Citizen Corps

A Guide for Local Officials

citizen corps

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

April 4, 2002

Dear Fellow Americans:

Americans are responding to the evil and horror of the terrorist attacks of September 11 with a renewed commitment to doing good. In communities around the country people are serving others in countless ways, from helping their local fire department, to volunteering with the local Red Cross, to joining a neighborhood or community watch program.

To capture the spirit of service that has emerged throughout our communities, we launched the USA Freedom Corps initiative earlier this year. As part of that initiative, we created Citizen Corps to help coordinate volunteer activities that will make our communities safer, stronger, and better prepared to respond to any emergency situation.

Our local mayors, council members, and county commissioners know best what risks their communities face. They also know how best to use the talents and the time of their citizens to prevent, prepare for, and respond to those risks. Because every community is different, we are asking cities and counties across the country to create Citizen Corps Councils of their own design, bringing together first responders, volunteer organizations, law enforcement agencies, and community-serving institutions, such as schools, hospitals, and houses of worship.

Some Citizen Corps Councils will feature local activities that reflect new and existing national programs such as Neighborhood Watch, Community Emergency Response Teams, Volunteers in Police Service, and the Medical Reserve Corps. Some will include local programs that involve partnerships with law enforcement agencies, hospitals, first responders, and schools.

What all Citizen Corps Councils will have in common is that our local leaders will be working to expand opportunities for their community members to engage in volunteer service that will support emergency preparation, prevention, and response. This guide offers a suggested framework for community activity that will allow local government leaders to begin their own Citizen Corps Council and activities.

Together, we can protect our communities and make them places where responsibility and service are reflected in the good we do for others.

Thank you for your service,

George W. Bush

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Executive Summary

Since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, Americans have acted with courage, compassion, and unity. To capture this spirit and to foster an American culture of service, citizenship, and responsibility, President George W. Bush has called upon all Americans to dedicate at least two years of their lives—the equivalent of 4,000 hours—in service to others. He launched the USA Freedom Corps initiative to inspire and enable all Americans to find ways to serve their community, their country, or the world.

Citizen Corps is the component of USA Freedom Corps that creates opportunities for individuals to volunteer to help their communities prepare for and respond to emergencies by bringing together local leaders, citizen volunteers and the network of first responder organizations, such as fire departments, police departments and emergency medical personnel. The goal is to have all citizens participate in making their communities safer, stronger, and better prepared for preventing and handling threats of terrorism, crime, and disasters of all kinds.

Citizen Corps Leadership

The Citizen Corps effort will be coordinated at the local level by Citizen Corps Councils, or a similar coordinating body, which will bring together leaders from the relevant sectors of your community. The purpose of the Council is to have all decision makers at the table to manage existing volunteer resources, to leverage mutually supportive endeavors among the represented groups, and to direct the overall local plans to implement Citizen Corps in the community.

At the state level, all Governors have appointed a state coordinator for Citizen Corps to facilitate this locally driven initiative. The state coordinator will work closely with the local governments, other state organizations, the Department of Homeland Security, (DHS), the Department of Justice (DOJ), the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), and other federal agencies to implement a successful Citizen Corps program for the state.

Key state responsibilities include: identifying needs and developing a statewide strategy for increasing the first responder and volunteer collaboration; developing statewide marketing strategies; matching Citizen Corps training needs with other major state training initiatives; reporting statewide accomplishments; and ensuring that Citizen Corps communities receive consideration for relevant grant funding administered by the state.

The President has requested funding from Congress to support and expand Citizen Corps Councils around the country as well as funds to support the federal Citizen Corps programs. These funds would support local activities that foster preparedness programs and partnerships between the first responder organizations and the volunteers.

Citizen Corps Programs

Citizen Corps programs build on the successful efforts that are in place in many communities around the country to prevent crime and respond to emergencies. Programs started through local innovation are the foundation for Citizen Corps and this national approach to citizen participation in community safety.

Currently three federal departments, DHS, DOJ, and HHS, administer four programs that are being promoted at the national level as part of Citizen Corps. DHS also coordinates the overall effort of helping communities establish local Citizen Corps Councils and programs.

The federal Citizen Corps programs are:

✶ The Neighborhood Watch Program, funded by DOJ and administered by the National Sheriffs' Association, has been reinvigorated to increase the number of groups involved in crime prevention and homeland security and preparedness efforts. The goal is to double the number of groups participating in Neighborhood Watch by 2004. Additional information about registering a watch group or obtaining resources to support Neighborhood Watch efforts is available at www.usaonwatch.org.

✶ FEMA's Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program provides training in emergency preparedness and in basic response techniques to local trainers who in turn train citizens, enabling them to take a more active role in personal and public safety. The goal is to triple the number of citizens who are CERT trained, increasing the number nationwide to 600,000 by 2004. Additional information on CERT is available at www.training.fema.gov/emiweb/cert.

✶ Volunteers in Police Service (VIPS) is funded by DOJ and administered by the International Association of Chiefs of Police. The program, which was launched nationwide in spring 2002, provides training for volunteers to perform administrative and non-intervention policing activities to free up law enforcement professionals for frontline duty. Additional information is available at www.policevolunteers.org.

✶ HHS administers a community-based Medical Reserve Corps that was launched in fall 2002. Through this program, currently practicing and retired volunteers trained in healthcare and others interested in public health issues will be able to assist during large-scale emergencies and will augment the emergency medical response community. Medical Reserve Corps volunteers can also play a productive role in meeting pressing but non-emergency public health needs of the community throughout the year. Additional information is available at www.medicalreservecorps.gov.

There are also many other opportunities for participating in Citizen Corps. There is a vast array of educational and volunteer activities already underway across the country that focus on making communities safer, stronger, and better prepared. These activities are also part of Citizen Corps. In addition, Citizen Corps has an Affiliate Program to formally recognize and collaborate with programs and organizations that offer communities resources for public education and outreach, training and voluteer service to support homeland security.

Local Government Implementation

Citizen Corps is designed to be tailored to each community and will be managed at the local level by Citizen Corps Councils, or a similar entity, comprised of leaders from: emergency management and the first responder community; volunteer, community service, faith- and community-based organizations; educational institutions; medical facilities; business and industry; and the community's neighborhood networks.

Each community that is implementing Citizen Corps should consider creating a Citizen Corps Council. This guide will help your community join the many others across the country that have already started Citizen Corps Councils in order to be prepared to fully implement the Citizen Corps programs in their communities.

