



**For Immediate Release**

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**CaliforniaVolunteers Announces the First California Colleges and Universities  
CERT Symposium**

Symposium to be held at Saddleback College in Orange County on April 16-17

CaliforniaVolunteers and the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office are partnering to hold the first California Colleges and Universities Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Symposium. The CERT Program educates its volunteers about disaster preparedness for hazards that may impact their region; and trains them in basic disaster response skills, such as fire safety, light search and rescue, team organization, and disaster medical operations. The symposium is an opportunity for college and university CERT administrators, program managers, and instructors to meet to discuss topics pertaining to effectively running a CERT program and building relationships with local agencies.

The symposium will cover topics relevant to college and university CERT programs including:

- How to run a successful CERT program;
- How CERT fits into the overall emergency preparedness plans on campus;
- How to manage CERT volunteers;
- How to properly deliver CERT Basic Training;
- How to create partnerships with local government and private sector entities; and,
- An overview on the Disaster Service Worker (DSW) and Disaster Service Worker Volunteer Program (DSWVP).

"CaliforniaVolunteers, as the lead state entity responsible for coordinating volunteers during a disaster, has seen first-hand the critical role that the CERT program plays in our state," states Secretary Karen Baker. "We look forward to partnering with the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office in providing this symposium so that our college CERT programs can continue to make a positive impact in their communities."

Using the training learned in the classroom and during exercises, CERT members can assist others in their neighborhood or workplace following an event when professional responders are not immediately available to help. CERT members are also encouraged to support emergency response agencies by taking a more active role in emergency preparedness projects in their community.

## **CERT in California**

On average, CERT provides over 800 courses to over 20,000 people annually in the state. There are over 290 CERT programs registered in California. To date, over 160,000 people have been trained in California. The symposium was planned in coordination with the CERT office at FEMA headquarters, FEMA Region IX, the California State University Chancellor's Office and the University of California Office of the President.

Keynote speakers include: Karen Baker, Secretary of Service and Volunteering; Frank Borden, CERT Founder – Los Angeles City Fire Department; and, Dr. Phillip Schertzing of Michigan State University – head of the team that developed the Campus CERT Instructor training for FEMA in 2006. In addition, over 43 campuses are expected to attend along with subject matter experts from CERT programs in local government and the private sector.

You find more information about this event on our website:

[http://www.californiavolunteers.org/index.php/calvol/CERT\\_Symposium](http://www.californiavolunteers.org/index.php/calvol/CERT_Symposium)

### ***About CaliforniaVolunteers***

*CaliforniaVolunteers is the state office that manages programs and initiatives to increase the number of Californians involved with service and volunteering. Through its innovative website, individuals and families can find more than 50,000 volunteer opportunities throughout the state involving the arts, education, animals, disaster preparedness, the environment and other areas of interest. Karen Baker, the nation's first state cabinet Secretary of Service and Volunteering leads the organization. For more information, please visit [www.CaliforniaVolunteers.org](http://www.CaliforniaVolunteers.org).*

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