

# Citizen Corps Program

Citizen Corps is FEMA's grassroots strategy to bring together government and community leaders to involve citizens in all-hazards emergency preparedness and resilience. 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. The Citizen Corps Program benefits first responders by creating well trained, better informed, and better prepared citizens to take care of themselves and others during times of crisis -- allowing first responders to address the most critical needs.

Through Homeland Security Grant Program funds, the CAPCOG Region has funded a position to coordinate the Citizen Corps Programs located in the ten county Region as well as identify activities for citizen preparedness. Linda Haynie, City of Austin Homeland Security and Emergency Management, is the Regional Citizen Corps Coordinator and can be reached at (512) 974-0471 or [Linda.Haynie@ci.austin.tx.us](mailto:Linda.Haynie@ci.austin.tx.us). If you are interested in learning more or becoming involved in a local program, please contact Linda or one of the Citizen Corps programs listed below.

There are five different Citizen Corp Programs. These include the following.



The **Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)** program provides training in emergency preparedness and in basic response techniques to citizens, enabling them to take a more active role in personal and public safety. The CERT program provides citizens with training in basic emergency response skills such as fire suppression, light search and rescue, and disaster medical operations. Using their training, CERT members can assist others in their neighborhood or workplace following an event and can take a more active role in preparing their community. The program is administered by Department of Homeland Security (DHS). The national website is [www.citizencorps.gov/cert/](http://www.citizencorps.gov/cert/).



**Fire Corps** promotes the use of citizen advocates to enhance the capacity of resource-constrained fire and rescue departments at all levels: volunteer, combination, and career. Citizen advocates can assist local fire departments in a range of activities including fire safety outreach, youth programs, and administrative support. Fire Corps provides resources to assist fire and rescue departments in creating opportunities for citizen advocates and promotes citizen participation. Fire Corps is funded through DHS and is managed and implemented through a partnership between the National Volunteer Fire Council, the International Association of Fire Fighters, and the International Association of Fire Chiefs. To learn more about Fire Corps visit [www.firecorps.org](http://www.firecorps.org).



The **Medical Reserve Corp (MRC)** strengthens communities by utilizing currently practicing and retired medical trained persons and others interested in public health issues to assist during large-scale emergencies and to augment the emergency medical response community. MRC volunteers work in coordination with existing local emergency response programs and also supplement community public health initiatives such as outreach and prevention, immunization programs, blood drives, case management, and other efforts. The MRC program is administered by the US Department of Health and Human Services. Additional information is available at [www.medicalreservecorps.gov](http://www.medicalreservecorps.gov).



**USAonwatch (UOW)-Neighborhood Watch** works to provide information, training and resources to citizens in reducing residential crime. In the aftermath of September 11, 2001, Neighborhood Watch programs were expanded beyond their traditional crime prevention role to help neighborhood focus on disaster preparedness, emergency response and terrorism awareness. USAonWatch-Neighborhood Watch is administered by the National Sheriffs' Association in partnership with the Bureau of Justice Assistance, US Department of Justice. Additional information is available at [www.usaonwatch.org](http://www.usaonwatch.org).



**Volunteers in Police Service (VIPS)** works to enhance the capacity of state and local law enforcement through volunteers. VIPS serves as a gateway to resources and information for and about law enforcement volunteer programs. Some volunteers perform administrative and non-intervention policing activities to free up law enforcement professionals for frontline duty. Funded by the Department of Justice (DOJ), VIPS is administered by the International Association of Chiefs of Police. Additional information is available at [www.policevolunteers.org](http://www.policevolunteers.org).