

# 2008 Medical Reserve Corps National Leadership and Training Conference



**Prepared Volunteers, Resilient Communities, Strong Nation**



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# **Are you ready to make the leap? Sustaining your MRC by becoming a nonprofit**

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# Goals:

- Help decide if becoming a nonprofit organization is right for your MRC
- Provide tools to build your MRC into a nonprofit
- Share best practices and experiences

Liisa: Living Case Study

Jodie: The Big Picture

# Inspiration...

Non-profit and voluntary organizations respond to the deeply rooted need for individuals to be part of something bigger than themselves.\*

\* Peter Frumkin, *On Being Nonprofit*

# Living Case Study: MA Region 4A

- MA Region 4A is comprised of 34 towns and cities; arriving at consensus was like herding cats!
- Here's how MA Region 4A operates...
- Opportunities and challenges of "Region 4A-MRC.org"

# Is nonprofit status right for your MRC?

- Assess:
- Is there available funding to sustain nonprofit status?
- Is there a core volunteer base to provide fiduciary and governance oversight?
- What's to be gained (or lost) by becoming a nonprofit?

# Before you run off to get your 501c3 application!

- Build a strong foundation -- this will pay off!
  - Build partnerships with Board of Health, LEPC, Police, Fire to determine the needs of the community
  - Build partnerships with other community organizations
  - Get organized with an advisory committee to run the MRC locally
  - Reach out to MRC members -- they are your greatest resources

# Benefits of nonprofit status

- Can seek out and accept funds tax-free
- A mechanism for administering donated funds and grants
- Paid staff to manage your MRC

# Benefits of nonprofit status

- Formalize volunteer structure (e.g., roles and responsibilities for Board of Directors); accountability
- Build social capital, good will, and trust
- A formal venue for advocacy and lobbying activities

# ...Challenges...

- All of the benefits of becoming a nonprofit are in turn, challenges:
  - Funding?
  - Staffing?
  - Volunteer?
- = Sustainability and many "masters"

# **Nuts and Bolts...**

- **Develop a mission statement**
- **Recruit a Board of Directors**
- **Hire a lawyer and accountant  
(could be volunteers)**

# **Nuts and Bolts...**

- **Draft articles of incorporation and file for incorporation (state)**
- **Draft by-laws**
- **File for federal tax-exempt status**
- **Build a development (fundraising) plan**

# More foundation building...

- Assist with public health initiatives (flu clinics, fairs, education)
- Ensure level of volunteer training as requested by local emergency personnel and MRC
- Partner, partner, partner!!!

# **...and yet more foundation building...**

- Ongoing recruitment
- Rely on your local advisory committees
- Managing growth...and volunteers

# Is nonprofit the only way to go?

- Other options for your MRC:
    - All volunteer
    - Opinion leader
    - Fiscal agency
- = strong models to consider

# Are you ready?

- Know your strengths and use them...
- ...and get assistance with your limitations: Asking for money? I have a funny story!

= rely on your volunteers!

# Tool Kit:

- Letter to community groups and Local government
- Press releases
- Local MRC Executive Committee guidelines
- Letter to recruit MRC EC members

# More Tools:

- First Board of Directors meeting agenda to form a corporation
- General guidelines for fund-raising to spark some ideas
- Partnerships are huge (discussion)!

# **If you are ready...**

- Use your toolkit....
- Ask us questions...give us your thoughts...
- Have fun!!!

# **Resources for when you've forgotten all of this!**

[www.region4a-mrc.org](http://www.region4a-mrc.org)

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