

Drill into Action

Out of the devastation of disasters come valuable learning opportunities. In July 2006, Lake County, OH experienced an intense [flood](#) when ten inches of rain raised the Grand River 11 feet above flood level. Hundreds of residents were displaced from their homes for days and found their valuables damaged beyond repair. Lake County residents formed a [Citizen Corps Council](#) to ensure they were prepared the next time an event like this occurred. Seven years later, in July 2013, their community experienced another major flood.

[Lake County Citizen Corps](#) learned from the 2006 flood that a Volunteer Reception Center (VRC) is an important asset during disaster recovery. In order to prepare their community and Citizen Corps members, they performed a full scale VRC drill to ensure they could operate one efficiently. The American Red Cross lead the exercise with 20 members of the community including, but not limited to Citizen Corps volunteers, staff from the Lake County Emergency Operation Center, Lake Metro Parks and others.

Lake County Citizen Corps' training and drilling proved valuable when their community was hit with another flood in 2013. Just 24 hours after a local state of emergency was declared by the County Commissioners, the Lake County Citizen Corps Council stood up a VRC, which received a total of 63 referrals from the [2-1-1](#)—an information and referral search phone line—regarding residents with disabilities and older residents. Citizen Corps volunteers assisted by:

- Making phone calls to verify that the residents who requested assistance through 2-1-1 received flood related clean-up; and
- Following-up with 2-1-1 referrals to check on the residents' condition.

[America's PrepareAthon!](#) stresses the importance of being prepared for a disaster by taking action through drills, exercises or discussions. When a flood hit Lake County again, their Citizen Corps was able to quickly set-up a VRC that ran efficiently thanks participating in a VRC drill and completing intensive VRC training beforehand. If you are interested in organizing an exercise or other activity to help ensure your community is prepared, we encourage you to check out the resources available at www.ready.gov/prepare, including playbooks for local leaders for planning and organizing events, and free customizable communications tools and resources. Just select a hazard that may impact your community to get started. Once you plan your event, we hope you'll share it with other communities throughout the country by registering for [America's PrepareAthon!](#) and visiting the [America's PrepareAthon! "Add Events" page](#).