



THE WINNEBAGO COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

MEDICAL RESERVE CORPS

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



THE WINNEBAGO COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

MEDICAL RESERVE CORPS

**Best Practices in Volunteer
Recruitment & Relations**



Recruiting Methods

- What is Recruitment in Volunteerism?

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



Recruiting Methods

- 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

□ 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

- ❑ 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

- **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

- **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

- **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

- **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

- **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

- **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

- ❑ 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

- 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)

- 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

- 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

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



Volunteer Utilization

- 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

- 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

- 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

- 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

- 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

SPIRIT: a good acronym* for those in charge

- **Sincerity** – be honest about your program
- **Passion** – have passion, enthusiasm is contagious
- **Innovation** – be creative & flexible, have fun
- **Risk-taking** – break the mold (within reason)
- **Inclusiveness** – be diverse and empowering
- **Thinking like a visionary** – think how it can be

*Source: Dana Renschler, Waco Center for Youth



Job Assignment Selection

- 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

- 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

- 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!

□ **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

□ **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

- **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?

- **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?

- **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?

- **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

- **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

□ **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

□ **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

- **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

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

- Other 1st 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

- **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

□ **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

□ **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

- **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

- **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

- **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



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