

10 Things I Wish I Had Known When I Started as an MRC Unit Leader

Below we share ten ideas that MRC leaders have identified as helpful information they wish they had known when they started as unit leaders. We hope the information helps you as you take on your new role as an MRC unit leader.

1. The MRC offers Well Check webinars to help share best practices and other information relevant to MRC leaders, and if you miss a webinar, you can find archived recordings at <https://aspr.hhs.gov/MRC/Pages/UnitLeaderResources.aspx> - scroll down to “Well-check Webinars” on the lower right column.
2. MRC units nationwide have found various funding sources from federal agencies such as the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of Health and Human Services. A “one-stop shop” for federal grants can be found at [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov). Other units are obtaining funds from state and local agencies and private and non-profit organizations.
3. TRAIN (http://www.phf.org/programs/TRAIN/Pages/MRC_TRAIN.aspx) is great resource for training unit volunteers, and unit leaders can use it to create and administer a training plan. See this guide — <http://www.phf.org/programs/TRAIN/Documents/MRC-TRAIN%20Training%20Plan%20Guide.pdf> — for more information on creating a training plan.
4. Unit leaders can communicate with other unit leaders, ask questions and share unit news and tips by joining the two-way listserv at <https://aspr.hhs.gov/MRC/Pages/UnitLeaderResources.aspx> or use the direct link <https://list.nih.gov/cgi-bin/wa.exe?SUBED1=MRCLEADERS-L&A=1>
5. The MRC Program created a comprehensive set of programmatic elements, or “stepping stones,” that form a path MRC unit leaders can follow to develop their MRC units. These elements are known as the Factors for Success and can be found here: https://aspr.hhs.gov/MRC/Shared%20Documents/MRC%20Factors%20for%20Success_2021.pdf
6. The Technical Assistance (TA) Assessment is a tool for guiding discussion about an MRC unit’s TA needs. The TAA process will help the Regional Liaison (RL) identify a unit’s strengths and areas in which an MRC unit may need additional assistance or help finding resources. The TAA also helps MRC unit leaders identify priorities for organizational development. Each year, your unit’s RL will contact you to set up a time to work through the assessment tool.
7. The MRC has established Core Competencies for MRC volunteers that can help guide volunteer training efforts; the competencies can be found here: <https://www.naccho.org/uploads/downloadable-resources/2019-MRC-Core-Competencies-and-Training-Plan.pdf>
8. For the MRC monthly report, the MRC Program Office pulls the prior month’s activity report data from the reporting system on the 15th of the month, and any activities from the prior month not reported by the 15th will not be included in the MRC monthly report. In addition, for the MRC Program to consider a unit active, unit leaders must update the unit profile regularly, a minimum

of once a quarter (including current contact information, volunteer numbers, and recent activities).

9. MRC units are expected to verify the credentials of volunteers with professional licenses and certifications. At a minimum, MRC units must ensure that volunteers' discipline-specific licenses are current and unencumbered. In some cases, MRC unit leaders can and should coordinate with the state registry/Emergency System for Advance Registration of Volunteer Health Professionals (ESAR-VHP) to verify volunteers' licenses and credentials. In addition, many local communities require background checks for volunteers to work in shelters with children.

10. The MRC has a logo, and the MRC Program Office has a guide for how for units may use the logo. The guidelines for using the MRC logo can be found at <https://www.phe.gov/mrc/unit-leader-resources/Documents/MRC-IdentityGuide-508.pdf>