Index

I. Welcome to Team River Runner
II. Organizing your chapter and Getting Started
   A. Basic Chapter Requirements
   A.1 Chapter Coordinator
   A.2 Water Venue
   A.3 Participants
   A.4 Volunteers
   A.5 Participant Referral Sources
   A.6 Gear and Gear Storage
III. Adaptive Outfitting and Techniques
IV. Chapter Requirements
V. Chapter Expectations
VI. Legal/Insurance Information
   Media Release
   Medical Data Release
   Privacy Training
   TRR Privacy and Nondiscrimination Policy
VII. Fundraising
VIII. TRR Organization
IX. Resource Links
   TRR Chapter Coordinator Application
   TRR Chapter Affiliation Agreement
   TRR Volunteer Conduct Policy
   TRR Waiver set-up instructions
   ORS Tutorial
   TRR Safety Protocol
   Pathway to Paddler
   Pathway to Instructor
   Staff/Volunteer/Participant Information Form
   Team River Runner Incident Report Form
I. Welcome to Team River Runner

Team River Runner (TRR) was established in August 2004 in the Washington DC area. TRR is a volunteer organization run by the National Office (TRR-N) staff in Maryland near where its first TRR Chapter was established at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center. The organization is overseen by a Board of Directors. TRR works as a Chapter of Move United giving active-duty service members, veterans, and their family members an opportunity to find health, healing, community purpose, and new challenges through adventure and adaptive paddle sports. The benefits of TRR have as much to do with social support, finding emotional strength, and re-creating personal identity as they do with athletics.

TRR was originally established to help active-duty military personnel wounded in Iraq and Afghanistan in recovery at Walter Reed Army Medical Center. The program was a success! So, in 2007, TRR outreached to other Department of Defense (DoD) branches as well as the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to grow this program. Now, all TRR Chapters and Programs actively seek to collaborate with all national and community programs that serve veterans. TRR believed that generosity of collective efforts as a team creates more powerful and successful programming.

The TRR National Program is now an all-inclusive-embracing organization that welcomes all who wish to participate. The highest-level programming goal is having wounded/disabled veterans take on leadership (purpose) in local programs. Veterans, family members and/or volunteers without disabling wounds or issues are encouraged to take part as well.

There are now over 60 operating TRR chapters across the country. In 2018 we served over 2000 veterans and active-duty soldiers. TRR has become a family of grass roots support and a valuable recreation therapy resource for our vets.

As you consider standing up a new chapter, you and your local team will be joining a national organization that will provide guidelines for initial stand up, directions for operating a chapter, and support and resources as you go forward. You will find resources throughout this handbook that you can use initially and refer to as your chapter progresses.

Just think, your new chapter will be giving active/retired military, veterans, and their families an opportunity to heal from profound psychological and physical wounds by exploring the challenges of kayaking and other paddle sports. For those recently injured, kayaking might be the first new skill they have a chance to learn – as opposed to re-learning a previously expert skill. Our participants, by choosing a positive life in the face of great disadvantages, will subtly and quietly change the lives of those with whom they come into contact, on and off the water, for the rest of their lives. This includes the volunteers of your new chapter.

Some participants may participate briefly or infrequently. Others will incorporate paddle sports as a significant component of their lives. TRR encourages a lifelong involvement in this therapeutic activity.
II. Starting and Organizing a TRR Chapter

First, do not be overwhelmed by the Chapter Handbook or any of the rest of the materials referenced here. Setting up and running a Chapter, it is not difficult. Second, realize you are not doing this alone. The TRR-National Chapter Coordinator and Program Director will assist you and guide you through the standup process. You will also have access to a Regional Coordinator for ongoing questions and issues. Third, every chapter has different needs and opportunities, and will not look exactly like every other chapter.

This Handbook is intended as guidance only, and you are given a lot of leeway to develop your chapter. TRR is most interested in getting “butts in boats,” and if this is done in a safe manner, with approval of the Program Director, you have considerable flexibility in how you accomplish this. The Handbook is provided as a source of what has worked, and to make your job easier, not as an inflexible template that you must follow. The few mandatory requirements for chapters are clearly identified in the Handbook.

