



Request for Applications 2020 Medical Reserve Corps Operational Readiness Awards

Introduction

The National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) is pleased to announce the 2020 Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) Operational Readiness Awards (ORA) which provide funding opportunities for MRC units. Funding for this opportunity is available through a cooperative agreement between NACCHO and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response (ASPR) (grant # 6 HITEP150032-02-13). Any applicable statutory or regulatory requirements, including [45 CFR Part 75](#) and [2 CFR Part 200](#), directly apply to this sub-award. Specific information on allowable costs can be found in [2 CFR Chapter I, Chapter II, Part 200](#) including Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards.

Funding Intent

The 2020 MRC ORAs aim to build the operational readiness capabilities of MRC volunteers and units to meet the emergency preparedness and response needs of their local, regional, or statewide stakeholders. The awards are intended to be flexible to meet the needs of all MRC units, support efforts to build MRC capabilities, strengthen stakeholder awareness of MRC capabilities, and identify or sustain integration of the MRC into local, state, and/or regional emergency response plans.

The MRC ORA is a **competitive award** open to MRC units that meet the eligibility requirements as outlined on the [MRC website](#), as well as those listed in this Request for Applications (RFA) document under Section III: Eligibility Requirements.

I. Operational Readiness Awards Overview and Description of Funding Tiers:

Awards Overview

NACCHO recognizes that MRC units vary in size, capabilities, and resources. To address this, funding levels have been structured to allow units to select the funding amount that fits their needs. Tier 1 funding provides a base funding level to support units building their volunteer capabilities. Tier 2 funding provides additional funding for units that are positioned to further develop their volunteer capabilities and strengthen or build their units' response capabilities. Applications for both funding levels will include an expectation for measurable project goals that will be commensurate with the amount of funding requested. The intention is to minimize the burden of the application process and also include attainable and measurable outcomes for each of the funding levels.

MRC units may apply to **one** of the following funding opportunities:

- **Tier 1 Awards: \$2,500 – Strengthen MRC Volunteer Capabilities**
- **Tier 2 Awards: \$7,500 – Strengthen MRC Unit Response Capabilities**

MRC units may apply online at <http://application.naccho.org> between October 7 - October 28, 2019.

Project expectations

Applicants are expected to address the following goals or activities as part of their award:

1. Activities should align with at least one of the MRC and ASPR priorities:
 - i. Medical screening and care in emergencies;
 - ii. POD's, mass vaccinations, and other mass dispensing efforts;
 - iii. Deployment of volunteers outside of local jurisdiction, and
 - iv. [Training community members to respond](#).
2. Applicants are encouraged to use the [MRC Factors for Success](#) to identify areas to further develop their volunteer and unit capabilities.
3. Project plans should **identify the current state** of their MRC unit's volunteer capabilities and **realistic goals** for the future state of volunteer capabilities.
4. Project goals should focus on building or sustaining volunteer or unit capabilities depending on the current operational status of the unit: new unit, established unit, or unit that is rebuilding.
5. Projects should focus on unit requirements and missions, while incorporating appropriate tools from the [MRC Deployment Readiness Resource Guide](#) to support building common MRC standards.
6. Units will be required to submit a brief project update at approximately the six-month mark and a final project evaluation at approximately 12 months after award of funding is announced.
7. Provide examples of MRC resources to be shared with the network to support peer-to-peer learning.

Tier 1 Awards: \$2,500 – Strengthen MRC Volunteer Capabilities

Target Audience: MRC units that want to focus their efforts on strengthening the volunteer capabilities of their MRC unit. Project goals may include but are not limited to building MRC unit size through targeted recruitment campaigns, increasing the number of volunteers trained in the MRC core competencies, and identifying and procuring resources to meet the MRC unit's mission.

Examples of project activities:

- Identify and track volunteer training levels and capability of the MRC unit to support emergency responses using the MRC Volunteer Tier Levels or other categorization.
- Set training goals that address volunteer capacity gaps.
- Develop and implement training plans for MRC volunteers that align with the MRC Core Competencies.
- Develop and implement training plans that support emergency response capabilities.
- Strengthen awareness of MRC capabilities with local stakeholders.

