



# Teen CERT

Launching and Maintaining the Training



**FEMA**





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## ***Teen CERT: Launching and Maintaining the Training***

### ***Introduction***

#### **What is CERT?**

The Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Program educates people about disaster preparedness for hazards that may impact their area. Community members are trained in basic disaster response skills such as fire safety, light search and rescue, team organization, incident command, and disaster medical operations. Using skills learned in classroom training and drills and exercises, CERT members can assist others after an event and before first responders can arrive on the scene.

Across the country, local CERT programs provide training and support for teams in all sectors of the community—neighbors, employees, students in high schools and colleges, and many other groups.

To learn more about what CERT members do, visit [www.citizencorps.gov/cert](http://www.citizencorps.gov/cert).

#### **Purpose of Teen CERT**

The Teen CERT concept was created to address preparedness and response capabilities from within high schools. While many schools have taken measures to provide for site security analysis and equipment, more effort is needed to train staff and students in school security and emergency response procedures, and to involve youth in the country's overall emergency preparedness and response plans. Teen CERT aims to train students in emergency preparedness and basic response to ensure that they have the skills needed to protect themselves, and assist others, in the event of an emergency.

Teen CERTs can support a school's emergency operations plan and assist emergency services personnel, thus providing valuable surge capacity to local first responders when needed. In addition, students are likely to take home lessons learned in the classroom, spreading the preparedness message to their families.

The teaching and the training of our youth will have a tremendous impact on how well we mitigate, prepare for, respond to, and recover from technical and natural disasters both today and in the years to come.

### **Purpose of *Teen CERT: Launching and Maintaining the Training Guide***

This Guide is intended for use by any individual wanting to initiate Teen CERT training in his or her local high school, but will likely not be an instructor. You should use this Guide as a resource for promoting, establishing, and maintaining teen training. Material reflects the experiences of Teen CERT coordinators around the country and offers some smart practices for the training. The Guide is not an exhaustive list of ideas, but reasonably prepares you to bring CERT to your school. Use the Guide as a resource and as a starting point for developing your own ideas and smart practices.

The Guide has four sections:

- Building Support
- Establishing the Training
- Maintaining the Training
- Training Resources

## ***Section One: Building Support***

Successful promotion to interested stakeholders of the intent and goals of Teen CERT is vital to starting the training in your community. There are a number of hurdles to work through but it is possible. This section covers the key issues you must address as you establish the training.

### **Preparing for the Pitch**

Once you have the idea to start Teen CERT training, you will want to prepare to pitch the idea to school administrators and officials. First, you should talk to your local CERT program if one exists. For anyone who wants to start Teen CERT training, this should be the first stop. The manager or coordinator of the local CERT program can help you prepare to talk to administrators and parents. He or she may also put you in touch with local emergency services officials who can become advocates for Teen CERT training. As important, initial contact with the local CERT program manager or coordinator can help ensure that the Teen CERT training will be regarded as an important adjunct to the CERT program. This connection can lead to joint activities such as drills and exercises, and other shared benefits.

Next, you should look for potential partners to assist in starting the training. They may be able to provide resources or help with initial preparations. Some partners to consider are: counselors, school resource officers, local law enforcement or fire officials, and the PTA. Use their experience with school or community leaders to tailor your pitch and effectively address your audience. They can also help guide you in identifying the decision-makers who will need to support the proposal. Each high school and school district has formal and informal protocols for considering new initiatives. For example, the high school's vice principal in charge of safety and security might be the most critical administrator to support your proposal. In other schools, the principal or the school board may be the decision-maker.

In preparing to meet with the decision-makers, you may also learn about Teen CERT successes from "CERT in Action" stories or CERT Newsletters posted on the National CERT website ([www.citizencorps.gov/cert](http://www.citizencorps.gov/cert)). By researching and reaching out to others with similar goals, you can discover more smart practices and also show administrators your dedication to providing the best possible training to students.

Once you have the support of the local CERT and any other resources, and you have set the meeting with administrators, do a little more homework. For instance, review the school's emergency response plan. Show administrators the potential value in teens as responders by identifying gaps in the plan or places where students could assist in emergency response. Never assume the value of the training is understood — be explicit about its benefits. You may even want to research the status of Teen CERT at other schools, especially rival schools, to ignite the friendly competitive spirit of administrators and eventually students. Showing your knowledge of the school climate may further engage officials.

