



WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES
DIVISION OF PUBLIC HEALTH
OFFICE OF PREPAREDNESS AND EMERGENCY HEALTH CARE
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Part 4: WEAVR Recruitment and Retention Strategy

August 2016

Wisconsin Plan for Volunteer Health
Professionals (VHPs)

This manual includes the Wisconsin Division of Public Health's strategies for:

- Marketing WEAVR to public health and medical services organizations
- Recruiting and training WEAVR system administrators
- Recruiting and managing VHPs
- Recognizing and retaining VHPs

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FOR MORE INFORMATION RELATED TO THIS DOCUMENT

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Part 4: WEAVR Recruitment and Retention Strategy

WISCONSIN PLAN FOR VOLUNTEER HEALTH PROFESSIONALS (VHPS)

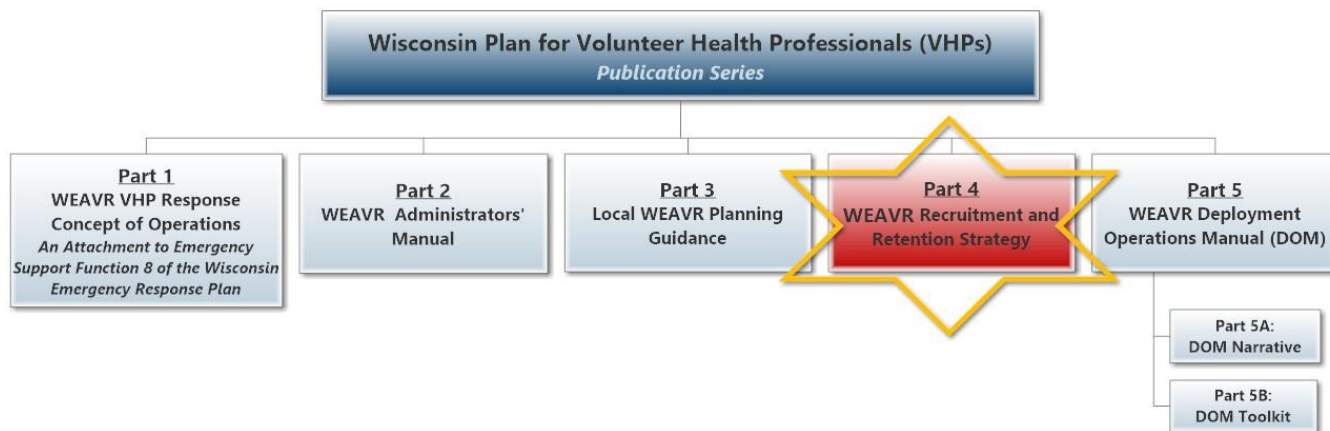
Introduction

The Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) Division of Public Health (DPH) is responsible for developing and maintaining a system to recruit, deploy, and manage verified and credentialed volunteer health professionals (VHPs) to respond when needed to local, tribal, regional, state, and federal emergency incidents. In accordance with federal mandate and state law, Wisconsin has developed the *Wisconsin Emergency Assistance Volunteer Registry (WEAVR)* to facilitate and manage the registration, credentialing, and deployment of VHPs in the event of an emergency that requires medical resources.

WEAVR Publication Series

This manual is part of the *Wisconsin Plan for Volunteer Health Professionals*. The following chart illustrates the organization of the publication series, designed to integrate use of WEAVR to deploy VHPs into state and county emergency operations plans (CEOPs).

FIGURE 1: WEAVR PUBLICATION SERIES



PURPOSE

This manual defines the strategies by which DHS personnel:

- Conduct statewide outreach and marketing for the WEAVR system
- Recruit, train, and mentor Local WEAVR Administrators
- Support statewide recruitment and retention of volunteer health professionals

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

The primary responsibility for recruiting and retaining VHPs belongs to Local WEAVR administrators.

WEAVR personnel in the Division of Public Health provide resources, strategies, technical assistance, and program awareness outreach to support local recruitment efforts.

