

## OVERVIEW

Every year, disasters strike throughout the United States -- resulting in human losses, infrastructure damage, economic harm, and environmental problems.

To strengthen the nation's disaster response capacity, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the Corporation for National and Community Service have established FEMA Corps, a unit of 1,600 service members within AmeriCorps NCCC solely devoted to disaster preparedness, mitigation, response, and recovery.

This innovative partnership builds on the historic collaboration between the two agencies, and:

- Enhances the federal government's disaster capabilities
- Increases the reliability and diversity of the disaster workforce
- Expands education and economic opportunity for young people
- Promotes an ethic of service
- Generates significant cost savings (estimated at more than \$350 million in the first five years)



FEMA Corps members provided invaluable service in the aftermath of hurricanes, floods, and tornadoes, and have created innovative ways to serve disaster survivors – all while saving taxpayer dollars and gaining valuable skills to jumpstart their careers.

## NOTABLE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

**Hurricane Sandy** is the largest deployment of FEMA Corps teams to date. One hundred and twenty-eight FEMA Corps teams have been deployed since October of 2012 working to assist Hurricane Sandy survivors in various capacities. As of July 2014, FEMA Corps teams have provided 521,502 hours of Hurricane Sandy assistance. Examples of some projects include: connecting community members to local resources, developing resource guides to improve coordination efforts, registering hurricane victims at local shelters, and supporting numerous volunteer facilities.

Forty AmeriCorps NCCC and FEMA Corps teams have responded to the devastating **Colorado floods** since September of 2013. Teams who initially arrived on the disaster site conducted American Red Cross Shelter surveys of existing living conditions. Corps members also conducted rental assessments to find more permanent housing for survivors and created detailed maps of the disaster area for FEMA's Joint Field Office. Teams who are presently responding to the Colorado floods in the summer of 2014 have worked on inventorying supplies and relocating FEMA's Joint Field Office from its temporary location in a hotel to a more established location in Centennial, CO.

A FEMA Corps team deployed to West, Texas to help residents affected by the **Texas Fertilizer Plant explosion**. The team was sent on an Assess, Inform, and Report (AIR) Mission to investigate ground zero of the disaster and



validate that the operational goals and priorities aligned with the most critical needs of disaster survivors. FEMA Corps members utilized Disaster Survivor Assistance iPads to register survivors at their home site, and were able to register nearly one-fourth of the town's survivors.

Twenty-one FEMA Corps teams assisted survivors following the devastating **Oklahoma tornadoes** during the spring of 2013. One team aided survivors by using tablets and associated apps to conduct Assess, Inform, and Report (AIR) Mission; on-site registration and status checks; geographic information systems (GIS) tagging; and needs assessments. The team conducted 7,139 home assessments, completed 1,604 status inquires, provided information to 3,720 people, made 989 referrals to voluntary agencies, and visited 783 businesses.

FEMA Corps members took part in a mass care mission to assist **Alaskan flood survivors**. During their time in Galena, the team operated laundry services for 554 loads of laundry, distributed 5,779 meals to survivors, provided 575 meals to volunteer rebuilders, created 216 reports and documents, moved 500 pounds of materials and supplies, and managed daily operations at up to four shelters. FEMA Corps members additionally helped with many clean-up projects that helped beautify the town.

## INNOVATIONS

FEMA Corps has been an integral part of the creation of **Disaster Survivor Assistance Teams** and has helped in its implementation. Prior to Hurricane Sandy, FEMA used a traditional brick and mortar approach to serving survivors. The accompanying lack of infrastructure, gas shortages, and power interruptions brought on by this natural disaster prompted FEMA Corps teams to suggest ways to change the way they supported survivors by utilizing technology. Corps members ushered in the use of iPads to register, follow-up, and find resources that survivors need.

A FEMA Corps team assisted with the Incident Management Assistance Team pilot training session at FEMA's Center for Domestic Preparedness in Anniston, AL. The team supported field exercises and simulations by formulating scenarios and facilitating exercise messaging. The team also assisted in the completion of the academy, final paperwork, and future planning materials. The team's service at the Center for Domestic Preparedness **will better prepare America for future disasters**.

Many FEMA Corps teams have been assigned to serve at FEMA headquarters in Washington, DC for one project during their ten months of service. As of July 2014, 34 teams have been assigned tasks to focus on disaster preparedness, logistics, external affairs and research. Past FEMA Corps projects at headquarters have included the following:

- Prepared closeout paperwork valued at **\$5 million** that had previously been granted to states for Disaster Unemployment and Crisis Counseling.
- Re-launched the **Ready, Steady, Strong** program (formerly FEMA Connect), which is designed to prepare teenagers for disasters. This program aims to better enable young adults 14-18 years old to help themselves, their families, and their communities in the event of a disaster.
- Evaluated computers and cellphones and classified equipment no longer in working condition. The team also identified equipment to be **donated to a local school**.