HVFD Information Binder Index

1. U.S. Fire Administration Retention & Recruitment for the Volunteer Emergency Services, May 2023
   - Referenced in Power Point presentation

2. NVFC Volunteer Retention Research Report, August 2020
   -Referenced in Power Point presentation

3. ICMA 21st Century Fire and Emergency Services, July 2020
   -Public comment submission

4. The New York Times As Wall Street Chases Profits, Fire Departments Have Paid the Price, February 2025
   -Public comment submission

5. Former Chief Robert Purcell Presentation to Council, 2019
   -Public comment submission

6. USKH City of Homer Public Safety Facility Space Needs Assessment, August 2014

U.S. Fire Administration
Working for a fire-safe America

Retention and Recruitment for the Volunteer Emergency Services

FA-361 | May 2023

FEMA

Mission Statement

We support and strengthen fire and emergency medical services and stakeholders to prepare for, prevent, mitigate and respond to all hazards.

U.S. Fire Administration
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Table of Contents

Introduction **1**

Part I: Critical Recruitment and Retention Challenges **5**
Section 1: Changing face of volunteerism 6
Section 2: Aging of the volunteer fire service 8
Section 3: Training demands 8
Section 4: Unmet expectations 11
Section 5: Work-life-volunteer balance 11
Section 6: Mission expansion 12
Section 7: Leadership 13
Section 8: Department image and culture 14
Section 9: Consolidations, mergers and regionalization 15
Section 10: Tension with local government 16
Section 11: Other challenges 17

Part II: Collaborating With Local Government **19**
Section 1: Department funding 21
Section 2: Making the case for support 23
Section 3: Working together to meet the community's needs 26
Section 4: Case studies 30

Part III: Recruitment Strategies **33**
Section 1: Membership requirements 33
Section 2: Understanding volunteer needs and motivators 35
Section 3: Finding prospective volunteers 37
Section 4: Personal invitations 47
Section 5: Provide sampling opportunities 47
Section 6: Effective onboarding 48
Section 7: Maintaining a positive image and culture 53
Section 8: Embracing diversity and inclusion 57

Part IV: Retention Strategies **61**
Section 1: Developing effective leadership 62
Section 2: Setting realistic expectations 65
Section 3: Health and safety considerations 68
Section 4: Building camaraderie 71
Section 5. Training requirements 72
Section 6: Volunteer benefits and incentives 76
Section 7. Recognizing volunteers 79
Section 8: Nonoperational volunteers 81
Section 9: Mentor programs 83
Section 10: Family support 84
Section 11: When it's time to say goodbye 85

Part V: Marketing for the Fire Service **89**

Part VI: Using Data To Drive Recruitment and Retention Efforts **97**

Part VII: Funding Recruitment and Retention Efforts **101**

Appendix A: Resources **105**

Appendix B: Considerations for Department/Government Support **111**

Appendix C: Sample Department Application **117**

Appendix D: Sample Exit Survey **123**

Appendix E: Sample Stay Survey **127**

Appendix F: Sample Social Media Policies **131**

Appendix G: Sample Media Policy **135**

Appendix H: Sample Nondiscrimination Statements **137**

Acronyms **139**

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Introduction

Recruitment and retention are the cornerstone of any volunteer fire or emergency medical services (EMS) department. Without proper staffing, fire and EMS departments cannot provide the services and protection their communities need. It is critical that volunteer departments have the necessary tools, information and support to assist in their efforts to recruit and retain volunteers.

The origin of this document begins in 1993 with a national workshop. This workshop, managed by the National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC) in cooperation with the U.S. Fire Administration (USFA), focused on recruitment and retention of the nation's volunteer fire and EMS. The result of that workshop was the 1998 document "Recruitment and Retention in the Volunteer Fire Service, Problems and Solutions." This document was also the companion text for a leadership course developed by the National Fire Academy (NFA).

