

Statement

Of

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Introduction

Chairman Cuellar, Ranking Member Dent, and Members of the Subcommittee, my name is Corey Gruber, and I serve as Acting Deputy Administrator of the National Preparedness Directorate of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

I am honored to appear before you today to discuss the Department's citizen preparedness efforts. Today, I wish to highlight for you the Department's key efforts to engage the public in preparedness, primarily through the Ready Campaign and Citizen Corps.

We have many dramatic examples of the importance of citizen preparedness. Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, in particular, illustrated that the more the public is engaged with government in emergency planning, preparedness, and response—particularly through social networks such as faith-based organizations, professional associations, business groups, and neighborhood associations—the more prepared and resilient our communities will be when an incident occurs.

The public must be part of local planning, training, and exercising so they will know what to do when the “real thing” happens. The American people are the ultimate stakeholders in the homeland security mission and must be an integral part of national preparedness efforts. Today, I will share with you key aspects of our national strategy for working with State, territorial, tribal, and local jurisdictions, as well as other partners, to engage the public in emergency preparedness.

National Strategy

Our national strategy for citizen preparedness recognizes that citizen preparedness, like emergency response, must be rooted in strong local efforts to integrate citizens and communities and requires locally or regionally developed plans to address each community's unique risks and capabilities. The Federal role is to provide national policy and guidance, a national-level awareness campaign, and resources to support State and local efforts to prepare and include citizens in homeland security.

National Guidance

DHS is committed to integrating citizen preparedness and participation in all appropriate national preparedness guidance. Citizen preparedness and participation are included as integral elements of key guidance documents, including the Interim National Preparedness Goal (NPG) and its Interim Target Capability List (TCL), State and Urban Area Homeland Security Strategies, Homeland Security Grant Program (HSGP) Guidance, and the National Response Plan.

Homeland Security Presidential Directive 8 (HSPD 8) specifically directs the Secretary of Homeland Security to work with other Federal departments and agencies, as

well as State and local governments, the private sector, and non-governmental organizations, to encourage active citizen participation and involvement in preparedness efforts. This directive led to the development of the Interim National Preparedness Goal and its National Preparedness Priorities, including a National Priority specifically directed at strengthening planning and citizen preparedness. Citizen Preparedness and Participation is one of 37 target capabilities in the Target Capability List, and is identified as a “common capability” that cuts across all four mission areas: prevent, protect, respond, and recover. The capability is defined as ensuring that “...everyone in America is fully aware, trained, and practiced on how to prevent, protect/mitigate, prepare for, and respond to all threats and hazards. This requires a role for citizens in exercises, ongoing volunteer programs, and surge capacity response.”

Another of the National Preparedness Goal’s associated tools, the Universal Task List (UTL), also addresses citizen participation. For example, the UTL lists the following required preparedness tasks: “...provide volunteer services, allocate volunteers across the emergency support functions, and utilize national, regional, and local volunteer services.”

In addition, in developing their Homeland Security Strategies, States and Urban Areas are required to tailor and update existing strategic goals and objectives to support citizen preparedness efforts. Citizen coordination is integrated throughout the guidance for States and Urban Areas receiving funding through the Homeland Security Grant Program (HSGP). For example, the grant guidance directs States to “...include an integrated approach to engaging citizens in preparedness, training, exercises, and volunteer support for emergency responders through Citizen Corps Councils. States are encouraged to fully leverage HSGP resources to accomplish this goal.”

Need for Citizen Preparedness

Emergency responders in America make up less than one percent of the U.S. population. This roughly translates to one firefighter for every 280 people, one sworn officer for every 385 people, and one EMT/paramedic for every 325 people.

Hurricanes and other major incidents in recent years graphically demonstrate that there are not enough emergency responders to take care of everyone, in every location during the most critical time – the first 72 hours after a disaster. In fact, the Los Angeles Fire Department estimates that in 95 percent of all emergencies, it is bystanders or victims themselves who first provide emergency assistance or perform a rescue before a professionally trained emergency responder can arrive on the scene. Citizens must be aware of what steps to take to protect themselves and their families. We also encourage people to get trained in basic skills they can use to help themselves and others in an emergency. Importantly, citizens who acquire these skills can offer a pair of “trained hands” to help overwhelmed emergency responders during major disasters.

