

MRC STTRONG Grant Final Report | *Abby Morris & Stuart C Vaughters**

In 2023, the federal Administration for Strategic Preparedness and Response (ASPR) program awarded \$50 million from the American Rescue Plan to 33 states and jurisdictions across the country. Oregon was one of two states awarded the largest individual award of \$2.5 million from the MRC State, Territory and Tribal Nations, Representative Organizations for Next Generation (**MRC-STTRONG**) grant program. The focus for the use of the funds was to enhance emergency preparedness and response and community capabilities for Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) units across the state. After a no-cost extension, the deadline to use the funds was May 2026. This final report reviews how the funds were used across Oregon's MRC units during the three-year period.

Enhanced Statewide Response Capacity

Medical supply trailers, medical caches, communications equipment, sanitation kits, shelter supplies, and mission-specific equipment were procured and mobilized across funded regions. Units reported immediate readiness improvements for wildfires, extreme heat, winter storms, landslides, flooding, and medically fragile shelter operations. Multiple counties conducted full-scale and functional exercises, including mass casualty scenarios, shelter activation simulations, ice storm and wildfire tabletop exercises, communications drills, and medical surge practice events.

Expanded Workforce Capacity

During the grant period, new coordinator positions and specialist roles were added across Deschutes, Lane, Eastern Oregon, and the State office, enabling consistent volunteer engagement, administrative support, and project execution. While several positions ended after the grant period concluded, the temporary workforce expansion allowed units to build durable systems, develop new training programs, and create sustainable partnerships. Although Lane County Public Health's sponsorship of the MRC formally concluded after grant-funded staffing ended, a local nonprofit (St. Vincent de Paul) took over sponsorship of the unit, preserving the momentum generated during STTRONG and preparing to resume volunteer activities.

Training and Skill Development

Hundreds of volunteers completed CPR (English and Spanish), Stop the Bleed, Basic and Advanced Disaster Life Support, Psychological First Aid, Tactical Emergency Casualty Care, cultural responsiveness, disability-inclusive emergency response, shelter medical triage, austere environment care, and wildfire and heat readiness training. Unit coordinators and volunteers attending regional conferences and multi-county training events strengthened interoperability and leadership across the state.

Community Outreach and Equity Advancement

Outreach prioritized communities facing high social vulnerability including rural residents, older adults, unhoused populations, individuals with disabilities, farm workers, low-income families, and multilingual households. Lane County's multilingual CPR and preparedness programming reached hundreds of Spanish-speaking and migrant farmworkers. Each MRC unit received disaster sanitation supplies (including a bucket toilet) with translated and culturally specific materials for educational purposes at public events. Tri-Counties (Clackamas, Multnomah and Washington) expanded on this effort, purchasing additional supplies to deliver large-scale disaster sanitation outreach with giveaway items for the public. Multiple units supported preparedness fairs, community health events, and targeted education for at-risk individuals.

Systems Modernization and Interoperability

Units developed or refined deployment protocols, volunteer field-site assignment procedures for Cascadia Subduction Zone Earthquake events, standardized SOPs (Standard Operating Procedures), task cards, credentialing workflows, mission sets, and revised volunteer management platforms. A GIS-based (Geographic Information System) field-site assignment work started as a multi-county effort, and now Washington County is maintaining the system and continuing to strengthen the mapping and analytical tools developed during the project. Units expanded MOUs (Memorandums of Understanding) and integrated more deeply into county emergency operations plans.

Overall Impact

The MRC STTRONG investment accelerated modernization, expanded capacity, and strengthened the equity and resilience of Oregon's MRC units. Over the three-year grant period, funded subrecipients and supported units improved surge capability, expanded volunteer skills, deepened partnerships, modernized systems, and delivered targeted preparedness education to communities at great risk. Even as some grant-funded positions sunset, systems built during the grant period—equipment caches, deployment procedures, community relationships, multilingual curricula, volunteer infrastructure, and cross-agency coordination—continue to enhance Oregon's preparedness landscape.. Through this award, every unit benefited from statewide training investments, set-aside procurements, and shared technical resources. Now, Oregon's MRC network is better equipped, more skilled, and more aligned with the communities most affected by disasters and recurring emergency conditions.

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