

CITIZEN CORPS MISSION STATEMENT

PREPARE • TRAIN • VOLUNTEER



CITIZEN CORPS MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Citizen Corps is to harness the power of every individual through
education, training, and volunteer service
to make communities safer, stronger, and better prepared to respond to the threats
of terrorism, crime, public health issues, and disasters of all kinds.

Implementing the Mission – The Citizen Corps Council

The Citizen Corps mission is accomplished through a national network of state, tribal, and local Citizen Corps Councils, which bring together the expertise of leaders from the emergency responder disciplines with the energy and spirit of volunteers, the private sector, elected officials, and other community stakeholders.

These Councils build on community strengths to develop a local strategy to foster a greater connection between citizens and emergency responders, increase awareness and preparedness, and encourage citizen participation in hometown security. Citizen Corps Council activities include:

- **Citizen Preparedness:** Helping to educate residents about important preparedness measures, such as developing a household disaster plan and disaster supply kits for the home, workplace, and vehicle; learning about emergency plans for schools, workplaces, neighborhoods, and communities; understanding alerts, warnings, and local emergency services; conducting drills; observing home health and safety practices; implementing property damage prevention measures; and participating in crime prevention and reporting. Citizen Corps Councils conduct public education and outreach efforts to provide critical local guidance on these actions.
- **Training and Exercises:** Providing training to improve citizen preparedness, prevention, and response capabilities, to include first aid; cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR); automated external defibrillators (AED); crime prevention and terrorism awareness; learning about the Incident Command System; and the skills included in Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training, such as fire safety, search and rescue procedures, and disaster medical operations. Councils also promote the importance of drills in the home, workplace, and school, and help coordinate citizen participation in community disaster response exercises.
- **Volunteer Service:** Coordinating volunteer opportunities that support local emergency responders, disaster relief groups, and community safety organizations. Everyone can do something to support local emergency management, law enforcement, fire service, emergency medical services, and community public health efforts. Citizen Corps volunteer programs include Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT), Fire Corps, Medical Reserve Corps, Neighborhood Watch/USAonWatch, and Volunteers in Police Service. Councils also coordinate additional volunteer opportunities as appropriate for the community and for people with special skills and interests.

The American people are the ultimate stakeholders in the homeland security mission and must be an integral part of national preparedness efforts. Citizen Corps Councils work to include all citizens in the process, including special needs populations, such as young adults, senior citizens, people with disabilities, Native American tribes, people with language barriers, and economically challenged individuals.

To learn more about Citizen Corps and to find the Council nearest you, please visit www.citizencorps.gov.

UNITING COMMUNITIES – PREPARING THE NATION

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CITIZEN CORPS PROGRAM OVERVIEW

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CITIZEN CORPS PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Coordinated nationally by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Citizen Corps integrates programs and activities that engage everyone in hometown security. Led by the local Citizen Corps Council, Citizen Corps implementation is tailored to the community and focuses on community-specific public education, outreach, training, and volunteer opportunities. Citizen Corps Programs include five federal Program Partners, Citizen Corps Affiliate Programs and Organizations, and other organizations and activities that promote the mission of citizen preparedness and participation.



The **Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)** program educates people about disaster preparedness and trains them in basic disaster response skills such as fire safety, light search and rescue, and disaster medical operations. Using their training, CERT members can assist others in their neighborhood or workplace following an event and can take a more active role in preparing their community. The CERT Program is administered by DHS.



Fire Corps promotes the use of citizen advocates to enhance the capacity of resource-constrained fire and rescue departments at all levels: volunteer, combination, and career. Citizen advocates can assist local fire departments in a range of activities including fire safety outreach, youth programs, and administrative support. Fire Corps also provides resources to assist fire and rescue departments in creating opportunities for citizen advocates. Fire Corps is funded through DHS and is managed and implemented through a partnership between the National Volunteer Fire Council, the International Association of Fire Fighters, and the International Association of Fire Chiefs.



The **Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) Program** strengthens communities by helping medical, public health, and other volunteers offer their expertise throughout the year as well as during local emergencies and other times of community need. MRC volunteers work in coordination with existing local emergency response programs and also supplement existing community public health initiatives, such as outreach and prevention, immunization programs, blood drives, case management, care planning, and other efforts. The MRC program is administered by HHS.



Neighborhood Watch/USAonWatch incorporates terrorism awareness education into its existing crime prevention mission, while serving as a way to bring residents together to focus on emergency preparedness and emergency response training. Funded by the Department of Justice (DOJ), Neighborhood Watch is administered by the National Sheriffs' Association.



Volunteers in Police Service (VIPS) works to enhance the capacity of state and local law enforcement to utilize volunteers. VIPS serves as a gateway to resources and information for and about law enforcement volunteer programs. Funded by DOJ, VIPS is managed and implemented by International Association of Chiefs of Police.

