



MA Responds is the volunteer registration system and database administered by the MA Department of Public Health. The system and website registers public health volunteers in MA, including medical and non-medical volunteers for Medical Reserve Corps Units (MRCs), the MA Volunteer Program for Public Health, and the State of Massachusetts Animal Response Team (SMART). It was launched in 2011. It allows MRC Units a system to manage volunteers, integrating local, regional, and statewide volunteer resources to identify, credential, train, and mobilize volunteers during a health-related emergency or event. The MA Responds system uses CORES as the volunteer management software. Agencies from more than 38 states, including Hawaii and Puerto Rico, have chosen CORES software by Juvare, which is the software vendor, to manage their volunteers. CORES adheres to ESAR VHP standards which assists MRC administrators with reporting. The Emergency System for Advance Registration of Volunteer Health Professionals is a federal program created to support states and territories in establishing standardized volunteer registration programs for disasters and public health and medical emergencies. Volunteers can register at [www.maresponds.org](http://www.maresponds.org).

All communications within MA Responds are encrypted and the data is hosted in two data centers with redundant power and connectivity, which means that if there was a mass emergency in one part of the country and for some reason various systems were down in one part of the country, data is safe in another part of the country, and MRCs would have access to their data and preserve the ability to communicate with their volunteers and manage their volunteers. Juvare meets the industry standard for all security measures. Volunteers only need enter the last six (6) digits of their social security number to register and the system will then automatically encrypt the number, so that it's no longer visible. The last six (6) digits of the social security number are also required for the hard copy CORI Form that is submitted to the state, and those will be visible on the pre-populated form, if the registrant uses this feature to print a CORI Form from the system. The six (6) digits would need to be entered on a blank form.

The goal of MA Responds is rapid identification and utilization of volunteers in emergencies.

The benefits of MA Responds are that it strengthens the ability to communicate with volunteers. It allows MRCs to communicate to individuals, groups, or their entire unit at the same time within minutes, using e-mail, phone and text communications.

It also allows the mobilization of vetted volunteers from other communities. This was very useful in recent times during the Merrimack Valley gas explosions and fires in September of 2018. The communities that were directly impacted were busy taking care of their personal and their community members' needs so they reached out to other MRCs in other parts of the state to ask for assistance. The other MRC leaders were able to use the MA Responds system to communicate with their volunteers and send the volunteers to the Merrimack Valley area to assist. The Merrimack Valley MRC units' administrators could accept the new volunteers with confidence that the volunteers had the same background checks and professional licenses' verifications by the system.

There is a MA Responds orientation course, housed on the Massachusetts Medical Society's website, to learn what it's like to be a volunteer within MA Responds. <https://www.massmed.org/Patient-Care/Health-Topics/Emergency-Preparedness-and-Response/MA-Responds-Volunteer-Orientation-Curriculum/> A prospective or accepted volunteer can go ahead and review all the materials on their own time and learn what it's like to be a volunteer, learn what it's like to show up to a shelter situation or volunteer situation and how they can prepare themselves for volunteering. Anyone who completes the modules can request a certificate of completion which will be sent out to that individual with a copy to their MRC Coordinator.



## MA Responds Volunteer Orientation Curriculum

Learn what it means to be [MA Responds Volunteer](#).

The MA Responds orientation curriculum is designed to familiarize volunteers with the role of MA Responds volunteers including:

- Emergency management structure
- When and how volunteers are activated
- Potential functions during an activation
- Supporting individuals with disabilities or access and functional needs
- Disaster mental health
- How to prepare yourself and your family for an emergency

The course is free. There are **no** continuing education credits available for this content.

### Download curriculum content:

All files in PDF format.

- [Welcome & Learning Objectives](#) (3 pages)
- [Modules 1 - 9](#) (65 pages)
  - [Module 1: Introduction](#) (4 pages)
  - [Module 2: Public Health Preparedness](#) (6 pages)
  - [Module 3: Incident Command System - ICS](#) (7 pages)
  - [Module 4: Crisis and Emergency Risk Communication](#) (4 pages)
  - [Module 5: Personal Preparedness](#) (12 pages)
  - [Module 6: Activation](#) (6 pages)
  - [Module 7: Safety and Security](#) (5 pages)
  - [Module 8: Individuals with Disabilities or Access & Functional Needs](#) (6 pages)
  - [Module 9: Behavioral Health](#) (7 pages)
- [Appendix 3-1 and 3-2 - Checklist of Items to Prepare for Before an Emergency](#) (4 pages)

Individuals who successfully complete all 9 modules of the curriculum have the option to receive a certificate. To apply for your certificate, [please visit here](#)