



# THE WINNEBAGO COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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## **MEDICAL RESERVE CORPS**

**WELCOME to the Annual Medical Reserve  
Corps National Leadership Conference!  
Baltimore, MD July 7-9, 2004**



# THE WINNEBAGO COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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## **MEDICAL RESERVE CORPS**

**Best Practices in Volunteer  
Recruitment & Relations**



# Recruiting Methods

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What is Recruitment in Volunteerism?

Recruitment is the act of identifying groups and individuals for service, and then asking them to serve.



# Recruiting Methods

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What is Public Relations for Volunteerism?

Public Relations is the process of relating an understanding of your organization's purpose and encouraging the public to regard your efforts positively.



# Recruiting Methods

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What is Marketing for Volunteerism?

Traditionally, marketing involves determining the needs of select or target audiences and then designing goods services or opportunities to respond to those needs; in volunteer efforts, this involves targeting those groups with the desired skills and a willingness to serve, and then giving them the reason(s) to do so.



# Recruiting Methods

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- What are your program needs?
- What groups of people can fill them?
- How do you reach these people?
- What is your message?
- How do you get commitment?



# Recruiting Methods

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- **What are your program needs?**
  - Understand the purpose of your MRC project
  - Sell MRC within your own organization
  - Prepare for volunteer involvement
  - Clearly define volunteer roles and create Job Action Sheets
  - Know and relate the benefits (and costs) of volunteering for your program



# Recruiting Methods

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- **What groups of people do you need/want?**
  - The program needs should drive your search
  - Targeted recruitment is usually preferable to a broad-based recruitment effort
  - Know the demographics of the traditionally available volunteers in your region and how to entice the usually unavailable groups
  - Do all you can with the known before you venture into the unknown



# Recruiting Methods

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## — How do you reach these people?

- Interagency networking
- Direct marketing to CEO's, community leaders and elected officials
- Direct marketing to specific labor groups and licensed professionals
- MRC & partner newsletters & websites
- Word of mouth & referrals
- Public call or blanket marketing



# Recruiting Methods

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## — **What is your message?**

- What are your MRC goals, mission?
- Why is the MRC needed?
- Who can help in your efforts?
- Why should they help?
- What is required to volunteer?



# Recruiting Methods

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## — **How do you get commitment?**

- Have volunteers complete an application
- Have volunteers complete a skills/interest inventory and read a privacy statement
- Help volunteers plan for their families
- Clearly define the volunteer's possible roles
- Clearly define the time commitment
- Show benefit to volunteer and community



# Recruiting Methods

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## — Things to remember:

- Traditional volunteer bases are shrinking – people retiring later, more working parents, declining work ethic, etc.
- Leisure time is at a premium in the U.S.
- Know what screening level you need and how to achieve it in a cost-effective manner
- Work for diversity in your program
- Recruitment is a year-round job



# Best Practices

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- What are your MRC introduction/orientation procedures?
- How do you plan to utilize your volunteers?
- What are your plans for volunteer management?
- How will you determine job assignments?



# Introduction & Orientation

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- Limit time for this first meeting (2 hours?)
- Be sure all forms are completed
- Give a brief history and explain benefits of the MRC and your housing agency
- Distribute handouts and give a brief training on home/family, work and travel preparedness
- Greet and meet each volunteer personally



# Introduction & Orientation (continued)

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- Give brief training modules in your agency's volunteer requirements and benefits, incident command, emergency response, public relations, disaster mental health and/or any initial, basic topics you require for volunteers
- Keep it animated and upbeat!
- Give MRC update/communication methods
- Cover “next steps”, training, etc.



# Volunteer Utilization

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- Know your MRC's needs!
- Develop an MRC command flowchart
- Wherever possible, try to use licensed professionals within their field of expertise
- Use your “Interest/Skills Inventory” in job role placement
- If necessary, utilize personal interviews to assist in the role placement process



# Volunteer Utilization

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- Use your volunteers appropriately
  - Utilize the most enthusiastic and available people for “active” leadership duties such as steering committee, training, administrative, public health initiatives, recruiting liaison, etc.
- Keep those that want to respond only in a disaster on “inactive” status in your database