In 2004, the NVFC and the USFA acknowledged the continuation of the challenges addressed in the 1998 document. A literature review and a field survey were conducted to determine the state of recruitment and retention in the volunteer emergency services. This resulted in the 2007 document "Retention and Recruitment for the Volunteer Emergency Services, Challenges and Solutions."

In June 2018, representatives from national fire service organizations and leaders in the volunteer emergency services met at the USFA National Emergency Training Center in Emmitsburg, Maryland, to discuss current trends in recruitment and retention in the volunteer emergency services and conduct a review of the 2007 document. This review led to the document today that incorporates more extensive research on recruitment and retention since the original 2004 field survey and encompasses a more holistic perspective of recruitment and retention, including the role of all community stakeholders and the important role local government plays in recruitment and retention success.

The USFA would like to thank the following groups and individuals who contributed to the development of this guide:

Organizations:

- International Association of Fire Chiefs — Volunteer & Combination Officers Section (IAFC-VCOS)
- International City/County Management Association (ICMA)
- National Fire Protection Association (NFPA)
- National League of Cities (NLC)
- NVFC
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Part I: Critical Recruitment and Retention Challenges

Recruitment and retention have become 2 of the biggest challenges facing the U.S. fire and emergency services in recent decades. The NFPA, which annually tracks the number of firefighters in the U.S., found that the number of volunteer firefighters in 2020 was 676,900. This is compared to 897,750 in 1984, the year the NFPA began gathering this statistic.

Even a cursory scan of news reports shows how dire the situation is in some areas. Headlines from communities across the country proclaim that departments have reached a crisis point and that some may have to close if they cannot find more volunteers quickly.

The first step to address the challenges facing local departments is to better understand the factors that are contributing to the decline in volunteer numbers. Solutions can then be presented that meet the challenges that can be overcome and work around those that cannot.

The root causes of recruitment and retention challenges have remained similar over the past decade. What has changed is the pace of the contributing factors and the urgency needed to address them. The demand on time, increased training requirements and poor leadership are a few of the challenges volunteer fire departments face in recruiting and retaining members. Part I of this document discusses recruitment and retention challenges from a holistic perspective within a community.

Closer look: Most of the time, it is not just one challenge that creates a barrier for departments to get and keep volunteers. Today's fire departments are facing a multitude of obstacles and changes that make it harder to recruit and retain members. As the Woodstock(Virginia) Fire Department notes:

"Our department faces many of the same challenges departments around the country are facing. These include increasing competition for volunteers among organizations, a decrease inthe amount of time community members can contribute due to job and family commitments, and the growing demands of the fire service related to training requirements, fundraising, administrative tasks, and an increasing call volume.

"In addition, our general community is aging, a growing number of our local workers are commuters which limits the amount of time they can contribute to community organizations, issues with other departments in our area have created a negative stigma related to volunteerfire departments, and [there's been] a loss of connection between our department and the community as the demographics and population make-up continues to evolve."

Section 1: Changing face of volunteerism

Volunteerism has been an integral part of American society since the founding of our nation. From the earliest fire brigades, volunteers have built today's fire service from the ground up, evolving into a complex system estimated at 29,452 volunteer, career and combination departments of varying size, mostly protecting rural populations. According to the NFPA data for 2020, there are an estimated 1,041,200 firefighters in the U.S., with 676,900 (65%) of those estimated to be volunteers.

The number of volunteers today is down significantly from 1984, when 897,750 volunteer firefighters were reported. This decline of over 220,850 volunteers took place while the United States population grew from nearly 236 million to over 331 million in the same time frame, indicating that volunteerism in the fire and emergency services has not kept pace with population growth.