The primary objectives of the Councils are to:

✶ Match the needs of first responders with the skills and abilities of volunteers to make their families, their homes, and their communities safer from the threats of terrorism, crime, and disasters.

✶ Educate the public on safety, help citizens take an active role in protecting themselves from harm, and teach citizens what to do in the event of a crisis.

✶ Spearhead efforts to offer citizens new and existing volunteer opportunities, educational information, and training courses to address crime, terrorism, and natural disaster risks.

✶ Promote all Citizen Corps programs and activities across the community.

✶ Capture innovative practices and report accomplishments that can be replicated in other communities nationwide.

✶ Survey the community to assess increased awareness and Citizen Corps participation.

Creating a new organization to start Citizen Corps is not required. If your community already has a strong team that brings together all sectors of your community, including first responders and volunteer groups, you may want to ask this group to take on the responsibility of promoting Citizen Corps and to acknowledge this group as affiliated with Citizen Corps. You are strongly encouraged to leverage existing resources and build on current successful programs whenever possible.

Benefits to the Community

Major disasters in a community can overload the

capability of first responders, especially during the first 12 to 72 hours of the response. Having citizens who are better prepared to take care of themselves and others during times of crisis will allow first responders to focus their efforts on the most critical, life-threatening situations.

In addition, there are many tasks that a well-trained and organized group of volunteers could perform on an ongoing basis that would free up sworn officers, licensed health professionals, and professional firefighters so that they could focus more on immediate emergency response needs and less on the routine or administrative aspects of their responsibilities. Successful models of such activity exist throughout the country and are primed to be taken nationwide.

Citizen Corps will help citizens take a more active role in crime prevention, risk reduction, and emergency preparedness. It will bring together all sectors of the community involved in first responder issues and will enable them to establish ongoing working relationships and to work together in times of crisis. As a component of President Bush's call to service, Citizen Corps will also help build a community's sense of pride and cohesion. ■

I. Citizen Corps

Overview

During his 2002 State of the Union address, President George W. Bush called upon every American to commit at least two years of their lives - the equivalent of 4,000 hours - to the service of others. Through the USA Freedom Corps, he wants to help every American answer that call to service by strengthening and expanding service opportunities to protect our homeland, to support our communities, and to extend American compassion around the world.

Coordinated by the Department of Homeland Security, (DHS), Citizen Corps is the component of the USA Freedom Corps that focuses on opportunities for people across the country to participate in a range of measures to make their families, homes, and communities safer from the threats of terrorism, crime, and disasters of all kinds. Citizen Corps also brings together a community's first responders, firefighters, emergency health care providers, law enforcement, and emergency managers with its volunteer resources.

Citizen Corps will help people across America take a more active role in crime prevention, support the emergency medical community, and be better trained in a wide range of emergency preparedness and disaster response activities. The events of this past year have motivated many Americans to want to help others more and to strengthen their communities. Citizen Corps offers the means for citizens to help make our communities safer, stronger, and better prepared and to answer the President's call to service.

Components of Citizen Corps

The Citizen Corps effort will be coordinated at the local level by Citizen Corps Councils, or a similar coordinating body, which will bring together leaders from the relevant sectors of your community. The purpose of the Council is to have all decision makers at the table to manage existing volunteer resources, to leverage mutually supportive endeavors among the represented groups, and to direct the overall local plans to implement Citizen Corps in the community.

Additional explanation of the Citizen Corps Councils is provided in Section II.

Current Federal Programs

Currently, there are four federal programs that are being promoted at the national level to be implemented locally as part of Citizen Corps. The long-term goal is to have every community implement all four programs.

✶ The Neighborhood Watch Program, funded by the Department of Justice (DOJ) and administered by the National Sheriffs' Association, has been reinvigorated to increase the number of groups involved in crime prevention and homeland security and preparedness efforts. The goal is to double the number of groups participating in Neighborhood Watch by 2004. Additional information about registering a watch group or obtaining resources to support Neighborhood Watch efforts is available at www.usaonwatch.org.

✶ FEMA's Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program provides training in emergency preparedness and in basic response techniques to local trainers who in turn train citizens, enabling them to take a more active role in personal and public safety. The goal is to triple the number of citizens who are CERT trained, increasing the number nationwide to 600,000 by 2004. Additional information on CERT is available at www.training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/cert.

✶ Volunteers in Police Service (VIPS) is funded by DOJ and administered by the International Association of Chiefs of Police. The program, which was launched nationwide in spring 2002, provides training for volunteers to perform administrative and non-intervention policing activities to free up law enforcement professionals for frontline duty. Additional information is available at www.policevolunteers.org.

✶ The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) administers a community-based Medical Reserve Corps that was launched in fall 2002. Through this program, currently practicing and retired volunteers trained in medicine and others interested in public health issues will be able to assist during large-scale emergencies and will augment the emergency medical response community. Medical Reserve Corps volunteers can also play a productive

role in meeting pressing but non-emergency public health needs of the community throughout the year. Additional information is available at www.medicalreservecorps.gov.

Additional Citizen Corps resources include:

✶ Citizen Corps Affiliate Programs and Organizations. Citizen Corps Affiliates offer communities resources for public education, outreach, and training; represent volunteers interested in helping to make their community safer; or offer volunteer service opportunities to support first responders, disaster relief activities, and community safety efforts. The list of Citizen Corps Affiliate Programs is available at www.citizencorps.gov/programs.

✶ The Be Ready Campaign. This national public awareness campaign was developed by DHS to educate citizens about preparing for and responding to potential future terrorism attacks. The campaign focuses on three basic steps everyone should take right now: make a kit, make a plan, and be informed. The campaign also includes a website at www.ready.gov, a brochure available via 1-800-BE-READY, and a media campaign.

✶ Are You Ready? A Guide to Citizen Preparedness. Produced by FEMA, this 100-page guide provides comprehensive practical information on how your family can prepare for any disaster. It includes up-to-date hazard specific safety tips, including natural and technological disasters, and newly updated information on terrorism. *Are You Ready?* is available on the Citizen Corps website, www.citizencorps.gov.

✶ The Citizens' Preparedness Guidebook. Produced by the National Crime Prevention Council (NCPC) with support from DOJ, this booklet provides current crime and disaster preparedness techniques, as well as the latest information on terrorism, to give Americans guidance on how to prepare in the homes, the neighborhood, at work, at the airport, in places of worship, and in public spaces. The guide is available on the Citizen Corps website www.citizencorps.gov or by calling NCPC at 1-800-WE-PREVENT (1-800-937-7383).

