



Dear Mayor:

Across the nation and here in New Jersey, our communities are giving top priority to the tasks of planning and preparing for potential threats from acts of terrorism. In any emergency, whether resulting from a natural disaster, crime, terrorist related act or an emergency of any kind, local government resources will be the first responders as well as the first line of defense.

Following a major disaster, first responders who provide emergency services will not be able to meet the demands placed upon them. Factors such as the number of victims, communication failures and roadblocks may prevent people from accessing the type of services they have come to expect at a moments notice through 911. People will have to rely on each other for help to meet their immediate needs until professional emergency responders can reach them.

In his 2002 State of the Union address, President Bush placed renewed emphasis on the Citizen Corps initiative, a component of the USA Freedom Corps, and asked that Americans volunteer their services to help safeguard our country, our communities, their families, and themselves. Citizen Corps is managed at the state and local level by CITIZEN CORPS COUNCILS that are in various stages of development at this time.

The New Jersey State Citizen Corps Council has been established by Governor McGreevey to coordinate the activities of the Citizen Corps Program here in New Jersey with current emphasis on the creation of Local Citizen Corps Councils and Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT).

**(Refer to Attachment A)**

CERT is a program designed to produce organized teams that will be capable of assisting their communities in times of disaster. Every county has assigned a member of their office of emergency management as their CERT Coordinator. The County CERT Coordinator will be assigned to the County Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) which will act as the County Citizen Corps Council.

**(Refer to Attachment B)**

The County CERT Coordinator will coordinate and develop CERT Train-the-Trainer courses in conjunction with the New Jersey State Police, Office of Emergency Management, Regional CERT Coordinators. These CERT Courses will be offered to all municipal emergency management coordinators who are interested in starting a CERT program in their community.

It is recommended that your Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) also be designated as your Local Citizen Corps Council. The Local Citizen Corps Council must register with FEMA via the internet at [www.citizencorps.gov](http://www.citizencorps.gov).

**(Refer to Attachment C)**

**New Jersey has received grant funding in the amount of \$527,375.00 from FEMA to support the Citizen Corps/CERT initiative.** Working through the state, county, and local network of Citizen Corp Councils, these monies will be utilized to fund CERT training programs and equip the instructors and students with the materials needed to support training. A population based formula has been utilized to allocate the funding throughout New Jersey. **The program will emphasize “performance based funding” whereby those counties and municipalities that are actively endorsing and participating in the program will receive a larger share of the support funds available.**

The CERT training program is a 20 hour course divided into eight blocks of instruction. Upon graduation from the CERT program, team members will receive a basic kit which will consist of the following items:

**(Refer to Attachment D)**

- Identification Vest with CERT logo and NJOEM logo
- Hard Hat
- Safety Goggles
- Dust Mask
- Work Gloves
- Crescent Type Wrench
- Carry Bag

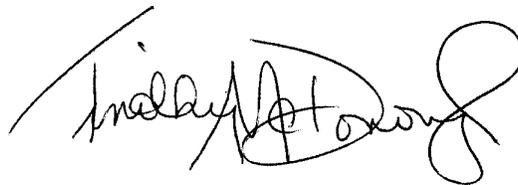
This equipment will be funded through the grant and provided via the state/county/local CERT coordinators. The State will maintain a database of all funds expended and allocated to the counties/municipalities in support of the initiative. A database to track all CERT-trained personnel and Citizen Corps Councils is being formed.

Working together we can be prepared to respond to any disaster or tragedy that confronts us. The State Citizen Corps Council has been created to foster collaboration and offer assistance to community volunteer organizations. The designation of your existing LEPC as your Local Citizen Corps Council is a significant step in the role that you will play in homeland security and the success of this initiative.

The State Citizen Corps Council and the League of Municipalities strongly endorse this program and encourage your cooperation to make the CERT Program a success.



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Chairman Homeland Security Task Force  
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