Volunteerism in general has slipped and surged over the past several decades, peaking for a brief time after 9/11 and reaching a low around 2015. In 40 years of tracking volunteers, the U.S. Department of Labor's (DOL's) Bureau of Labor Statistics shows that volunteer rates tend to rise after the age of 20, peak between the ages of 35 and 44 when people tend to be more settled and have strong career and social networks, and then decline as individuals age. According to Nonprofit Quarterly, this decline is believed to be associated with retirement, diminished physical capabilities and loss of connections with established social networks.

In 2020, the NVFC conducted a national survey resulting in the report "Volunteer Retention Research Report." This survey of current and former members shows that over two-thirds of respondents feel their departments have (or had) a problem with volunteer retention. This includes nearly 70% of current department leadership. Additionally, nearly half of all current volunteers have considered leaving the fire service at some point.

Even with significant volunteer interest, changes in everyday life and family dynamics affect the ability to both retain and recruit volunteers. Today it is increasingly common for families to have 2 working parents, perhaps reducing the time and energy left to volunteer, or single-parent households where child care or other considerations inhibit volunteerism, particularly when volunteer hours may require overnight shifts or responding to calls at a moment's notice. Employers are also less likely to let their employees leave during the day to respond to calls than they were in the past, making fire department coverage during traditional working hours more difficult.

There are many unique recruitment and retention challenges facing emergency service volunteers. Unlike many other volunteer opportunities, the volunteer fire and EMS services require extensive training hours, sometimes rigorous and unconventional volunteer hours, and expertise in multiple areas from fire dynamics to hazmat operations. Another challenge to recruitment and retention is the increased risk to life and health, from fireground injuries to long-term exposures that could lead to cancer and other debilitating diseases. The fire and emergency services offer a much higher-stakes volunteer experience than what one may find volunteering in a school or local food pantry.

Added to these challenges is the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic may have on fire and emergency service volunteer numbers. During the pandemic, many departments

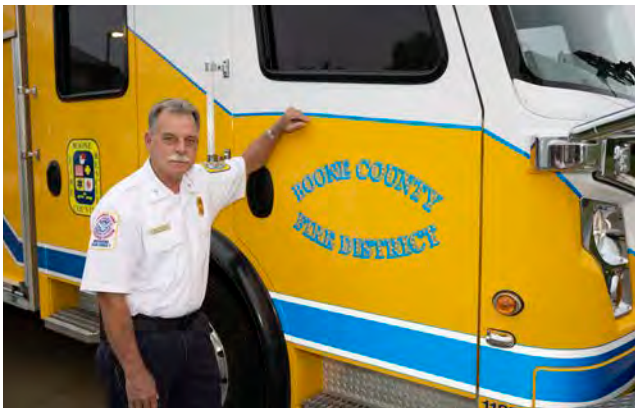
had to cease or modify their recruitment initiatives and cancel fire academies or recruit training programs. Some volunteers left their departments due to concern for themselves or a loved one about the risks of getting COVID-19 or because their employer prohibited activities that put them at risk of getting COVID-19. Decreased in-person contact may also have left volunteers feeling disconnected and unsure of their desire to continue their service. In addition, impacts to department funding created by the pandemic means there are less available resources to use toward recruitment and retention efforts.

It is hard to know yet exactly what the long-term impact of the pandemic may be on fire and emergency service volunteerism. Despite the challenges, there are also areas of opportunity that may result from the pandemic. For instance, there is greater awareness in communities of the work of emergency responders. There may also be more people who retain teleworking schedules, eliminating commute times and potentially creating a new pool of people available for volunteering. The transition to hybrid training programs that include online components may help both new and longtime volunteers better fit training into their busy schedules.

It should also be emphasized that the volunteer fire and emergency services have many strengths that can help counter some of the factors making it challenging to attract or retain volunteers. This lifestyle comes with an unparalleled level of camaraderie, opportunities to gain valuable skills and experience that extend well beyond the incident scene, and a chance to give back in a way so meaningful that life often hinges on it. Perhaps most notably, becoming a fire or emergency service volunteer secures one's place in the fire service family, providing a lifetime, global network of family and friends.

