

## **Citizen Engagement: Training Bystanders to Provide Immediate Emergency Care**

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Have you ever witnessed a terrible accident, or been the first person to see someone injured? Would you know what to do? How would you react? In recent years, New England communities have experienced disasters such as Hurricanes Irene and Sandy. They have also endured man-made emergencies including the Boston Marathon bombings and the tragic shootings at Sandy Hook Elementary school in Connecticut. These and other crises have highlighted the need for everyday citizens to help each other before professional help arrives.

In coordination with Federal partners, State, and local EMA (Emergency Management Agencies), FEMA launched a new training program in April 2017 to get people thinking about preparedness and take action to deliver immediate care, in the event of an emergency. The larger goal is a cultural shift toward enhanced preparedness. Representatives from FEMA Region 1 have been involved in promoting, teaching, and helping others deliver a potentially life-saving program: You Are the Help Until Help Arrives. We are striving to train 2,500 people by June 2018.



*The first graduating class of instructors from the Upper Merrimack Valley Medical Reserve Corps, training with Nashua's Emergency Management Agency in 2017.*

Until Help Arrives is a three-hour course that is packed with practical information. The program helps people identify how to react when faced with a stressful, life-threatening situation and recognize how to take positive actions to help. Until Help Arrives includes examples of 911 calls and explains what to expect when making a call. One of the hands-on modules demonstrates methods such as the use of a tourniquet to stop a bleed.



*A youth member of the UMV MRC demonstrates the use of a CAT tourniquet at a local fair, carefully supervised by an RN certified in 'Stop the Bleed,' to encourage registration for the first public class in MA of Until Help Arrives.*

Most important, the program offers suggestions on how to comfort the victims, and how to position unconscious people to protect their airways. Some local communities also include a segment to practice “hands-only” CPR.



*A certified AHA instructor helps a fellow MRC member learn compression techniques for hands-only CPR.*

Is it time for *your* community, *your* neighborhood, *your* family to join us and take action toward preparedness?

The feedback from these lessons has been inspiring! Those who have taken the Until Help Arrives “Train the Trainer” version have become a potential resource to deliver the class in local communities. In less than six months, the FEMA Regional Integration Branch trained over 200 instructors in New England. This collective effort between FEMA and the public has resulted in almost 800 people taking the class – making communities better prepared to deal with a wide range of emergencies.

One of the ripple effects from the course involved Nancy Burns, a Medical Reserve Corps leader in Massachusetts, who coordinated the training of instructors within the Upper Merrimack Valley MRC unit. When a staff member at MACOM Technology Solutions Inc. attended one of Nancy’s overview presentations, he followed up with his management and invited the MRC team to deliver the training at MACOM’s Lowell headquarters, which received overwhelmingly positive feedback.



*UMV MRC instructors  
rehearse their teaching skills  
for bleeding control before  
instructing at MACOM.*

The course is designed to raise awareness by everyday citizens of the significant impact they can make in someone’s life – if they learn how to react to an emergency. The in-person training is designed primarily to be offered in a classroom environment. For those who cannot attend the three-hour class, one of many alternatives is an online, interactive version that runs for thirty minutes.

Members of the MRC (Medical Reserve Corps), CERT (Community Emergency Response Team), civic groups, and other organizations eager to promote resilience within their community are strongly encouraged to study the online materials and learn how to become instructors. For more information, [watch this video](#) of local Nashua, NH first responders talking about the importance and usefulness of this course. Please [visit our website](#), or contact Sara Varela, Regional Preparedness Liaison Contractor, FEMA Region 1 [sara.varela@icf.com](mailto:sara.varela@icf.com) 703-713-8819.



*The UMV MRC provided 'student kits' so participants could apply the concepts immediately.*

In New England, the culture toward preparedness is expanding. Be an active part of preparing your community by helping us attain our goal of teaching 2,500 people by June 2018!