Request for Applications
2021 Medical Reserve Corps Operational Readiness Awards

Introduction

The National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) is pleased to announce the 2021 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 # 1 HITEP200045-01-00, CFDA # 93.008 Medical Reserve Corps Small Grant Program. 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 2021 MRC ORAs aim to build the operational readiness capabilities of MRC 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 and strengthen MRC capabilities, raise 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. Units will be expected to complete an interim project survey and final project survey that outlines their demonstrated progress to be eligible for future funding.

Consideration will be given to applicants that demonstrate the need for funding, identify clear goals and objectives to build response capabilities, have the capacity to implement their project plans, and develop an evaluation and sustainability plan. Consecutive year funding may be available, so applicants are encouraged to develop goals and objectives for the next 12 months, as well as over the next 36 months.

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.

MRC units may apply to **one** of the following funding opportunities:
- **Tier 1 Awards: $5,000** – **Build MRC Response Capabilities**
- **Tier 2 Awards: $10,000** – **Strengthen MRC Response Capabilities**

MRC units may apply online at https://nacchoapplication.secure-platform.com/a/organizations/main/home between November 9 – December 7, 2020.

Tier 1 Awards: $5,000 – Build MRC Response Capabilities

Focus: Provides a funding level for units to build capabilities to meet local response needs. This funding may support units that are smaller in size, have a specific/targeted need, a newly formed unit, or a unit that is focused on rebuilding their MRC unit if previously inactive or underutilized.

Example of Project Goals and Objectives
- Specific or Targeted Need: Develop a plan to recruit, onboard, and train MRC Volunteers to support mass vaccination response teams.
- Newly formed MRC unit: Develop an MRC unit volunteer management plan that identifies volunteer registration and onboarding requirements, alert and activation processes, establish minimum ICS and MRC Core Competencies requirements, volunteer tier levels, and identification of primary mission sets to be developed in collaboration with response partners.
- Rebuilding: Collaborate with response partners to determine emergency response needs, identify any barriers to using MRC volunteers, and develop a volunteer training and exercise plan to support MRC mission sets and integration into local response plans.

Examples of project activities:
- Develop recruitment strategy for medical professionals using social media and news outlets.
- Develop onboarding process to register volunteers, conduct administrative requirements, and track training requirements of volunteers.
- Identify and track MRC core competencies, ICS, and specialized trainings to support emergency responses using the MRC Volunteer Tier Levels or other categorization.
- Conduct workshops or meetings with emergency response partners, identify response roles for MRC volunteers, and build MRC mission sets.
- Conduct training and exercises that support MRC mission sets.
- Capture lessons learned from exercises or response activities. Update mission sets or response plans as needed.

Tier 2 Awards: $10,000 – Strengthen MRC Response Capabilities

Focus: Provides a funding level for units to strengthen current capabilities for evolving response missions. This funding is intended for units that have an established volunteer management structure, have the capacity to further expand their unit response capabilities, have a demonstrated record of supporting public health emergency responses, or have a record of supporting multiple natural disaster response missions.

Examples of project goals and objectives:
- Collaborate with response partners to identify and develop new or evolving MRC response mission sets, develop training plan to fulfill the mission set requirements, with an agreed target date to be operationally ready to deploy.
- Develop 2 MRC Mission Sets and execute a yearly training plan to increase volunteers able to deploy that include MRC Core Competencies, ICS, CPR, PFA, and other core requirements for deployments locally or outside of outside of local jurisdiction.

Examples of project activities:
- Conduct regularly scheduled unit trainings that reinforce volunteer capabilities to 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 build integration of MRC capabilities with stakeholders through joint trainings or exercises.
- Identify and purchase mission set equipment requirements and train volunteers on use of equipment/supplies.
- Capture lessons learned from exercises or response activities. Update mission sets, job action sheets, or response plans as needed.

Project expectations

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

1. Project goals should focus on developing unit capabilities to support local, regional, or state response missions, while incorporating appropriate tools and resources from the MRC Deployment Readiness Resource Guide which support building common MRC standards. Units are encouraged to develop training plans that include the MRC Core Competencies, identify minimum training requirements necessary for deployments, and utilize the MRC mission set template to develop response team plans that can be shared across the MRC network and with stakeholders.

2. Goals and 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.

3. Applicants are encouraged to use the MRC Factors for Success to identify areas to further develop their volunteer and unit capabilities.

4. Project plans should **identify the current state** of their MRC unit's volunteer capabilities, **barriers to deploying** MRC volunteers, and **realistic goals** for the future state of volunteer and unit capabilities.

5. Project goals should focus on **sustaining** volunteer or unit response capabilities through the development of unit training and response plans.

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.

II: Proposal Content, Evaluation, and Scoring of Applications

Proposals for ORAs will be evaluated on the following criteria:

The complete list of administrative and application questions may be downloaded here.