Consider this: The fire and emergency services have some unique challenges to recruitment and retention that other volunteer organizations do not face, such as the significant time commitment, lengthy training requirements, dangerous work environment, and potential lack of family support due to the time commitment and dangerous work environment. However, other challenges, such as identifying new pools of potential volunteers, reaching younger audiences and finding ways to make their volunteerism message resonate, are similar across the volunteer world. The fire and emergency services can learn a great deal from other volunteer organizations that have had success with recruiting. Fire and emergency services departments should look at the messaging and recruitment and retention campaigns used by other local and national organizations that have maintained high volunteer numbers in today's environment. Are there ideas, messages or concepts that could translate to the volunteer emergency services? Can aspects of what makes their recruitment and retention campaigns a success be applied to the local emergency services department?

Section 2: Aging of the volunteer fire service



The NFPA's "U.S. Fire Department Profile 2020" estimates that 50% of all firefighters are between the ages of 30 and 49 years old. Volunteer departments tend to have a higher proportion of firefighters over the age of 50, and in some rural areas it is not uncommon to find volunteers in their 60s or 70s. About one-third of small-town firefighters are 50 or older. When the rates of volunteer firefighters per 1,000 people protected for mostly volunteer or all-volunteer fire departments are examined, the rates show a downward trend and range from a high of 8.05 in 1987 to a low of 5.66 in 2020 per 1,000 population protected.

This aging population poses a challenge to the volunteer sector in that volunteer departments will find themselves with increasingly limited volunteers as members retire or otherwise find themselves unable to participate in an operational capacity. Younger members are needed to help fill the ranks, not just as entry-level recruits, but also as midlevel firefighters serving in officer and other leadership roles. The recruitment and retention process must be continual to ensure departments don't find themselves with only older, retiring firefighters and younger recruits, without more experienced "midcareer" firefighters to help lead and mentor others.

> Closer look: The aging population has posed a challenge for the East Dubuque (Illinois) Fire Department. "Our community has an aging population that makes it difficult for some of them to volunteer. The other [issue] is the fact that most of the younger people are moving out of the area, which makes it difficult to recruit them."

Section 3: Training demands

The delivery of emergency services in the U.S. has become increasingly complex. The fire department has become the go-to agency for almost all non-law enforcement emergencies. This has led to the ill-born concept that the fire department must train all members on firefighting, EMS, hazmat, natural disasters, vehicle and water rescue, high angle and confined space rescue, and drone usage, to name just a few. Unfortunately, this leads to response agencies becoming a jack-of-all-trades but a master of few.

Unlike EMS, there is not currently a national minimum training level requirement for the volunteer fire service. Many states and localities adopt standards based on national consensus training standards developed by the NFPA. Once adopted either in whole or in part, these standards may require a recertification process or continuing education unit (CEU) accrual process. Both the initial training and the recertification/CEU processes pose major time constraints for most volunteer members. When multiple certifications are required by the state or locality, the time constraints on potential volunteer members become even more daunting.

In some instances, training requirements, schedules and class accessibility were developed for the career fire service without adequate consideration given to the unique needs of the volunteer service. While expectations between the career and volunteer models should both include providing trained, professional help in a timely

manner to handle emergencies, training requirements must take into account that volunteers are often balancing full-time jobs while trying to meet these requirements. The time frame, and in some cases the delivery method, in which training needs to be completed must be adjusted to better accommodate the availability of today's busy volunteers, otherwise volunteers will become overwhelmed and frustrated, with attrition following suit.

The training of an emergency services volunteer requires a substantial commitment, starting with 120 hours for Firefighter I and 150 hours for emergency medical technician (EMT). Advanced, specialized and officer training all take a significant amount of additional training hours to complete. In cases where training is not offered locally, recruits must take time off work and away from their homes and families, adding to the many challenges training requirements pose to recruitment and retention.

