Background

Citizen Corps is the component of USA Freedom Corps that coordinates public education, training, and volunteer opportunities to engage all citizens in making their families, homes, and communities safer and better prepared to respond to threats of crime, terrorism, and disasters of all kinds. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) takes the lead in coordinating Citizen Corps across the nation in keeping with its central mission of disaster mitigation, preparedness, and response, and the interface with state and local governments.

The Indiana Department of Homeland Security (IDHS) has identified Citizen Corps as a benefit to the State of Indiana, its communities, and the well-being of all Hoosiers. IDHS was chosen as the State of Indiana's point of contact for Citizen Corps efforts.

Citizen Corps brings together leaders from the fire, rescue, and emergency medical services, law enforcement, emergency management, volunteer organizations, the private sector, and elected officials to form local Citizen Corps Councils. These Councils coordinate community strengths to implement local Citizen Corps programs.

Mission

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 to respond to the threats of terrorism, crime, public health issues, and disasters of all kinds.

INDIANA citizen corps

Indiana Government Center South
302 West Washington Street
Room E208
Indianapolis, IN 46204
Phone: 317-232-3980
www.in.gov/dhs

Indiana Department of Homeland Security
Leadership for a Safe and Secure Indiana

Are You Ready?

INDIANA citizen corps

Michael R. Pence
Governor

Indiana Citizen Corps Programs

The **Community Emergency Response Team** (CERT) program develops and trains teams in neighborhoods, workplaces, and schools in basic disaster response skills, including fire suppression, urban search and rescue, and medical operations. Nationally administered by FEMA, the CERT program provides an opportunity for citizens to take an active role in local emergency preparedness.

The **Medical Reserve Corps** (MRC) program coordinates volunteer health professionals and others interested in public health issues to provide ongoing support for community public health needs and resources during large-scale emergencies. The national MRC is administered by the Department of Health and Human Services.

The **USAonWatch** program incorporates community-wide terrorism awareness and education into the "eyes and ears" crime prevention mission of the Neighborhood Watch program. It empowers citizens to be active in homeland security in their own hometown. USAonWatch is managed nationally by the National Sheriffs' Association in partnership with the Bureau of Justice Assistance, Office of Justice Programs, US Department of Justice.

The **Fire Corps** program strengthens relationships between citizens and local fire departments, providing citizens with opportunities to support non-operational aspects of the fire service. A partnership between the National Volunteer Fire Council and the International Association of Fire Chiefs manages the national Fire Corps program.

The **Volunteers in Police Service** (VIPS) program provides citizens with opportunities to support the non-operational aspects of their local law enforcement agencies. The national VIPS program is administered by the International Association of Chiefs of Police in partnership with the Bureau of Justice Assistance, Office of Justice Programs, US Department of Justice.

For More Information

For more information on these programs contact your local emergency management agency (EMA), fire department, police department or other community organization.

For more information on IDHS, visit our website at: www.in.gov/dhs.

Citizen Corps Frequently Asked Questions

What is so special about Citizen Corps? What are the benefits to my community?

Citizen Corps is an easy way for communities to engage every individual in preparing their community for any type of emergency or threat.

When a state, tribe or local government participates in Citizen Corps, they are agreeing to work with everyone in their community to get preparedness on the "radar screen." Citizens will develop household preparedness plans and disaster supply kits. They will form Neighborhood Watch groups and will know what to do in times of emergencies. They will provide emergency preparedness training opportunities to the citizens of their community. This could be in the form of first aid training, CPR, Community Emergency Response Team training, or other forms of emergency response education and training. They will create opportunities in their community where citizens can engage in volunteer activities that support their first responders, disaster relief groups, and community safety organizations.

How do I participate in Citizen Corps in my community?

Citizen Corps is all about taking action and helping your community be better prepared to handle disasters, threats, and emergencies of all kinds. There are a number of things you can do in your community. You may form a Neighborhood Watch group, volunteer to help your police department or take a training course that increases your awareness of risks and better prepares you to handle them. You can also check www.citizencorps.gov/cc/CouncilMapIndex.do to find if there is a group in your community.

How is a Citizen Corps Council formed? Who should I talk to about starting one?

Councils bring together the first responder community, the volunteer community, and others to address community wide preparedness issues. They are to be sponsored or endorsed by an elected local government official or city or county administrator who has responsibility over the local government's operations.

Call your mayor, county executive, or appropriate local official to volunteer your talents. If you have experience leading the community, organizing volunteers, or working with officials, you may be a valued asset to your local Council.

Will I receive an I.D., plaque, or proof of volunteer status?

Proof of volunteer status will vary depending on the program with which you are involved. Some offer I.D. cards; many offer training certificates. Each community recognizes their volunteers in different ways. Since the Citizen Corps programs are put together at the local level, a city or county may choose many different ways to recognize their volunteers.