



## FEMA Youth Preparedness Council Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

### When are applications due?

Applications, letters of recommendation, and supporting materials must be received by March 20, 2016 11:59 p.m. PDT.

### Who can apply to serve on the Youth Preparedness Council?

Each applicant must be an 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, or 10<sup>th</sup> grade student and have done one or more of the following:

- Contributed to disaster preparedness in his or her community,
- Lived through a disaster and shared his or her experiences, or
- Participated in a local Citizen Corps Council, Teen CERT program, or other youth preparedness program.

You must be a current 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, or 10<sup>th</sup> grade student at the time you apply.

### How should the application be submitted?

All Youth Preparedness Council application materials must be sent to [FEMA-Youth-Preparedness-Council@fema.dhs.gov](mailto:FEMA-Youth-Preparedness-Council@fema.dhs.gov) with the subject line "[Applicant's First Name]\_[Applicant's Last Name]\_YPCApplication", e.g., Sarah\_Smith\_YPCApplication.

All application materials—one (1) application form, one (1) video response (if applicable in place of written narrative responses on application form), two (2) letters of recommendation, and any optional supplemental materials—must be submitted in **one (1)** email. Letters of recommendation must be submitted in PDF format. All attachments must follow the file naming conventions described in the application instructions, e.g., Sarah\_Smith\_ApplicationForm; Sarah\_Smith\_Recommendation1; Sarah\_Smith\_Supplement1.

If email size constraints limit the size of the attachments you can send, you may want to consider the following for reducing file sizes:

- Send links to websites with videos, supporting materials, and information, rather than attaching the files. Links can be input directly into the "Video Link" field under "Narrative Responses" and "Description" fields in the "Supplemental Materials" section of the application.
- Compress pictures or reduce the resolution of pictures.
- Convert text and/or images to PDF files.



## What makes a complete application package?

A complete package includes the following attachments submitted in **one (1) email**:

- One (1) application form;
- One (1) video response (if applicable in place of written narrative responses on application form);
- Two (2) letters of recommendation;
- Academic records (e.g., report card, transcript) from the current (2015–2016) school year;
- Academic records from the previous (2014–2015) school year; and
- Any optional supplemental materials.

All attachments must follow the file naming conventions described in the application instructions, e.g., Sarah\_Smith\_ApplicationForm; Sarah\_Smith\_Recommendation1; Sarah\_Smith\_Supplement1.

## How do I fill out the application form?

To view and edit the file, make sure you have the most recent version of Adobe Reader. You can download Adobe Reader at <http://get.adobe.com/reader/>. All responses **must** be input directly into the application form, which is an editable PDF form.

To fill out the application, click on the link “FEMA Youth Preparedness Council Application Form” at [www.ready.gov/youth-preparedness-council](http://www.ready.gov/youth-preparedness-council). Be sure to save a **downloaded** copy of the PDF to your computer. Please type your answers directly into the forms. Then, save the file with your responses. Please name your file using the following format: “[Applicant’s First Name]\_[Applicant’s Last Name]\_ApplicationForm”, e.g., Joe\_Jones\_ApplicationForm.

The file must be emailed as an attachment, along with one (1) video response (if applicable); two (2) letters of recommendation, your academic records, and any supplemental materials that are being provided, to [FEMA-Youth-Preparedness-Council@fema.dhs.gov](mailto:FEMA-Youth-Preparedness-Council@fema.dhs.gov).

Should you encounter any problems or difficulty in submitting your application materials, please contact FEMA at [FEMA-Youth-Preparedness-Council@fema.dhs.gov](mailto:FEMA-Youth-Preparedness-Council@fema.dhs.gov).

## I know someone who would be great for the Council—can I nominate him or her?

We encourage you to share the application with youth you think would be a good fit for the Council! However, FEMA will only consider applications submitted directly by the applicant. Each application **must include** two (2) letters of recommendation (which must be submitted in the same email as the application), so writing a letter of recommendation is a great way to show your support and provide input into the application process.



## **I applied last year and was not selected to the Council—can I apply again?**

Yes! Unfortunately, FEMA is unable to accept all of the qualified applicants in a given year. Spots open up every year and previous applicants are encouraged to reapply. There is a space on the application form to indicate whether you have previously applied to the Council.