1. **Project Description – 250 words per question (50% of total score):**
    a. Background: Describe the **community that your MRC unit supports** and how the MRC supports the community during emergencies/non-emergencies. Include jurisdiction demographics that impact the types of support roles or missions for the MRC unit such as age, disability, income, race, and ethnicity. Include any other unique challenges that demonstrate a need for this funding.
    b. Current State: Describe the **current readiness and capabilities** of your MRC unit. Describe your challenges or strengths to support the level of funding requested.   Units selecting the Strengthening award should be able to demonstrate their current capacity to develop response plans and mission sets. Include how your MRC unit is currently integrated into response plans or areas for opportunities to support new or evolving missions?

    c. <u>Future State:</u> Describe the **goals** of your project to build or strengthen the unit's operational readiness for the next 12 months. Consider what is realistic this project year and the measurable objectives to build your unit's operational readiness over the next 12-36 months.

    d. *(Example: 1. Develop a targeted recruitment plan for medical personnel to support mass vaccination plans or other identified response roles. 2. Develop a Mass Vaccination Mission Set to support local response plans and implement a training and exercise plan to support the mission set).*

    e. <u>Measurable Outcomes:</u> Describe the **measurable outcomes** of your planned project activities or planning resources developed for the next 12 months. *(Example: 1. XX number of MRC volunteers conduct onboarding administrative and training requirements to be a Level 3 deployable volunteer. 2. XX number of volunteers have been trained to support an MRC Mass Vaccination mission 3. Develop 2 mission sets and supporting training plans).*

    f. <u>MRC Priorities:</u> The MRC program has identified four priorities that MRC units should strive for. Describe the activities that will be conducted to support the primary MRC ASPR Priority that this project supports and why it is important for the community your MRC serves.

       i. Medical screening and care in emergencies

      ii. Points of Dispensing, mass vaccination, and other mass dispensing efforts

     iii. Use of MRC units outside of local jurisdiction

     iv. Training community members to respond

2. **Work Plan Implementation – 250-word limit per question (20% of total score):**

    a. <u>Implementation plan:</u> Describe the activities or trainings to be conducted to meet the project goals, objectives, and outcomes. Include a brief timeline over the next 12 months.

    b. <u>Collaboration:</u> Describe how MRC volunteers and stakeholders will be engaged in the project and strategies to address any barriers to deploy volunteers.

3. **Evaluation and Sustainability - 250-word limit per question (20% of total score):**

    a. Describe how your unit will collect data, monitor, and track planned activities to meet your project goals and objectives.

    b. Describe how your project goals will help build sustainability of your MRC unit during the next 12-36 months. *(Example - what procedures, plans, or trainings will be developed for future MRC activities).*

4. **Budget (10% of total score)**

    a. Include a line item budget of your estimated program costs. Your budget should equal $5,000 or $10,000 based on the award level requested. Use [NACCHO's Budget Template](#), or your own budget template saved as a doc, docx, pdf, csv, or xml file.

    b. Administrative costs should be minimized where possible and funds should be used to support unit response capabilities. **NACCHO's MRC Award funding may not be used to purchase promotional items/giveaways.** Please include the following categories in your budget:

       i. Administrative Costs and Fees

      ii. Professional Service Fees

     iii. Facilities, Rentals, and AV Fees

     iv. Uniforms, Field Equipment, and Resources

      v. Training & Exercises (T&E)

     vi. Travel/Transportation Services

    vii. Awards, Recruitment, and Outreach

Evaluation and Scoring of Applications

Applications for the ORAs will be evaluated on the relevance of the proposed project goals and activities for the level of funding requested, clear description of the intent of the project, planned activities, capacity to implement planned activities, and the overall impact of the funding to support the mission of the local MRC unit(s) applying.

Application questions will be scored in four categories, as outlined above: Project Information (50%), Work Plan (20%), Evaluation and Sustainability (20%) and Budget (10%). 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.

III: Eligibility Requirements

Minimum eligibility requirements for the MRC ORAs include the following:

- Applicants must have a MY NACCHO account to apply: **https://nacchoapplication.secure-platform.com/a/organizations/main/home**
- Selected applicants must have fully updated their unit profiles* on the MRC Program Office website (https://mrc.hhs.gov/HomePage) between **September 1 – December 7, 2020**, 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. Please ensure you enter correct information for the housing agency and signature authority to avoid contract delays.
- 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 2021 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 **December 7, 2020**, 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 March 22, 2021.
- MRC units that received an MRC Operational Readiness Award in 2020 must have submitted an interim project evaluation report to be eligible for funding in 2021. MRC COVID-19 Awards must have met project requirements by December 4, 2020 to be eligible for future funding. Contact mrc@naccho.org if you are unsure if you have submitted a report.

IV: Reporting Requirements

All awardees will be required to complete an interim and final project survey as part of the funding agreement. 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.

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.

- **September 1 – December 7, 2020:** Applicants must have fully updated their unit profiles on the MRC Program Office website (https://mrc.hhs.gov).

- **October 28, 2020:** Release FY2020- 2021 MRC ORA Request for Applications.

- **November 5, 2020:** MRC Awards Webinar.

- **November 9, 2020:** MRC Operational Readiness Award application opens at **5am PST**.

- **December 7, 2020:** MRC Operational Readiness Award application closes **5pm PST**

- **December 8, 2020:** Verify eligibility status of applicants. Date by which prospective MRC units must have submitted their application for registration with the MRC Program Office to be eligible for a 2021 MRC ORA.

- **December 9, 2020:** Application review period begins.

- **December 30, 2020:** Application review period ends.

- **Week of January 4, 2021:** Notice of Awards released to awardees.

- **January 11-22, 2021:** Award contracts mailed to awardees.

- **March 22, 2021:** Signed contracts and Certification of Non-debarment forms due to NACCHO.

- **July 2021:** Interim project progress survey.

- **January 2022:** Final project evaluation survey.

Other Important Information

MRC ORA contracts will be sent electronically to selected units no later than January 22, 2021. It is the responsibility of the MRC unit to return a signed copy of the contract no later than March 22, 2021. 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.