



Your latest news from the Vermont Medical Reserve Corps (MRC)

CHANGING MISSIONS FOR CHANGING TIMES

Heather Rigney, MRC State Coordinator

Sometimes it's easy to forget that our small MRC units that we know and love are part of a bigger picture of over 800 MRC units nationwide. Our federal partners have been pushing nationally for the Medical Reserve Corps Program to organize their major programs by 'Mission Sets' which is basically a standardize way of describing what services we do statewide, what training is required to do it, and what resources we bring when we respond. Standardization helps us talk to one another, and tell our partners what we're capable of in a simple, easy to understand format.

Our partners in Region 1, which comprises all of New England, have been hard at work building this capability out. New

Hampshire and Connecticut have already done this task. Other states are actively working towards this goal. This year, Vermont MRC will be using nationally provided templates to build out our mission sets to be in compliance with national standards.

In looking at the work we do to prepare for writing these mission sets, I am noticing a distinct shift in some of our focal areas, even as we stay true to our roots. In addition to those missions we have done for decades such as Point of Distribution support and Med Surge using the Deployable Mobile Support Assets (otherwise known as the Portable Hospital and other shelters), we are building our work in areas such as Family Assistance Centers and Family Reunification Centers, Emergency Shelter Support, and a number of missions related to filling gaps in medical services such as foot care, dental care, and more. Did you know we're even considering Behavioral Health as a future mission?

The work we do in the MRC is as varied as our members, and reflects the needs of our communities. While not obsolete, the days where the majority of our work was event support and the occasional talk to the local scouts or senior center are long gone. We are in our communities every day, teaching, interacting with our most marginalized, and filling the void in times of direst need.

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Vermont MRC Summit 2025

Saturday, March 29
Franklin Event Center
Rutland, VT
9am-4pm

Make your plan to join the MRC for our annual Vermont conference. Summit is the place to build partnerships, advance your skills, and preview new innovations coming to the MRC program.

What you will experience:

Engaging Presenters

Unit Presentations

Overview on Vector and new RMS Databases

All Unit Skills Drills

Catered breakfast and lunch provided

Vermont Medical Reserve Corps
Summit 2025



Registration link: <http://bit.ly/4hQzKny>

Need help registering? Email MRC@vermont.gov

Announcements

We have a recruitment video!

Verifying your



Account

Thanks to the MRC volunteers and leadership who agreed to be interviewed for our MRC Recruitment Video. August Toynton, Unit Co-Coordinator with NWMRC, and Noah Detzer with VDH Communications, were instrumental in launching this project. Our own Matt Ward, Unity Co-Coordinator of LVMRC, was the interviewer, asking our volunteers “Why do you love the MRC?” And we soooo loved their answers. This video will be posted to our improved OnCallforVT.org landing page, which goes live in March, and will also be featured at Summit.

The Vermont MRC Program has been gearing up to transition our training platform to Vector Solutions. We have delayed going live for a number of months because only a third of our volunteers have responded to the verification email sent to them. It is critical that all MRC volunteers follow the link and verify their account.

The most recent verification was sent to all users on February 21 from the parent account TargetSolutions. Please check your email Inbox and/or Spam to find the link and follow the directions. The temp password is MRC2025!

It is the MRC’s intent to go live in March no matter how many or few are registered, and we will be providing a user overview at the MRC Summit for those who wish to learn more about Vector.

Benefits of Vector include ‘one stop shop’ for online trainings, ability to assign volunteers training by activation level, skill set and mission set, auto verification of course completion, and more.

In the News

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Above: Curt Lindberg of Central VT MRC, and Bill Stearns of Upper Valley MRC pose at the start of their shift in the Barre Emergency Shelter.

Celebrating Volunteerism

MRC was featured in a number of articles this past month with local news agencies, and in the VDH newsletter, The Voice.

WCAX coverage of MRC of Southwest VT's Sandgate Preparedness Program

<https://statics.teams.cdn.office.net/evergreen-assets/safelinks/1/atp-safelinks.html>

VT Digger article by MRC Volunteer Curt Lindberg on his impressions at the Barre Extreme Cold Weather Shelter

<https://vtdigger.org/2025/02/02/curt-lindberg-heartbreaking-heartwarming/>

Link to The Voice, which featured Jacquie Kelley of Northwest VT MRC, Heather Rigney, MRC Statewide Coordinator, Lamoille Valley MRC, and MRC of Southwest VT in various articles.