## **Do I have to submit a letter of recommendation?**

Yes. You must submit **two (2)** letters of recommendation from two (2) adults with your application. Applications received without two (2) letters of recommendation will not be reviewed.

## **Can anyone write a letter of recommendation for a Youth Preparedness Council application?**

Letters of recommendation must come from an adult 18 years of age or older. At least one (1) letter of recommendation must come from an adult who can speak to the applicant's experience with preparedness and/or disaster(s)—which could be from preparedness programs, experiencing a disaster, etc. The second letter of recommendation should come from an adult who is familiar with the applicant's involvement in the community. Examples of people who may write letters of recommendation include group leaders, teachers, advisors/counselors, school administrators, coaches, employers, community or faith leaders, local first responders, or Citizen Corps Council or CERT Program members. Family members, relatives, guardians, etc. may not write letters of recommendation.

## **Do I have to submit my academic records?**

Yes. You must submit academic records (e.g., report cards, transcripts) that demonstrate your good academic standing for the current (2015-2016) and previous (2014-2015) school years.

## **What are the requirements for the narrative responses?**

All narrative response questions/topics must be addressed, either by written or video response.

If responding in writing, please adhere to the character limit (including spaces) provided for each response. Once you have reached the limit, the application will not accept any more characters. You may need to rework your response to fit within the designated character allotment.

If responding in a video, you must address all five (5) questions/topics in the Narrative Response section. Please keep your video under 20 minutes in length.

## **I want to respond to the application questions in video, can I?**

Yes. The five (5) Narrative Response questions/topics may be addressed in a video recording. To submit your responses, you may include your video file with your application email, using the naming convention "[Applicant's First Name]\_[Applicant's Last Name]\_Video", e.g., Joe\_Jones\_Video. You may also upload your video to a video-sharing website



(e.g., YouTube) and provide the link in the indicated field on the application. Please keep your video under 20 minutes in length.

## **Can someone who serves on a local Citizen Corps Council or Partner Program or Affiliate (e.g., Teen CERT, Medical Reserve Corps, Fire Corps, Volunteers in Police Service, Neighborhood Watch) apply to serve on the Council?**

Any 8th, 9th or 10th grade student who is engaged in individual and community preparedness activities may apply to serve on the Youth Preparedness Council.

## **Do applications need to address a specific type of youth disaster preparedness activity?**

Applicants are asked to submit any examples of disaster preparedness activities, personal experiences with disasters, or disaster response activities that would qualify them to serve on the Council. A section of the application form includes space for describing up to three (3) examples of experiences related to disasters or youth preparedness. Sample preparedness activities include but are not limited to:

- After-school activities
- America's PrepareAthon! participation
- Citizen Corps programs
- Disaster preparedness camps
- Increasing local disaster awareness
- National Preparedness Month participation
- Pet/service animal preparedness
- Rural area preparedness activities
- Teen CERT training
- Under-represented community programs
- Using social media to further disaster preparedness
- Youth club activities (e.g., Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts)
- Youth preparedness activities through a faith-based group

## **What types of supplemental materials can I submit?**

You can submit any materials that you feel would strengthen or support your application. Possible supplemental materials include news about a preparedness or disaster response activity in which you participated, preparedness materials that you developed, or pictures and video of a preparedness activity in which you participated. Be creative! Showing your activities and impact will strengthen your application. All supplemental materials, if provided, must be included in the same email as the rest of the application materials and use the following file naming convention:

- "[Applicant's First Name]\_[Applicant's Last Name]\_Supplement1", e.g., Joe\_Jones\_Supplement1
- "[Applicant's First Name]\_[Applicant's Last Name]\_Supplement2"

Please note that supplemental materials are **not** required.



## How will an applicant know his or her application was received by FEMA?

An email confirmation will be sent to the applicant confirming receipt of his or her application. If you do not receive a confirmation email within three (3) business days, please re-send your application.

## How will the applications be reviewed?

National and regional FEMA representatives will review applications. Each state and territory falls into one (1) of ten (10) FEMA regions (the states and territories in each region can be seen here: [www.fema.gov/regional-operations](http://www.fema.gov/regional-operations)), and each region has a Community Preparedness Officer (CPO). Applications will be reviewed by both headquarters staff and the CPO of the region in which the applicant lives. Finalists will be asked to participate in a virtual (e.g., Skype) or telephone interview.