As part of the Nationwide Plan Review, conducted in the spring of 2006, the Federal government's first comprehensive assessment of State and Urban Area catastrophic planning, citizen and community preparedness strengths and weaknesses were assessed in several areas: Warning, Emergency Public Information, Evacuation, and Mass Care and Resource Management. The findings of the assessment for all 50 States, 5 Territories, the District of Columbia, and 75 of the largest urban areas highlighted the need to improve how the Nation:

- Fully integrates citizens and non-governmental entities in planning, training, and exercises;
- Addresses effective public alerts and warnings;
- Plans for citizen protective actions, particularly evacuation and sheltering;
- Engages in planning and proactive thinking in preparing to meet the needs of special needs populations before, during and after emergencies; and
- Integrates volunteer and non-governmental resources (personnel, equipment, facilities, and consumable resources) for surge capacity.

To help jurisdictions address these findings as well as other Nationwide Plan Review findings, the DHS Citizen Corps program is participating in the current FEMA effort to update the "State and Local Guide 101" document, which provides guidance to State and local entities on writing Emergency Operations Plans.

The Department administers two main programs to encourage preparedness and engage citizens in local preparedness activities – the *Ready* Campaign and Citizen Corps. To complement these efforts, FEMA also develops, publishes, and distributes community preparedness informational materials. These three initiatives work hand-in-hand to build citizen preparedness.

Ready

Ready is the Department's public awareness campaign to encourage people to take simple steps to make themselves and their families more prepared for emergencies. DHS and Citizen Corps work together with locally-based Citizen Corps Councils throughout the Nation to provide "*Ready*-branded" materials as a base for preparedness initiatives. In addition, Citizen Corps fully supports implementation of *Ready's* National Preparedness Month initiative each September by hosting hundreds of local events around the country.

Ready encourages all individuals to do three key things to prepare for emergencies: get an emergency supply kit, make a family emergency plan, and become informed about the different types of emergencies that could occur and their appropriate responses. The *Ready* Campaign's messages are distributed through a variety of public

outreach efforts, including advertisements, websites, brochures, partnerships, and media outreach. The campaign not only reaches out to individuals, but also targets children and families, businesses and Spanish-speaking individuals through *Ready Kids*, *Ready Business* and *Listo* – all extensions of the *Ready* Campaign.

The *Ready* Campaign partners with the Department's Private Sector Office to promote *Ready Business*, which aims to help owners and managers of small-to-medium size businesses prepare their employees, operations, and assets in the event of an emergency. In addition, in response to requests by parents and teachers for information appropriate to share with children, the Department created *Ready Kids*, a family-friendly extension of the *Ready* Campaign. *Ready Kids* is a tool to help parents and teachers educate children, ages 8-12, about emergencies and how they can help their families prepare.

The *Ready* Campaign also has *Listo*, *Listo Negocios*, and *Listo Niños*, which are Spanish language versions of the *Ready* Campaign's efforts. These companion materials ask individuals, businesses, and families to do the same things to prepare as the English versions, but do so in a way to better facilitate outreach to the Hispanic community.

The Department has worked with The Advertising Council to develop, produce, and distribute television, radio, print, outdoor, and Internet Public Service Advertisements (PSAs). The campaign currently has more than 100 PSAs for *Ready*, *Ready Business* (business preparedness), and *Listo* in various formats, including documentary-style ads, Spanish ads, and ads featuring former Presidents George H.W. Bush and Bill Clinton and First Lady Laura Bush. All of these ads run in space donated by media companies across the Nation. To date, *Ready* has received more than \$642 million worth of donated broadcast air time and print advertisement space.

The *Ready* Campaign also delivers its message through the www.ready.gov and www.listo.gov websites, which feature information, materials, and local resources. As of March 31, 2007, these websites have received more than two billion hits and 26 million different visitors. The Department also operates toll-free phone lines, 1-800-BE-READY and 1-888-SE-LISTO, which provide basic information on personal preparedness and allow callers to order free publications. There are currently more than a dozen *Ready* brochures, including versions in English and Spanish that highlight individual, family, and business preparedness, as well as special publications for older and disabled Americans, pet owners, and teachers. As of March 31, 2007, the toll-free numbers have received more than 293,000 calls; and more than 11.5 million *Ready* materials have been requested or downloaded from the website. In the four years since it was launched, the *Ready* Campaign has established itself as a successful effort to encourage Americans to prepare for emergencies. The Ad Council has declared *Ready* one of the most successful campaigns in its more than 60-year history.

