



Snapshots of Success

The Citizen Corps Councils highlighted here demonstrate the range of ways Citizen Corps can and should be implemented. Citizen Corps is based on the fundamental principle that while the Citizen Corps mission is the same everywhere, every community is different and that approaches to engage everyone in the community will understandably be different as well. These communities vary in size, geography, population diversity, and how the Councils have been formed and sustained. The purpose of providing these examples is to share examples that have worked around the country.

VIRGINIA – Arlington County Citizen Corps Council used focus groups to find out more about the needs of special populations, and discovered that Arlington’s elderly hesitated to leave their homes to refill prescriptions during the sniper shooting of 2002. Thanks to these focus groups, Arlington’s Council has mobilized the community to meet the preparedness needs of all of the County’s residents.

ILLINOIS – The City of Belvidere has an unusually high youth population, which the Belvidere Citizen Corps Council smartly tapped into to create Belvidere’s Youth Citizen Corps. The Youth Citizen Corps operates car washes to raise funds for local Citizen Corps affiliates and volunteers thousands of hours to address a wide range of community needs, from distributing information on the West Nile virus to cleaning up the lawns of area elderly.

CALIFORNIA – The Fresno Citizen Corps Council has formed an effective community network by building strong working relationships among a diverse array of key community stakeholders. Citizen Corps programs are implemented or supported by leaders representing the business, civic, medical, military, social service, governmental, law enforcement, education, disaster response and faith-based communities. Working together they are preparing to meet unexpected challenges tomorrow by making the community safer and stronger today. The Fresno Citizen Corps Council also provides training programs in Spanish and several Southeast Asia languages.



TEXAS – To upgrade communication with residents, the Harris County Citizen Corps Council has expanded its reach with a 211 system to keep residents up to date on impending weather problems. The Council’s website links to the Harris County Office of Emergency Management with real-time radar pictures and a map of current rainfall totals. This insightful use of tools readily at hand gives Harris County citizens a critical leg up on the exceptionally dangerous weather that is the norm for coastal Texas.

MISSOURI – The metropolitan Kansas City area already had an existing umbrella organization, the Kansas City Metropolitan Community Organizations Active in Disaster, to coordinate critical services to individuals and families in times of disaster. Because of the similarity of the mission, the Kansas Citizen Metropolitan COAD members jumped at the opportunity to build on this existing structure, rather than building a new Council from the ground up. The strong heritage of the COAD brings tremendous local expertise to fulfilling the Citizen Corps mission in Kansas City.

WASHINGTON – The King County Citizen Corps Council has designed a process for conducting community needs assessments and focused on aggressive CERT training while, simultaneously drafting an amendment to Washington’s Good Samaritan law that legally indemnifies “any person,” including those in the building, remodeling and repairing trades, from prosecution for any mishaps that might take place during “emergency repairs to any structure at the scene of an accident, disaster, or emergency that has caused or resulted in damage to the structure.”

PENNSYLVANIA – The Lancaster Citizen Corps Council brings technology to the job without breaking the bank. Contributions from area companies and public-sector entities provided a dynamic safe school planning and information sharing tool and software for the Medical Reserve Corps. The Council built a comprehensive system that allows medical triage for remote locations, assigning the best-qualified volunteers to the site of an emergency, and much more.



FLORIDA – The Orlando Citizen Corps Council taps the range of experience and the breadth of interest in the community leadership by rotating the Council leadership every two years. The Council is also supported by an elite group of Hometown Security Volunteers who have trained in four different Citizen Corps Programs and take the reins at the neighborhood level.

ARIZONA – Running mock attacks and response drills, the Citizen Corps Council for Homeland Security of Southern Arizona keeps volunteers on the cutting edge of bio-terrorism planning. The Council also has assembled a crew of 50 nurses for their Vaccination Strike Team and is working with state licensing boards to reduce the cost of maintaining licenses for retired medical professionals.

OKLAHOMA – The Tulsa Project Impact Citizen Corps Council structures its efforts with a 7-step action plan led by interdisciplinary Safe and Secure Teams to help neighborhoods, businesses, and other organizations be better prepared through assessment, education, and preparedness projects. Combining this approach with many other community outreach efforts, from a pancake breakfast preparedness event to the Language and Culture Bank, gives Tulsa a strong and diversified outreach strategy.