# Volunteer Utilization

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- Consider any additional training required when making job assignments – the less the better; job roles can be changed, periodically, as the volunteer’s training accumulates
- Offer modular advanced training to all volunteers on a regular basis, as possible or available; and keep them aware of any and all available internet or web-based training



# Volunteer Utilization

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- Determine your “best” (they are all great!) volunteers and use them as your links to companies, agencies, & organizations or for personal referrals – often the very committed people *know* the person who recruited them
- These people also best promote your program



# Volunteer Management / Relations

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- Keep paid staff and volunteer roles defined and clearly different – Fair Labor Standards Act dictates this
- Train paid staff on the proper treatment of volunteer workers
- Give volunteers a workspace, clearly defined objectives/duties and praise for their efforts!



# Volunteer Management / Relations

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- Use positive language and be specific when correcting or assisting volunteers
- Check with volunteers to be sure they are comfortable with their assignment; if not, try to rectify or reassign job role
- Set the tone for change – duties will rarely remain constant, and people do not always like surprises



# Volunteer Management / Relations

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- Develop a plan for utilization of volunteers from special needs populations
- Develop plans for team building/motivation
- Develop plans for volunteer evaluation
- Have a plan for job reassignment
- Have a plan for release of volunteers



# Volunteer Management / Relations

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## **SPIRIT: a good acronym\* for those in charge**

- **S**incerity – be honest about your program
- **P**assion – have passion, enthusiasm is contagious
- **I**nnovation – be creative & flexible, have fun
- **R**isk-taking – break the mold (within reason)
- **I**nclusiveness – be diverse and empowering
- **T**hinking like a visionary – think how it can be

\*Source: Dana Renschler, Waco Center for Youth



# Job Assignment Selection

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- Develop Job Roles for your MRC activities – for both ongoing initiatives and disaster/emergency
- Develop Job Action Sheets with clearly defined duties, work location, required qualifications/commitment & supervisor or subordinate job title.
- Assign paid staff & volunteers in accordance with your MRC command flowchart



# Job Assignment Selection

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- Job assignment is based on professional skills, a completed Skills/Interest Inventory and documented training whenever possible
- Consider the “active” or “inactive” (episodic) status in Job Assignment
- Family & employment commitments are a factor that must be included
- If needed, conduct an evaluation interview



# Job Assignment Selection

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- Consider “family” volunteers in assignments
- Consider special needs assignments
- Be prepared for reevaluation and reassignment where needed
- Utilize informal methods where appropriate — listen to what people have to say about your volunteers



# Volunteer Retention – know who your best volunteers are and why!

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## — **Your best volunteers:**

- Are proud of what they do
- Believe in your mission
- Feel good helping others
- Are dependable, flexible & team players
- Have relevant expertise, skills or training
- Have some personal link with your program



# Volunteer Retention – know the characteristics of a great organization

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## — **Great Organizations:**

- Have a shared belief in the mission, become empowered to do more – therefore earning respect and responsibility, clearly see the “big picture” and don’t waste time.
- Provide and encourage infectious enthusiasm
- Provide the opportunity to interact with a variety of people & achieve important goals



# Volunteer Retention – know the characteristics of a great organization

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## — **Great Organizations (continued):**

- Fill a clear need with honesty, integrity and no misgivings about their value or contribution
- Watch the organization & individuals grow
- Utilize feedback for positive action
- Know how to treat workers and clients
- Discuss the previously avoided
- Expect people to exceed the minimum



# Volunteer Retention – How do you keep your volunteers?

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## — **To feel satisfied, volunteers need:**

- To know the cost/benefit of their service
- To be properly placed into a role (adjusted as necessary) according to their interest & skill
- Initial orientation & training sufficient for them to be comfortable with the program, the mission, the leadership and their role
- Early assignment of duties for those who wish to an active role & regular updates for all



# Volunteer Retention – How do you keep your volunteers?

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## — **To feel satisfied, volunteers need (cont.):**

- Access to the proper levels for questions or problem resolution
- Access to additional training, as available & requested, to progress in their role or to further develop skills or capabilities
- The opportunity to apply their abilities, skills & training in mock trials, such as tabletop drills, on-line exercises or scale drills



# Volunteer Retention – How do you keep your volunteers?

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## — **To feel satisfied, volunteers need (cont.):**