✶ Appendix A provides the website address of other federal agencies and organizations that have useful information relating to the Citizen Corps mission.

Other Activities

There are many other opportunities for participating in Citizen Corps. There is a vast array of educational and volunteer activities already underway across the country that focus on making communities safer, stronger, and better prepared. They can be either interest-based programs or broad, community-wide initiatives. If your community participates in such activities, you may choose to integrate these efforts into the local Citizen Corps right away.

Examples could include:

✶ Local activities that are similar to Neighborhood Watch, CERT, or VIPS, but may have different names in your community;

✶ Family preparedness materials being taught and distributed in neighborhoods, in the workplace, and throughout the school system;

✶ Community, faith-based, and youth programs that establish neighborhood support networks and disseminate disaster preparedness educational materials and preparedness kits to the disadvantaged, elderly, non-English speaking, and persons with disabilities;

✶ Programs that involve volunteer medical professionals in an organized response to emergencies, such as those administered by the American Red Cross;

✶ Volunteer amateur radio operators serving as reserve communications experts in times of crisis;

✶ Volunteer engineers and engineering students performing structural analysis on critical infrastructure, lifelines, schools, and at-risk buildings;

✶ Programs for volunteers to participate in projects to reduce the damage to schools, hospitals, and other public buildings from known hazards in your area, such as floods, tornados, earthquakes, and hurricanes;

✶ Community and family disaster preparedness efforts conducted by established volunteer groups such as local Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD) and Volunteer Centers, or community service organizations, churches, and faith-based organizations already active in your community;

✶ Volunteer fire departments and emergency medical teams;

✶ Programs supported by the local Chamber of Commerce to train business owners and employees on disaster preparedness and emergency response measures;

✶ High schools and college community service groups that promote Citizen Corps principles; and

✶ Volunteer participation in developing a community communications system for the color-coded Homeland Security Advisory System.

Every community is different. Citizen Corps calls on your community's creativity and inventiveness to develop other programs or activities that work in your area and that encompass all sectors of your community. Successful programs or approaches to citizen participation that start in one community can spread nationwide through the Citizen Corps network.

Benefits to your Community

Securing our safety and freedom requires that we all work together. Every American has a critical role to play. Major disasters in a community can overload the capability of first responders, especially during the first critical 12 to 72 hours of the event. Citizen Corps will provide the community with a well-trained, readily available pool of local people who know their community and who can help during this critical time when outside assistance may have not yet arrived.

On a day-to-day basis, your Council will help citizens take a more active role in crime prevention, risk reduction, emergency preparedness, and public health issues. Citizen Corps Councils and the programs they oversee will make your community a safer, better place to live.

Specific benefits include:

✶ Supplementing a community's professional police, fire, emergency management, public health, and public safety capabilities where appropriate, especially in times of emergency;

✶ Giving the residents of your community a greater sense of security, responsibility, and personal control;

✶ Showcasing your community's efforts in crime prevention, public health and safety, emergency medical response, risk reduction and mitigation practices, emergency preparedness, and emergency response as part of the national Citizen Corps initiative;

✶ Bringing together the volunteer and the first responder communities to promote the concept that everyone has a role in making their community safer, stronger, and better prepared;

✶ Demonstrating your leadership and your personal commitment to the safety of your community;

✶ Building community pride and patriotism; and

✶ Preparing us all for the vital role of caring for ourselves and others in times of crisis. ■

Citizen Corps Councils

Organizing a Citizen Corps Council

Communities all across America already embrace the principles of Citizen Corps. There are many elected officials, business leaders, and involved citizens already doing their part to make their community a great place to live. Many communities also already have an organization that promotes public health and safety, disaster preparedness, and crime prevention in the community. No doubt, there is a strong base already involved in this effort in your own community. These activities are at the heart of Citizen Corps.

The Citizen Corps Councils will bring together leaders from the relevant sectors of your community to coordinate the Citizen Corps effort. The purpose of the Council is to have all decision makers at the table to manage existing volunteer resources, to leverage mutually supportive endeavors among the represented groups, and to direct the overall local plans to implement Citizen Corps in the community.

Each community and region will determine the geographic boundaries and membership for its Council. Suggested membership of the Citizen Corps Council, or similar entity, includes the following:

✶ Leadership from elected officials, such as the mayor, city council members, county commissioners, or the tribal government leaders;

✶ Leadership from emergency management and from the first responder community: law enforcement, fire, and emergency medical services, and health care providers;

✶ Leadership from volunteer, community service, and faith-based groups, including a local VOAD group or Volunteer Center, if you have one;

✶ Leadership from any existing community substructure, such as advisory neighborhood commissions, wards, voting districts, census tracts, water and sewer districts, or other groups that represent a large cross-section of the community;

✶ Leadership from major industries or other groups in the area, such as community leaders from educational institutions and school boards, the business community, environmental and transportation groups, including airports and utility providers; and,

✶ Other representatives from specific segments of the community, such as the elderly, minority populations, non-English speakers, and local media executives.

The primary qualification to participating on the Council is making a commitment to educate the public on safety, to help citizens take an active role in protecting themselves from harm, to teach citizens what to do in the event of a crisis, and to expand volunteer opportunities that will make the community safer.

You do not need to create a new organization to start Citizen Corps. Leveraging existing resources is strongly encouraged. If your community already has a strong team that brings together all sectors of your community, including first responders and volunteer groups, you may want to ask this group to take on the responsibility of promoting Citizen Corps and to acknowledge this group as affiliated with Citizen Corps.

There may be an existing group in your community that includes many of the appropriate participants, such as local emergency planning committees, that could take the lead in joining with additional relevant parties to implement Citizen Corps.

There are a number of national organizations, such as the American Red Cross and the Salvation Army, that could be key participants in your local management structure. If your community does not have local representation of these groups, you may want to contact the national organization to see how you can start a local affiliate.

However you choose to establish the local management structure, this group should be charged with managing all aspects of Citizen Corps at the local level and with bringing Citizen Corps programs and principles to residents of the community.

The purpose of the Citizen Corps Council, or similar coordinating group, is to develop a systematic, efficient, and effective method for providing public education and training opportunities, stimulating

wide-spread participation, and organizing volunteer programs to increase the safety of your community. Having duplicative efforts or competing entities is not productive.

