

A Fact Sheet for Emergency Managers

Citizen Corps

What is Citizen Corps?

Citizen Corps is a new network of volunteer organizations that tap the skills and abilities of the American people to help communities prepare for and respond to emergencies.

Through Citizen Corps, residents can play an active part in making their communities safer, stronger, and better prepared for preventing and handling threats of terrorism, crime, and disasters of all kinds.

There are five federal programs currently being promoted at the national level to be implemented locally as part of Citizen Corps:

- An expanded **Neighborhood Watch Program** incorporates terrorism prevention and education into its existing crime prevention mission.
- The **Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)** program trains individuals in emergency preparedness and basic response techniques to enable them to provide critical support to first responders during emergencies.
- **Volunteers in Police Service (VIPS)** provides volunteer support for law enforcement by tapping volunteers to perform administrative and non-intervention policing activities to free up officers to be out in the community.
- Through the **Medical Reserve Corps**, currently practicing and retired medical professionals will augment the emergency medical response community during large-scale emergencies. Volunteers can also support non-emergency public health needs throughout the year.
- **Operation TIPS**, the Terrorist Information and Prevention System, will tap millions of workers who, by the nature of their jobs, are well-positioned to recognize unusual events. Operations TIPS will provide them with a toll free number to report suspicious activity to the nearest FBI field office.

How can Citizen Corps Make Your State Stronger?

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

On a day-to-day basis, you can help your constituents take a more active role in crime prevention, risk reduction and emergency preparedness. Citizen Corps Councils at the local level, and the programs they oversee, will make your community safer, stronger and better places to live. Specific benefits include:

- Raising the profile of current emergency management efforts and brings emergency managers into the forefront of public safety by creating a venue for the messages that emergency managers have been promoting for years;
- Creates stronger connections between emergency management, first responders and the general public;
- Protecting citizens by giving everyone an opportunity to take a role in their family, business and communities' safety and become better educated and prepared;
- Allows your communities to better leverage your resources by utilizing the strength of your volunteer base;
- Providing a mechanism for fast, reliable communication to communities in emergency situations;
- Brings public safety to the neighborhood level, making individuals a part of a community effort, and creating partnerships for emergency management;
- Leadership in safety attracts new business interests into your community and strengthens corporate presence;
- Unifies everyone under a common goal of safety and sustainability, and brings neighbors together; and
- Showcasing your communities' best practices in crime prevention, public safety, emergency medical response, risk reduction and mitigation practices, emergency preparedness and emergency response as part of a national Citizen Corps initiative.

Citizen Corps calls on your creativity and inventiveness to develop other programs or activities in across your state that will encompass all sectors of your communities. Your voice and presence, as a professional in emergency management, can strengthen the initiatives in your communities and encourage more people to be involved. Successful programs or approaches to citizen participation that start in one community can spread nationwide through the Citizen Corps network.



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