### Teen CERT in Practice

The staff at Valley Mills ISD in Valley Mills, Texas felt compelled to begin Teen CERT training at the school due to the health and safety needs of the faculty, staff, and students. They saw a high level of need at the school due to those suffering from health issues like diabetes, asthma, seizures, and other physical injuries. CERT-trained students are aware of the different medical issues and are able to assist in the event of an emergency.

## Talking to Administrators

Begin by providing brief background information about the CERT program and the purpose of training teenagers. Explain that CERT is nationally recognized and supported by FEMA, and that it is in keeping with Department of Education goals for Crisis Training and Safe and Drug Free Schools.

Next, provide general information on CERT training itself, the topics that are covered, and the amount of time needed to complete the *CERT Basic Training* course. Emphasize that FEMA has developed standard materials for the course, including an Instructor guide, Participant Manual and PowerPoint slides, and that local programs are encouraged to tailor the materials as needed to address local hazards. Explain that teens receive the same CERT basic training as adult volunteers, but with a few minor adjustments to make the delivery more suitable to their learning styles.

If there is a CERT program in the same jurisdiction as the school, explain the link between the CERT training for teens and the local CERT program. Teen CERT training should partner with, or be part of, the local CERT program, so you should explain this relationship and how the Teen CERT training gains from the experience and resources of the local program. If there is no local CERT program, then you may explain that the state has a program and offers some additional guidance.

Next, explain the positive impact the training will have on the students and the school. The training supports student awareness of what to do before, during and immediately after an emergency. Teen CERT provides skills and organization for students to safely provide assistance in the immediate aftermath of a disaster when professional response may be delayed or limited. In this capacity, students can help direct others during evacuation or shelter-in-place, and provide other assistance as needed. Team members can support the school's overall emergency operations plan, and may also benefit the school year-round by assisting with emergency drills, addressing safety issues through peer mentoring, and by conducting emergency and fire safety education presentations.

Also describe what is in it for the student. Students learn life skills, fulfill community service requirements, give back to the community, develop leadership skills, and help make their schools safer.



Lastly, explain the costs and emphasize that they are low. Instructional costs may be managed in conjunction with the local CERT program, or by developing a cadre of trained volunteer CERT instructors. Funds may be needed to cover the initial expense of training props and of equipment, and creative approaches will have to be developed for sustainability. There may also be additional costs if administrators decide to offer CPR, First Aid, and automatic external defibrillator (AED) certification classes in conjunction with CERT training.

Regarding needed resources, Teen CERT training does not have to operate or exist on its own. In addition to the local CERT program, a number of other school and related groups can partner to leverage expertise and resources for Teen CERT. This can mean reaching out to student volunteer service programs, Health Occupation Students of America (HOSA), JROTC, or 4-H. Groups can work together and pool resources, which only increases their value to the school.

In their initial consideration of Teen CERT training, administrators will have many questions. These are examples of some of the potential questions and answers you should be prepared for:

- *What is included in the Teen CERT curriculum?* The curriculum consists of nine units; each unit has goals and learning objectives. The delivery of the training includes lecture, and demonstration and hands-on practice of specific skill sets. At the end of the course, students participate in a disaster drill to reinforce learning. Students also take pre- and post-examinations to evaluate learning.
- *How long is the training?* The curriculum takes approximately 20-30 hours to cover in its current form. However, an additional 8 hours will be required if the school will offer certification in CPR, First Aid, and AED.
- *What is the school's liability?* No matter what is done, the school is still liable. Many high schools regard and treat potential liability related to Teen CERT training as they handle it for other activities such as student football and other sports. Another consideration is whether the school can reduce their risk and liability by having qualified student responders who are trained in first aid and who know how to react in an emergency in their school? (See more on discussing liability in **Acknowledging Potential Roadblocks** below.)
- *Won't CERT training expose students to additional risk during an incident?* The intent is not to expose the students to additional risk. Rather, it is to provide the school with trained personnel who are able to render aid to victims during an event when professional responders may be delayed. This training is about learning to respond safely and responsibly. Volunteers are taught and constantly reminded that rescuer safety is paramount to being a CERT volunteer; they cannot help others if they endanger themselves.
- *Who will deliver the Teen CERT training?* All lead instructors should be trained CERT instructors. Other staff to consider as trainers include school resource

officers; emergency management professionals; local fire, police, and emergency medical service (EMS) personnel; school nurses, health or physical education instructors, or school counselors; and other disaster relief personnel like adult CERT volunteers.