A. Basic Chapter Requirements

These are the key requirements that we have found are needed for establishing a new chapter:

1. Chapter Coordinator – oversees the program and is responsible for maintaining regular contact with the TRR National Chapter Coordinator and TRR Programs Director.
2. Water Venue – a pool and open water (lake, river, or ocean).
3. Participants – active-duty soldiers and/or veterans.
4. Volunteers – willing to help run the program (some of whom need to be experienced boaters).
5. Referral Sources – support of your local VA hospital or outpatient clinic, base’s Warrior Transition Battalion, university veterans’ organization, or another consistent source of referrals.
6. Boat and gear storage – a safe, secure, and accessible location to store your chapter’s gear.

A.1 Chapter Coordinator

This is the person submitted a Chapter Coordinator Application and was approved by the National Chapter Coordinator and Programs Director – probably you if you are reading the handbook. Hopefully, by this time you have viewed the “Chapter Orientation” video and after reading this handbook you will sign and submit the Chapter Affiliate Agreement.

A.1.1 Record Keeping and Online Reporting

During the training, you probably learned about a few administrative tasks that you are responsible for but can be delegated to volunteers who want to be involved but are not paddlers. The most critical is for each activity to be recorded in our online reporting system (ORS) in a timely manner. This is essential information that allows us to track (and fund) individual chapters, as well as inform potential donors and grantors of our organizational
accomplishments. This process takes 5-10 minutes per activity and a brief 30-minute training session provided by TRR-N ORS Trainer will explain how to do this.

Another administrative task is to ensure all volunteers participants sign the **liability and medical release waivers electronically or in paper every calendar year prior to attending his/her first chapter event on the signed year. This is a yearly requirement.** By signing the [Chapter Affiliation Agreement](#) between you and TRR-N, you are committing to perform these essential and very important tasks.

TRR-N will provide liability insurance to cover your volunteers. This insurance is provided once the TRR-N National Chapter Coordinator and Programs Director determines your chapter is ready to operate and hold sessions. They will assist you in determining your kayak and equipment needs and then arrange purchase and delivery of that equipment to your chapter. Instructional opportunities for you and your chapter will be optimized and pursued as determined by TRR-N.

### A.2 Water Venue
A large, heated pool is the best year-round venue for teaching the basics. If the government facility does not have one, search out local universities or community facilities. Since using a non-governmental facility can create legal and insurance issues, thoroughly discuss your pool session requirements with the facility contact and provide a copy of our insurance documentation if requested. If your local pool requires payment for use, discuss this with your Regional Coordinator. TRR-N often will pay pool costs until you get your fundraising underway.

Local water can be flat, moving, whitewater, surf, or open ocean. Make sure proper permits are acquired and that areas have reasonable access and bathrooms for your participants. A Class I run can become a Class V takeout for someone on crutches. Again, after printing and signing the [Chapter Affiliation Agreement](#) between you and TRR-National, you’re ready to get started.

### A.3 Participants
The most important requirement is to have a concentration of vets and/or military community to recruit participants. Most of our chapters are located near a VA hospital or clinic, active-duty military base, and/or university or colleges. You, as the local TRR representative, will need to approach the local veteran or military leadership and ask for their support in endorsing the program and referring participants to your local chapter. TRR-N can provide a PowerPoint presentation for this outreach effort as well as TRR brochures and business cards for you to pass out.