Citizen Corps also works closely with the **Corporation for National and Community Service** to promote volunteer service activities that support homeland security and community safety; the **Citizen Corps Affiliate Programs and Organizations** to expand the resources and materials available to states and local communities to implement the Citizen Corps mission; and other awareness and preparedness resources, such as **Ready.gov**, to help everyone in America prepare, train, and volunteer for hometown security.

To find out more about Citizen Corps Programs and activities, please visit www.citizencorps.gov.

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CITIZEN CORPS QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q: What is Citizen Corps?

A: Citizen Corps is the nationwide grass-roots movement to actively involve everyone in America in making our communities and our nation safer, stronger, and better prepared for all hazards and threats. ***We all have a role in hometown security and Citizen Corps provides local opportunities for everyone to prepare, train, and volunteer!***

Q: What is hometown security and what can citizens do to help?

A: Hometown security means taking an active role in making our families safer and in helping our communities be safer too. We all have the ability – and the responsibility – to be more aware of the threats we face, to prepare for all hazards, to learn the skills needed to help others in times of crisis, and to volunteer our time to support our local emergency responders.

Q: What are some specific steps that citizens can take to be more responsible for their safety?

A: We can all take some important steps right now to help ourselves and our families prepare for a possible disaster, public health incident, crime, or terrorist attack. Citizen Corps Councils help educate community residents on these measures and provide critical local information and guidance. Important preparedness measures include:

- Having emergency supply kits in the home, vehicle, and workplace.
- Practicing family evacuation and communications plans.
- Learning about natural hazards and the terrorist threats we all now face.
- Understanding alerts, warnings, local emergency services and emergency plans for schools, the workplace, the neighborhood, and the community.

Q: What kinds of training should citizens take?

A: In 95 percent of all emergencies, the victim or a bystander provides the first, immediate assistance at the scene. We must all get training in emergency prevention, preparedness, and response and maintain these skills to help ourselves and others in a critical situation.

Important training includes first aid; cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR); how to use an automated external defibrillator (AED); crime prevention and terrorism awareness; learning about the Incident Command System; and the skills included in Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training, such as fire safety, search and rescue procedures, and disaster medical operations. Citizen Corps Councils help make this training available and accessible to all residents of the community.

Q: What kinds of volunteer activities does Citizen Corps provide?

A: Citizen Corps offers volunteer opportunities to support local fire departments, law enforcement, emergency medical services, community public health efforts, emergency management, disaster relief organizations, and other community safety initiatives. Specific Citizen Corps volunteer programs include CERT, Fire Corps, Medical Reserve Corps, Neighborhood Watch/USAonWatch, and Volunteers in Police Service. Local Citizen Corps Councils also develop additional volunteer initiatives to meet specialized community needs.

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CITIZEN CORPS QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS (continued)

From helping with community outreach and safety education to on-site administrative support to providing surge capacity during an incident or for project specific needs, the added support of citizen volunteers gives emergency services providers more time to fulfill their highly skilled responsibilities in keeping our nation safe or responding to an event.

Q: What are Citizen Corps Councils and what do they do?

A: State, tribal, and local Citizen Corps Councils bring together the homeland security expertise of emergency responders with the energy and spirit of volunteers, the private sector, elected officials, and other community stakeholders.

These Councils build on existing community resources to develop a comprehensive strategic plan to foster a stronger connection between citizens and local emergency responders and to involve all residents of the community in preparedness, training, and volunteer support. Citizen Corps activities are tailored to the unique attributes of the community and take into account the community's potential threats, needs, geography, population density, and population composition, including those with special needs. Council responsibilities include:

- Educating the public on all hazards preparedness and risk mitigation measures.
- Providing local training in first aid and emergency prevention, preparedness, and response capabilities.
- Organizing volunteer activities that support local emergency responders and disaster relief efforts.

Q: When was Citizen Corps started?

A: Citizen Corps was launched in January 2002 as part of President George W. Bush's USA Freedom Corps initiative to promote a culture of service, citizenship, and responsibility.

Q: Who manages Citizen Corps at the national level?

A: Citizen Corps is coordinated nationally by the Department of Homeland Security. As a presidential initiative, the White House is also committed to the success of Citizen Corps.

Q: How can citizens get more information about Citizen Corps and get involved?

A: Everyone can visit the Citizen Corps website, www.citizencorps.gov, to read the overview publication *Citizen Corps: A Guide for Local Officials* and to view an introductory presentation. The website also lists every Citizen Corps Council across the country and includes point of contact information.

If a community does not currently have a Council, citizens may contact the state-level point of contact, listed at www.citizencorps.gov/citizencorps/statepoc.do or any of the Citizen Corps programs or affiliate organizations active in the community to get involved!