- *Don't we need professional emergency responders to conduct the training?* If the primary instructor is not a professional responder, the following can be supplemental instructors in selected units: an emergency manager for Unit 1; a firefighter for Units 2 and 5; an emergency medical services technician (EMT) for Units 3 and 4; a counselor for Unit 7; and a police officer for Unit 8.
- *What will trained students contribute to the school when the course is finished?* In addition to providing assistance as needed during actual emergencies, trained students may support other activities within the school. They may point out unsafe conditions, help in evacuations like fire drills, identify students who have become disenfranchised, or serve as role models who take on new leadership responsibilities within the school.
- *Can students use this material for fulfilling community service credits for graduation?* Yes, and it is encouraged. It is recommended that participants receive 20-30 community service hours toward graduation.
- *What kind of equipment would we need?* Training props such as fire extinguishers are needed. These might be procured on loan from the local CERT program or local fire department. Team members need safety equipment (hard hat, work gloves, safety goggles, dust mask, safety vest, and medical gloves), First Aid kit, emergency blanket, flashlight (and batteries), and backpack.

## Talking to Parents

Once administrators approve of presenting Teen CERT training, you should establish guidelines for students who would be eligible for the training. (See more on selection considerations in **Selecting Students** below.) However, the next step in building support for the training is outreach to parents. Plan on holding a Parents' Night informational meeting to discuss the benefits of CERT training for teens and to solicit parents' support. Plan the meeting collectively with instructors and administrators. You may also want to work with any parents' groups or organizations. Solicit their ideas for how to best reach out to parents and organize the meeting.

This meeting is your best opportunity to get parents involved and interested in the training. They may be interested in teaching, raising funds, or helping establish and maintain the training. More important, they may have the biggest role in getting their teenagers to participate in the training.

Expect parents to be concerned about their children's safety and what content they will be exposed to through the training topics and skills. Leaders should let parents know

that while the risk of injury resulting from this training is minimal, it does exist. Leaders should also stress to parents that the training will prepare teens to responsibly and safely respond in the event of an emergency.

Consider the following when planning Parents' Night:

- Send a letter of invitation prior to the meeting to explain the rationale for the training. Include a summary of the course goals and objectives, and topics included in the curriculum.
- At the meeting, review the content of the training.
- Provide parents and students with a registration form and a permission/release form to confirm their participation. These forms may be turned in one or two days after the meeting to allow parent and student to discuss the commitment required for participation in the training.
- All training materials and personal protective equipment that the students will receive should be displayed at the meeting.
- Give parent the opportunity to ask questions and voice concerns.

## **Acknowledging Potential Roadblocks**

Whether talking to administrators, parents, or local officials, be up front about some of the struggles to starting and maintaining Teen CERT training. Emphasize that there is effort involved but that the benefits will be worth it. There are two main roadblocks you will want to discuss: program fatigue and liability.

### *Program Fatigue*

One of the most important issues that officials should recognize is program fatigue. This happens to many types of organizations and volunteer groups. Acknowledge that the training does not run itself and active engagement is necessary. This is not like a fundraiser or something you do just one time, it is for the duration.

You should avoid talking about a "great new program." Instead focus on framing it as a terrific new resource. Emphasize this with everyone you end up talking to—principal, superintendent, emergency services officials, elected officials, and parents.

While Teen CERT takes resources, it will also create new resource for safety in the schools.

### *Liability*

This issue needs to be openly discussed and examined from the beginning. Do not intensify or diminish the issue, but acknowledge its existence and emphasize the greater benefits. Emphasize that CERT training is as much about keeping the

responder safe as it is anything else. Students hear repeatedly that, “You are the most important person to keep safe.” Students will be learning some interesting skills, creating additional liability exposure in the process, but the skills they learn will help them keep themselves safe.

Note that the school’s legal advisor would likely draw up a liability waiver for CERT participants. This should not deter parents from allowing their children to participate, especially when parents understand the CERT member safety is a significant theme that is reinforced throughout all of the training.

CERT is no more dangerous than the athletics many teenagers participate in and, in this case, they will be learning life-long preparedness skills. As a coach in Mississippi explained it, “There is less liability in CERT than in someone playing football.”