Depending on the size of your community, you may need to have a steering committee within the Citizen Corps Council and subcommittees to focus on particular efforts. Subcommittees could be assigned a particular function, such as marketing and communications, or a particular focus, such as K-12 education on emergency preparedness.

The Importance of Leadership

Leadership within the Council is critical for success. This leader could be an elected community official, an executive with one of your community's major employers, the head of your community's economic development group, or a leader from the volunteer community.

The most important qualification for the leader of the Council is the ability to motivate team members to reach your collective goals: making your community a safer place to live, work, and play; providing opportunities for all citizens to participate; and a commitment to broad community representation. If the local elected official is not the operational leader of the Council, it will be critical that he or she provide clear and public support to the Council through public endorsements and be kept informed of Council activities.

Responsibilities of the Citizen Corps Council

While this initiative provides tremendous flexibility for you to implement Citizen Corps in a way that best suits your community, some general responsibilities of the local organizing group include:

✶ Creating an action plan to involve the community in prevention, preparedness, and response activities and to mobilize the community in a large-scale event;

✶ Identifying ways in which the community's volunteer resources can help meet the needs of its first responders;

✶ Working with existing neighborhood leaders, or creating a neighborhood leadership structure, to design a systematic approach to educate the public and encourage Citizen Corps participation throughout the community;

✶ Spearheading efforts to offer citizens new and existing volunteer opportunities, educational information, and training courses to address crime, terrorism, public health issues, and natural disaster risks;

✶ Recognizing all activities that promote prevention, preparedness, and response training as a part of Citizen Corps and encouraging new endeavors;

✶ Organizing special projects and community events to promote Citizen Corps activities, and recruiting volunteers to participate;

✶ Fostering a spirit of mutual support by working with Citizen Corps Councils in neighboring communities and jurisdictions to be able to share resources in times of need;

✶ Capturing innovative practices and reporting accomplishments to the state coordinator for Citizen Corps; and

✶ Surveying your community to assess increased awareness and Citizen Corps participation.

Liability Issues

Councils should consult with a local attorney regarding any risks or liabilities that might arise from its activities. Most local bar associations encourage members to provide pro bono (free of charge) services to worthwhile causes. A Council's potential exposure to liability for acts or omissions of its staff or volunteers will vary from state to state.

Individuals who participate in Council activities should also be advised of their potential risks of liability under state law. Some volunteer activities may be covered by so-called Good Samaritan laws, which protect volunteers who render assistance in limited circumstances. Councils may consider obtaining release from liability and/or similar instruments if local legal counsel deems it necessary. A compendium of state liability laws is available at www.citizencorps.gov/councils. ■

Initial Meetings

Creating a Citizen Corps Council or asking an existing organizing group to expand their mission and take on this responsibility is an easy first step to making Citizen Corps an active part of your community. You may want to hold one or more brainstorming sessions where Council members can collectively identify goals for your community and develop a better understanding of the risks your community faces. Topics that the Citizen Corps Council might address can include:

✶ Educating Council members on the roles, responsibilities, and practices of the first responders, volunteer organizations, and any existing neighborhood organizational structure in the community;

✶ Identifying the existing activities and resources within your community that support Citizen Corps principles;

✶ Identifying volunteer groups and opportunities within your community that could assist in reducing risk or that could supplement resources in an emergency;

✶ Creating a menu of volunteer opportunities in which community residents could easily participate or partnering with the local Volunteer Center, if you have one, to design volunteer recruitment strategies;

✶ Assessing resources within your community that could be drawn on to support volunteerism and public education in your community;

✶ Identifying possible resources to support Citizen Corps, including local private sector support and contributions from foundations and non-profit organizations;

✶ Discussing opportunities to build public awareness and to educate the community about Citizen Corps opportunities within your community; and

✶ Developing a wish list of additional resources that your community might need to support a comprehensive Citizen Corps effort.

Developing a Citizen Corps Action Plan

As you begin to assess your needs and resources, you should work toward developing a clear mission statement and an action plan. Your Citizen Corps Council action plan could include short and long-term goals, a community communication system for emergency warnings, and a community mobilization plan with a specific plan outlining how to meet these goals.

Short-term goals could include having working smoke alarms and emergency kits in every household by the time school starts again each fall, having each business in the community practice their evacuation plans within a specific month, training all senior high school students in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), or having Neighborhood Watch groups in all neighborhoods of the community. You may also want to target specific groups within your community, such as people living in high-risk areas, the youth population, Americans with disabilities, or disadvantaged populations.

It will be important for you to set meaningful, attainable goals, to make them public, to meet them, and then to recognize and celebrate your success.

Linking Local Activities with the National Effort

It will also be important for you to link local activities to the national effort. Although you may have an existing organization take on this responsibility and not create a new Citizen Corps Council, it is critical that all activities at the local level that encompass citizen participation in emergency preparedness, response capability training, crime prevention, and skill-based volunteer programs related to community safety be identified with Citizen Corps.

A great way to get started is to have a public event to recognize the activities that volunteers, first responders, and residents in your community are already doing that relate to Citizen Corps. Explain that there is a new national initiative to link all these activities and to introduce other activities to promote personal and community safety. Make a commitment to help each resident in the community participate in Citizen Corps. Citizen participation can include:

✶ Becoming better prepared and taking measures to reduce risk within their home, such as putting together a family emergency preparedness plan and kit, installing smoke detectors, elevating electrical

appliances above flood stage, securing free standing shelving to a wall, or strapping down a water heater;

✶ Being a part of a Neighborhood Watch Program group;

✶ Becoming a volunteer firefighter or emergency medical technician;

✶ Volunteering their particular skills to help with community risk assessments; and

✶ Volunteering with community organizations already active in disaster preparedness and response.

The goal is to include everyone in your community. One of your first steps to support Citizen Corps is to promote the initiative and to expand the range of opportunities available to the residents of your community. Other opportunities for Citizen Corps volunteers are listed in Appendix C.

There is no standard way to approach promoting your local efforts; each community is encouraged to be creative and to use the Citizen Corps message to promote participation. Your community may host community-wide Citizen Corps community preparedness days to challenge everyone in the community to put together a home emergency preparedness kit. Another may put the Citizen Corps logo on appropriate local websites. Another may use the local media outlets to promote local Citizen Corps activities and to educate the public. Another may focus on the school system to disseminate information. And some communities will do all of these and more.