The *Ready* Campaign also uses organizational and media outreach to spread its messages. *Ready* has relationships with a wide variety of public and private sector organizations. For example, Minor League Baseball and the Boy Scouts of America have

partnered with *Ready* since 2003 to distribute emergency preparedness information at baseball games across the country. The Department has also been successful in encouraging State and local governments to play key roles in helping to create a culture of preparedness. When *Ready* was created, only a handful of State and local efforts existed; now nearly every State and major city is doing something to encourage their residents to prepare.

Over the past four years, there has been dramatic growth in these localized efforts to focus and re-emphasize the *Ready* message. Media coverage is another venue the Department has used to communicate with citizens about emergency preparedness. During 2006, the Department issued nearly a dozen news releases and conducted more than 340 media interviews on *Ready* with outlets across the Nation that reached an audience of more than 61 million Americans.

While it is too early to effectively gauge the long-term effects of *Ready* on public preparedness, thus far there are indications of progress. Annual national surveys conducted by the Ad Council for the campaign and its extensions have yielded positive results:

- A national survey of the general public conducted in June 2006 found that 91 percent of respondents said it is important for all Americans to be prepared for emergencies. From 2005 to 2006, the proportion of Americans who said they have taken *any* steps to prepare rose 10 points, from 45 percent to 55 percent.
- A national survey of Hispanic Americans conducted in August 2005 found that 96 percent of respondents said it is important for all Americans to take steps to be prepared for emergencies. Thirty-nine percent of Hispanic Americans report having put together an emergency supply kit.
- A national survey of businesses with fewer than 1,000 employees conducted in December 2006 found 88 percent of respondents said that it is important for businesses to take steps to prepare for a catastrophic disaster. Forty-seven percent said their company has an emergency plan in place in the event of a disaster, an increase of 8 percent from 2005.

FEMA's Citizen Corps

Citizen Corps is the Department's grassroots initiative to actively involve all citizens in the effort to secure the homeland through planning, personal preparedness, training, and volunteer service. Citizen Corps plays a critical role in facilitating and fostering preparedness activities among State and local entities that are not traditionally involved in emergency management.

Citizen Corps is coordinated nationally by the Department of Homeland Security through the Community Preparedness Division in FEMA's National Preparedness Directorate. Citizen Corps provides a national strategy and program support for State and

local program implementation. In just five years since Citizen Corps was launched in 2002, it has grown to over 2,200 State, local, Tribal, and Territorial Councils, encompassing 75 percent of the nation's population.

Citizen Corps works with five national programs through partnerships with other Federal agencies and national organizations. The five programs--Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT), Medical Reserve Corps (MRC), Fire Corps, USA On Watch/ Neighborhood Watch (NWP), and Volunteers in Police Service (VIPS)--provide national resources for training and exercising citizens at the State and local level.

Citizen Corps was highlighted in the White House's report on the Federal response to Hurricane Katrina as one of the things that went right. In particular, the report described the efforts of the Harris County, Texas, Citizen Corps Council in providing shelter and services for hurricane victims at the Houston Astrodome. The Council built a functioning city virtually overnight to process over 65,000 evacuees from New Orleans. More than 60,000 Citizen Corps volunteers contributed to the success of the operation, while throughout the country, Citizen Corps and its program partners supported many other welcoming and shelter operations to receive displaced victims. The White House report noted that Citizen Corps was successful because "they had coordinated ahead of time with local businesses and volunteer groups, and because they were familiar with and implemented elements of the Incident Command System."

The concept behind Citizen Corps is that every State and territory should have a network that will implement the national citizen preparedness goals and guidance according to local needs and resources. Citizen Corps does not compete with existing volunteer organizations; rather it seeks to embrace all the organizations in a community and bring them together working towards homeland security. Because every community is unique, Citizen Corps is flexible to deal with each community's needs and priorities. However, every Citizen Corps initiative has a common thread: they all involve ordinary citizens volunteering in local communities to help secure the homeland.