The table that follows outlines the various courses that may be required, average hours per course, rank or level of firefighter needing the training, and approximate completion time.

Training requirements

Note: Departments should reference the unique training requirements in their state. The information below is an aggregate of individual state training requirements.

Training module	Rank	Average class length in hours	Approximate time to complete for volunteers*
Firefighter			
Firefighter I	All firefighters	120 hours	5 months
Firefighter II	All firefighters	100 hours	4 months
Firefighter III	Firefighters aspiring to be officers	60 hours	2 months
Officer I	First-level company officer	40-60 hours	1 month
Officer II	First-level company officer	40-60 hours	1 month
Officer III	Command-level officer	40 hours	1 month
Officer IV	Chief-level officer	40 hours	1 month
EMS licensure levels**			
Emergency Medical Responder	Basic provider (firefighter)	48 hours	
EMT	Basic ambulance provider	150 hours	
Advanced EMT	Enhanced ambulance provider	200 hours beyond EMT	

Training module	Rank	Average class length in hours	Approximate time to complete for volunteers*
Paramedic	Advanced ambulance provider	350-1500 hours (Committee on Accreditation for the EMS Professions standards)	
Hazardous materials			
Awareness	All firefighters	24 hours	2 weeks
Operations	Firefighter III/officers	40 hours	1 month
Technician	Hazmat specialists	40-80 hours	1-2 months
Other courses			
Vehicle operations	All drivers	24 hours	2 weeks
Pumps/hydraulics	All pump operators	40-60 hours	1-2 months
Vehicle extrication	All firefighters and officers	24-60 hours	2 weeks to 2 months
Water rescue	All firefighters and officers as needed	16 hours	2 weeks
Wildland firefighting	All firefighters and officers as needed	24-100 hours	1-4 months
Farm machinery extrication	All firefighters and officers as needed	25 hours	2-3 weeks
Silo rescue	All firefighters and officers as needed	26-30 hours	4-6 weeks
Truck company operations	All firefighters and officers as needed	24-36 hours	4-6 weeks
Aerial operator course	All firefighters and officers as needed	24 hours	1 month
Trench rescue	All firefighters and officers as needed	24-36 hours	4-6 weeks
Technical rescue	All firefighters and officers as needed	24-36 hours	4-6 weeks
Aircraft rescue	All firefighters and officers as needed	50 hours	1-2 months

*When taken several nights/week. Includes at least 1 (but typically more) weekend day of practical evolutions.
**Source: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration Office of EMS based on 2021 National EMS Education Standards.

Closer look: The Secaucus (New Jersey) Volunteer Fire Department notes that training is a barrier for some potential recruits. "The biggest challenge we are facing when it comes to recruiting new members is the time commitment. Besides a commitment to respond to incidents, drills, meetings, etc., new recruits often find it difficult to make time to attend proper training and complete state requirements to become a certified firefighter."

Section 4: Unmet expectations

New recruits have a certain set of expectations in their head about being a volunteer firefighter or EMS provider, and once they start the job, they often find that the reality is very different. It is unrealistic to recruit volunteer firefighters with visions of battling flames and heroic actions and expect them to become highly motivated team members after encountering the reality of the job. It is more common to do training, treat a patient for a medical call, decontaminate and restock the ambulance, check tire pressure on apparatus, write up reports, check inventory, and help the community with a host of minor tasks unrelated to fighting fires. If a recruit does not understand that they just signed up for all of this, poor morale will ensue, and the person may end up leaving the department.

In other cases, recruits expect to be welcomed into a close-knit group of supportive peers, and instead they may find themselves facing an outdated (and truly unacceptable) version of hazing. In addition to setting the department up for potential legal and public relations repercussions, this experience makes new recruits feel like outsiders and sets them up to fail as committed, valuable members of the department. In the NVFC's "Volunteer Retention Research Report" (2020), 22% of former volunteers reported that they left their departments because the "department atmosphere was full of cliques and groups that exclude others." 30% of current volunteers reported the same cliques and exclusion as reasons volunteers might leave the department. These behaviors are harmful, counterproductive and drive volunteers away almost as quickly as they come.