Information Sharing

A critical part of making Citizen Corps a success is building a network of communities that are committed to engaging their citizens in making their neighborhoods safer, stronger, and better prepared for all situations. To facilitate this network, DHS maintains a web-based directory of Citizen Corps Councils. Through this directory you will be able to contact other Citizen Corps Councils throughout the nation and have a direct exchange of information with your counterparts. This directory will also enable your state and federal partners to contact you with updated information as the programs evolve nationally and to collect innovative local practices for national promotion.

As soon as you have designated a group to coordinate Citizen Corps in your community, please log on to www.citizencorps.gov/councils and register your Citizen Corps Council contact information by clicking on the registration link. In providing this information to DHS, you will be agreeing to be part of a list to be shared with other community leaders working to create Citizen Corps in their community.

National Citizen Corps Programs in Your Community

Right now, every community can start Neighborhood Watch groups. Guidance on how to begin is available online at www.usaonwatch.org, from your local sheriff's department, your local police department, or from the National Sheriffs' Association. A strong network of Neighborhood Watch groups can also serve as a delivery system for other Citizen Corps materials, such as emergency communications, Community Emergency Response Team training, or a family preparedness checklist.

FEMA's *Are You Ready? A Guide to Citizen Preparedness* provides practical information on how your family can prepare for any disaster. Available on the Citizen Corps website, www.citizencorps.gov, this guide can be used to help everyone in your community be better prepared.

FEMA's Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training program is a 20-hour course, typically conducted over a seven-week period. Training sessions cover disaster preparedness, fire suppression, basic disaster medical services, light search and rescue, team organization, and a module on protection against terrorist threats.

The training also includes a disaster simulation in which participants practice skills that they learned throughout the course. Your local fire and emergency medical services (EMS) departments may have a key role in bringing CERT to your community. Many states already have experienced CERT trainers who

could come to your community and provide training. Soon every state will have this capability.

VIPS was launched nationwide in May 2002, and hundreds of police departments around the country are now registered online. Examples of best practices and examples of how citizens participate in supporting their local police department are available at www.policevolunteers.org. These activities may include: community outreach; telephone work; research; policy review; technology support; information system support; administrative tasks; and other non-enforcement activities deemed appropriate.

The Medical Reserve Corps Guide for Local Leaders was released in fall 2002. This Guide and additional information on the activities of Medical Reserve Corps units around the country is available at www.medicalreservecorps.gov. Medical Reserve Corps units are comprised of locally-based health volunteers who work together to improve the overall health and well-being of their neighborhoods and communities and who are on-call to assist their communities during large-scale emergencies, such as an influenza epidemic, a chemical spill, or an act of terrorism. ■

IV. Available Resources

Fortunately, implementing Citizen Corps in your community can be accomplished with resources that you may already have available. Volunteer agencies in your community and your Volunteer Center, if you have one, can help you better direct volunteer interest to Citizen Corps activities. There are many low-cost ways for local businesses to participate: by donating the cost of a publication, by sponsoring a Citizen Corps volunteer fair, by sponsoring training for employees or neighborhood residents, and by practicing emergency preparedness plans for the business. The federal and state governments will provide training materials and technical assistance to help you get started and to help you sustain the momentum.

The Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), a federal agency that operates nationwide service programs, may make available to Citizen Corps Councils volunteers who participate in AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, and Learn and Serve America programs. Many of these participants are already active in disaster-related programs with other voluntary agencies. Volunteers could serve to help communities establish a training and information delivery system in neighborhoods, schools, and businesses, and could help with family preparedness and crime prevention initiatives in the community or across a region. Additional information is available at www.cns.gov.

Volunteer support and participation in Citizen Corps can come from a variety of sources. Encourage your Council members to be creative when thinking about potential resources that exist throughout the community. Appendix A is a list of government, emergency management, and first responder community websites that may be helpful to you as you expand your volunteer base. Appendix B includes a list of questions to help your Council identify possible resources, including people, materials, and financial.

The President has requested funding from Congress to support and expand Citizen Corps Councils around the country as well as funds to support the federal Citizen Corps programs. These funds would support local activities that foster preparedness programs and partnerships between the first responder organizations and the volunteers. ■

V. Communicating Success

Communicating success is a key element of sustaining momentum. It is important to share your success with the residents of your community as well as with your state and federal partners. By sharing ideas and practices that work in one community, similar actions can be embraced by other communities and can inspire further creativity.

Developing a strong Citizen Corps Council will require significant proactive communication with residents of your community. Identifying creative ways to get the message out about opportunities available through Citizen Corps, as well as calling your citizens to action and communicating success, will require an ongoing communications strategy that can include media coverage, events, and presentations.

You may want to consider forming a communications committee within your Council that includes local media representatives, public relations and marketing executives, and talented spokespersons who will help you to effectively recruit and educate the members of your community.

The communications committee may want to consider:

✶ Developing a presentation about Citizen Corps in your community that can be shared at meetings held by groups within your community. Once a presentation has been developed, Council members can fan out to present Citizen Corps to community groups, local parent/teacher associations, volunteer clubs, and other groups that are interested in Citizen Corps.

✶ Planning a media outreach strategy that will tap into and develop relationships with your community's local media to educate them on Citizen Corps. Media opportunities might include interviews with participants active in Neighborhood Watch, coverage of your local government's proclamation of Citizen Corps week, letters to the editor, or meeting with the editorial board about Citizen Corps. Local media could also sponsor a regular newspaper or television spot to feature volunteer opportunities and Citizen Corps activities/success stories.

✶ Designating contacts for speaking to the media and working with these contacts to develop a consistent message for promoting Citizen Corps within your community.

✶ Incorporating Citizen Corps into newsletters and other publications developed by your community's local government, Chamber of Commerce, or neighborhood associations.

✶ Planning a community Citizen Corps fair to bring together specific volunteer opportunities in your community with citizens interested in contributing. By inviting a local radio station to sponsor it, they could also provide public service announcements in advance to promote the fair and broadcast live from the fair on the day of the event. Your local Volunteer Center may be able to help arrange such an event.

✶ Contacting members of Congress and their local staff to help promote Citizen Corps activities within your community.

You may also want to create a recognition committee to provide support and recognition to Citizen Corps volunteers. Your local Volunteer Center can assist you with ideas for appropriate public recognition. ■

VI. Government Roles

Federal Government

Citizen Corps is a vital component of President Bush's USA Freedom Corps initiative, through which he wants to inspire every American to answer the call to service and to strengthen and expand service opportunities to protect our homeland, to support our communities, and to extend American compassion around the world. President Bush will continue to echo his call to service and encourage Americans to serve their communities through Citizen Corps.