## When will members be notified that they have been selected?

New Youth Preparedness Council members will be announced in May 2016.

## Are there any monetary rewards associated with being selected for the Youth Preparedness Council?

There is no cash reward associated with being selected for the Youth Preparedness Council.

## What is required of Youth Preparedness Council members?

Participants are expected to represent the youth perspective on emergency preparedness and share information with their communities. Members are expected to serve for two (2) years on the council. Each new Council year begins in July with the Youth Preparedness Council Summit.

In his or her first year, each Council member is expected to develop and complete at least one (1) youth preparedness-related project specific to his or her region and interests, as well as to pursue other preparedness-related opportunities in his or her community. In his or her second year, each Council member is expected to complete at least (1) national level youth preparedness-related project in collaboration with other second year Council members. In addition to the national project, Council members are expected to serve as mentors to guide new, first year Council members in their projects and activities.

Council members are also **required** to attend two Youth Preparedness Council Summits, which are held in July in Washington, DC.

Members are required to participate in **mandatory** group conference calls every other month. These calls allow members to provide updates on their projects, pose questions to FEMA headquarters staff and CPOs, and provide feedback to other members based on their experiences. Members are permitted to miss one (1) call per year. Members are also required to participate in two one-on-one calls per year with a representative from FEMA headquarters and their CPO to check-in on the status of their projects.



## Youth Preparedness Council



FEMA

Additionally, members are expected to submit monthly status reports to FEMA headquarters and their CPO that describe the progress they have made on their projects over the past month and any challenges they have faced.

Please see the *FEMA Youth Preparedness Council Member Roles and Responsibilities* document for more information.

### How long does a member serve on the Council?

Members are asked to commit to the Council for two (2) years. Each new Council year starts in July with the Youth Preparedness Council Summit. If members have not completed the mandatory requirements during their first year, FEMA may excuse the member from participating in a second year.

### What is the Youth Preparedness Council Summit? When is it held?

The Youth Preparedness Council Summit is an opportunity for Council members to meet one another and FEMA representatives, including their Regional CPOs, who will be their ongoing FEMA support contacts and mentors. Council members will be able to share their experiences, ideas, solutions, and questions on youth disaster preparedness with FEMA, national partners engaged in youth preparedness work, other Council members, and selected federal officials. Council members also receive their official certificates of membership during a ceremony at the Summit. Please note that attendance at the Summit is **required** for those selected to the Council. The next Summit will be held towards the end of July 2016.

A parent/guardian or parent-authorized chaperone must attend with each Council member. The Summit includes sessions for parents/guardians/chaperones. FEMA will reimburse travel, lodging, and meals and incidental expenses for each Council member and his or her parent/guardian/chaperone to attend the Summit. Additional information about expense reimbursement is provided in the response to the next question.

### Is there a cost associated with the Summit?

Council members and chaperones will be reimbursed for expenses associated with the Summit; however, please note that many of these expenses need to be paid for up front by the Council member/chaperone and will be reimbursed by FEMA *after* the Summit. Council members and their chaperones are reimbursed for:

- **Travel** via common carrier—air, rail, or bus transportation. This includes transportation to and from the airport, train station, etc. Transportation to and from Summit-related events (e.g., a taxi to a field trip that is part of the Summit, or to the mandatory dinner held as part of the Summit) can also be reimbursed. Parking is not included. Transportation for personal excursions, such as sightseeing, will not be reimbursed.
- **Lodging**. FEMA will provide a lodging option that is within the government daily rate, which is the maximum rate that can be reimbursed.
- **Meals & incidental expenses**. These are reimbursed at a flat, per diem rate.



## Youth Preparedness Council



FEMA

There will be a session at the Summit for parents/guardians/chaperones to learn about reimbursement.

### **Additional Questions**

Please email additional questions to [FEMA-Youth-Preparedness-Council@fema.dhs.gov](mailto:FEMA-Youth-Preparedness-Council@fema.dhs.gov). Thank you.