### Teen CERT in Practice

The following quotes from students at Valley Mills ISD show that while there is liability in Teen CERT, there are also many benefits.

*“Being a CERT member has affected my life by helping me be more aware of what I can do during a dangerous situation.” -Christian A.*

*“Without all the training I have obtained, I would not be able to help others the way I am now. I feel safer knowing there are students who can handle emergencies.” -Rebecca L.*

*“If there are ever any situations where I am not quite sure what to do, I will do the best I can, based on my training. Then, I will ask for more training later. But my training has taught me how to stay calm and how to handle many different types of situations.” -Krystal L.*

## ***Section Two: Conducting the Training***

Once you have official approval and the necessary support personnel in place, it is time to get the training started. This section covers the key aspects of establishing the training and presenting it to the students.

### **Scheduling**

All schools have structured curriculum and availability times. It is a shared task among CERT advocates, school representatives, and any other necessary personnel to find the schedule to make the training work. The class should be scheduled so as to maximize the availability to students and instructors. Often, a schedule that works well for a school is a schedule that works well for teens. Work with school administrators to determine how to best offer the class, how often to offer it, and how to prevent it from interfering with academic subjects.

A few potential schedules that have worked for other Teen CERT trainings include the following:

- If the school is on a block schedule, the class can be held during the Student Resource Time (SRT).
- If the school is on a traditional schedule, with administrative approval, it may be possible to integrate the course into the current curriculum (e.g., using health or physical education classes).
- Holding the course outside of school hours is also an option. For students not involved in other activities, it can be held after school.
- Offering the course during the summer helps those without other structured summer activities. This can also help provide role modeling and professional interaction for youth.

No matter what schedule you choose, be sure to remain flexible and open to unforeseen circumstances that can arise at schools. This means including one or two make-up days in the schedule. Regardless of interruptions or circumstances, students must complete all units to be eligible for Teen CERT.

### Teen CERT in Practice

Teen CERT training has been successfully presented through three different schedules at high schools in Costa Mesa, California.

1. Taught to students after school hours and on Saturdays.
2. Spread out over 20 days and taught at the end of another safety course during the school day.
3. Presented as a Teen CERT camp, held for 1 week from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. This training also included a CPR and First Aid course. After the Thursday session, students returned and spent the night in a mock shelter. They cooked for themselves, with the assistance of adult CERT members, and completed exercises and puzzles.

## Class Size

Determining optimum class size includes many considerations:

- Classroom size (including enough floor space to accommodate hands-on skill practice in the classroom)
- Availability of assistant instructors
- Availability of training equipment and supplies (e.g., First aid supplies, manikins)
- Addition of supplemental training such as CPR, AED, First Aid (class size of 20 students recommended for these topics)

Remember that successful CERT training includes team-building, hands-on practice and effective coaching. Groups that are too large can make it difficult to conduct these aspects of the training successfully.

## Selecting Students

There is no one right way to select students and ultimately the decision should be made by the school representative. However, the goal should be to include a variety of students from different student circles and organizations. Teen CERT works best when a diverse population participates in the training. Before selecting students to participate, administrators must decide how the training will be delivered. This could mean that:

- All students in the school are required to participate.
- All students are offered the chance to participate.
- A select group of students participate.
- Or some other option as determined by the school.

Ultimately room and resource requirements and availability should be taken into account when determining the number of students that will participate. If students are to receive additional training and certification in CPR, AED, and First Aid, a class size of 20 is recommended. When additional training is not being offered, larger groups may work. However, small classes are ideal for team building, coaching, and empowerment.

If the training is not open to all students, there should be some criteria to select students. You may want to consider some or all of the following when selecting students:

- *Academic eligibility.* Choose students in good academic standing. Those with academic difficulties should not be selected so they can focus on academics in their free time. (Future membership may be used as an incentive to getting students to improve their grades.)
- *Career goals.* Integrate Teen CERT into the curriculum for vocational education students. Training could become a mini-component of an existing curriculum or a special topic area for students interested in related career fields.
- *Availability.* Examine potential members' schedules to ensure there will not be conflicts with sports or other activities they are committed to.
- *Leadership skills.* Bring in students with strong leadership skills that are admired in the school to help the training thrive. Teens are going to sell the idea to other teens, so anticipate that students with strong leadership skills will enhance the success of the training. Reach out to teens with a strong presence in the school who are also interested in Teen CERT and use their outreach skills.
- *Diversity and social circles.* Draw students from different social circles to ensure that a wide swath of the school population is represented.
- *Vulnerability to being "at risk."* CERTs are about teamwork. Involve at-risk students, who might not usually participate in traditional school activities, as a good way to foster their connection with the school and classmates.
- *Special needs students.* Encourage participation by special needs students. As for all Teen CERT participants, the training can increase self-awareness and self-confidence as they gain lifelong skills in self-protection.
- *Grade level.* Include a mixture of sophomores, juniors, and seniors to ensure that Teen CERT continues after one class leaves. (First-year students are typically

dealing with a range of adjustments to high school which may make them less able to maintain a commitment to CERT.)