#### A.3.1 Essential Eligibility Criteria for Participants
Referring providers also want to know who can participate, given that we describe ourselves as an adaptive sports organization. TRR strives to be inclusive of everyone, regardless of physical
or mental disabilities. However, to ensure safety, TRR utilizes certain criteria established by the American Canoe Association (ACA) and referred to as the Essential Eligibility Criteria (EEC) for Paddlers (Additional specific requirements may be required for coastal and whitewater outings). The participant must be able to:

1. Breathe independently (i.e., not require medical devices to sustain breathing)
2. Independently maintain sealed airway passages while under water
3. Independently hold head upright without neck / head support
4. Manage personal care independently, or with assistance of a companion
5. Manage personal mobility independently, or with a reasonable amount of assistance
6. Follow instructions and effectively communicate independently or with assistance of a companion
7. Independently turn from facedown to faceup, and remain floating faceup while wearing a PFD*
8. Independently get in/out of a paddle craft or with a reasonable amount of assistance*
9. Independently get out and from under a capsized paddle craft*
10. Independently reenter the paddle craft following deep water capsize or with a reasonable amount of assistance*
11. Maintain a safe body position while attempting skills, activities, and rescues listed in the appropriate Course Outline, as well as can recognize and identify to others when such efforts would be unsafe given the participant’s personal situation*

* To participate in adaptive programs, participants must acknowledge only the first six EEC listed above. Entry-level adaptive programs will involve teaching and practicing EEC #7-11.

In addition to regular pool sessions, other activities that can help recruit and engage more participation are – Family Paddling Days and Non-Paddling events:

Family Paddling Days
Include family, friends, and caretakers by bringing sit-on-tops, inflatable kayaks (IKs), or rafts to your local open water venue. The opportunity for the participants to teach their family is a great confidence builder. Combine a picnic, basic lessons for new participants and games to get everyone involved. If you have the opportunity to do downriver stretches, throw in a Poker Run, too.

Non – Paddling Events
Family picnics and movie nights or other outdoor activities – such as hiking - are all opportunities to get your participants, their friends, and families together for some fun. TRR is as much social connections as paddling, so be creative!

A.4 Volunteers
“Volunteer” refers to community members and/or veterans who are assisting in your chapter to differentiate them from “Paddlers” or “Participants,” who are the veterans engaged in our programs. We encourage participants to take on leadership roles, so some of your volunteers
may start out as participants in your chapter and eventually take on active roles within your volunteer base. **Volunteers are the heart of each chapter.**

We’ve found recruiting suitable volunteers to be relatively easy. Good sources for acquiring volunteers include your local kayaking club, local university kayak instructor and all your local kayaking buddies and local outfitters. Other organizations like Team Red White Blue, VA Voluntary Service, or community volunteer banks may also be resources. Seek out volunteers in any way your community might have people available.

**Most chapters operate best when there are 6-8 volunteers** willing to help. Not everyone has to be present for all sessions. It does works well to build some depth in your volunteer base. Not all have to be kayakers, but the majority should be experienced boaters. Having someone qualified as an ACA instructor is a plus for a chapter, but not required. TRR does want at least one volunteer to be an experienced boater well versed in safety (at least CPR certified) and Swift Water Rescue (SWR) to provide guidance and/or be lead in addition to Chapter Coordinator when running programs, especially on moving water trips. TRR will offer ACA certification to veterans and select volunteers willing to commit to volunteering.

### A.4.1 Building a Volunteer Base

1. Recruit boaters you know or want and provide the “Welcome” paragraph above to introduce them to TRR, adding your own information. Be clear about the time requirement (3-4 hours a week) and the potential diagnoses your participants may have, so prospective volunteers will have an idea of the scope of disabilities.

2. We encourage volunteers to be ACA Certified Instructors, however this is not a mandatory requirement. In order to encourage a structured, safe, and rewarding progression of skills, TRR has developed a [Pathway to Paddler checklist](#) that volunteers can use when instructing our participants to make them accomplished paddlers. For those who wish to move into leadership and instruction roles within TRR, we have a [Pathway to Instructor checklist](#) as well.

3. Use experienced paddlers volunteers that meet the Trip Leader capabilities as outlined in the [TRR Safety Protocol](#) to determine who they are capable of working with. The ratio of volunteers to participants depends on your participant demographic. Amputees/paraplegics/Visually impaired benefit from a 2 to 3 volunteer per participant ratio, other diagnoses can manage with 1 on 1. As participant skills increase, volunteer ratios decrease. Look to turn accomplished participants into paddlers/volunteers!

