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NEW YORK CITY **OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT**  
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**OEM KICKS OFF SECOND ROUND OF TRAINING FOR NYC COMMUNITY  
EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAMS (CERT)**

OEM Commissioner Joseph F. Bruno, in partnership with the American Red Cross, New York's five borough presidents, Citizens for NYC, New York City Fire Department (FDNY), New York City Police Department (NYPD), New York State Emergency Management Office (SEMO), and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), today launched the second phase of New York City's Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) pilot program.

Training begins today for the second cluster of the New York City CERT pilot program's 15 participating groups at Borough of Manhattan Community College. The City's seven existing CERTs – five of which completed the NYC CERT training in January during the first phase of the pilot – are already actively engaged in voluntary preparedness and response efforts in their communities.

“CERTs empower citizens to take a more active role in preparing their communities for all types of emergencies – they are among our most important partners in helping to ensure the City is prepared,” Commissioner Bruno said. “But all New Yorkers can do their part to prepare the City for any emergency by taking the steps outlined in ‘Ready New York: A Household Preparedness Guide.’”

“Today also marks the first day of National Volunteer Week. Volunteers, including CERT members, often provide City emergency responders invaluable help and support following a major disaster.”

CERT – part of the Department of Homeland Security's Citizen Corps initiative – aims to help individuals take a more active role in emergency response and preparedness. CERT members are trained in basic disaster response skills so they can assist emergency personnel when needed in emergencies affecting their immediate communities. CERTs



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also work to educate residents about the many hazards they may face and ways they can better prepare for all types of emergencies.

Members of New York City's CERT pilot program will undergo intensive, hands-on training through the course's eleven modules which include two units about Preparedness for the Urban Environment, developed last year by OEM, the American Red Cross in Greater New York, FDNY, NYPD and FEMA to reflect New York City protocols.

CERT pilot program participants include (groups beginning training today marked in boldface):

- **BRONX: Mott Haven Central**, Bronx Task Force on Child Abuse Prevention, Latin American Chaplain Association
- **BROOKLYN: United Senior Citizens of Sunset Park**, St. Gabriel's Senior Center Advisory Board, United Jewish Organizations of Williamsburg,
- **MANHATTAN: East 79<sup>th</sup> Street Neighborhood Association**, East Sixties Neighborhood Association, Inc., Community Board #12 Manhattan Public Safety Committees
- **STATEN ISLAND: Mud Lane Society**, South Beach Civic Association, Elm Park Civic Association
- **QUEENS: Jewish Association for Services to the Aged (JASA)**, Glendale Civilian Observation Patrol and Glendale Ambulance Corps, Glenridge Senior Citizen Multiservice & Advisory Center, Inc.,

In addition to CERT training, each pilot program team receives a CERT kit, which includes items such as helmets, vests, dust masks, work gloves and other supplies. The groups will also receive a supply of "Ready New York" guides – the centerpiece of OEM's citywide household preparedness campaign – to distribute throughout their communities. Funding for the CERT pilot program training, materials and curriculum revision was made possible through a Department of Homeland Security grant.

As NYC CERT is still in its pilot phase, the City encourages New Yorkers interested in disaster volunteering to sign up with a local volunteer organization such as New York Cares, the Salvation Army or the American Red Cross in Greater New York *before* a



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disaster occurs. Getting involved with a disaster volunteer organization before an emergency will increase your ability to help when help is needed.

Citizens for NYC, a citywide nonprofit organization that supports block and neighborhood associations, will provide additional disaster preparedness and recovery training to neighborhood groups that complete CERT training. Groups that complete the Citizens for NYC training will receive small implementation grants for neighborhood disaster preparedness and recovery planning.

New York's Citizen Corps Council – which includes representatives from OEM, NYPD, FDNY, American Red Cross, Citizens for NYC, the City Council, the Mayor's Office Community Assistance Unit, borough presidents' offices, SEMO, FEMA and the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene – has been instrumental in supporting the City's CERT pilot program.

Launched in January 2002 as part of President Bush's USA Freedom Corps initiative, Citizen Corps fosters a culture of service, citizenship and responsibility. Through a network of over 830 Citizen Corps Councils at the state and local levels, Citizen Corps brings together leaders from law enforcement, fire, emergency medical and emergency management, local government, volunteer organizations and the private sector to engage citizens in homeland security efforts and strengthen programs such as Volunteers in Police Service (VIPS), Neighborhood Watch, Medical Reserve Corps, and CERT.

For more information about Citizen Corps, CERT, and the "Ready New York" campaign, residents can access [NYC.gov/oem](http://NYC.gov/oem) or call 311.