Using Citizen Corps as its platform, a State or local government can launch a Ready Campaign, distribute emergency information, organize community resources for planning and preparedness efforts, or provide disaster readiness education.

Each of the 2,200 individual Citizen Corps Councils bring together the expertise of leaders from the emergency responder disciplines with the resources of volunteers, the private sector, elected officials, and other community stakeholders. These Councils examine community preparedness from a multi-discipline, comprehensive standpoint and work to engage citizens as strategic partners in community preparedness. Citizen Corps Councils integrate local programs and activities that engage everyone in hometown security and foster increased collaboration between citizens and all emergency responder disciplines.

Each community and region determines the appropriate geographic boundaries that its Council will serve and determines the Council membership. All Councils are

connected to city, county, tribal, and State government through local elected leadership (mayor, county commissioner/county executive, or tribal chief), and emergency management or homeland security officials. State Citizen Corps points of contact are appointed by the governor. As part of its all-hazards mission, each Council looks for areas of focus unique to its community. For example, Councils in coastal or riverside communities might pay special attention to hurricanes and flooding, while Councils in areas with large immigrant populations might put more emphasis on multi-cultural and multi-lingual outreach. The Detroit Citizen Corps Council is one example of the latter. Due to the high population of Iraqi-Americans in the area, the Council has made a special effort to reach out to this community and integrate it into emergency planning and preparedness efforts.

At the national level, Citizen Corps works with offices within the Department of Homeland Security, as well as with other Federal agencies, to provide support for these targeted efforts at the State and local level. National priorities established by Citizen Corps include preparedness for individuals with disabilities, pet owners, senior citizens, and youth. Best practice examples from across the country are solicited as a base for leveraging the work of local Councils and communities. As such, the Department is working with Citizen Corps to provide expertise and support for community based outreach and inclusion of potentially isolated key communities.

Because Citizen Corps Councils can claim membership from an impressive array of groups including emergency responders, local volunteer organizations, business and civic leaders, and minority and special needs groups, the Councils provide a forum through which local homeland security leaders can work with community leaders and citizens to address the public safety and preparedness needs of the community. The multi-discipline collaboration achieved through Citizen Corps provides economies of scope and scale in implementing programs and activities. Having all decision makers at the table enables the community to manage existing volunteer resources strategically, leverage mutually supportive endeavors among the represented groups, and direct the overall local plans. Having established working relationships before an incident occurs also makes response coordination more effective.

The programs and activities the Council implements help emergency responders tap the community's greatest resource – the voice and the power of the people. In addition, when emergency responders openly engage the public in preparedness and risk mitigation measures, training, exercises, and volunteer support, the public develops greater trust and appreciation for the responsibilities and services provided by those in uniform. This trust is critical when the public must respond to urgent information and directives during a crisis.

Citizen Corps involves a partnership of government and non-governmental organizations at all levels. Citizen Corps maintains an affiliation with 25 major nonprofit organizations and government agencies—such as the American Red Cross, the American Legion, and the Home Safety Council—whose programs promote community preparedness and through which individuals can find training and volunteer opportunities

at the community level. Further, the Department has worked with partners such as AARP, the National Organization on Disability, the National Fire Protection Association, the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals and the American Veterinary Medical Association, to create and distribute emergency information to targeted populations. The National Citizen Corps Council brings together more than 75 national non-governmental organizations and Federal agencies to collaborate across the responder disciplines and non-governmental sectors to support Federal, State, and local preparedness. Through these affiliations, the Citizen Corps network extends to tens of million of Americans.

Citizen Corps also has developed partnerships to support its five major programs, as noted earlier:

- The **Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)** program is administered by FEMA. CERT educates citizens about disaster preparedness and trains them in basic disaster response skills such as fire safety, light search and rescue, and disaster medical operations. CERT courses are delivered in the community by a team of first responders who have completed CERT Train-the-Trainer (TTT) training conducted by their State Training Office for Emergency Management or the Emergency Management Institute.
- **Fire Corps** is also funded through a cooperative agreement with FEMA and is managed and implemented through a partnership among the National Volunteer Fire Council, the International Association of Fire Fighters, and the International Association of Fire Chiefs. 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.
- The **Medical Reserve Corps (MRC)** program is administered by the Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) Office of the Surgeon General. It strengthens communities by helping medical, public health, and other volunteers offer their expertise throughout the year, as well as during local emergencies and other times of community need.
- **Neighborhood Watch/USAonWatch** is funded by the Department of Justice (DOJ) and administered by the National Sheriffs' Association. The program incorporates terrorism awareness education into its existing crime prevention mission, while serving as a way to bring residents together to focus on emergency preparedness and emergency response training.
- **Volunteers in Police Service (VIPS)** is funded through DOJ's Bureau of Justice Assistance and managed and implemented by DOJ and the International Association of Chiefs of Police. VIPS works to enhance the capacity of State and local law enforcement to utilize volunteers by serving as a gateway to resources and information for and about law enforcement volunteer programs.

Today, there are 2,682 CERTs, 632 Fire Corps programs, 1,558 VIPS programs, 671 MRC units, and nearly 14,800 Neighborhood Watch programs.

As part of providing national support to increase the effectiveness of preparedness education nationwide, Citizen Corps has established a cooperative agreement to conduct research on citizen preparedness in America. The research includes tracking and analysis of community preparedness survey results from multiple sources, analysis of media treatment of preparedness and disasters, analysis and summary of multi-disciplinary research on factors that affect individual and community preparedness, and a review and analysis of national and field level expert advice on the top priorities for all-hazard protective measures that save lives. Research reviews are published quarterly through the Citizen Corps website. Four issues of the Citizen Preparedness Review have been published to date.

The most recent issue, on Citizen Corps' Personal Behavior Change Model for Disaster Preparedness, identifies the key factors needed to motivate citizens to take personal action to prepare. Key findings highlight the importance of localizing preparedness education to target local risks and plans for protective actions, and the critical role community networks play in preparing individuals by reinforcing preparedness in a community or organizational context.

Citizen Corps is also working closely with the Department of Homeland Security's Science and Technology Directorate on research related to civic engagement and other factors affecting community resiliency. These research areas will provide a more robust basis for measuring preparedness and the impact of preparedness on both consequences and recovery.

Since 2003, the Department has awarded over \$100 million to support Citizen Corps. Since Fiscal Year (FY) 2004, Citizen Corps Program funding has been included as one of the five grant programs under the Homeland Security Grant Program (HSGP). In order to leverage additional funding for this important priority, the Department has integrated community preparedness throughout the HSGP guidance as grant expenditures across all five HSGP grant programs. States use these funds to support a broad range of citizen preparedness activities that can include establishing a Citizen Corps Council, providing citizens with preparedness training—including CERT training, communicating citizen preparedness messages, and developing professional responder exercises that include a test of the citizen response role.

From FY 2004 through FY 2006, States spent nearly \$140 million to establish and enhance citizen volunteer initiatives, citizen awareness of emergency preparedness, prevention, and response measures, and Citizen Corps Councils. Fifty-one percent of the \$140 million is DHS funding beyond the Citizen Corps Program dollars, with the remainder being supported by Citizen Corps Program funding alone.

FEMA Disaster Education Materials

FEMA has developed disaster education materials, a disaster preparedness curriculum, and a well-populated website, which all provide a wide range of information to the public on preparing for, responding to, and recovering from disasters. This includes training and related materials available through the Emergency Management Institute, such as the *Are You Ready?* Guide to Citizen Preparedness, independent study courses, and facilitator's guide.

The Guide to Citizen Preparedness is FEMA's most comprehensive source on individual, family, and community preparedness. It provides a step-by-step approach to disaster preparedness by walking the reader through how to get informed about local emergency plans, how to identify hazards that affect their local area, and how to develop and maintain an emergency communications plan and disaster supplies kit. Other topics covered include evacuation, emergency public shelters, animals in disaster, and information specific to people with disabilities. *Are You Ready?* also provides in-depth information on specific hazards, including what to do before, during, and after each hazard type.

Conclusion

Through Citizen Corps, *Ready*, and other initiatives, the Department is working to increase citizen preparedness, engage citizens in preparedness planning and programs, and leverage citizen assistance to support emergency response professionals. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the opportunity to provide information on these efforts and for your continued support for this important work. I would be happy to respond to any questions you or Members of the Subcommittee may have.