- *Legal issues.* Some schools will not let students with any arrests or past problems with drugs or alcohol participate. Setting a clear behavioral standard will encourage teens to make responsible decisions and provide an incentive for doing so.
- *Other groups.* Look to any pre-existing networks within the school for potential volunteers, groups like Girl Scouts, HOSA, JROTC, 4-H, and service or other clubs.



## Section Three: Maintaining the Training

Establishing and presenting the training is only the start. Once participants have completed *CERT Basic Training*, it is important to keep them involved in the group and practiced in their skills. This section covers ideas for keeping your training going.

### Keeping Students Engaged

It is important to provide activities and opportunities to keep members interested; they need to sense that they are part of a team and that they have a role in their community. Focus on activities that will test and refresh students' skills and keep them active in the school and community. A few ideas for engaging volunteers are to:

- *Hold drills and exercises in school.* Drills and exercises improve individual skills of volunteers; help enhance team capabilities; and keep everyone charged and interested in the training. Tailor exercises specially for the teens using relevant settings and scenarios. And as a bonus, any events become marketing tools to draw in other students. Remember to invite local media to any exercises that will offer good photo opportunities. Remember also to coordinate with the CERT program in your community if one exists to be sure that Teen CERT members can participate in drills and exercises that the program sponsors.

#### Teen CERT in Practice

Each year the Harris County (Texas) Department of Education's Center for Safe and Secure Schools coordinates a final exam drill for Teen CERT volunteers from local high schools. In 2011, students from 17 school districts participated in the drill. During the exercise volunteers extinguished fires, triaged accident victims, performed search-and-rescue tactics, and practiced disaster relief.

- *Offer other training.* While drills and exercises will help maintain and expand individual and team skills, offer periodic refresher sessions to reinforce basic training skills. Supplemental training is also available from a number of sources:
  - Visit the national CERT website at [www.citizencorps.gov/cert](http://www.citizencorps.gov/cert) for more information and training materials for CERT supplemental modules.
  - FEMA also has independent study courses which teens can take, such as IS-100 on ICS at <http://training.fema.gov/IS/crslst.asp>.

- If possible, provide supplemental training such as CPR and/or AED courses.
- The National Weather Service offers the SKYWARN program to train students as severe weather spotters.
- Your local EMA may also offer supplemental training that students could benefit from.
- *Partner with fire department or law enforcement.* Professionals can facilitate in any drills or exercises you hold. They may also be able to use the CERT-trained teens as actors in drills and exercises for their own professional personnel. Exposing teens to professional responders shows them both the importance of what they are learning and some potential career paths.
- *Watch for state or regional events for Teen CERT participants.* Events may include Teen CERT camps or rodeos. You can find out about any events by talking to state CERT contacts or local EMA officials.
- *Look for ways to be involved in the community.* Give volunteers opportunities to showcase their skills and knowledge while performing community service. Examples of events they could staff include fairs, carnivals, and information booths at public safety events, or assisting in public safety initiatives sponsored by police or fire departments. Partner with your local CERT program if there is one to include teen members with adult CERT members in community service activities. The county EMA is another good resource to see where volunteers can be used in the community or in other schools.

### Teen CERT in Practice

With the assistance of a grant from the Texas Department of Health Services, Teen CERT volunteers at Valley Mills ISD organized an “All About You” health fair. The grant money is primarily used to give flu shots to students, faculty, parents, and community members. The fair also features booths with a variety of health and safety presenters. Teen CERT members help set up and then wear their vests and hard hats at the fair as they greet attendees and assist presenters.

- *Communicate regularly with team members.* Work with your volunteers to determine the best way to reach them for both formal activations and informal events. Consider use of social media tools such as Facebook, Twitter, etc., as well as meetings to prepare for an exercise or other event. Also encourage

communication amongst team members so they may share resources and activity ideas.

