

**Fairfax County Citizen Corps Council
Charter**
(approved 2003)
(revised as of April 2007)

This Charter is intended to promote a common understanding of the *Fairfax County Citizen Corps Council's* purpose, scope, goals, structure, and operating guidelines.

Background and Purpose

The *Citizen Corps* is a component of the national *USA Freedom Corps* established after the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks to promote a culture of service, citizenship, and community responsibility. The four main programs of the national Citizen Corps include: Neighborhood Watch, Volunteers in Police Service (VIPS), FEMA's Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT), and the Medical Reserve Corps (MRC).

In the spring of 2002, local communities across the country were encouraged to start Citizen Corps Councils to consist of leaders from local government, neighborhood groups, the emergency management and first responder community; the volunteer community, including community service and faith-based organizations; and other organizations and individuals to serve as the local operating structure to bring *Citizen Corps* to the community.

In July of 2002, the web-based *USA Freedom Corps Volunteer Network* that assists citizens by directing them to volunteer opportunities in their communities was launched to further expand the scope of the volunteer effort.

Secure Virginia, including the *Virginia Corps* initiative, was established in September, 2002 and includes both a web-based program and volunteer service opportunities for those interested in the State's homeland security and emergency preparedness efforts.

The *Fairfax County Citizen Corps* includes the County's Neighborhood Watch, Volunteers in Police Service (VIPS), the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT), the Medical Reserve Corps (MRC), the Fire Corps, and affiliate organizations. The County's *Citizen Corps* is registered with the National Citizen Corps and the *Virginia Corps*.

The development and implementation of a *Fairfax County Citizens Corps Council* was initiated in November, 2002 and authorized by the Board of Supervisors on January 6, 2003 to further federal and state efforts to enhance homeland security and emergency preparedness volunteer opportunities and services in the

County. The County's *Citizen Corps Council* is registered with the national *Citizen Corps Council* and the state *Citizen Corps Council*.

In May 2006, the Board of Supervisors endorsed several recommendations regarding the Fairfax County Citizen Corps Council. These included removing County staff from the Citizen Corps Council and its Executive Committee, adding ten new citizen members appointed by the Board, providing dedicated staff support through the Fairfax County Office of Emergency Management, and requiring the Council to submit an annual report to the Board of Supervisors. In April 2007, the Board of Supervisors clarified that it did not intend to prevent an organization or member of the Board from appointing as its or his/her representative on the Council a person who also happens to be a County employee.

Scope

Fairfax County strives to promote public health and safety, disaster preparedness, and crime prevention. A need exists, however, to bring together the *Citizen Corps'* main programs and participating affiliate organizations. The *County's Citizen Corps Council* is organized to help coordinate and advise the County's *Citizen Corps* and those affiliate organizations. The *Council* will serve as an advisory body to promote federal and state volunteer initiatives, enhance services, facilitate the exchange of information and training, support partnerships, and enhance community pride. Examples include: arranging for training and information access needed for public education and awareness, and volunteer contact management for enhancing communication with volunteers.

The *Council* is not intended to supplant or supersede any specific organization's role and responsibilities with respect to volunteers. The *Council* realizes and values organizational policies and protocols governing the use of volunteers.

The *Council* will meet regularly and work to build membership in existing volunteer programs. It will coordinate with non-Council organizations to ensure collaboration of volunteer opportunities and will work together in planning the wise use of volunteers to create a well-trained, readily available pool of citizens and professionals.

Goals and Objectives

The *Council's* goal is to make Fairfax County safer, stronger, and better prepared to respond to emergency situations. The Council will work to enrich existing volunteer programs and enhance their effectiveness by supporting federal and state initiatives and will have the following objectives:

- Coordinate with the County's *Citizen Corps* programs and participating affiliate organizations on ways to maximize citizen participation in emergency response.
- Promote all County *Citizen Corps*, affiliate, and community volunteer programs and activities across the community.
- Serve as a forum to discuss volunteer issues.
- Leverage existing resources and build on current successful programs in the County wherever possible.
- Educate the public on emergency preparedness and response.
- Spearhead efforts to offer citizens new and existing volunteer opportunities, educational information, and training courses to address crime, terrorism, and natural disaster risks.
- Capture innovative practices and report accomplishments that can be replicated in other communities nationally.
- Survey the community to assess increased awareness and participation in County *Citizen Corps*, affiliate, and community volunteer programs.

Structure

The Council will consist of 35 members. Ten members shall be citizens appointed by the Board of Supervisors. Five members (one each) shall be appointed by and from each of the County's *Citizen Corps* programs. The remaining 20 members will represent a cross-section of organizations from the following: volunteer, community service, faith, and community-based organizations; healthcare delivery systems; business and industry; the transportation sector; media representatives, minority and special needs representation, and other groups suggested by the Council for inclusion on the Council. The County Executive will designate the member organizations and each organization will select a representative and an alternate.

County staff may not serve on the Council or its Executive Committee by virtue of his/her County position. This does not prevent an organization or a member of the Board of Supervisors from appointing as its or his/her representative on the Council a person who also happens to be a County employee. Council members who are appointed by the Board must reside in the district of the appointing Supervisor. Organizational members of the Council must serve residents of Fairfax County or the Cities of Falls Church or Fairfax, or the Towns of Herndon, Vienna, or Clifton. There is no residency requirement for representatives (or their alternates) of the organizational members or the County's *Citizen Corps* programs.

Operating Guidelines

The *Council* operates under national and state goals of enhancing volunteer service in local emergency preparedness and homeland security efforts.

The *Council* will maintain a working relationship with the County's *Emergency Management Coordinating Council* (EMCC) to ensure efficient coordination and use of volunteers.

Staff Support

The *Council* will have dedicated staff support from Fairfax County government through its Office of Emergency Management, including a full-time volunteer and community outreach coordinator, and other staff support as needed.

Annual Report

The Council shall prepare an annual report for presentation to the Board of Supervisors.