

WEST VIRGINIA

Highlights of State Council Activities

The West Virginia Citizen Corps Council consists of 33 members, representing a wide variety of state and local agencies, businesses, volunteer organizations and educational facilities. The Council meets biannually and serves in an advisory capacity regarding the development of local Citizen Corps Councils statewide and the implementation of all Citizen Corps programs.

WV Citizen Corps works in close partnership with the Governor's Commission for National and Community Service (CNCS), West Virginia's Community Emergency Response Volunteers (CERV) program, and the West Virginia Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (WVDHSEM). West Virginia Citizen Corps Council seats were filled by invitation through the collaborative efforts of the WVDHSEM Director, the CNCS Director and the State Citizen Corps Coordinator. The governance process for the WV Citizen Corps Program is implemented by the State Administrative Agency (SAA) through coordination with the WVDHSEM Director and the State Citizen Corps Coordinator. The West Virginia CNCS Director serves as chair for the State Citizen Corps Council. Under the leadership of the West Virginia Citizen Corps Council, CERV recruited, trained and empowered 195 volunteers this year.

WV Citizen Corps participated in the construction of the Homeland Security Grant proposal for the state, which was instrumental in showing the need to include volunteers in various aspects of the state's emergency plan. This work built on the successful collaboration that occurred between the WV Citizen Corps Program, CNCS and CERV during the Katrina disaster.

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Public Education and Outreach

West Virginia Citizen Corps Councils and CERV leaders participated in various county and local events, fairs and training exercises to promote public awareness and education for West Virginia's communities about the need for disaster preparedness.

WV Citizen Corps worked with the West Virginia Developmental Disabilities Council and the West Virginia Rehabilitation Department to develop materials and training, and to improve planning for individuals with special needs. Additionally, outreach to various Boards of Education gave Citizen Corps a new avenue to facilitate preparedness training for West Virginia's youth.

Jefferson County Citizen Corps is operated by the Jefferson County Office of Homeland Security (JCOHS), which coordinates committees on Public Awareness and Education, People with Special Needs, and Animals in Disaster, among others. Volunteers working with JCOHS and Citizen Corps have been very active in presenting Fire Safety Programs to children and seniors

in their county. Volunteers have presented fire safety programs to local daycare centers and elementary schools, as well as senior citizens' groups.

Training and Exercises

Local Citizen Corps Councils in West Virginia continue to conduct individual and family disaster preparedness and CERT training. They also facilitate the use of Web-based preparedness training to reach a larger portion of the state more efficiently. The Volunteer WV Web site posts available trainings as well as online classes for the public. Additionally, WV Citizen Corps partners with other agencies to make the training available at various conferences throughout the state. Trained volunteers have been active in state drills, exercises, and during actual events.

Eleven counties formed a collaborative partnership with Maryland's Project Aware Program to bring disaster tabletop exercises to Citizen Corps volunteers in the northeastern portion of West Virginia. Randolph County completed the first Teen State Emergency Response Team (SERT) training in West Virginia. Tucker County is also in process of implementing TeenSERT training. Jackson County set up the first CERT training for state park employees. First aid and automated external defibrillator training will also be provided in collaboration with the American Red Cross (ARC). Six Regional Developers are holding Train-the-Trainer classes in many of the local Council territories.

Volunteer Programs and Support

West Virginia proudly boasts a gain of 407 trained volunteers who have given 8,547 hours of volunteer service. Through the Volunteer WV Web site, more than 600 additional volunteers have indicated their interest in disaster preparedness training opportunities. In partnership with Citizen Corps, the CERV program has doubled its volunteer base in less than a year. These numbers reflect volunteers who are active in making themselves, their families and their communities safer, better prepared and more resilient to disasters and emergencies.

Collaborative efforts between a local Citizen Corps Council, the CERV program, ARC and Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA), resulted in the establishment of a volunteer point-of-contact center, which will be used to house area VISTA workers, as part of Volunteer WV. CERV and ARC will offer training at the facility and will provide ongoing recruitment for volunteers in the community.

Support for Hurricane Katrina Response

West Virginia Citizen Corps provided assistance for evacuees. Citizen Corps volunteers assisted with donations management for the evacuees sheltered in Camp Dawson, an Army National Guard training site.

National Preparedness Month

As part of National Preparedness Month activities, the Governor kicked off a statewide conference, which united citizens and emergency officials to discuss how to work together during a disaster. This first State Citizen Corps Conference provided citizens with information from local, state and national presenters on Citizen Corps programs through interactive exhibits and displays at the Charleston's Towne Center Mall. A state public service announcement

featuring Governor Joe Manchin III was issued. The announcement aired on public television across the state.