocating for local health departments.

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