



Citizen Corps and Hurricane Katrina

Following the onslaught of Hurricane Katrina, more than 100,000 Citizen Corps volunteers¹ from all 50 states and the District of Columbia were actively involved in response and recovery efforts across America.

Citizen Corps volunteers in the hardest hit areas demonstrated perseverance and the volunteer spirit by helping their fellow citizens.

- Alabama Citizen Corps, along with the Alabama Emergency Management Agency, local emergency management offices, and the faith-based community, helped staff the state and local emergency operations centers, shelters and phone banks; provided traffic control; managed donations at collection points and more.
- Over 200 Florida Citizen Corps volunteers assisted within their own state and were deployed to assist in Mississippi and Louisiana. Activities included: performing damage assessments, supporting their emergency operation centers, providing radio communications support, distributing food and water, and assisting in debris removal.
- Louisiana Citizen Corps volunteers worked with Community Relations (ESF-15) by visiting shelters in different parishes, registering victims for assistance and providing them with updated information.
- Gulfport/Harrison County Mississippi Medical Reserve Corps members, in partnership with Mississippi State Guard Medical Reserve Corps, established a medical needs shelter serving 140 medically fragile individuals and nearly 1,000 other displaced persons. The Lee County Medical Reserve Corps staffed a medical station at the local Red Cross shelter with nurses, pharmacists and administrative support.

Along with emergency responders, Citizen Corps volunteers from around the country traveled to the affected areas to support the relief efforts.

- Approximately 1,000 Citizen Corps participants from around the country worked as temporary personnel for the Federal Emergency Management Agency in the impacted area.
- More than 300 California Citizen Corps volunteers joined the Red Cross to assist.
- 13 Georgia Citizen Corps volunteers from the Columbia CERT team provided help in Gulfport, Mississippi via the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC) process.

¹ Citizen Corps volunteers are those that participate in volunteer programs and activities sponsored by a local Citizen Corps Council, usually to include Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT), Fire Corps, Medical Reserve Corps, Neighborhood Watch, Volunteers in Police Service, and the Citizen Corps Affiliate Programs and Organizations.



- The Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene sent more than 200 Medical Reserve Corps volunteers to the impacted area through the EMAC process.
- Texas Homeland Security Director Jack Colley signed an Emergency Action Record to provide reimbursement to Citizen Corps volunteers who, when needed and requested, traveled across the state to provide assistance to other jurisdictions.

Citizen Corps volunteers provided overwhelming support to the emergency shelters housing displaced victims around the country.

- Throughout the initial two week-period following the storm, Harris County Citizen Corps Council tapped their well established network of partners and citizen program participants to process more than 3,500 volunteers every day to assist with sheltering nearly 25,000 Louisiana evacuees at the Houston Reliant Astrodome. The Harris County Volunteers in Police Service Program and the Harris County CERT had over 200 volunteers augmenting active law enforcement personnel at the Astrodome.
- Arizona Citizen Corps volunteers provided more than 7,000 hours of support to assist with more than 576 evacuees in the Phoenix Veterans Coliseum and supported efforts at the Arizona State Fairgrounds in Tucson for an additional 700 evacuees.
- More than 300 Arkansas Citizen Corps volunteers assisted over 9,000 evacuees being housed at Fort Chaffee, National Guard/US Army Reserves Training Center in Sebastian County, in the following activities: providing care at a medical center where 2,200 evacuees received medical attention in the first 48 hours and managing dining facilities and an off-site donations collection center.
- Hundreds of Oklahoma Citizen Corps volunteers assisted at the Camp Gruber military post in caring for nearly 1,400 evacuees by providing medical care, assisting in food preparation, stocking warehouses and collecting and sorting donated goods.
- Throughout Iowa, local Citizen Corps Councils helped to care for the more than 1,000 evacuees by mentoring and sponsoring them in the following ways: providing transportation and childcare services, assisting them in registering for available resources at their local Disaster Recovery Centers, and providing financial assistance or tangible resources.
- Massachusetts Citizen Corps volunteers assisted in a local 24-hour effort called ‘Operation Helping Hands’ by staffing information lines, assisting the local Department of Transitional Assistance in ensuring that evacuees were provided and cared for, mentoring families who requested assistance at the local Disaster Recovery Center and tutoring school-age children.