Unmet expectations about the job as well as negative treatment of recruits will unquestionably result in the loss of members over the short term. The latter can result in morale (and management) problems within the department even if new members stay on. And both will make recruitment more difficult because those who leave will share their negative experiences, sowing the seeds of discontent with friends, family and other community members, creating a downward spiral in recruitment that the department might not even realize.

Section 5: Work-life-volunteer balance

Individuals wanting to volunteer their time in their communities are often faced with balancing other responsibilities such as work, religious affiliations, children's activities and other family obligations. Although a desire to give back to the community is a strong motivator for volunteerism, it can be challenging to strike a balance between volunteering and other life obligations. Complicating this is the fact that volunteering in a fire department is one of the most time-consuming volunteer opportunities available today; between extensive training requirements and ongoing emergency calls, it requires a significant commitment from the volunteer.

The changing demographics of families may also affect one's ability to volunteer. According to Pew Research Center, in 1960, 25% of households with children had 2 working parents. In 2016, that number increased to 66%, and it is expected to keep increasing. Furthermore, Pew Research Center has reported that 12% of parents with children under 18 are also the caregiver of a parent or other adult. This makes it more difficult for a fire department volunteer to participate in department activities such as training, fundraising and responding to emergencies.

Other challenges affecting the work-life-volunteer balance may include employers who are unable or unwilling to accommodate emergency calls during working hours or are unsupportive of employees who may arrive late due to being on an emergency call. In addition, the time commitment faced by volunteers can put a strain on family relationships due to the long hours away from the family as well as missed milestones such as birthdays, holidays or kids' sporting events.

As departments continue to struggle with recruitment and retention, the demand on active members increases. With fewer people to do the same amount of work, members may find themselves overextended in their time commitment to the department. This can lead to frustration and burnout and have a compounding negative impact on the department's ability to recruit and retain volunteers.

Closer look: The Rapid Valley Volunteer Fire Department (Rapid City, South Dakota) finds diminished available time to be a barrier in gaining new recruits. "Work hours and family hours are completely dominating time of members and potential members. When the older members grew up, there was little travel for kids' sports, but with the explosion of kids' sports, families are traveling every weekend and they have games and practices all week. Places of work are demanding more hours from the workers; about half of the available work in this area for people in their 20s and 30s requires 6 days and 50 hours a week. Adding this with a family, members just do not have the time to commit to the department. Our most active members are either single or retired."

The struggle with work-life-volunteer balance has also created staffing challenges for the Royersford (Pennsylvania) Fire Department: "We've struggled at times to staff apparatus during traditional daytime working hours as well as overnight as members have to weigh their work commitments in the morning."

Section 6: Mission expansion

The days of a fire department only responding to fires are long gone, and the mission of the traditional volunteer fire department has changed. The modern fire department deals with a much greater range of complexities in the shape of far more emergencies and public assistance calls. This mission expansion has created conflict within department culture, complicated the leadership and financial needs of the department, and put an enormous strain on the time and skills of volunteer, part-time or understaffed administration.

Data affirms how drastic the change has really been. According to National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS) data, in 2019, only 4% of all reported fire department calls were fire related, while almost two-thirds of calls required emergency medical and rescue services. EMS dominates. The rise in EMS and other demands, coupled with the decline in firefighting, clashes with traditional firefighter culture and department traditions. For those who joined with visions of fighting fires, having to become certified for EMS and responding to a majority of EMS and other calls could, if not properly managed, lead to poor morale, frustrated or unmotivated firefighters, resignations, and department leaders overwhelmed with the administrative complexities of today's fire and EMS services.