Additional aspects of the federal government role in Citizen Corps will include:

✶ Promoting Citizen Corps at the national level and providing a national message, a logo, and a brand;

✶ Fostering state and community participation, overseeing progress, recognizing accomplishments, and providing opportunities for mentoring and sharing ideas and resources;

✶ Compiling accurate information and developing training standards and training materials for Citizen Corps activities;

✶ Conducting train-the-trainers courses to develop state training capabilities, and providing on-line educational opportunities as appropriate;

✶ Helping identify volunteer programs and initiatives that support the goals of Citizen Corps;

✶ Helping secure national partnerships to promote Citizen Corps throughout the country; and

✶ Developing financial incentives and tie-ins with other federal programs to encourage local government participation in Citizen Corps.

At the national level, Citizen Corps is coordinated by DHS in collaboration with DOJ and HHS, and is supported by CNCS. In addition, DHS is working with other federal agencies, national volunteer organizations, and representatives from first responders associations. DHS regional offices will work with states and communities to help make Citizen Corps a success.

State Government

The responsibilities of state governments mirror those of the federal government and include the mission to encourage every community in the state to participate in Citizen Corps.

Local Citizen Corps Councils will be supported by a state coordinator for Citizen Corps. States are also forming Citizen Corps Councils to bring together a number of state, local, and community organizations. State Citizen Corps Councils will foster collaboration and address the needs of communities across the state, to include sharing innovative practices and avoiding pitfalls. Since this is primarily a local government initiative, it is critical that the state coordinator has a good working relationship with the local governments and serves as an advocate.

Key state responsibilities include: identifying needs and developing a statewide strategy for increasing the first responder and volunteer collaboration; developing statewide marketing strategies; matching Citizen Corps training needs with other major state training initiatives; reporting statewide accomplishments; and ensuring that Citizen Corps communities receive consideration for any relevant grant funding administered by the state.

States could also support Citizen Corps by developing relevant state policies and practices. To lend their support, governors and other state representatives could also promote Citizen Corps in public speaking engagements, press conferences, and media events. ■

VII. Conclusion

We have experienced many changes as a nation since September 11, 2001. We are now more aware of our vulnerabilities, more appreciative of the freedoms we are protecting, and more understanding that we have a personal responsibility for the safety of our families, our neighbors, and our communities. Citizen Corps was created to engage all Americans in making our communities safer, stronger, and better prepared for any situation.

This is an exciting time in our nation's history. We have the opportunity to reinvigorate our national identity and to build an American culture of service, citizenship, and responsibility. We must not miss this opportunity to harness the innumerable acts of kindness taking place in our communities everyday and to make them a part of this profound cultural change. ■

Appendix A Citizen Corps-Related Websites

Government

The White House
www.whitehouse.gov

USA Freedom Corps
www.usafreedomcorps.gov

Department of Homeland Security
www.dhs.gov

Citizen Corps
www.citizencorps.gov

FEMA
www.fema.gov

Department of Justice
www.justice.gov

Department of Health and Human Services
www.hhs.gov

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
www.cdc.gov

Corporation for National and Community Service
www.cns.gov

National Regulatory Commission
www.nrc.gov

Environmental Protection Agency
Chemical Emergency Preparedness and
Prevention Office
www.epa.gov/ceppo

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
www.nws.noaa.gov

U.S. Geological Survey
www.usgs.gov

U.S. State and Local Gateway
www.statelocal.gov

Emergency Managers

National Emergency Management Association
www.nemaweb.org

International Association of Emergency Managers
www.iaem.com

First Responders

Police

Volunteers in Police Service
www.policevolunteers.org

International Association of Chiefs of Police
www.theiacp.org

National Sheriffs' Association
www.sheriffs.org
www.usaonwatch.org

National Crime Prevention Council
www.ncpc.org

Police Executive Research Forum
www.policeforum.org

National Law Enforcement and Corrections
Technology Center
www.nlectc.org

Fire

International Association of Fire Chiefs
www.iafc.org

National Volunteer Fire Council
www.nvfc.org

International Association of Fire Fighters
www.iaff.org

National Fire Protection Association
www.nfpa.org

Fire Department Safety Officers Association
www.fdsoa.org

Appendix A Citizen Corps-Related Websites

Public Health and Emergency Medical Services

Medical Reserve Corps
www.medicalreservecorps.gov

National Association of Emergency Medical Technicians
www.naemt.org

National Association of EMS Educators
www.naemse.org

International Rescue and Emergency Care Association
www.ireca.org

Volunteer Organizations and Resources

National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster
www.nvoad.org

American Red Cross
www.redcross.org

National Safety Council
www.nsc.org

Points of Light Foundation & Volunteer Center National Network
www.pointsoflight.org

The Salvation Army
www.salvationarmy.org

Church World Service
www.churchworldservice.org

United Way
www.unitedway.org

Association for Volunteer Administration and Volunteer Managers
www.avaintl.org

Network For Good
www.networkforgood.org

The Independent Sector
www.independentsector.org

Volunteer Match
www.volunteermatch.org

Business Associations

US Chamber of Commerce
www.uschamber.com

Center for Corporate Citizenship
www.uschamber.com/ccc

The United States Junior Chamber (Jaycees)
www.usjaycees.org

Appendix B Potential Resources for Citizen Corps Councils

These questions may help you identify resources to help you implement Citizen Corps.

General

1. Who could champion this initiative in your community? Who might champion it within segments of your community? What is the best way to foster city/county/regional collaboration?

2. What organizations are already active in programs relevant to Citizen Corps objectives?

3. Which organizations usually sponsor or participate in various events that happen in your community (e.g., days of service, parades, fairs, block parties, speakers, carnivals, etc.)?

4. What federal, state, or non-profit agencies serve your community? Could they provide staff, guidance, or training to participate in Citizen Corps activities?

5. Does a regional planning Council or a related organization include your community within its sphere of interest?

6. What current preparedness activities are in progress in your communities? How can you involve youth organizations, such as Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, or Explorers in Citizen Corps activities?

Volunteer

7. Do you have a Volunteer Center in your community where volunteer opportunities can be registered and where you can receive assistance with recruitment efforts? What do you need to do to start one?

8. Is there a state or local VOAD that could provide training and planning assistance for emergency preparedness, mitigation, response, and recovery?

