

## Giving Your Best When Your Community Is in Greatest Need

In response to the outpouring of volunteer support in the days following September 11, 2001, President George W. Bush created the USA Freedom Corps. That national initiative is made up of several components, among them AmeriCorps, the Peace Corps, and Citizen Corps. **Citizen Corps volunteers, in particular, work to make sure their families, homes, and communities are prepared in the event of terrorism, crime, and disasters of all kinds.** One specialized component of that effort is the **Medical Reserve Corps**.

- The Medical Reserve Corps allows experienced **health professionals** to volunteer their expertise in times of need.
- Medical Reserve Corps Units consist of **locally based professional medical volunteers who can assist their communities during emergencies**, such as an influenza epidemic, a chemical spill, or an act of terrorism.
- Medical Reserve Corps volunteers may also provide **education and prevention** services to improve the health and well-being of their neighborhoods and communities.

*Help us be smart about emergency preparedness and response.*

*Think about the difference you could make by lending your expertise.*

*Become part of the solution.*

Find out how  
to become  
part of  
our team:

Contact us at:

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Bergen County Executive



**The Medical Reserve Corps**



*The first response  
to any disaster  
is a local response.*



**Be ready to lend  
your medical  
skills and health  
expertise.**

**The Medical Reserve Corps**

*Volunteer medical and health professionals  
serving their communities in times of need*

## Building from the Ground Up

Your willingness to volunteer your skills and knowledge is what the Medical Reserve Corps is all about. It starts with individuals like you—individuals who care enough to pool their resources when large-scale emergencies hit close to home.

When you add your expertise to our local emergency planning effort, you become part of our local organizing effort. We are building from the ground up because our community's needs have their own unique character, and because those of us who live here have the greatest incentive to make the best use of our local resources.

Each of us can make a difference.

## A National Community of Shared Vision and Support

We are not working alone. Hundreds of other communities are organizing similar efforts, each in its own way. Many are willing to share what they've learned from their mistakes and their successes.

We are part of a growing movement.

The Program Office of the Medical Reserve Corps, headquartered in the Office of the Surgeon General, functions as a clearinghouse for community information and "best practices." It links us to technical expertise and educational resources. Its role is to help us achieve our local visions for community health and emergency preparedness and response. For more information, visit: [www.medicalreservecorps.gov](http://www.medicalreservecorps.gov) and [www.njmrc.nj.gov](http://www.njmrc.nj.gov) and click the online application button to enroll.

## Who can volunteer for the Medical Reserve Corps?



- **Practicing, retired, or otherwise employed medical professionals**, such as doctors, nurses, emergency medical technicians, pharmacists, nurses' assistants, and others.
- **Community members with medical training** are also encouraged to volunteer in order to assist with administrative and other essential support functions.

*United States citizenship is not required to be part of the Medical Reserve Corps. Non-citizen, legal U.S. residents are also welcome to volunteer and contribute their time, knowledge, and skills to protecting and improving their communities.*

## What do Medical Reserve Corps volunteers do?

It varies, depending on the nature of the emergency and our ongoing need for community health outreach and education.

What we do know is that major emergencies can overwhelm the capabilities of our first responders, especially during the first 12 to 72 hours. Medical and other health volunteers can provide an important "surge" capacity during that critical period. They can also augment medical staff shortages at local medical and emergency facilities. In short, we often need medically trained individuals to fill in the gaps in our emergency response plans and to improve our response capabilities overall.

## What is my legal liability as a volunteer medical professional?

All professionals operating outside their standard places of work should be concerned about legal liability associated with their volunteer activities.

Ask to be apprised of the current laws and regulations in our state regarding liability for volunteer medical professionals. You'll then be able to determine if the level of risk is acceptable.

Most volunteer professionals find the risk of legal exposure to be far outweighed by the satisfaction they receive from their community contribution. Yet it is always a personal decision.

## What training will I need?

Emergency preparedness and response is a highly coordinated effort that allows us to maximize our capabilities at a time of extreme disorganization and stress.

You may already know how to perform some of the medical and health functions we so desperately need. In most cases, your training as an MRC volunteer will focus primarily on learning our local emergency systems and health procedures, trauma response techniques, use of specialized equipment, and other methods to enhance your effectiveness as a volunteer.

Perhaps the most important part of your training will be learning to work as part of a team. An organized, well-trained MRC unit will be familiar with its community's response plan, will know what materials are available for use, will know its response partners, and will know where its skills can be put to best use and in a coordinated manner.