## **Integrating Teen CERT into the School Environment**

By making Teen CERT an integral aspect of the school, you increase its likelihood of surviving and thriving.

One of the most effective ways of ensuring that your Teen CERT endures is to incorporate the CERT into the school's disaster response plan and/or emergency operations plan. By doing this students can be trained to address specific needs within the school and become a vital resource. Students may assist in safety drills, identify hazards, or have specific duties for planned events and unexpected events.

Instructors need to work with the school's administration as well as the local EMA to establish Teen CERT in these areas. The coordinator/manager of the local CERT program, if there is one, could also be a helpful advisor. Not all schools will want to incorporate CERT into response plans, but it is a good way to ensure longevity of the training.

You can also provide an incentive for students to join CERT and garner more interest by giving credit for participation. The most common way CERT is showing up at schools is as an extracurricular activity. But schools should also explore using the training to fill a graduation or community service requirement.

Finally, consider other ways to maintain and enhance the visibility of CERT in the high school. Be sure that exercises are announced to the student body, and invite CERT members to write articles for the school newspaper. Consider ways to highlight program events such as graduation from the Basic Training. Graduation ceremonies are an excellent way to recognize student accomplishments in Teen CERT and are also an opportunity to have leadership focus on the benefits of the training. Organize a graduation event to properly acknowledge the students, and consider inviting parents, members of the school administration, and representatives of local media. If possible, have an official from your local fire department or EMA participate to congratulate the students and recognize the importance of their training.

## **Maintaining a Connection with Community CERT**

Just as you turned to your community CERT program to help pitch the training, you can also turn to them for help in maintaining the training. Work with the existing program to share resources. Teen CERT members may engage in exercises and drills that are put on for adult members. This gives teens a chance to interact with more experienced volunteers and to see what opportunities CERT offers.

CERT-trained teens also should be cross-listed as members of their school CERT and their neighborhood CERT. This will provide maximum opportunity for activation and participation in any event.

Once teen volunteers graduate, they should be advised on joining the community CERT program. Give graduates a link to the CERT registry on the national website so they can find a local CERT program wherever they are going.

There are no examples of teen training that have lasted without another CERT program in the community. However, this should not be a deterrent. There are many instances where the introduction of teen training led to the creation of a local communitywide CERT program and they were able to help sustain each other. If you do not have a local CERT program, consider starting one or involving any passionate administrators or parents you encounter in starting one.

## **Partnering with Existing Programs**

New training initiatives tend to have greater success if they can partner with the resources of an existing program or group. Look to any pre-existing networks within the school, such as Girl Scouts, HOSA, JROTC, 4-H, or other clubs. Following the model of well-established groups will provide insight as to how to present training, maintain membership, and best impact the school or community. Existing groups can also benefit from assisting your new initiative as you may expand their member base, reinvigorate their interest, and shoulder some of the resources burden.

### **Teen CERT in Practice**

At Duncan Polytechnical High School in Fresno, California, volunteers came to Teen CERT training through a partnership with the Fresno County Office of Education (FCOE) Regional Occupational Program Health Careers course. The topics and skills in the CERT training coordinated well with the educational and professional goals of the health occupations students. Students are preparing for rigorous careers in the medical fields.

## ***Section Four: Training Resources***

From money to instructors to supplies, there are a number of resources you will need in order to sustain Teen CERT training. These resources are just as important as the support of the school and the interest of the volunteers. This section covers advice on some necessary resources to consider.

### **Securing Funding**

Federal and state funding for emergency preparedness programs is not unlimited. Therefore, Teen CERT will have to come up with interesting and creative ways to support and fund the training. This may include seeking funds through grants or other sources.

#### *Grants*

Seek grant funding from various local, state, and national programs. Remember, though, that grant funding is temporary. Even if you get a grant to get started, you will have to find a permanent source of funding for maintenance. Grant writing is a particular skill so take a course to learn how to do it correctly or find a resource in the community to help you, e.g., not-for-profit organization, community college.

Only governmental agencies may receive the Department of Homeland Security funding that supports CERT. This is why it is important to work with your local EMA. Most of this funding comes through the states or, in some metropolitan areas, through the Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) region. For more information, contact your state Office of Emergency Management/Homeland Security, or visit:

<http://www.fema.gov/government/grant/index.shtm>.