<https://mailchi.mp/7eedf77122d1/the-voice-february-2025?e=9a0a72bdb3>

WHERE'S THE MRC?



MRC volunteers from around the state participate in the filming of our first ever MRC recruitment video the week of February 5th.



Liz May from NEKMRC practices tourniqueting skills at a Stop the Bleed event.



LVMRC and NEKMRC field a competitive team at Curds and Curling.



A Castleton University student demonstrates wound packing at a class taught by RAMRC.



MRC volunteers assist VDH Burlington District Office at a pop-up dental clinic.

UNIT ACTIVITIES AROUND THE STATE

MRC OF THE NORTHEAST KINGDOM

This year, we have held our annual MRC celebration in which we recognized volunteers with the most hours worked: Helen Wilson, Susie Duckett, Cheryl Glick, Laural Ruggles, Barry Glick, Alice Burt and Liz May. We appreciate the efforts of ALL of our MRC volunteers and celebrate all our achievements. We have offered two sessions of MRC Orientation this year. We also continue to offer Stop the Bleed monthly in St. J and every other month in Newport. Last month we assisted Lamoille Valley MRC at the Curds and Curling event.

MRC OF SOUTHWESTERN VT

We have had a great few months working with Town's Community Table Groups to talk about personal preparedness. We had groups of 20-40 community members participating in creating preparedness discussions, Go-Bags, Stop the Bleed and CPR AED instruction. We have been intensely working with this community after a community tragedy to empower residents in resiliency. We received local media attention for these community efforts.

Northwest MRC

NWMRC participated in CPR/AED/First Aid, Stop the Bleed (internal and external), Martha's Kitchen Health Screening Clinics, VDH Vaccine Clinics, Emergency Climate Shelters (Burlington), Steering Committee Meeting, Recruitment Video (Statewide), Foot Care Clinics

UPPER VALLEY MRC

Upper Valley MRC hosted a Winter Readiness Rendezvous training event. We attended a multi-agency Family Reunification Training in late January hosted by the VA Hospital. In February, we participated in the Hartford Ice Fishing Derby & Red Zone 5k respectively. Seven Stop the Bleed classes have also been scheduled from January through early March.

LAMOILLE VALLEY MRC

LVMRC participated in Curds N Curling Winter festival with tabling & recruitment. We performed STB trainings in Hardwick for Hardwick ski event volunteers, tabling and preparedness education, including Be Bright at Night and STB at Hazen Union Wellness Fair and at Morrisville Methodist Church Warming center lunch (5-9 participants at each event.)

CENTRAL VERMONT MRC

CVMRC hosted an emergency go kit workshop in January for members of Montpelier Senior Activity Center, AARP, the Montpelier Commission for Recovery and Resilience, and the Montpelier Disaster Recovery Network. We have also been helping coordinate and staff two emergency shelters in Barre, at the Barre Auditorium and at the Church of the Good Shepherd.

RUTLAND-ADDISON MRC

RAMRC performed Stop the Bleed at VTSU Castleton with nursing students. We have also conducted meetings with the Outreach Care Team to determine our partners' strategic direction.

SOUTHEASTERN MRC

In collaboration with VT Foodbank, Covid test kit distribution at VeggieVanGo; Community CPR/STB in schools and community; Cold weather shelter support in Barre; Distribution of personal hygiene supplies to the homeless; Shelter staff orientation training at Groundworks; Family reunification training

MRC MEMBERS SPOTLIGHT

Every quarter, we will be recognizing and celebrating MRC volunteer(s) who have gone above and beyond to serve their communities. Sound like a volunteer you know?

Submit a nomination to MRC@vermont.gov

BRANDON MCCART, MRC OF SOUTHWESTERN VT

“Brandon has been a huge addition to our Unit. Looking at the last year alone, he has volunteered for 16 different MRC events and logged just over 60 hours of time. Brandon helped to co-instruct 10 of the training events. This included helping us at schools with STB, renewing his BLS certification and becoming both a STB instructor as well as a CPR instructor. Our participants appreciate Brandon’s quick wit and awesome skill drills.

Brandon assisted us with our ORA grant by attending all our senior events and interacting with hundreds of individuals over the last year. He helped us to take surveys of gaps with seniors, perform vitals at health events, do senior assessments, help with medication take-backs, installation of cooling units, training of basic skills such as STB and preparedness. Brandon even traveled with us to the National Preparedness Summit in Chicago last May and assisted with our Vermont Leadership Summit in July.

