



# MRC In Touch

Volunteers Building Strong, Healthy, and Prepared Communities

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[www.medicalreservecorps.gov](http://www.medicalreservecorps.gov)

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## Featured Article

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### North Central Mississippi MRC Participates in a Statewide Exercise

On July 31, eight volunteers from the North Central Mississippi MRC participated in the largest simulation ever conducted in the state. The exercise brought together over 200 participants from state and local emergency management and public health agencies, students and representatives from the University of Mississippi, as well as local organizations including the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program, a faith-based organization, and the Boy Scouts.

The simulation demonstrated what would happen if there were an explosion in the University of Mississippi's football stadium in Oxford, MS. Participants in the exercise worked together to make the simulation flow smoothly and were able to identify the roles that they would play in a real response. The exercise provided a learning experience that could not be obtained in any other form. Local organizations plan to execute another exercise of this scale every four years to stay updated on the different technologies and methods.

For the MRC, the exercise helped them to gauge volunteers' responses to the situation and to evaluate their strengths and weaknesses. MRC volunteers understood that their role in an emergency would be to help first responders on the scene. It also demonstrated that MRC volunteers can handle any situation that might arise. The North Central Mississippi MRC will continue to train its volunteers accordingly.

This September marks the tenth annual National Preparedness Month, and emphasizes the importance that preparedness plays in community resiliency after an emergency or disaster. Jimmy Allgood, Director of Oxford (MS) Emergency Management, said, "A community that fails to exercise its preparedness plans and procedures is not truly prepared. Preparedness is just one portion of the overall planning process. The community must continually exercise and update their plans to stay current with today's changing technologies and community needs." This month, take the opportunity to encourage preparedness in your community and assess what role your MRC would play in a local response!

## MRC/NACCHO Connections

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### Write a Winning Proposal for NACCHO's MRC Awards

NACCHO's MRC Awards application process opens on September 30! This year, NACCHO will offer two awards: a Capacity Building Award, which will provide funding to all eligible MRC units to enhance their capacity, and the Challenge Award, which will ask units to design a proposal for a project that aligns with one of four focus areas. Twenty-five Challenge Awards will be awarded after a competitive selection process.

Units may find it helpful to keep in mind these key elements of a winning proposal:

**Remember the objectives of a proposal.** By writing a proposal, you are looking to access funding you need to execute or sustain your mission and capabilities. The funder (in this case, NACCHO) is looking for a plan to focus on the issues they want addressed and the methods you have identified to achieve the desired outcomes. Keep the funder's intentions in mind as you write and edit your proposal.

**Start with the funding announcement.** Be sure to read the funding announcement in its entirety to understand what the funder is looking for and what they are not. Once you have an understanding of the funding announcement, activate your team to help write the proposal. Think of those in your housing organization, or outstanding volunteers who can offer writing and editing skills, or who can outline your unit's vision as you write the

proposal. As you write and edit your proposal, refer to the funding announcement to ensure that your proposal still aligns with what is outlined in the funding announcement.

**Follow the KISS Principle.** When writing your proposal, "Keep it Simple, Stupid." Remember that the funder is looking for something that is easy to learn and use—don't over complicate the proposal. Keeping it simple also respects your readers' time. And remember to use plain language—could a tenth grader understand your proposal?

**Your writing style makes a difference.** Use short sentences (20-25 words) with only one idea per sentence. Chose active voice over passive voice, and dig out buried verbs to shorten your sentences (Change "Convened a Meeting" to "Met"). In writing your proposal, avoid jargon, clichés, or idioms. Jargon won't often be understood by a broad audience, while idioms and clichés will lengthen your sentences. Reviewers will often read hundreds of proposals, so be sure to make every word in your proposal count!

## Announcements

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### MRC Units Mark National Preparedness Month

National Preparedness Month 2013 is underway! MRC units play a critical role in encouraging their communities to be prepared for disasters, and Preparedness Month reminds us of all of the ways individuals and organizations can take the steps necessary to be prepared.

MRC units already have some great activities lined up to mark National Preparedness Month 2013:

- Franklin County and Columbus MRC (OH) have almost ten activities scheduled throughout September, including a "Ready in Three" training, ICS 100, and a rabies vaccination clinic.
- Satilla MRC and the Ware County Community Emergency Response Team (GA) will simulate a texting and driving accident scenario. They will use the opportunity to educate residents about disaster preparedness, and the upcoming flu season.
- Salt Lake County MRC (UT) will raise awareness about emergency preparedness and will recruit new members at the Utah State Fair. They will also participate in a multijurisdictional exercise with the Community Emergency Response Team.
- Uncas Health District MRC (CT) will distribute preparedness coloring books to kids at a community fair in Norwich, CT.

Keep up the excellent work, and be sure to send your Preparedness Month stories to [mrcnewsletter@naccho.org](mailto:mrcnewsletter@naccho.org). NACCHO will be sharing these stories in more MRC publications and in other NACCHO media.

### MRC Hurricane Sandy Report

The DCVMRC's Hurricane Sandy Activities Report is now available. This report provides an overview of the MRC network's actions during the peak activity of this event. The report reflects MRC unit profile activities between October 24, 2012 -- January 11, 2013, and relevant emails and reports shared by state and local coordinators.

Due to the local nature of the MRC, a true accounting of all of the events and activities is not possible at the local level. Review the [report](#) to see all of the great work MRC units across the nation have contributed in preparing for and responding to this massive event!

### Call for Nominations: Million Hearts Blood Pressure Control Champions

The 2013 Million Hearts Hypertension Control Challenge is underway! Submit your nomination for a clinician, clinical practitioners, or health systems working with patient to get blood pressure under control, or encourage high-performing, small and large practices to enter the Challenge. The Challenge is open through September 9.

Clinicians, practices, and health systems that provide primary care and have achieved hypertension control rates greater than 70 percent are eligible to enter. Last year, Million Hearts recognized Kaiser Permanente Colorado and Ellsworth Medical Clinic in Wisconsin for achieving greater than 80 percent control among their patient populations with high blood pressure. [Enter now](#) to help more Americans get their blood pressure under control!

### Zombie Apocalypse Game

Looking for a way to engage children during Preparedness Month? Luke Esquibel, Unit Director of the Albuquerque-University of New Mexico MRC, shared their unit's "Zombie Apocalypse Game" to help children

prepare for disasters and to understand the importance of flu vaccinations. Luke says:

"The teachers were made up to look like zombies. Kids were instructed that there is a pandemic and they need to collect resources, water, batteries, etc. Some of them had to care for more than one person, and if they are touched by a zombie they need to go to the vaccination room. Teens needed to answer a preparedness question; if they get the question correct they are allowed to go back in and finish collecting their resources, and if they don't answer it correctly they become zombies."

Children play a critical role in encouraging preparedness. [FEMA](#) notes that seventy percent of households where children brought preparedness materials home from school have an emergency plan that has been discussed. Findings show children play an important role in disaster preparedness and are very effective at influencing others. Incorporate interactive games and activities such as scavenger hunts and emergency plan development to make preparedness trainings for children fun and successful.



The mission of the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) is to be a leader, partner, catalyst, and voice for local public health departments.

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