FIGURE 2: DHS PERSONNEL ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Personnel	Functions
<p>DHS/WEAVR Staff</p>	<p>WEAVR/VHP Program Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct outreach with local public health and medical services organizations to develop VHP management programs using the WEAVR system, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Developing local VHP Management Plans</i> ○ <i>Assigning and supporting Local WEAVR Administrators</i> ○ <i>Supporting local recruitment, management, and retention of local VHPs</i> • Provide ongoing training and mentoring for Local Administrators.
	<p>VHP Recruitment</p> <p><i>Direct VHP recruitment is a local responsibility.</i> State outreach activities support local recruitment and retention efforts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct statewide outreach: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>To inform health professionals about the WEAVR system</i> ○ <i>To support local recruitment efforts</i> • Provide resource materials for use in local recruitment efforts. • Provide strategies and coaching to prompt continuous local recruitment efforts.
	<p>VHP Engagement</p> <p><i>Local Administrators have primary responsibility</i> for training and engaging their VHPs. DHS/WEAVR Staff activities support those efforts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate statewide training opportunities for registered VHPs. • Develop centralized outreach messaging campaigns to registered VHPs. • Provide strategies, resources, and mentoring for local training, planned activities, and engagement efforts.

Personnel	Functions
Other DHS/DPH Personnel	<p>In-House Collaboration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate with DPH outreach staff, as available, to develop and sustain social media VHP marketing strategies. • Identify opportunities to expand marketing and outreach audience through collaboration with in-house DHS units. such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Emergency medical technicians’ unit</i> ○ <i>Tribal affairs office</i> ○ <i>Environmental health</i> ○ <i>Retired Senior Volunteers Program</i>

WEAVR System Marketing and Technical Support

Local public health departments (LPHDs), tribal health departments, Medical Reserve Corps, and other medical services organizations are the backbone of Wisconsin’s VHP recruitment and management initiative. Without a strong commitment from local organization leadership in public health and medical services agencies, VHP programs cannot thrive.

DHS/WEAVR Staff will provide ongoing WEAVR system marketing and technical support to foster strong jurisdictional participation in the WEAVR/VHP initiative.

PUBLIC HEALTH AND MEDICAL SERVICES OUTREACH

Wisconsin’s Division of Public Health provides both funding incentives and technical support to achieve strong local capabilities in volunteer management as outlined in *Public Health Preparedness Capabilities: National Standards for State and Local Planning*, published by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in March 2011¹.

Public Health Emergency Preparedness (PHEP) Cooperative Agreements

Public Health Preparedness Capability 15, Volunteer Management, is a priority target capability in Wisconsin for the 2015-2017 biennium. Local PHEP Cooperative Agreements during this period contain an objective that jurisdictions assign a Local WEAVR Administrator to coordinate programming and resources to meet Capability 15 standards.

Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) Support

While not a substitute for a vibrant jurisdictional VHP initiative, an active local MRC unit can help jump-start a jurisdiction’s VHP program development.

- DHS/WEAVR Staff will encourage collaboration between MRC units and their local governmental counterparts on such efforts as :
 - Sharing technical expertise and recruitment strategies
 - Partnering for training events and planned activities
 - Developing local VHP deployment plans
 - Conducting VHP recognition activities

¹ For a complete discussion of these capabilities, go to <http://www.cdc.gov/phpr/capabilities/>.

- If a community has no local MRC unit, DHS/WEAVR Staff will encourage and help facilitate the formation of one. For resources on starting an MRC unit, visit the [MRC website](#).

Administrative Support and Technical Assistance

DHS/WEAVR Staff provide direct administrative support and technical assistance to local jurisdictions in developing the organizational infrastructure to build and maintain a strong VHP management program.

- *Part 2: WEAVR Administrator’s Manual*, of the *Wisconsin Plan for Volunteer Health Professionals*, provides a detailed position description and job action checklist to guide local VHP program development and maintenance.
- DHS/WEAVR Staff provide a collection of resources – including outreach materials, tools, models, templates, and manuals – that Local Administrators can download from the DHS Partner Communications and Alerting (PCA) Portal -- <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/pca/index.htm>.
- The State WEAVR Administrator provides ongoing individual support as needed.

TRAINING AND MENTORING OF LOCAL ADMINISTRATORS

Since the strength of Wisconsin’s VHP management program depends largely on the strength of Wisconsin’s local WEAVR administrators, DHS/WEAVR Staff place priority on continuous training and mentoring.

