Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT)

The Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program is a nationally supported, locally implemented initiative that teaches people how to better prepare themselves for hazards that may affect their communities. Since 1993, CERT trains the public in basic disaster response skills such as team organization, disaster medical operations, fire safety, and light search and rescue. The ability for CERT volunteers to perform these activities frees up professional responders to focus their efforts on more complex, essential, and critical tasks. Communities can utilize CERT volunteers in a variety of roles including Disaster Response, Shelter Support, Radio Communications, Family Reunification, Donations Coordination and Management, Damage Assessment, Well-Being Checks, EOC Support, and Event Support.

The CERT program offers numerous benefits, including:

⇒ Increased personal and family preparedness
⇒ The ability to provide immediate assistance to others
⇒ Enhanced community resilience and self-sufficiency
⇒ Collaboration and support for professional responders
⇒ A strong sense of community and shared responsibility

What does it take to become recognized as a CERT program?

To start a Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program, you may need to consider the following:

- Sponsoring organization: The program must have a sponsoring local, county, or state government organization.

- Training: You can develop a training plan to equip members with the skills they need. FEMA's Emergency Management Institute (EMI) offers training for instructors and program managers. CERT members are typically trained annually in natural disaster response and mitigation techniques.

- State coordinator approval: The state coordinator must approve the program.

- Resources: You may need to budget for supplies like first aid kits, hard hats, safety goggles, gloves, and protective coveralls. You can also consider applying for grant funding.

- Marketing: You can market your program and recruit volunteers from the community.

- Ongoing requirements: You may need to complete an annual questionnaire, verify program manager. and sponsor information, and update team registration information.

How does a CERT Program access CERT Train the Trainer Instruction?

The Maine Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) will be hosting a CERT Train the Trainer Course 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. September 18-19, 2024, at MEMA, 45 Commerce Drive in Augusta, ME. Those interested in attending the CERT Train the Trainer Course must meet the following perquisites:

- A referral from a CERT-sponsoring agency, typically a local, regional, or state agency.
- IS-100: Introduction to ICS
- IS-200: Basic ICS for Initial Response
- If you are not a first responder, the CERT Basic Training is required.
- For current first responders the CERT Basic or IS 317 is required. https://training.fema.gov/is/courseoverview.aspx?code=IS-317.a&lang=en
- Approval from the State Coordinator Agency that if that Agency sponsors the T-T-T course.

To register for the no-cost course, CLICK HERE. Deadline to register is August 30th.

For more information on CERT programs please visit Join CERT | FEMA's Community Emergency Response Team or contact Kelsey Preecs, MEMA Individual Assistance Officer and CERT Coordinator at kelsey.preecs@maine.gov or (207) 413-0837