

## **Citizen Corps Volunteers Make a Difference in the Wake of Hurricane Sandy**

Alongside interagency, state, local, and volunteer partners, FEMA and the emergency management team are working long hours each day to ensure the needs of communities affected by Sandy are identified and addressed.

While FEMA has provided more than \$1.04 billion in assistance, as of December 6, 2012, to communities and individuals affected by the disaster, our whole community partners also remain committed to survivors.

The dedication of volunteers supporting the response and recovery has made a tremendous impact on our effectiveness.

“Federal response to disasters is only one part of the equation,” said FEMA Administrator Fugate. “Groups like Citizen Corps Councils and Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) programs provide front-line support to first responders and community members during disasters. FEMA is proud to work alongside our Citizen Corps partners. I extend a thank you and acknowledgement for all that they contribute.”

As the recovery continues, we will feature best practices and stories of triumph from our counterparts in the affected states. Key to the response in ravaged areas were New Jersey and New York volunteers.

New Jersey Citizen Corps Council helped coordinate volunteers across the state and sprung into action immediately. During the height of the storm, a communications repeater went down in the Hoboken Fire Department. Thinking quickly on their feet, the Hoboken CERT utilized its amateur radio repeaters as the primary means of communication for shelter operations, shuttle bus communications, and volunteer interactions.

Again, in the Hoboken area, establishing relationships with CVS and Doctors Without Borders prior to the disaster led to smooth coordination between the programs when assistance was needed. CERT members were able to recruit doctors and nurses to provide seniors with the aid and medication they required. Additionally, CERT volunteers transported seniors to local shelters to ensure their safety.

Not far across the Hudson River, 1,200 New York CERT volunteers also worked around the clock, providing homecare for residents and ensuring food, water, blankets and emergency care were provided in hundreds of shelters throughout NYC and surrounding areas. CERT volunteers were so integrated into the day-to-day oversight of these shelters, US Health and Human Services Secretary Katherine Sebelius requested a briefing from a NY CERT team member working in Brooklyn with the Special Medical Needs Shelter. Additionally, a local American Red Cross volunteer [touted the efforts of CERT](#) and its volunteers noting the shelter wouldn't have run as smoothly without them.

In addition to assisting the needs of survivors, NY CERT volunteers supported those impacted by the fuel shortage and various public transportation obstacles. At the request of the New York Department of Health and Mental Hygiene and the Home-Based Healthcare Alliance, NY CERT

volunteers transported nurses and healthcare practitioners to local hospitals, throughout various communities to see homecare patients and developed a strategy to ensure residents requiring someone to check on them, would be seen.

NY CERT team members also pumped fuel from tankers at Floyd Bennett Field and in the Rockaways. This assistance provided fuel for hundreds of emergency vehicles in storm damaged areas. Most importantly, through the work of these CERTs, the support provided to emergency responders and emergency vehicles were able to respond and transport those in need to open hospitals.

Administrator Craig Fugate, the Individual and Community Preparedness Division and the entire FEMA family want to thank the team of emergency management professionals and volunteers for their efforts over the past several weeks. Thank you for your time and commitment to the mission of making communities safe, secure and more resilient to withstand disaster.

To learn more about NJ CERT visit their [website](#) and click [here](#) to learn more about NY CERT.