As the hurricane season continued, Citizen Corps Councils worked to provide preparedness and public information to their citizens.

- The New Hampshire Citizen Corps Office launched a Web site to match agencies needing volunteer service with citizens who wanted to serve, resulting in over 400 volunteers registering on the Citizen Corps volunteer database.
- As part of the management team for the Governor’s Help Line, the Virginia Citizen Corps Office helped manage the Virginia Public Inquiry Center, where Virginia’s citizens could obtain emergency information, make donations, and volunteer.
- Maine Citizen Corps volunteers staffed a call center at the state emergency management agency to support the Governor’s task force in addressing reception center issues for sheltering and long-term housing needs for victims.
- More than 150 Massachusetts Citizen Corps volunteers provided staffing for a volunteer and donations management hotline, which received over 9,000 calls.

Citizen Corps Affiliate Programs and Organizations

Citizen Corps Affiliate Programs and Organizations are non-partisan, non-profit or government sponsored entities that support the mission of citizen participation in making America safer. These programs and organizations contribute to Citizen Corps’ comprehensive approach to all-hazards prevention, protection, response and recovery.

American Radio Relay League: Nearly 1,000 Amateur Radio volunteers assisted in hurricane-ravaged Gulf Coast communities. In Hancock, Mississippi, radio amateurs from Florida provided communicators and dispatchers for all services at the temporary emergency operations center at the Stennis Airport.

The American Legion: The American Legion approved 577 grants for a total of \$702,000 from their National Emergency Fund. These individual grants were up to \$1,500 for the victims who are members of the American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary and Sons of the American Legion. In addition, the American Legion received about \$170,000 in donations during the initial two weeks after the storm hit.

American Red Cross: Citizen Corps Councils throughout the country assisted in the recruitment effort for 40,000 volunteers to staff local Red Cross chapter shelters, providing meals and collecting, sorting and distributing donated goods.

Association of Public Television Stations: Mississippi Public Broadcasting worked with up to 100 shelters in the relief effort for Hurricane Katrina victims by coordinating donations, to include items such as: TV/DVD/VHS sets; video material (including Sesame Street and Between the Lions); games, toys, and activity sheets; thousands of books, including books from First Books and Sesame Street. Louisiana Public Broadcasting (LPB) worked on the following projects for Hurricane Katrina relief efforts:

“FEMA How To”: A step by step tutorial on the application process for federal help for both individuals and businesses affected by the hurricane; and “Coping Skills”: A series of videos on how to aid adults and children with the aftermath of Katrina.

Civil Air Patrol: Over 300 Civil Air Patrol personnel supported Hurricane Katrina operations directly, and thousands more registered their availability to provide support.



CAP aircrews from throughout the country flew over 1,200 hours to provide infrastructure assessments; airborne imagery to key federal, state, and local personnel; and airborne communications relay for responders on the ground and to transport critical resources and personnel. CAP Ground Teams conducted surveys of Hancock, Jackson, Pearl River, and Stone Counties in Mississippi over several days. They contacted over 8,500 residents in over 4,200 households.

Mercy Medical Airlift / Angel Flight America: More than 1,000 missions were flown with over 2,000 passengers being reunited and relocated with their families. Over 500 volunteers were involved in these efforts.

Veterans of Foreign Wars: The VFW National Headquarters provided \$120,000 to both Louisiana and Mississippi and \$30,000 to Alabama in direct support for those members living in the impacted areas. Through the Veterans of Foreign Wars Military Assistance Program Emergency Relief Fund, over \$60,000 was distributed to active duty, guard and reserve troops affected by the storm. Several Posts across America donated over \$100,000 for members living in the Gulf Coast and opened their doors as shelters for evacuees, such as VFW Post 3619 in De Ridder, Louisiana, which sheltered more than 150 victims.