4. Be hard-nosed in selecting volunteers. Ask them to commit to a minimum number of sessions in the first month or two. Consistency in instructors is critical to build confidence in the participants. If non-paddlers want to volunteer, welcome them to help with gear organization, administrative, fundraising and video recording pool sessions and outings. Medical professionals who want to participate can be great assets. Discourage lookie-loo’s and people who want to “see if they like it.” They won’t, and you’re not running a sideshow for their amusement.
5. Set a Chapter Kick-off date. It works well to have the first session to be composed of volunteers only. Go through the whole session, of providing equipment, having a couple of volunteers play role as healing vets. If practical, TRR-N may be able to send a representative for an initial session with your volunteers to discuss etiquette, specialized outfitting, adaptive roll instruction, adaptive stroke instruction, safety, and games. This session must be conducted at a water venue so that stroke and roll instruction can be practiced. We recommend a 2-hour session.

6. A follow-up training session is very helpful. A local ACA certified Instructor Trainer is a great resource. Bring friends who would like to be students and go get wet. **It is imperative that all volunteers have the same knowledge on instruction technique, strokes, rolling and safety.**

7. Set up a series of sessions at the primary venue (pool/flat water/river) and go for it!

New Volunteers after chapter is established

Upon arrival at an event, new volunteers should, after being hugged effusively, be given

1) A mentor for the event to whom they can ask questions and who will make sure they are not abandoned  
2) TRR Liability and Media release form – electronically signed on annually (based on calendar year) and  
3) Volunteer Information Sheet – completed and returned  
4) Volunteer Guidelines- read, signed, and returned

If the event is a VA or DoD event, the new volunteer may need to sign a VA/DoD Volunteer Form. Check with your VA or DoD representative on site. New volunteers should observe and assist the first time they attend an event, then be requested to coach at their next session.

A.4.2 Volunteer Management

Managing volunteers is like herding cats. Good luck! With volunteers, you have the delicate situation of not being able to “tell” them what to do. Note that some facilities may discourage or prohibit friends and family of volunteers from attending events. This may be due to a control issue, a legal issue, or simply an effort to protect participant privacy and dignity. TRR’s policy is that participants’ family and friends are welcome unless they pose a safety risk at an outdoor venue.

A.4.3 Safety Protocol for Volunteers

The [TRR Safety Protocol](#) found on the website explains in detail TRR’s trip roles, safety procedures and volunteer guidelines.
A.4.4. Volunteer Roles

The following roles have been found to be helpful, especially as chapters grow. When starting, chapters may not have any or many of the roles filled, or the Chapter Coordinator may take on many of the roles. Some roles, such as volunteer coordinator, gear wrangler, and fundraiser won’t be necessary until you grow considerably.

1. **Event Coordinator** - this individual may be the Chapter Coordinator, or a designee appointed by the chapter coordinator at each event. They will coordinate the paddling activity, assigning all the needed roles to make sure activity is safe, well organized, and fun. Depending on the event and other volunteers available, this volunteer may need trip planning and leading experience and instruction experience.

2. **Instructors** - these are the volunteers delivering the instruction, guiding, and mentoring participants. They should be team players, experienced paddlers willing to be flexible, sensitive, and adaptable in instruction. TRR is unique in that we instruct individuals with both physical and mental disabilities.

3. **Secretary** – Can be hands-on at the venue, or purely administrative, or both. For new chapters, the chapter coordinator may take this role initially.
   a. Responsible for entering participant, volunteer, and event info into the reporting system (ORS) and notifying participants and volunteers about events. A reporting system User’s Manual and training will be provided. ORS is a mandatory requirement for each chapter.
   b. Communicates with TRR-N and submits any receipts for reimbursement.
   c. Ensures volunteers and participants have signed info sheets, liability and media waivers and keeps them filed separately. Liability and Media Waivers must be signed every calendar year.

   Please keep, in separate folders:
   a) Invoices that are packed with gear shipments.
   b) Un-reimbursed receipts from food, supplies, or gear purchases.
   c) Reimbursed receipts.