Tier 2 Awards: \$7,500 – Strengthen MRC Unit Response Capabilities

Target Audience: MRC units that are positioned to further develop their volunteer capabilities, as well as strengthen or build their unit response capabilities. Project goals may include strengthening targeted volunteer capabilities, building or sustaining specific unit response capabilities, and identifying and procuring resources to meet and/or expand the emergency and preparedness response capabilities of the MRC unit.

Examples of project activities:

- Collaboration with response stakeholders to identify new or evolving response missions, further develop response capabilities, or sustain response capabilities.
- Develop unit training plans that reinforce volunteer capabilities and support unit mission requirements.
- Identify and implement training opportunities to support unit mission capabilities, such as workshops or exercises.
- Conduct recruitment and training of volunteers for response roles identified for specific unit missions.
- Strengthen awareness and integration of MRC capabilities with stakeholders.

II: Proposal Content, Evaluation, and Scoring of Applications

Proposals for ORAs will be evaluated on the following criteria:

1. **Project Description (50% of total score):**
 - a. For the funding level selected, describe the current state of your MRC unit and why you are selecting this funding level.
 - b. Describe the goals of your project. What are the measurable objectives for your project?
 - c. Describe the benefits and impacts your program, initiative, or activity will have on your community and/or participants. What are the expected measurable outcomes?
 - d. Describe how the project supports the MRC and ASPR priorities.
2. **Work Plan (25% of total score):**
 - a. Implementation plans: Describe how the project will be carried out and include a brief project timeline.
 - b. Describe how MRC volunteers and/or stakeholders will be engaged in the process.
3. **Budget (12.5% of total score):**
 - a. Provide a line item budget of your estimated program costs. Administrative costs should be minimized where possible.
 - i. Administrative Costs and Fees
 - ii. Professional Service Fees
 - iii. Facilities, Rentals and AV Fees
 - iv. Uniforms (such as MRC Vests or personal deployment items), Equipment or Resources
 - v. Training & Exercises
 - vi. Travel/Transportation Services
 - vii. Awards, Recruitment and Outreach
 - b. See OMB Guidance [2 CFR 200 - UNIFORM ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS, COST PRINCIPLES, AND AUDIT REQUIREMENTS FOR FEDERAL AWARDS](#), Subpart E Cost Principles, General Provisions for Selected Items of Cost (200.420 - 200.476) for additional guidance.
 - c. NACCHO's MRC Award funding may not be used to purchase promotional items/giveaways.
4. **Evaluation (12.5% of total score):**
 - a. Describe how your unit will collect, monitor, and report data to share the impacts of your ORA project. For example, did you meet your goals for improved volunteer capability? i.e. Number of total volunteers, number of Tier I & II volunteers, number of mission set capabilities, number of volunteers trained for a specific mission set response.

Evaluation and Scoring of Applications

Applications for the ORAs will be evaluated on the relevance of the proposed project to the level of funding requested, clear description of the intent of the project, and the overall impact of the funding to support the mission of the local MRC unit(s) applying. Evaluation of the project scope will consider the funding tier for which the unit is applying.

Application questions will be scored in four categories, as outlined above: Project Information (50%), Work Plan (25%), Budget (12.5%), and Evaluation (12.5%). Applications may receive a maximum score of 100% with funding awarded based on an applicant's total score, recommendation of reviewer(s), scope of project relevant to the funding tier, and the total funding available across each of the tier levels.