9. How can you involve organizations such as the American Red Cross and the Salvation Army that are already active in disaster preparedness and response?

10. Are there courses and programs already being provided in your community by voluntary organizations?

11. What volunteer groups are already active in the community that can be called upon to serve as Citizen Corps Council partners, including community service groups, faith-based groups, and high school civic groups?

12. Is your community served by AmeriCorps volunteers? Does your community have an active Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP)?

13. Are there volunteers already working and trained with organizations whose missions complement the goals of Citizen Corps? How can you tap into organizations that already recruit, manage, and place volunteers?

14. What other organizations, such as universities, volunteer groups, civic organizations, business councils, mosques, churches, or synagogues, can be tapped to sponsor volunteer participation or community events?

Schools and Universities

15. Are there colleges, universities, or vocational/technical schools in your community that have sponsored or participated in local preparedness activities?

16. Do any of these institutions have curricula or degrees of study programs related to civic administration or emergency management? Do they have an internship program that you could tap to support Council efforts?

17. What other resources might your community's colleges, universities, or vocational/technical schools provide to your Citizen Corps Councils?

18. Do your local high schools incorporate a community service element as part of their graduation requirement? How can you involve high school clubs' members or their leaders in Citizen Corps?

Business Sector

19. Which businesses in your community have corporate policies that encourage worker participation in community life?

20. Are there businesses in your community that have a good fit with the goals of Citizen Corps, such as insurance companies, security firms, training facilities, or manufacturers of preparedness kit items?

Media

21. Are there individuals or local celebrities in your community who would be willing to serve as motivational speakers to encourage people to participate in Citizen Corps?

22. Which TV, radio, print, or other media outlets in your area are community-service oriented?

23. Which journalists or reporters in your community frequently cover human interest stories or stories on disaster and emergency management?

24. Is there a local weather forecaster or news anchor who could be encouraged to serve as a Citizen Corps Council member?

Appendix C Opportunities for Citizen Corps Volunteers

The following are examples of how citizens can engage in volunteer opportunities that support the efforts of Citizen Corps. This is by no means an exhaustive list but is intended to give you some ideas for getting your citizens involved.

Neighborhood Watch Program

✶ Arrange for home security inspections by crime prevention officers to identify security vulnerabilities

✶ Upgrade locks, security hardware, and lighting

✶ Train family members to keep valuables secure and to lock windows when leaving home

✶ Train family members on identifying suspicious behaviors that could indicate terrorist activity

✶ Ask neighbors to watch for suspicious activity when the house is vacant

✶ Organize block WATCH groups to assist children, the elderly, and other especially vulnerable persons if they appear to be in distress, in danger, or lost

✶ Organize meetings with neighborhood groups and trained crime prevention officers to discuss security needs and crime prevention strategies

✶ Obtain and study informative materials from the National Sheriffs' Association, the National Crime Prevention Council, and local law enforcement agencies

Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT)

✶ Staff a community education booth at community events

✶ Identify safety needs and vulnerable individuals in your neighborhood

✶ Distribute disaster education material in your neighborhood, in multiple languages if appropriate

✶ Assist with writing and distributing a CERT newsletter

✶ Help organize drills, activities, and supplemental training for your team

✶ Participate in a speaker's bureau to schools and clubs

✶ Assist emergency management officials and fire departments with installing smoke alarms and other special projects

✶ Help with CERT administrative duties by maintaining databases, helping with class registration, and assisting with class logistics

✶ Organize recognition activities for volunteers

✶ After CERT training, assist in evacuation, shelter management, donations management, care of responders at fires or emergencies, mass care of victims from a large event, damage assessment, and perimeter control

Volunteers in Police Service (VIPS)

✶ Take police reports

✶ Make follow-up telephone calls to victims

✶ Conduct fingerprinting

✶ Engage in crowd/parking control at special events

✶ Participate in search and rescue missions

✶ Participate in mounted patrols in parking lots at high school football games

✶ Operate metal detectors at a courthouse

✶ Serve subpoenas

Medical Reserve Corps

During emergencies, members of the Medical Reserve Corps could:

✶ Assess and monitor the condition of patients

✶ Counsel patients

✶ Perform support and management activities (e.g., facilitate patient transfers, inventory and distribute pharmaceuticals, supplies, and food)

✶ Administer and distribute medication

In non-emergency situations, local agencies could request volunteers to assist them in performing their routine duties. Volunteers could:

✶ Distribute educational materials about the need for immunizations

✶ Give immunizations

✶ Assist with health education

✶ Provide additional support for community

screening efforts (e.g., breast cancer, hypertension, diabetes, etc.)

Fire Department

✶ Become a volunteer firefighter or emergency medical services technician

✶ Offer to help the fire department in its fundraising efforts. Help with bingo, bake sales, or other department fundraising programs

✶ Help the department with its financial matters if you have a business background or special skills in this area

✶ Help with correspondence, public outreach, and records management

✶ Assist the fire department and fire prevention experts with fire prevention education in your neighborhood, place of business, schools, and community organizations

✶ Assist the department with its canteen service so they will have water and food for major fires

Appendix D Fact Sheets on National Citizen Corps Programs

on pages 25-28

What is Citizen Corps?

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 for terrorism, crime, public health issues, and disasters of all kinds.

Citizen Corps brings together leaders from law enforcement, fire, emergency medical and other emergency management, volunteer organizations, local elected officials, the private sector, and other community stakeholders to form Citizen Corps Councils. These Councils will tailor activities to the community and build on community strengths to develop and implement a local strategy to have every American participate in homeland security and community and family safety in three principle ways: through public education and outreach, through training opportunities, and through volunteer programs that draw on special skills and interests to support first responders, disaster relief organizations, and community safety efforts.

Citizen Corps is composed of federally sponsored programs and non-profit affiliate programs and organizations that share the common goal of helping communities prevent, prepare for and respond to crime, disasters, pressing public health needs and emergencies of all kinds. It encourages all Americans to take an active role in building safer, stronger, and better prepared communities one neighborhood at a time!

Neighborhood Watch Program

The Neighborhood Watch Program is a highly successful crime prevention effort that has been in existence for more than thirty years in cities and rural areas across America.

OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAM

Developed as means to incorporate citizens in crime prevention efforts, Neighborhood Watch brings together local officials, law enforcement, and citizens to create a united front in protecting our communities.