   Please submit itemized, written documentation for each expense including date of purchase/expense, item(s) purchased, cost per item, total cost & vendor name. Copy the receipts and send the copy in with the itemized summary. Monthly submission is sufficient. The reimbursement form can be found on the website under “Resources.” Please remember that ALL purchases must be pre-approved by your regional coordinator.

4. **Participant Outreach Coordinator** – Recruits new participants, keeps contact with existing members and maintains a relationship with the chapter’s government contact to spread the word about TRR to potential participants. Provides outreach to veterans’ organizations (DAV, PVA, VFW) and attends veteran events and activities to promote TRR and the local chapter. Useful for chapters without a consistent Referral Source.
5. **Volunteer Coordinator** – Maintains a list of volunteers, including skill and instruction level, and helps coordinate and schedule the appropriate volunteers for chapter activities. Useful for larger chapters.

6. **Gear Wrangler** – Keeps a list of gear, helps maintain and repair gear, and assists the chapter coordinator in determining gear needs and purchases. Useful for larger chapters.

7. **Fundraiser** – Seeks sources of local funding from merchants, veterans’ organizations, other non-profits, and foundations. The focus of a new chapter in the first two years is to develop a paddling program, not raise funds. The national organization will support you financially during these start-up years and as needed going forward.

A.5 Participant Referral Sources

One of our best sources for participants is the local VA (if one is in the area) office, go to [https://www.va.gov/](https://www.va.gov/) to find the nearest location. If available, contact the recreational therapist at the VA medical facility. The VA rec therapist provides access to patients, assures the patients have been medically cleared to participate and can work with you on Essential Eligibility Criteria for Paddlers. The recreational therapist may be able to help you gain access to a VA pool and help coordinate the VA volunteer training process. The recreational therapist is also an invaluable source to spread the word about TRR to their peers and to help the therapists at new TRR chapters. Learn as much as you can from them and invite them to participate in sessions so they can experience what their patients will.

Within the various VA hospitals around the country there are several departments with the hospital targeting vets to help. Some hospitals have Acute Spinal Cord units that service vets with severe spinal injuries, some have units helping those with amputations, other for traumatic brain injuries, Post Traumatic Stress, and substance abuse. Look online to find the hospital or outpatient clinic near you and determine which departments are within the hospital. Be aware that these departments rarely talk to each other. You should initiate a discussion with EACH department.

The response you will receive will vary from department to department. Don’t get discouraged. These are busy people meeting lots of demands. It only takes one Yes out of a hundred Nos!! There is an addendum attached for your meeting with the VA that details typical questions and TRR’s answers for them. Additionally, you might consider showing them the TRR chapter on the web and offering to give them a 10-minute PowerPoint brief. The TRR National Program Director may be able to attend this meeting or join via conference call. This has proved useful in the past in gaining the VA rep’s support.

The two critical messages for the VA are that you will provide a safe, effective, and proven program for their veterans that aids their healing and that there is a national organization that stands behind and supports you.
Once you gain the VA reps approval you be required to undergo some VA training. This process can be quick, or it can drag on for months. Regardless, it must be done. Be patient but persistent. You will be working with the VA Volunteer Coordinator. Once your training is complete, you should have already established with your VA point of contact how they will refer vets to your program. This is an exciting time. However, be aware that some vets who say they are going to attend, end up not. Don’t take it personally. It takes time to grow a program. If you get one or two interested, they will spread the word. You can always ask them if they know a fellow vet that might enjoy paddling.

What should you say about TRR to excite potential participants?
Remember: you may only have a few minutes to engage them.
1) It’s on the water, it’s safe, and it’s fun!
2) Helps rehabilitation - builds flexibility, strength, coordination, and balance
3) Leads to trips on various bodies of water - rivers/lake/surf/bay
4) Can be done with family members!
5) Breaks the boredom of the hospital routine
6) Barriers to participation are manageable:
   a. “Your wife expects you home? Invite her to come along and try it too.”
   b. “You play poker at 6? You’ll still have 40 minutes in the pool.”
   c. “You can’t swim? No problem: we all wear life jackets.”