III: Eligibility Requirements

Minimum eligibility requirements for the MRC ORAs include the following:

- MRC units must have an account at NACCHO's Awards website (<http://application.naccho.org>) to apply.
- Selected applicants must have fully updated their unit profiles* on the MRC Program Office website (<https://mrc.hhs.gov/HomePage>) between **July 1 – October 28, 2019**, prior to receiving award funding.
 - *A fully updated unit profile is one in which all questions have been answered or updated (particularly unit leader contact information, numbers of volunteers, and activity reports, if applicable). The MRC Program Office strongly encourages units to update their unit profiles with any previously unreported activities for the last year, as well as new activities.
- Applicants must be eligible to receive federal funds through their housing/sponsoring agency or be a 501(c) (3) non-profit organization.
- Applicants must provide both their Employer Identification Number (EIN) and their Duns & Bradstreet Number (DUNS), as required by Federal regulations.
- Prospective MRC units* applying for a 2020 MRC ORA must follow the MRC Program Office's unit registration process, have submitted their prospective unit's application for registration, and have been confirmed by their Regional Liaison no later than **October 28, 2019**, to be eligible.
 - *A prospective MRC unit that has applied for an MRC ORA will not be awarded funding until it is an approved and registered MRC unit.
- MRC Units selected for funding will receive a notification of award and contractual agreement. Units that accept the funding agree to comply with the terms of agreement outlined in the contractual agreement and submit all documents within the terms of agreement timeframe. NACCHO will not be able to accept any requests for changes to the content language of the contractual agreement. Requests for corrections or changes to designated approving authorities, housing agencies, or addresses to the contract must be submitted to NACCHO by February 10, 2020.
- MRC units that received an MRC Challenge Award in 2018 must have submitted a final project evaluation report to be eligible for funding in 2020. Contact mrc@naccho.org if you are unsure if you have submitted a report.

IV: Reporting Requirements

All awardees will be required to complete two project surveys as part of the funding agreement. NACCHO will provide awardees with guidelines and requirements at the time of award. The information reported in these surveys will be used to determine progress toward meeting the award goals and objectives, provide accountability of funding to the MRC Program office, and identify promising practices, resources or tools to share across the greater MRC network. NACCHO is also interested in ensuring that ORA projects can be sustained beyond the project timeline. Therefore, progress reports will include plans to ensure the sustainability of efforts initiated under the award.

The reporting requirements include:

- Initial progress survey six months after notification of award funding.
- Final project evaluation survey at twelve months.

Awardees are encouraged to report successes through conference presentations, media articles, and research papers, and by sharing with NACCHO at mrc@naccho.org.

V: Important Dates and Information

The following dates are provided for planning purposes for the application, review, notice of award, and post award reporting requirements.

- **July 1 – October 28, 2019:** Applicants must have fully updated their unit profiles on the MRC Program Office website (<https://mrc.hhs.gov>).
- **September 23, 2019:** Release FY2019-2020 MRC ORA Request for Applications.
- **September 30, 2019:** MRC Awards Webinar.
- **October 7, 2019:** MRC Operational Readiness Award application opens at **5am PST**.
- **October 28, 2019:** MRC Operational Readiness Award application closes **5pm PST**
- **October 29, 2019:** Verify eligibility status of applicants. Date by which prospective MRC units must have submitted their application for registration with the MRC Program Office in order to be eligible for a 2020 MRC ORA.
- **October 30, 2019:** Application review period begins.
- **November 27, 2019:** Application review period ends.
- **Week of December 2, 2019:** Notice of Awards released to awardees.
- **December 9-20, 2019:** Award contracts mailed to awardees.
- **February 10, 2020:** Signed contracts and Certification of Non-debarment forms due to NACCHO.
- **June 2020:** Six-month project progress survey.
- **January 2021:** Final project evaluation survey.

Other Important Information

MRC ORA contracts will be sent electronically to selected units no later than December 20, 2019. It is the responsibility of the MRC unit to return a signed copy of the contract no later than February 10, 2020. Funding for awards will be mailed approximately 2-4 weeks after receipt of the completed and signed contract. We are unable to make content changes to the contract or extend the deadline for receipt of the contract. Units are encouraged to be proactive in coordinating the grant approval process within their housing agency or local jurisdiction to avoid possible delays.

For any additional questions, contact NACCHO at mrc@naccho.org.