As part of Citizen Corps, President Bush and Attorney General Ashcroft have announced that the National Sheriffs' Association (NSA) will work to double the number of Neighborhood Watch Programs operating throughout the country from approximately 7,500 to more than 15,000 by 2004. In addition to expanding the number of Neighborhood Watch Programs, NSA will also offer citizens new information about how to recognize and report signs of potential terrorist activity in their neighborhoods. Residents are critical in the detection, prevention, and disruption of terrorism.

RESOURCES AVAILABLE

All the information necessary to start a Neighborhood Watch Program is now available online at www.usaonwatch.org along with a registration page to record your group once it is organized. These materials teach individuals how they can assist in the war against terrorism by incorporating preparedness in their daily lives. The NSA will also continue to work with neighborhoods nationwide to reduce crime by encouraging businesses, the faith community, schools, and citizens to cooperate with and assist local law enforcement by reporting suspicious activity.

The National Crime Prevention Council, in partnership with the U.S. Department of Justice, has developed a Citizen Preparedness Guide for use in this and other Citizen Corps programs. The guide provides specific actions that citizens can take in their communities to reduce crime. The guide outlines five specific themes: protecting one's self and family; protecting and comforting children; knowing and caring for neighbors; reporting crimes and suspicious activity; and emergency preparedness. Get a free copy of the guide at www.citizencorps.gov, or by calling 1-800-WE-PREVENT.

More information about the Neighborhood Watch Program and how to start one in your neighborhood is available at www.usaonwatch.org.

citizen corps

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our website at www.citizencorps.gov

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Community Emergency Response Team

Community Emergency Response Team training is a FEMA program that educates citizens about the hazards they face in their community and trains them in lifesaving skills. If needed following a disaster, these citizen-responders use their training as part of a neighborhood or workplace team to help others when professional responders are overwhelmed or not immediately available. CERT members provide immediate assistance to victims in their area, organize spontaneous volunteers who have not had the training, and collect disaster intelligence that will assist professional responders with prioritization and allocation of resources when they arrive.

OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAM

CERT promotes a partnering between emergency management and response agencies and the people in the community that they serve. The goal is to train members of neighborhoods and workplaces in basic response skills. Then CERT teams are formed and maintained as part of the emergency response capability for their area.

If there is a natural or man-made event that overwhelms or delays the community's professional responders, CERT members can assist others by applying the basic response and organizational skills that they learned during their CERT training. These skills can help save and sustain lives until help arrives. CERT members also can volunteer for special projects that improve a community's preparedness.

RESOURCES & CURRENT PRACTICES

The basic CERT training program is a 20-hour course, typically delivered one evening per week over a 7-week period. Training sessions cover disaster preparedness, fire suppression, basic disaster medical operations, light search and rescue, disaster psychology, team organization, and a new module on terrorism to educate CERT members about BNICE agents: Biological, Nuclear, Incendiary, Chemical, and Explosive. This module will help CERT members identify situations where these agents may have been used and protective actions that they should take.

The training concludes with a disaster simulation in which participants practice skills that they learned throughout the course.

CERT information including a CERT Instructor Guide and Student Guide is located on the web at http://training.fema.gov/emiweb/cert/index.htm.

citizen corps

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Volunteers in Police Service (VIPS)

The Volunteers in Police Service (VIPS) program has been developed by the U.S. Department of Justice in partnership with the International Association of Chiefs of Police. A vital element of Citizen Corps, VIPS provides citizens the opportunity to help make their community safer by volunteering to support their local law enforcement professionals.

OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAM

The VIPS program is designed to address the increasing demands on state and local law enforcement agencies. In the aftermath of the terrorist attacks of September 11, already limited law enforcement resources are being stretched further at a time when this country needs every available officer out on the beat. Some police departments are turning to civilian volunteers to enable police officers to be on the front lines, working to make communities safer. These volunteer outreach efforts will receive new support through VIPS.

Examples of volunteer support activities include:

- Assisting with traffic control;
- Impounding and storing marked abandoned vehicles;
- Searching for missing persons;
- Booking property;
- Transporting department vehicles;
- Enforcing handicapped parking; and
- Processing paperwork.

RESOURCES & CURRENT PRACTICES

The VIPS program was launched in May 2002. The program will provide resources to assist local law enforcement in incorporating community volunteers into the activities of law enforcement agencies. A tool kit for state and local law enforcement agencies will outline a series of promising practices to help them design strategies to recruit, train, and deploy citizen volunteers in their departments.

There are already many police departments across the country utilizing the talents and commitment of volunteers in their communities to support the work of their officers. Examples of some of these programs are available on the Citizen Corps website.

For more information about the VIPS program and how you can join today, contact your local law enforcement agency or go to www.policevolunteers.org.

citizen corps

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Medical Reserve Corps

As part of Citizen Corps, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has created the Medical Reserve Corps to engage volunteer health professionals and others with an interest in public health in supporting the medical services of their community during a large-scale local emergency and in promoting public health in their community throughout the year.

OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAM

Medical Reserve Corps seeks to:

- Draw Americans into volunteer service;
- Create a framework to match volunteers' skills with their communities' needs;
- Train a cadre of health professionals to respond better to the needs of their communities, enhancing their skills and teaching them their roles in support of local emergency response efforts; and
- Provide reserve capacity at the community level to respond to health needs for emergencies and/or for locally identified public health needs and priorities.

Medical Reserve Corps volunteers can assist with emergency response teams, provide care to victims with non-serious injuries, and provide additional manpower/staffing to increase the effectiveness of physicians, nurses, and other health professionals in a major crisis.

RESOURCES & CURRENT PRACTICES

Local leaders will develop their own reserve of medial professionals and other volunteers based on their community's needs. These volunteers will be trained and then registered on a local Medical Reserve Corps list, ready to be called up to duty in the event of an emergency. Once established, local leaders will decide if and when to activate their Medical Reserve Corps unit during an emergency. Medical Reserve Corps volunteers will receive assignments based on their skills and qualifications.

As the lead federal agency for the Medical Reserve Corps, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has worked with health professions' organizations, other related professional organizations, and local and state agencies to develop the program guidelines and a resource manual, and has provided technical assistance to local communities who choose to develop their own Medical Reserve Corps.

Medical Reserve Corps information, including program guideline and a resource manual, is located on the web at www.medicalreservecorps.gov.

citizen corps

For more information, please visit our website at www.citizencorps.gov

FEMA

Federal Emergency Management Agency

500 C Street SW, Washington, DC 20472

www.citizencorps.gov

USA Freedom Corps

The President's Call to Service