
Medical Reserve Corps Partners with AmeriCorps to increase sustainability

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Abstract: The Washington State Department of Health Public Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Program (PHEPR) had been investigating options to assist in the continued development of sustainable Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) units in our state. Medical Reserve Corps Units have limited budgets and often struggle to pay for their program coordinator. Thanks to a new partnership with the Washington Service Corps AmeriCorps program of the Employment Security Department, the Washington State Department of Health PHEPR was able to support the placement AmeriCorps VISTA members at selected MRC units throughout the state.

AmeriCorps is a National Service Program in which participants serve full time for one calendar year, receive a monthly stipend, health care insurance and a \$4,725 college education award.

In September 2008, ten (10) new AmeriCorps members accepted placements at the following sites: Whatcom County, Skagit County, Snohomish County, King County, Snoqualmie/ east King County, Region 5 – Pierce County, Region 3- Thurston County, Grays Harbor County, Region 4- Southwest WA, Region 8

Activities include the recruitment of volunteers, coordination of training events, strategic planning, the development of newsletters and assisting in the coordination of disaster response activities. At the mid point of the 2008-09 program year, several accomplishments have been made including: 231 volunteers recruited, 142 volunteers trained, assist in coordination of the King County Alternate Care Facility exercise, entering volunteers into our Washington State Health Alert Network, developing and updating MRC volunteer databases, including WAHVE, serving as liaison to Red Cross, and coordinating training activities for tribal based MRCs.