

OKLAHOMA

State Council

The goal of Citizen Corps is to improve community resiliency to all hazards through citizen preparedness and participation. At the state and local level, this goal is achieved through the coordination and oversight of Citizen Corps Councils, which implement public education and outreach, training and exercises, and volunteer service programs and opportunities.

Highlights of State Activities

Public Education and Outreach

Oklahoma Citizen Corps continued to partner with other state organizations in the McReady initiative to do public education and outreach on preparedness across the state.

Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) classes continue all over the state. Some of the groups that have participated in the training are Neighborhood Watch groups, Kiwanis, representatives from the Hispanic and hearing-impaired communities, Wal-Mart employees, Oklahoma Corporation Commission and Oklahoma Department of Human Services employees.

Training and Exercises

Oklahoma CERT is growing in force and popularity. The State Citizen Corps program continues providing background checks, CERT identification badges, and backpacks to team members.

Tulsa is known for its robust Citizen Corps program. Preparedness was the major theme of 2005 for Tulsa. Volunteers participated in exercises and drills, including Operation Firework Fanfare. They promoted the use of CERT and National Incident Management System (NIMS) training, created a system of credentialing for Citizen Corps volunteers, and developed strategies to continue programs after various sources of grant funding came to an end.

In January, Oklahoma Citizen Corps volunteers helped with evacuating, sheltering, traffic control and communications as wildfires burned for four months. In April, tornadoes hit northeast Oklahoma and CERT members gathered in shelters, helping individuals at their homes and with traffic control in the disaster area.

Volunteer Programs and Support

The Citizen Corps' Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) programs have partnered to create a statewide network of medical professionals willing to serve as volunteers in disasters and promote public health concerns in their communities. Tulsa, Oklahoma City, Lawton and the Statewide Nurses Association are working together to build a sustained medical volunteer bank that will be available throughout the state as needed.

Support for Hurricane Katrina Response

Oklahoma hosted nearly 16,000 evacuees in shelters all over the state. In addition, many Citizen Corps volunteers were deployed to hurricane-affected areas. Specifically, hundreds of MRC volunteers and CERT members provided help with logistics and overall operations at Camp Gruber, a military post hosting the evacuees in eastern Oklahoma.

National Preparedness Month

Oklahoma Citizen Corps supported events throughout the state during National Preparedness Month. In April, Oklahoma's Preparedness Month, Citizen Corps hosted McReady Oklahoma to prepare for the severe weather season. During the month, special brochures, family preparedness guide booklets, and children's activity pages were distributed in local McDonald's restaurants.