Thank you, Brandon! We greatly appreciate your dedication to our Medical Reserve Corps of SW Vermont!”

-Dee Myrvang, Unit Coordinator



Brandon (foreground) charting at a dental pop-up clinic.

How long have you been volunteering with the MRC? What drew you to volunteer?

I have been an MRC member a little over 6 months, I think (we checked, it’s been 8 months!) I was drawn to volunteer because I’m retired, I have the time to give and I thought my experience and knowledge gained in my military and emergency services background might be helpful.

What has been your favorite MRC experience(s)?

So far my favorite MRC experiences have been helping to teach Stop the Bleed and CPR because of my medical background in the military.

What's your favorite winter activity?

My favorite winter activity is traveling to at least one warm destination.

Honorable

MENTIONS

For every volunteer we interview, there are so many more who are called out for great service. See below for the names of all who were nominated, both for our newsletter and for national-level awards. These volunteers will get certificates of appreciation at this year's MRC Summit.

Alice Burt
Barbara Byrne
Margaret Caudill-Slosberg
Cheryl Glick
Rebecca Levasseur-Oettinger
Brandon McCart
Eileen Murphy

Laural Ruggles
Susan Slowinski
Bill Stearns
Kim Tenner
Fran Tougas
Janet Zinter

Congrats to Rutland's Outreach Care Team (OCT) for their national nomination

PERFECT Partnership

The Rutland/Addison MRC is a key part of a strong field outreach partnership in Rutland County. The Rutland City Outreach Care Team (OCT) comprises six community partners that provide field mental health support (Rutland Mental Health), substance use peer counseling (Turning Point Center of Rutland), first aid, wound care, and health screenings (Rutland County Health Partners and RA MRC), and hygiene services (Rutland City Police) to individuals experiencing homelessness. The Rutland District Office of the Vermont Department of Health also supports the team through strategic planning and data analysis.

Rutland City has a population of approximately 15,000, with over 400 individuals experiencing housing insecurity. The team conducts outreach every Wednesday and every other Monday, visiting known encampments and gathering sites. Since its establishment in October 2023, the OCT has assisted dozens of people through wellness checks, connections to primary care, substance use services, and mental health care, as well as referrals to additional resources. The team has also distributed harm reduction supplies, provided necessities for daily living, helped individuals replace lost identification documents, and arranged transportation to critical appointments. Additionally, they have collaborated with local organizations to expand mobile outreach efforts and provide services that individuals might not otherwise receive.

next-level leaders

A pair of great MRC Unit Coordinators were also nominated for recognition by their co-coordinators. Here's a shout-out to two very dedicated folks:

Wanda Walkowiak, SEMRC

Wanda jumped right in to serve as our Assistant Coordinator. She has created a presence for the MRC in the outlying regions, including COVID test kit distribution, Fall Prevention, gun safety and Be Bright at Night. Wanda also attended the Family Reunification training, and is now trying to move that planning forward in the Wilmington region.

Moriah Keat, UVMRC

Moriah is Leadership Rookie of the Year! Honestly, she's jumped in with both feet and superior motivation. Her dedication to strategic training, planning, in-person events accessible to all State MRC units, recruitment and retention practices, updating and reconciling our UV MRC roster, initiating the carousel work group to share the work load among State EPs and MRC unit leaders are just a few things she has done. She has really gone all in, and I'm excited and proud to have her as my partner in the UVMRC.

UPCOMING STATEWIDE TRAININGS

FAMILY ASSISTANCE CENTER PARTS 1 AND 2

Learn about the process of working in a Family Assistance Center and providing support to families during a mass fatality event.

FAC Part 1 April 10, 5:30-7 (Virtual)

FAC Part 2 April 30 (Waterbury) and May 15 (Burlington)

MRC ORIENTATION (VIRTUAL)

A requirement of every volunteer, this orientation can substitute for an in-person session or the Orientation video on Vector.

May 22, 9am-10am (Session 1)

May 22, 6pm-7pm (Session 2)

EMERGENCY SHELTERING WITH PETS (VIRTUAL)

Learn about our sheltering partners at Vermont Disaster Animal Response Team, their mission and how families with pets integrate into shelters.

May 27, 6:30-7:30

VERMONT HEALTHCARE AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS COALITION MINI-CONFERENCE JUNE 11, STOWEFLAKE

Save the date-more information forthcoming.



See calendar invites in original RMS email to MRC volunteers for all trainings listed.