

Formation of Arlington County Citizen Corps Council

In the aftermath of Sept. 11, 2001, Arlington citizens began working together to organize community efforts to prepare the public for future emergencies.

Civic Federation Initiative to develop a model for neighborhood-based disaster education

In October 2001, the Arlington Civic Federation started a “Public Preparedness Initiative” to develop neighborhood-based plans for disaster education and preparation. The team received early encouragement and expertise from Arlington’s Deputy Coordinator for Emergency Services Capt. Mark Penn. The group formed a partnership with the Red Cross’ “Community Disaster Education” committee to work together on community and neighborhood-based education.

Ad Hoc coalition of civic, nonprofit organizations working on recovery and preparation

With support from Capt. Penn, an ad hoc coalition of civic and nonprofit groups formed to develop plans for community-wide leadership and coordination for public education, volunteer coordination, and resource management for emergencies. The coalition’s work led to discussion of a County-sponsored council to develop a plan for public education and preparedness that coordinated Arlington government plans with resources from all sectors of the community.

Neighborhood Watch as vehicle for organizing plans for communication and mutual aid

The Civic Federation team worked with Arlington Police Chief Edward Flynn and Acting Deputy Police Chief Tom Panther to develop a neighborhood service model for strengthening neighborhoods through an Arlington Neighborhood Watch program based on a partnership between Community Policing and Civic Associations.

Support from governor’s office on commonwealth preparedness

The Civic Federation sought and received information and support from the Governor’s office on the development of state and national plans for public preparedness. The Hon. John Hager helped energize our volunteers and establish a high profile for this initiative in our community by delivering the keynote address at our Civic Federation Banquet in March.

Leader’s Forum to introduce public preparedness and encourage neighborhood planning

The Civic Federation hosted a forum for the Arlington community on public disaster education and preparedness with participation from Arlington’s Emergency Services Coordinator, Police Department, Public Schools, the Red Cross, and the Civic Federation. Teams from the Civic Federation, the Red Cross, and the County have met with civic groups throughout the County to present information on public preparedness and to encourage Arlingtonians to develop plans for helping their neighbors in emergencies.

County Manager, Ron Carlee, appointed a Public Preparedness Planning Group

As part of the County Board initiative for improving community involvement in preparedness, the Manager charged the “PPPG” with recommending a structure for establishing a public preparedness council in the fall of 2002.

Citizen Corps Council

On Friday, Sept. 6, based on the recommendations of the planning group (PPPG), Arlington Board Chair Chris Zimmerman and Manager Ron Carlee announced the formation of an Arlington Citizen Corps Council. The Council has broad representation from all sectors of the community and focuses on five objectives:

- Coordination
- Public Emergency Communication
- Public Education for Emergency Preparedness

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- Community Involvement and Volunteer Participation
- Management of Community Resources for Disaster Response

The AC-CCC has a Coordinating Committee and four Task Groups assigned to respond to the objectives. The AC-CCC also uses “focus groups” to tailor programs to the needs of individual community sectors including, persons with disabilities, the elderly, business neighborhoods, Spanish language. Focus groups are convened as needed on a project basis.

Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT)

In September 2002, simultaneous to the formation of the CCC, Arlington announced that it would hold pilot Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) classes for community members interested in learning how they can better prepare their homes, neighborhoods and work places for disasters. The pilot session trained 26 community members. The curriculum, provided by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, teaches preparedness and response techniques including disaster first aid, small fire suppression, light search and rescue, disaster psychology and information terrorism threats. As of January 2004, Arlington has trained over 170 individuals in six neighborhood-based teams and a business team.