Referral sources often ask how often the program will offer sessions for the veterans. Our goal is to provide ongoing activity for participants, preferably pool sessions once a week, with ocean, river, or lake outings when weather conditions permit. TRR has found we help participants best by offering weekly sessions. It gives participants something to look forward to, to be motivated about and goals to strive towards.

A.6. Gear and Gear Storage
TRR-N will supply your chapter with gear suited to both your venue and your participants. Whitewater chapters will use mostly whitewater boats, while surf and flatwater chapters may need sit-on-tops, surf boats or longer river runners. Get a wide range of gear sizes but concentrate on XL and XXL tops and spray skirts, and 197 and 200 length paddles. Other useful personal gear includes nose plugs, neoprene booties (for participants with poor extremity sensation, such as those with spinal cord injury), and swimming goggles. Please communicate clearly with the TRR-N Program Director to make sure you get the best possible mix of gear for your participants. You are responsible for keeping track of the gear and using it exclusively for TRR activities. Do not loan it out or let vets “borrow” it.

Label all the gear when you receive it with ‘TRR’ and the size in an easily visible but not annoying place. Sprayskirts have tunnel and deck sizing and can be hard to determine if not clearly labeled. Dry tops may have different neck and body sizing as well. If you will be working with amputees, request a couple extra right and left side thigh braces.

Store gear at the primary venue, if possible. If not, one of the following may be good options:
   1) Enclosed trailer, with ventilation and lines for drying gear
2) Storage at volunteers’ homes
3) Storage in ‘POD’ style portable unit

We recommend against issuing gear to individual participants. This poses a risk to the organization and to individual participants. You are also likely to not get your gear back.

III. Adaptive Outfitting and Techniques

As you get established, and recruit participants, you may begin to encounter participants requiring adaptations for boats and gears. Do not let this alarm you or frighten you. TRR-N has developed extensive guidance and training in adaptive paddling and can provide consultation and direction as needed. Please refer to our website, www.teamriverrunner.org, under “Our Chapters” then “Adaptive Resources” for information on adaptive outfitting and gear. Additionally, our website under “Programs” then “Virtual Training” there are several training videos on adaptive paddling.

IV. Chapter Requirements

TRR strives to minimize specific mandatory requirements for chapters, and allow them the flexibility to develop and grow as best meets the needs of their participants. There are only a few requirements that are mandatory to maintain the safety of our participants and the viability of our organization. Each chapter will ensure that:

1. The chapter coordinator submits Chapter Coordinator application to TRR National Chapter Coordinator.
2. Upon application approval Chapter Coordinator:
   a. Reads TRR Handbook and signs the Chapter Affiliation Agreement
   b. Completes the Code of Conduct course and...
   c. Attends the virtual New Chapter Coordinator Training course.
3. Chapter Coordinator and volunteers go through Background check (paid by TRR-N) and sign Code of Conduct Form.
4. The chapter coordinator or designated volunteer sets up electronic TRR Liability waiver and media release link and sends it to all participants and volunteers https://www.teamriverrunner.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Waiver-Sign-Instructions.pdf
5. All activities are entered into the Online Reporting System each quarter.
6. All funds raised locally are submitted to the TRR national office Business Manager.
7. Alcohol is not used before or during any TRR event, and that no TRR volunteer provides alcohol to participants.

V. Chapter Expectations

There are also some expectations and/or goals of chapters, that, while not mandatory, help ensure that you chapter is an active and healthy component of the larger TRR family. We encourage:

1. Regular communication with TRR-N:
   a. Participate in monthly National phone conference.
   b. Communicate monthly with your Regional Coordinator.
2. Regular TRR activities. TRR promotes an active and healing lifestyle through opportunities for our participants to grow and challenge themselves. This requires regular activities to maintain engagement and promote healing, skills, and growth. We have found that chapters that accomplish the minimum activity goals below are often ones that remain active and viable, and ones where participants and volunteers are easier to recruit, engage, and maintain:
   ● 24 pool or open water sessions a year
   ● Two local river or lake sessions per year
   ● 15 unique participants a year
   ● Two family days per year
   ● Participant participation in at least one National Trip per year.
   ● Qualified and safe instruction according to guidelines specified in the TRR Handbook.

