

MONTANA

Highlights of State Council Activities

The Montana State Citizen Corps Council met five times in 2005, bringing together representatives from Montana Disaster & Emergency Services, the Governor's Office on Community Service, Montana Chapter of the American Red Cross, American Association of Retired Persons, the Montana Office of the Corporation of National and Community Service, Montana Emergency Management Association, American Red Cross, Retired Senior Volunteer Program, Montana Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD), Critical Illness and Trauma Foundation, Office of Rural Health, Montana State University Extension Service, the United Way, Montana State Office of the Chamber of Commerce, and Montana Fire Chiefs' Association.

The Montana State Council also receives support from state leadership including the Governor's Deputy Chief of Staff, the Governor's Office of Economic Development, and the Office of the Adjutant General. Citizen Corps is included in the Montana State Strategic Plan, represented at the State Emergency Response Commission, referenced in the Montana Disaster and Emergency Services Emergency Operations Plan, and was a previous member of the Montana State Homeland Security Task Force.

Citizen Corps grant funds have been provided to local Citizen Corps programs on a competitive basis from FY 2003 through FY 2005. Areas of strategic focus include development of Citizen Corps and its primary core elements; program increases in the Community Emergency Response Team, Medical Reserve Corps, Volunteers in Police Service, USA on Watch, and Fire Corps programs; CERT Team development, public education, and an emphasis on national preparedness programs.

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Public Education and Outreach

The State Citizen Corps Council received grant funding to organize and conduct the nation's first Territorial Citizen Corps Conference. It incorporated FEMA Regions VIII, IX and X and was titled the Western Territorial Citizen Corps Workshop Training Conference. Over 130 participants from 20 states and territories attended with the full support of the National Citizen Corps Office and its Affiliates.

The State Council as well as local Citizen Corps Councils used public service announcements to garner support for the various programs and elements of the state's overall Citizen Corps program. In 2005, the number of Citizen Corps Councils grew to 16, including one tribal Council, the Blackfeet Tribal Citizen Corps Council. Sixty-four percent of the state's population is now served by a Citizen Corps Council.

Training and Exercises

Citizen Corps personnel, especially those who have received CERT training, have participated in various local, county, and regional exercises as part of the state's Exercise Plan. The various County Councils participate if the schedule and volunteer status permit.

Volunteer Programs and Support

Volunteer support continued to grow throughout the various communities in the state. Some CERT teams were generated in areas where there was no organized Citizen Corps effort. Nearly 1,500 personnel have taken CERT training to date. The State Council supports local efforts through the provision of CERT training materials, advice and instructors.

Support for Hurricane Katrina Response

Due to the proactive efforts of local and regional emergency managers, Montana provided a large number of Community Relations Officers in response to the 2005 hurricane season. An estimated 700 Montana personnel supported post-hurricane recovery operations and several remain on duty in locations ravaged by the storms.

National Preparedness Month

National Preparedness Month 2005 was marked by a statewide media campaign along with National Preparedness programs running in Yellowstone, Richland, and Lewis & Clark Counties. It is estimated that over 4,000 personnel attended the programs and many more received materials. This generated an increase in requests for Citizen Corps information, including a heightened interest in CERT training, Fire Corps, USA on Watch, and Medical Reserve Corps programs.