

UTAH

Highlights of State Council Activities

Utah Citizen Corps is a vital program of the Utah Commission on Volunteers, an office of the Lieutenant Governor. The Utah Citizen Corps Council meets monthly and is comprised of representatives of local government, public safety and public health, national service, Utah Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (UVOAD), emergency managers, and the five pillar programs of Citizen Corps. In 2005, the Utah Division of Homeland Security/Office of Emergency Services recommended that Utah's CERT program be transferred to the Utah Commission on Volunteers, paving the way for increased coordination of citizen awareness and participation in training and exercises and affiliated volunteer programs. The Utah Citizen Corps Council promotes and supports new and existing local and regional councils by earmarking 80 percent of its funds for local communities with emphasis on expanding the five charter programs.

In August of 2005, the governor appointed Utah's Citizen Corps Program Manager as Executive Director of the Utah Commission on Volunteers. The Executive Director serves as a member of the Governor's Homeland Security Advisory Council and the Salt Lake Metropolitan Medical Response System (MMRS) Board. In Utah, Citizen Corps is an important component of the state's homeland security strategy. In 2005, the Southern Utah Regional Citizen Corps Council completed its second year of hosting an AmeriCorps VISTA project with 14 members serving full time to promote CERT and Citizen Corps throughout Utah's rural communities. Utah's delegation to the Western Regional Citizen Corps Conference included several AmeriCorps VISTA members who helped to establish the groundwork for a statewide preparedness campaign called *Be Ready Utah*.

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Public Education and Outreach

In rural Garfield County, 300 "Vials of Life" kits, containing medical histories, prescriptions, and other needed information to aid in providing appropriate medical treatment, were put together and distributed to senior citizens throughout the county and at the community health fair. Garfield County CERT volunteers conducted public education and outreach to all senior citizens in the county.

A special project by the Youth Engaged in Service (YES) Ambassador resulted in the creation of a new video entitled "Youth Engaged in Homeland Security" that was distributed to local, state and national partners. Sponsored by the Points of Light Foundation, over 1,000 copies have been shared around the country.

Training and Exercises

The Utah Citizen Corps Council hosted two community team trainings sponsored by the Western Community Policing Institute, titled “Creating Prepared, Vigilant and Resilient Communities for Homeland Security” and a Senior Officials Workshop by TEEEX/Texas A&M.

Southern Utah Regional Citizen Corps Council hosted a mock disaster/training event for CERT teams in the 11 counties of Southern Utah in April of 2005. Dubbed the Red Rock CERT, the training also served as an exercise for the UVOAD, bringing together the American Red Cross, the Southern Baptist Disaster Relief Services, and the Church of Latter-Day Saints to feed over 300 participants during three days of hands-on training. A partnership with the Utah Health Occupations Students of America (HOSA) launched during Red Rock CERT with high school students serving as mock disaster victims. Several of the 40 student participants were seniors who gave up their senior prom to volunteer at the Red Rock CERT. As a result, Teen SERT programs were implemented in several high schools in Washington County and other Utah communities.

The Central Utah Citizen Corps Council helped recruit 82 members of local school districts, emergency responders and law enforcement to attend the All Hazards in Schools Safety Course at the National Education Training Center (EMI) in Emmitsburg, Maryland. This was a crucial first step in helping Southern Utah school districts create, practice, and exercise better school safety plans. A Community and School Preparedness Workshop was held in November to provide additional training to local elected officials, school administrators, CERT members, and volunteer coordinators with special emphasis on Teen SERT. Presenters included the director of Utah’s 4-H programs.

Volunteer Programs and Support

Utah Citizen Corps programs acquired a database of over 3,000 names of individuals who responded to the Katrina relief efforts and could be connected to local Citizen Corps Councils to help prepare, train, and recruit volunteers in their own communities. These individuals could also be invited to participate in other state agency or governor-led initiatives around preparedness and community/family strengthening.

Support for Hurricane Katrina Response

The Commission on Volunteers/Utah Citizen Corps Council participated in the Emergency Operations Center to assist in volunteer and donations management, working alongside the Division of Homeland Security, numerous public safety professionals and state agency leaders, nonprofit and faith-based groups, UVOAD partners, and the leadership of the Army National Guard at Camp Williams. Over 560 evacuees from New Orleans found a safe haven at Camp Williams. Volunteers responded overwhelmingly with donations of both goods and services. The Utah Department of Health Katrina Relief Hotline received over 7,000 calls in the first week; half of those were offers of goods and supplies, the other half for time and services.

Utah’s response to Katrina involved the UVOAD organizations more than any other affiliate or program of Citizen Corps. Volunteers came primarily from the ranks of local faith-based and corporate organizations. Katrina relief efforts helped to galvanize state agencies’ resolve to improve collaboration and coordination of planning, training, and exercises with an emphasis on including local elected officials and citizens. A new Citizen Corps Program Manager, appointed in September of 2005, proved invaluable in coordinating volunteers during Katrina response.

National Preparedness Month

Utah Citizen Corps held a statewide Business Preparedness Conference on Continuity and Emergency Preparedness during National Preparedness Month. This conference provided preparedness information and training on a variety of subjects, including: business continuity planning, cyber security, employee safety, Utah disasters, ready/respond/recover, and more.

Clearfield City, situated between Salt Lake City and Ogden, sponsored a CERT training class from September 6 through 15. CERT has been a focus of efforts to assist citizens to become better prepared for all hazards.