Your chapter may remain an active and effective program for participants regardless of whether you accomplish all, some, or none of these goals. More is better than less, if safety isn’t compromised, the only expectation is that you get participants paddling!

3. Complete recurring requirements and/or certifications – this could be annual safety training, ACA certifications, waivers etc.

Either the National Chapter coordinator and/or the Programs Director will review these goals with you, as well as the obligations and expectations outlined above and in the [Chapter Affiliation Agreement](#). The Affiliation Agreement outlines the obligations that the national program will have to your chapter, as well as the expectations of your chapter as part of a national program.

4. Create a web presence for your chapter on the national website. This can be configured with pictures, contact information and event updates. If a chapter already has created a website for itself, it must, to avoid confusion:
   a. Be clearly identified as a Chapter of Team River Runner.
   b. Have links to the national chapter and the national chapter’s donation page.
   c. Post only local sponsors on the chapter.

5. Provide information to participants about available TRR National Events:
   a. Leadership Clinics
   b. Competitions including Kayak Football Tournaments and Biathlons
   c. Use Golden Paddle Funds (if your Chapter meets that annual goal!) to send veteran participants to these programs!!

VI. Legal/Insurance Information

A government event is defined as an event held either 1) at a VA or DoD facility, or 2) away from a VA/DoD chapter, but where a government employee is paid to attend. This means that the VA or the DoD is liable for what occurs at that event. TRR, Move United, and the individual volunteer are not liable.

When TRR volunteers attend a TRR event off government property without a government employee ‘on the clock’ (thus, a non-government event), they are functioning as true TRR volunteers. TRR liability waiver and media release electronic form must be signed annually by
both participants AND volunteers before they attend a non-government TRR event for the attendees to be covered. Here’s the clincher: the TRR waiver and media release can be signed at a government event only if VA Staff agrees, because the volunteer may not be legally a TRR volunteer at that time! Each VA clinician and VA Medical Center will have its own policies. It is important to clarify, but a TRR waiver must be signed at a non-government TRR event (NO VA employee in attendance). Summary: many Chapters have the TRR Waiver signed on government site, some do not.

TRR will help your chapter obtain liability insurance. This insurance provides coverage to volunteers that are conducting sanctioned TRR events offsite from a VA or DoD facility, such as a river or local outing.

Media Release
Note that each VA and DoD chapter will have different criteria for allowing pictures, interviews, and names of their participants to be released to the media. Participants will need to complete these guidelines for TRR to use media. The TRR Liability Waiver form has a media release as a component, so signing this is sufficient for non-VA events.

Medical Data Release
TRR makes every attempt to protect medically sensitive material. Veterans or participants can freely give their information to your Chapter Secretary or volunteer taking waivers and participant information forms. We will not be given any personal information from VA or DoD staff. Only enter personal information into the Online Reporting System (ORS) as needed for documentation. Keep all documents with personal information in a private location.

Use any approved TRR forms we provide to gather information. Keep private, and work with VA or DoD staff to make certain you are following guidelines they have in their facility.

Privacy Training
Each VA and DoD facility may require privacy training of their volunteers. TRR volunteers are not required to be VA or DoD volunteers unless required to at a VA or DoD location. If you are involved in VA or DoD events (at VA or DoD facilities) please check with your VA or DoD representative about any training requirements.

TRR Privacy and Nondiscrimination Policy
TRR volunteers must follow this TRR Privacy and Nondiscrimination Policies:

Privacy: TRR does not sell, trade, rent or publish personally identifiable information, such as participant names or e-mail addresses to outside parties. However, aggregated data without personally identifying information from our online reporting system may be used in reports to donors or donor organizations and in the annual report, among other publications.
Discrimination: TRR prohibits discrimination against current or prospective participants, family members, and volunteers based on race, color, gender, religion, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, or any other legally protected characteristics in any of its programs or activities.

