

**Arlington County, VA Government
For Immediate Release**

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**ARLINGTON COUNTY LAUNCHES CITIZEN CORPS COUNCIL AND EMERGENCY
PREPAREDNESS CLASSES**

(Embargoed Until 10 a.m., Friday Sept. 6 Utilizing Key Lessons from the 9/ 11 Pentagon Attack, Arlington County Announces Pilot Program to Educate Citizens in Disaster Response

Arlington, Va. (Sept. 5, 2002) — To help residents in Arlington communities personally prepare for emergency situations, Arlington County is announcing plans to establish the Citizen Corps Council. Unlike government organized emergency response teams, the Council will be headed by civic leaders and empowers citizens to take action in the face of disaster.

“It is important for Arlington citizens to know how to take care of themselves, their families and their neighbors during times of crisis,” Arlington’s County Board Chair Chris Zimmerman, said. “This Council will be tasked with promoting effective response techniques among residents and businesses, whether we’re faced with tornadoes or terrorist threats.”

Members to the Council will have special expertise in various preparedness and response fields. A County Emergency Management Plan currently exists and was used Countywide by the local government offices during the 9/11 attack last year on the Pentagon. The Council will retool the current plan to include more information on citizen preparedness and other community-based responses.

Council leadership will be named by the County Manager and members named by participating organizations. The Council will work closely with the County Manager and public safety departments in areas of emergency operations as they relate directly to the public.

Members of the Council will be responsible for devising an integrated public preparedness plan for the County, educating the public about the plan, improving the County’s communications abilities between citizens and businesses, encouraging and recruiting community involvement and volunteer participation and identifying community resources for disaster response, including volunteer resources, goods and financial contributions.

In addition to forming the Council, Arlington will 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 is made up of eight classes and is limited to 20 community members. Sessions begin on Sept. 25 and will run weekly through Nov. 9. Six regular classes will be held every Wednesday night from 7-9:00 P.M. at the Fairlington Community Center. Two practical sessions with exercises, including a course on small fire suppression and the final examination will be held on Saturdays.

The curriculum is provided by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and classes will be taught by Arlington County employees from the Fire Department, the Employee Assistance Program, the Red Cross, and other Arlington community partners. Districts can download the curriculum at <http://training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/cert/>

Instructors will train preparedness and response techniques regarding first aid, terrorism and public health, as well as providing planning information for other emergency situations. The class also will educate community members about the psychological concerns that may result in the aftermath of large disasters or emergencies.

After the pilot session, CERT courses will be available to all Arlington communities and businesses that are interested in learning how they can prepare for and help during times of tragedy.

For more information on the Council or CERT training, please contact Capt. Clare Halsey at (703) 228-3571.

These efforts are supported by an additional emergency preparedness position approved by the County Board as part of the Fiscal Year 2003 Budget.

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