- The WEAVR System Administrator conducts a webinar series every year, posting the recorded series on the [PCA Portal](#) for later reference. Webinar topics have included:
 - Orientation and registration
 - Messaging
 - Credentialing
 - Mission Manager
- The WEAVR System Administrator facilitates access for Local Administrators in periodic active training events, including:
 - WEAVR system communication drills and VHP alerting exercises
 - Opportunities to participate in regional or statewide exercises that include VHP focus or injects such as:
 - Medical surge
 - Mobilization of the Mobile Medical Care Facility
 - Wisconsin Emergency Management (WEM) exercises
- The WEAVR System Administrator coordinates a mentoring program for Local Administrators through:
 - Direct contact from DHS/WEAVR Staff
 - Continuous news and updates
 - Prompts for recruiting and training opportunities, new resources, etc.
 - Individual support
 - Encouraging mentoring and collaborative relationships between local units and jurisdictions

SYSTEM SUPPORT

Potential Wisconsin VHPs can register with WEAVR in one of two ways:

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- Affiliated WEAVR members – VHPs who indicate membership with a VHP unit – e.g., a Medical Reserve Corp unit, FAST, local jurisdiction, etc.
 - Local WEAVR Administrator monitors and validates registration, credential verification, and background checks for incoming VHPs.
 - DHS/WEAVR Staff provide technical assistance as needed.
- Unaffiliated at-large WEAVR members – VHPs who register in the system at large without specifying a particular unit or location
 - DHS/WEAVR Staff monitor and validate registration, credential verification, and background checks for incoming VHPs.
 - DHS/WEAVR Staff may refer unaffiliated VHPs to local units as indicated.

Recruitment and Retention Strategies

The Division of Public Health employs a two-part strategy to stimulate local VHP recruitment and retention.

- **Statewide Public Outreach:** The WEAVR System Administrator conducts public outreach through state-level systems and contacts to raise awareness about WEAVR and to prompt health professionals to register in the system.
- **Resources and Services:** The WEAVR System Administrator, in collaboration with other DHS personnel, provides resources and services to boost local recruitment activities.

STATEWIDE PUBLIC OUTREACH

State-level personnel can be the most efficient coordinators of outreach activities, such as use of statewide communication networks, organizations with regional or statewide reach, and collaboration with state and/or national preparedness campaigns.

The DHS/WEAVR Staff collaborate with other DHS outreach personnel and with partner organizations to conduct

- Public outreach designed to encourage listeners to either:
 - Register in WEAVR, affiliating with one or more selected units or jurisdictions
 - Register in WEAVR as an ad hoc volunteer
- Organizational outreach to:
 - Health professional associations
 - Healthcare coalitions
 - Voluntary organizations
 - Wisconsin Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster
 - American Red Cross
 - Salvation Army
 - Volunteer Centers
- Focused outreach via:
 - Interviews, meetings, and conference appearances
 - Collaborative training activities
 - Newsletter articles

- Organizational website and social media posts

RESOURCES AND SERVICES TO SUPPORT LOCAL RECRUITMENT ACTIVITIES

In addition to statewide outreach, DHS/WEAVR Staff provide resources and support to Local Administrators in sustaining a year-round variety of VHP recruitment activities.

Recruitment Resources

- Preprinted brochures, posters, etc.
- Downloadable templates for recruitment letters, public service announcements, etc.
- Customizable newsletter articles

Periodic Recruitment Activities

Periodically throughout the year, the WEAVR System Administrator will share ideas, open discussion forums, provide incentives, etc., to diversify and build interest in local recruitment campaigns.

Such topics may include:

- Encouraging Local Administrators to set goals for a target number of volunteers to recruit per month/quarter/year
- Discussing ways to capitalize on national campaigns – e.g., National Preparedness Month, Older Americans Month – see [National Seasonal Preparedness Messaging Calendar](#)
- Discussing the types of community leaders or groups to whom Local Administrators can provide information on the WEAVR program
- Brainstorming how to capitalize on free community service message opportunities to advertise for volunteers with the skills needed for potential WEAVR missions
- Exploring all the types of media available to promote volunteerism and emergency preparedness, including social media, television, radio, and newspapers along with word-of-mouth strategies
- Inviting existing volunteers to join recruitment efforts and providing them with resources to do so.

