

NACCHO's MRC COVID-19 RISE Awards



Historic Response

In just the first two years of COVID-19 pandemic response, the over 300,000 volunteers of the Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) network contributed over 3.8 million hours of service at an economic value of over \$132 million.¹ Volunteers supported a range of activities including testing, contact tracing, call centers, medical surge, and vaccinations. This largest multi-year engagement in the network's 20-year history demonstrated the MRC's readiness and adaptability as an essential provider of local workforce surge support.

Investment in the MRC

In the midst of the COVID-19 response, the MRC network received an historic investment of \$100 million through the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021. Through this funding and under a cooperative agreement with the Administration for Strategic Preparedness and Response (ASPR), the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) provided \$15.1 million to 253 MRC units and state coordinators through the MRC COVID-19 Respond, Innovate, Sustain, and Equip (RISE) Awards.

This fact sheet shares the accomplishments of the MRC as a result of this investment.

MRC COVID-19 RISE Awards

NACCHO's MRC COVID-19 RISE awards provided MRC units and state coordinators funding to support the immediate needs of the MRC network, increase capacity to address the ongoing COVID-19 response efforts, and ensure units are resourced for future mission requirements. A total of 253 awards were distributed from 2021 through 2023 under three tier levels: \$25,000 (Tier I); \$50,000 (Tier II); \$75,000 (Tier III). Awards supported over 300,000 volunteers across 39 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico.

\$15.1 million

Distributed 2021-2023

253

MRC units and state coordinators funded

39

States, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico reached

339,636

Volunteers supported

Communities Served

- 17% <50,000 residents
- 47% 50,000-499,999 residents
- 28% 500,000 residents
- 9% Statewide reach





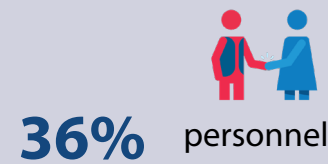
Use of RISE Award Funds

RISE Award funds enabled MRC units to increase their overall readiness by attaining needed supplies; recruiting, training, and deploying volunteers; and hiring staff to dedicate to support and expand unit capabilities. These changes enabled units to create an infrastructure to better support current and future responses.

Units primarily used funding for supplies, equipment, and/or technology, including items for response, training, medical care, and office operations. Secondly, units used funds for direct labor and employment benefits.

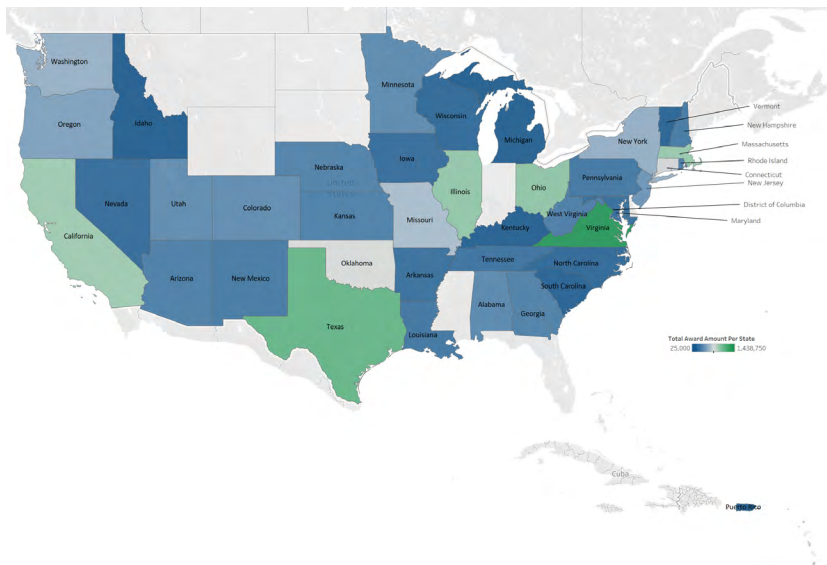
Upgrades to messaging and communications strategies/systems enabled units to more easily mobilize their volunteers and respond rapidly to emergency events. Sites noted increased visibility through website updates and media campaigns. This visibility also aided in recruitment as units could more easily engage with potential volunteers through social media and other forms of advertising and outreach.