Departments that are struggling to keep up with everyday call volume, administrative requirements and significant training requirements simply do not have time to put into recruitment and retention. Volunteers who are unable to maintain the harried pace could leave, and prospective volunteers may think twice before joining an organization that barely has time for them.

Section 7: Leadership

Fire departments have many types of leaders. There are designated leaders, such as chiefs and officers, and there are informal leaders, those members of the department that others look up to, follow and seek guidance from. There may also be a divide in operational leadership and administrative leadership, with nonoperational duties such as recruitment and retention, building maintenance, membership, and fundraising falling to the president or administrative manager.

Problems can arise when there is conflict between leaders, conflict between leadership and membership, leadership that is not prepared/able to perform their expected duties, leadership that is unwilling to grow and evolve the department in positive and productive ways, and leadership that does not support the membership.

Leadership of a volunteer fire department is not about standing in the front yard of a burning house with a portable radio telling people what to do; this is emergency incident management. But all too often, fire department leaders are chosen for their emergency incident management skills, under the mistaken impression that how well a person manages an emergency incident indicates how well they will lead a volunteer or mostly volunteer fire department.

Successful leadership is about much more than emergency incident management. It is about providing a clear and positive vision for the fire department; communicating that vision to the firefighters, community and elected officials; and then working every day to make that vision a reality. There is a great deal of work that must be done in between fires and other emergencies relating to training, recruiting, planning, budgeting, preventing and solving personnel issues, and preparing.

A calm, clear head under pressure at the scene of any emergency is critical, but the best chiefs and leaders will make sure that they are not the sole person capable of managing an incident. The best leaders design and implement systems that do not rely upon them to handle every situation. Moreover, they know their own limits and rely upon their officers and firefighters to fill in for their weaknesses. In departments that separate operational and administrative functions, the leaders on both sides need to understand they must work together for the good of the department, and that the department depends on both functions to be successful. Good leaders have developed a department where people are valued for their strengths and skills, not beaten down for the weaknesses. Good leaders also know how to utilize informal leaders within the department to facilitate change and garner buy-in. This results in a strong team. If the chief is not strong in one skill or knowledge, someone else is, and they step up to assist.

When leadership fails to set and communicate a clear and positive vision, does not understand or acknowledge their own weaknesses, does not delegate responsibility or authority to others, and allows negative actions such as cliques, bullying and unsafe practices to abound unabated, the department will fail. Members will become frustrated, feel unappreciated and undervalued, and recruitment and retention will become increasingly difficult. Poor leadership is consistently cited as a leading cause of why volunteers quit.

Closer look: The town of Canton (Connecticut) Volunteer Fire and EMS Department understands that leadership can make or break recruitment initiatives: "Challenges to recruitment involve not only selling the dangerous external environmental [and] health and safety realities of the fire and EMS service to a diminishing pool of prospects, but also the necessary and honest assessment of internal culture, communication, and strategic directives that are either conducive to or destructive of the goal to attract new members."

Section 8: Department image and culture

When it comes to recruitment and retention, it is important to consider the image that the department puts out to the public. Nobody wants to be a part of an organization with a poor public image. Is there strong and effective leadership, or does the community see a department with infighting, disgruntled volunteers, poor leadership or morale problems? Often that image is deeply influenced by the organization's culture. The culture of an organization is defined by the values, beliefs and behaviors of its members. In most organizations, the culture is developed over a long period of time, and sometimes the members aren't even sure why they do things the way they do.

The department has multiple opportunities to communicate the type of organization it is to the public. These communications can come from simple on-duty interactions between department personnel and the public, as well as off-duty events such as family get-togethers, community events or even attending a kid's softball game. Other communications may happen through news stories, press releases, posts on social media and information on the department's website. When the public does an internet search for a department, what they find will impact their desire to join. Results showcasing members in action during incidents and in training, conducting fundraisers,

interacting with the public in a positive way, and taking pride in wearing their uniform can boost recruitment and retention efforts. On the other hand, a department with a poor reputation in the community, dissatisfied members and negative interactions with the public is not likely to be as successful in recruiting or retaining a volunteer force.