Communication

Well-chosen messaging, shared thoughtfully throughout the year, can:

- Keep VHPs engaged in their volunteerism
- Enhance their readiness to train or deploy
- Strengthen their fluency with the WEAVR system
- Increase their understanding of emergency preparedness and response.

Centralized Messaging Hub

DHS/WEAVR Staff assemble and distribute messages, social media content, links, and similar content to Local Administrators to pass along to their affiliated VHPs as desired.

Centralized information gathering, research, and message development provides an invaluable resource for Local Administrators. A single staff person who cultivates a diverse array of information sources can:

- Reduce duplication of effort by Local Administrators
- Substantially increase the distribution network and the volume of useful and relevant messaging to VHPs

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- Provide messaging content to Local Administrators who might not otherwise have the means to maintain a messaging campaign
- Generate ideas for recruiting and planned activity themes

Communication Topics

- Free training opportunities
- Shared social media posts
 - State social media administrator(s) actively seek out relevant social media posts to share with local social administrators, who can then post them on their social media sites
 - State social media administrator(s) generate posts to support current outreach themes and opportunities
- News stories about:
 - Emergency preparedness
 - Emergency response in actual incidents/disasters that included VHPs
- Links to online newsletters with stories about VHPs, volunteer liability, preparedness, etc.
- Suggestions for ways to get the most out of WEAVR
- Reminders to update contact, profile, and training information.

TRAINING & EXERCISING

While the WEAVR System does not prescribe training requirements, DHS/WEAVR Staff support and facilitate local access to training and exercise opportunities that will strengthen VHP readiness and engagement.

Training – Classes and Activities

Part 2: WEAVR Administrators' Manual contains a detailed outline of standard VHP training recommendations (pages 16-18). DHS/WEAVR Staff provide continuing notification to WEAVR registrants regarding the available training opportunities.

Drills and Exercises

DHS/WEAVR Staff provide advocacy and technical support to Local Administrators seeking to increase VHP participation in local emergency response drills and exercises, including:

- Encouraging healthcare coalitions and Wisconsin Emergency Management regions to support inclusion of VHPs in drills and exercises ***as responders rather than as victims***
- Providing technical assistance on exercise scenarios and injects
- Sharing success stories from units/jurisdictions that have recently had successful drills or exercises

PLANNED ACTIVITIES

DHS/WEAVR Staff support VHP engagement in planned activities by:

- Providing information about opportunities to participate in local, regional, and state drills and exercises.
- Encouraging Local Administrators to engage VHPs to present preparedness programs to community organizations.
- Discuss opportunities to participate in community events, celebrations, and fairs at which Local Administrators can:

- Register new recruits.
- Offer preparedness tips and information.
- Have a free drawing for an emergency preparedness kit or other items.
- Fostering a mentoring program to keep volunteers engaged and support potential leaders in local organizations. Encourage Local Administrators to:
 - Delegate responsibilities for orientation and training to experienced volunteers.
 - Delegate other administrative duties to volunteers looking for more involvement in the organization.
 - Pair experienced volunteers with new volunteers.
 - Provide opportunities for leadership and resource management training.
 - Create work groups for special projects that involve both new and experienced volunteers.

VHP Recognition and Support

The entire WEAVR System must emulate a positive environment of support and recognition for all WEAVR members and personnel. The State WEAVR Administrator steers a planned system VHP support, recognition, and appreciation activities:

- To affiliated VHPs via their Local Administrators
- Directly to unaffiliated VHPs

POST-DEPLOYMENT ACTIVITIES

DHS/WEAVR Staff coordinate with Receiving and Sending Jurisdictions to ensure that they:

- Conduct a welcome-home event for returning VHPs that provides for volunteer recognition and appreciation, after-action debriefing, and post-deployment support as needed.
- Complete and submit/store all post-deployment recordkeeping.
- Bring all WEAVR system components related to the deployment mission up to date.

VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION AND APPRECIATION

The State WEAVR Administrator encourages Local Administrators to make volunteer recognition and appreciation an ongoing priority whether or not VHPs have had opportunities to deploy. Strategies include:

- Including topics in webinar agendas that allow Local Administrators to share volunteer recognition and appreciation success stories
- Sharing news about volunteer recognition and appreciation events
- Discussing the use of VHP performance evaluations
- Providing for debriefing, after action reviews, etc., among Local Administrators
- Providing for VHP length-of-service awards