- Realistic expectations from leadership
- Recognition or rewards for their service
- Leadership to provide a work environment that is as safe as possible at the time
- Leadership to address liability issues (briefly, and to the best of your ability)
- A volunteer work environment that is as FUN and comfortable as possible



# Regional & Interagency Cooperative Volunteer Response Efforts

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## — **Who do you play with and why?**

- The answer depends upon your local MRC mission, the housing agency, conditions and needs of your community, and consideration of the general goals & mission of the Medical Reserve Corps Program - nationally
- You should generally consider cooperation or partnership/integration with any related or legitimate entities you may respond with or from which you may draw volunteers



# Regional & Interagency Cooperative Volunteer Response Efforts

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— **Who do you play with and why?**

**- Good General Guidelines:**

- Create a liaison or point person within every organization, business or government agency that you possibly can
- Create/participate in every interagency planning or advisory committee that you can
- Be involved, where invited, in every other agency's activities that you can



# Regional & Interagency Cooperative Volunteer Response Efforts

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## — **Who do you play with and why? (cont.)**

- The management of your housing agency
  - You will have a long, hard road if you do not have the support of the agency supporting your program



# Regional & Interagency Cooperative Volunteer Response Efforts

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- **Who do you play with and why? (cont.)**
  - Other local, regional, state and/or federal public health agencies b/c of interdependence
  - Your response in a disaster will be, in some way, cooperatively with the response, activities, direction, etc. of these entities
  - These agencies are a wealth of resources & information from which to draw for both response activities and public health projects



# Regional & Interagency Cooperative Volunteer Response Efforts

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## — **Who do you play with and why? (cont.)**

- Other 1<sup>st</sup> responder agencies b/c you are mutually dependent and beneficial in crisis
- All responders need to be aware of the others' response plans and how they coincide with their own
- Planning together (interagency) will both assure better understanding of all agency's plans and operating procedures and foster better interagency relationships



# Regional & Interagency Cooperative Volunteer Response Efforts

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## — **Who do you play with and why? (cont.)**

- Other non-profit & volunteer agencies b/c you are working towards similar goals within the same community – why be adversarial?
- Why re-invent the wheel, chase the same volunteer pool & compete with each other when you can collaborate/coexist peacefully
- This should always be a mutually beneficial relationship



# Regional & Interagency Cooperative Volunteer Response Efforts

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- **Who do you play with and why? (cont.)**
  - Local corporations and businesses b/c of the great pools of possible volunteers and sponsorship
  - They have a stake in the community and programs for local volunteer involvement
  - They can promote or help sponsor your program
  - You can help them by providing employees who are better able to respond to emergencies and who have the spirit of volunteerism



# Regional & Interagency Cooperative Volunteer Response Efforts

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- **Who do you play with and why? (cont.)**
  - Local school districts and colleges b/c of their volunteer pool, resources and facilities
  - School districts can offer teachers, nurses and administrators and facilities for use in disaster
  - Colleges can offer staff/students in specialized fields, research resources and facilities
  - You offer them response training, volunteerism credit and a sense of community spirit



# Regional & Interagency Cooperative Volunteer Response Efforts

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## — **Who do you play with and why? (cont.)**

- Faith-based organizations and clubs b/c of the dedication of their volunteers and, possibly, b/c of the expertise they bring
- Faith-based organizations generally can offer well-organized and dedicated volunteer pools
- Clubs can offer well-organized volunteers, often with specialized skills
- You offer response training & preparedness



# Regional & Interagency Cooperative Volunteer Response Efforts

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- **What can the participating agencies expect to gain through these efforts?**
  - A better knowledge of each agency response plans & procedures and how they correlate
  - A plan for unified response in a disaster
  - Better interagency communication
  - More cooperation in the day-to-day interaction between agencies



# Regional & Interagency Cooperative Volunteer Response Efforts

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- **How can the community as a whole gain through these efforts?**
- Better prepared citizens and agencies will translate to a better prepared community
  - A cause for which a large portion of the community can play a role can lead to a more unified community
  - Better trained citizens (and agencies) will lead to more confident responders and a more confident, prepared and assured community



# THE WINNEBAGO COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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## **MEDICAL RESERVE CORPS**

**Thank you for your attention!  
And thank you for your efforts in  
community preparedness & response**