Some corporations also offer grants for specific causes, including emergency preparedness.

#### *Other Sources*

Other Teen CERTs have been able to secure funding in other ways, including hosting fund-raisers, charging a fee for the training, soliciting in-kind contributions (e.g., donated printing of training materials, loaned fire extinguishers for Unit 2 of the Basic Training) and establishing a not-for-profit organization.

Another option is soliciting local businesses for corporate sponsorship. Donations from outside donors may be tax exempt if the CERT or the school has a Federal tax ID number.

While not a direct route to funding, keeping the community aware of what Teen CERT accomplishes can bring in support. Remember to invite news media to visit when conducting drills or practices to give the community a chance to see the value of the

training. Keep the city council or school board updated on how the training is benefiting the school; they may be more inclined to assist with funding if they see the worth.

### Teen CERT in Practice

Each year Saline High School in Saline, Kansas, holds a school-wide awards night. Teen CERT coordinators choose this time to thank their sponsors by recognizing them at the ceremony and presenting them with a framed certificate of appreciation.

## Selecting Instructors

A great resource in all aspects of the training will be your instructors. By choosing instructors with a breadth of experience and good instructional skills, you can tap into what they know for their expertise and ideas.

The *CERT Basic Training* Instructor Guide recommends that all CERT instructors should have completed the *CERT Basic Training* course and the *CERT Train-the-Trainer* course, and also have significant training experience. In addition to these qualifications, an ideal instructor would be one that:

- Works well with other people
- Has honesty, integrity, and reliability
- Has passion, enthusiasm, and good communication skills
- Is open-minded and flexible
- Looks and acts professional
- Has the ability to address large groups
- Has some background in teaching teenagers
- Has real-life experience as a first responder or a background in one of the disciplines of emergency management
- Knows the curriculum and is able to deliver it following proper protocols
- Is creative and can adapt their training style to the audience
- Uses real-life stories so participants can better understand a concept
- Is respected in the community

- Is a team player
- Maintains a high level of communication with volunteers and is able to make the training feel relevant to them

## Using Training Materials

Teen CERT training uses the same materials as standard CERT training. The materials — Instructor Guide, Participant Manual, and PowerPoint slides — are all available on the national CERT website.

Materials will need to be customized by instructors, however, to include local hazards, disasters, and sites. Photos of the school and community will make the training more relevant to the students.

There is a list of needed training props and other supplies in the instructor notes at the beginning of each unit in the Instructor Guide for the *CERT Basic Training*. Props for training may be acquired by talking with local fire and police departments. This is also another important opportunity for you to work with your community CERT program to use their existing props or to procure together any that are needed.

## Providing Equipment

As you put together resources for your training keep in mind that there are certain pieces of equipment that are must-haves for teen volunteers, including kits, safety helmets, and safety vests. Photo ID badges would also be good to offer teen volunteers, but are not mandatory.

### Teen CERT in Practice

Saline High School created a “response barrel” for Teen CERT volunteers. The 33-gallon trash can on wheels contains several backpacks full of standard gear plus more specialized response gear like pry bars, etc.

## Seeking Partnerships

It would be incredibly difficult, maybe even impossible, to successfully begin and maintain Teen CERT training without the support of others. Seeking partnerships from a variety of arenas will support you in your endeavors and can be a critical resource. Potential partners have been noted throughout this Guide. In summary, a few ideas for partnerships include:

- Develop a partnership or be part of your community’s existing CERT program and use their expertise and other resources.

- Develop a partnership with local emergency services agencies, notably fire and police, in order to get instructors and possibly other resources.
- Work with other teen organizations with a base within the school (e.g., Girl Scouts, HOSA, JROTC, 4-H, or other clubs) to determine how their goals might overlap with yours and how to secure mutual benefits.
- Use your county EMA to learn more about and access DHS grants.



## ***Other Resources***

The following are websites that may provide resources for Teen CERT training:

- National CERT Website, including Teen CERT webpage

<http://www.citizencorps.gov/cert/>

- FEMA Independent Study Courses

<http://training.fema.gov/IS/crslist.asp>

- Red Cross Courses

<http://www.redcross.org/en/takeaclass>

- DHS and FEMA Grants Information

<http://www.fema.gov/government/grant/index.shtm>

- National Weather Service SKYWARN Program

<http://www.weather.gov/skywarn/>