VII. Fundraising

TRR-N wants you to focus the first year on building your program. As you get established you are encouraged to solicit local donations. Fundraising brochures are available from the National office or online at www.teamriverrunner.org.

Click on the Donate! link and scroll down the page to the donor brochure link.

Chapters are encouraged to solicit $1,000 of local donations for:
1) Needed operational expenses (gear, pool rental, etc.)
2) Local trips and family days
3) Special Events

Each chapter is encouraged to solicit local donations to be used towards extra gear and expenses incurred for local paddling outings (gas, food, hotel overnight if required). It is not the intent for local volunteers to fund these outings. TRR-N can help support local trips if required and if coordinated in advance with TRR-N through the Program Coordinator. Donation of boats and equipment from individuals is encouraged and are tax deductible. Each chapter is encouraged to become financially independent within the first two years.

Solicitation of donations from national companies and organizations must be coordinated with the TRR-N Program Director or Business Manager to avoid TRR making multiple approaches to the same donor.

Cash donations collected at a chapter level are to be combined in a money order and forwarded to TRR-N. Checks must be made payable to "Team River Runner" and forwarded to TRR-N Business Manager. The federal tax ID number for TRR is 20-3838651. Donations mailed to TRR-N will be deposited in a bank account and be available for equipment purchases, training, and clinic attendance. For Chapters established prior to 2021, TRRN will credit chapter’s account with 90% of the funds and retain 10% for administrative overhead until your balance reaches $10,000. Chapters established after 2021 is 80% to chapter’s account and 20% for TRR-N to support participants attending National events.

Chapters with balances above $10,000 will be asked to use funding above that level to hold and sponsor regional paddling events. If funding exceeded $20,000 chapters may be asked to help support another chapter’s requirements. This reflects the ongoing efforts of a community approach and generosity to help TRRN support other chapters and veterans get on the water. 

NOTE: A copy of any thank you letter to local donors sent out by a local chapter must also be sent to the National office for record keeping.
VIII. TRR National Staff and Organization

TRR is organized into eight administrative areas:

Joe Mornini
Executive Director
Joe@teamriverrunner.org
(301) 233-8882

Dave Robey
Program Director
Dave@teamriverrunner.org
(703) 717-1224

Celiann Gonzalez
National Chapter Coordinator
Celiann.gonzalez@teamriverrunner.org
(720) 440-0558

Michelle Karpathy
Business Manager
Michelle@teamriverrunner.org
(240) 994-9084

Bill Finger
TRR National Conference Coordinator
Bill@teamriverrunner.org
(423) 361-2338

Nazanin Yousefnejad
Communications Manager; Outreach
Nazanin@teamriverrunner.org
(301) 793-2877

Charlie Duffy
TRR Safety and Risk Management Director
Safety@teamriverrunner.org
(703) 407-0909

Brandon Huff
Admin Assistant; ORS Training
Brandon@teamriverrunner.org
(508) 834-4877 ← Also the ‘ORS Text Hotline’

You can also leave messages on our phone: 301 534 4877
Or email us: info@teamriverrunner.org
For reimbursements:
Team River Runner
5007 Stone Rd.
Rockville, MD 20853

TRR also is organized in regional geographic areas found on this link:

IX. TRR Resource Links

TRR Chapter Coordinator Application
tor-Application-with-google-form-link.pdf

TRR Chapter Affiliation Agreement

TRR Volunteer Conduct Policy
m-2.pdf

TRR Insurance Waiver and Media Release
ructions.pdf

ORS Tutorial

TRR Safety Protocol

Pathway to Paddler
https://www.teamriverrunner.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Level-1-4-Paddler-Progression-Check-Li
st-Color.pdf

Pathway to Instructor
https://www.teamriverrunner.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Level-1-4-Instructor-Progression-Check
-List-Color.pdf

Team River Runner Incident Report Form