Use of Funds



**based on a sampling of units*

Reach of RISE Awards



[Click to see a breakdown of funding by location.](#)

“ This funding allowed us to hire and retain qualified staff to increase our response capability. The new coordinator successfully onboarded 167 new members during the performance period. We were also able to upgrade our team member’s PPE for additional safety while deployed. ”



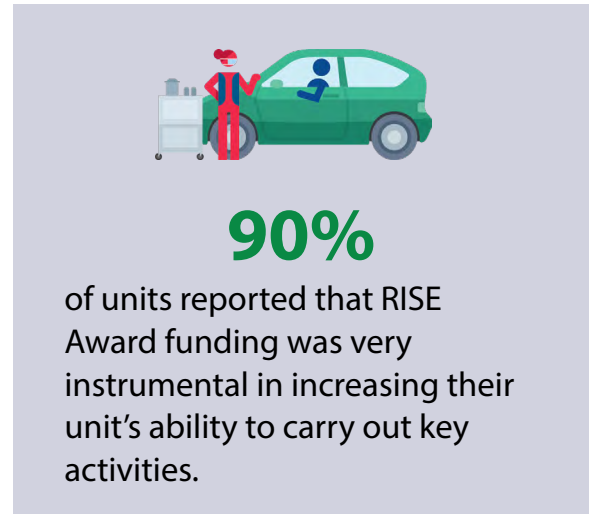
Impact of RISE Awards

The RISE Award allowed units to elevate their capacity in many areas. Before the RISE Award, one third of units stated that they had no current funding source (as of 2020), and the median budget across units was only \$2,500.² The awards increased these budgets often tenfold or more, and provided opportunities to MRC units that were not available before.

With investments using RISE Award funds, unit leaders were able to establish regular community outreach, perform COVID-19 response, and conduct volunteer recruitment and engagement activities. Over 70% of units stated their ability to equip volunteers increased significantly from RISE funding. Nearly all (90%) of units reported that RISE Award funding was very instrumental in increasing their unit's ability to carry out key activities.

Awardees cited volunteer leadership; the acquirement and management of necessary equipment and supplies; new trainings; and technological improvements as primary factors for their level of confidence in their unit's sustainability. Many noted that funding opportunities are scarce, and the RISE award allowed them to build a foundation of response support (volunteers, supplies, trainings, etc.) that will likely last past current funding.

“Our unit has been able to equip volunteers with the necessary supplies to respond to remote public health incidents and to participate in events to promote healthy living and emergency preparedness. ”



“Our volunteer base has become better prepared for response to both medical emergencies and disaster events. ”



Virginia Beach MRC (VA)

Future Investments

Supporting the capacity and readiness of these local volunteer units for future emergencies is a top priority. Medical Reserve Corps volunteers help communities prepare for, respond to, and recover from a variety of public health emergencies, which may include emergencies related to natural disasters—such as wildfires, hurricanes, tornadoes, blizzards, and floods—as well as other emergencies that affect public health, such as infectious disease outbreaks, and chemical spills and attacks, whether intentional or natural. While these supplemental investments were critical to the emergency pandemic response, sustained investment in personnel and leadership roles within units is necessary to continue the level of operations built with the RISE awards. Furthermore, predictable and sustained funding through annual federal appropriations is needed to ensure units have quality, functioning equipment, and adequate training for new and established volunteers.



University of Minnesota MRC

References

1. Medical Reserve Corps COVID-19 Report: March 2020 to 2022, ASPR MRC, November 2022, <https://aspr.hhs.gov/MRC/Shared%20Documents/MRC-2022-COVID-Report-508.pdf>
2. 2020 Network Profile of the Medical Reserve Corps, NACCHO, November 2021, <https://www.naccho.org/uploads/downloadable-resources/NACCHO-Network-Profile-MRC-2020.pdf>

Acknowledgements

This document was made possible through support from the Medical Reserve Corps Program, ASPR, grant number 6 HITEP200045. NACCHO is grateful for this funding to support the Medical Reserve Corps. The views expressed within do not necessarily represent those of the sponsor.

Additional Information

For additional information visit www.naccho.org/mrc or email mrc@naccho.org.