Section 9: Consolidations, mergers and regionalization

It is not uncommon for the topics of consolidations, mergers or regionalization to arise when discussing challenges facing volunteer fire departments, such as staffing shortages, financial needs and deployment problems. These are complex issues that vary greatly by state. State law will govern much of what can and cannot be done, and how it can or cannot be done. A comprehensive legal assessment is essential. State and local politics will also enter into the discussion and should not be underestimated.

When the idea of consolidation, merger or regionalization comes up, it often impacts department morale. Leadership must be prepared to manage the feelings of members. Members may feel that these efforts are being brought against them personally or based on some animosity toward them or the department by outsiders. Be honest and realistic about why these changes may happen, and clearly communicate to members the benefits to the department and their community as well as the positive new regionalized impacts. It is critical to keep members as well-informed as the law allows, and to involve them in the discussions and decisions as much as possible. Otherwise, the department may end up with 2 workforces coming together in an atmosphere of hostility that can drive existing volunteers out and make it exceedingly difficult to recruit replacements. Lawsuits, public outcry and poor service are also typical outcomes from forced, unhappy mergers and can damage the department's public image.

Additionally, when faced with the issue of consolidation, merger or regionalization, it is best to address it and make decisions as soon as possible. Letting the issue drag on will destroy morale, create anxiety and further hurt recruitment efforts because it is difficult to attract volunteers to an organization that is perceived as having no future.

Also, local station of department mergers or regionalization can end up creating combination departments. If career and volunteer work and affiliation issues are not properly planned, this situation can become a cause for poor working relationships between career and volunteer firefighters. Strong, effective leadership is needed to set clear expectations regarding the working relationship, training, command structure, organizational roles and civility among members. Department leadership must quickly deal with all disputes in a manner that isn't perceived as favoring one group or the other. Otherwise, leadership runs the risk of losing control of how people behave and could end up with grievances, dwindling ranks of volunteers, lawsuits and poor service to the community.

When facing regionalization, it is important to note that regionalizing a group of departments over a large geographic area may not result in improved response times. This outcome can be due to the overall geographic distances between responding units. For instance, merging 5 departments and putting a staffed station at the center of the geographic area will be great for those that live in the middle of the area, but as you move farther out from the regional fire station, response times get longer and longer. Creating a system with reasonable response times for all can be difficult. And, politically, the communities and residents at the edges are likely to object to paying

for a service that is no longer local and is far away. First responders may balk at longer commutes to the station and longer response times, and morale may decline as the department image suffers in the eyes of the community. These types of regionalization work best when the focus is on administrative regionalization, along with other areas such as maintenance, training and purchasing, but leave the local stations intact.

Closer look: While often there is resistance to consolidations or mergers, if done well, it can be a solution to address staffing and funding issues facing local departments. An article from The Reading Eagle on June 1, 2021, reported that over the past 15 years, several large municipalities in Berks County and the Tri-County area in Pennsylvania consolidated independent volunteer fire companies serving the same communities into 1 fire department helmed by a paid chief or commissioner. The new municipal fire departments are able to pool equipment and volunteers to better respond when the community calls. In addition, municipal governments now have more control over how money from fire taxes is spent.

Section 10: Tension with local government

How a volunteer fire department is structured varies by department, with some part of the local government and some separate. Funding sources also vary, with some departments fully funded by the local government, some partially funded by local government and some completely on their own. However, just like the community, the local government benefits from the fire department, and the fire department benefits from local government support.

Unfortunately, many departments have weak or even poor relationships with local officials. Local officials and department leaders may find themselves at odds instead of working together to ensure the community has the emergency services it needs. This can create obstacles to the success of the department, including in areas of retention and recruitment. In many instances, the fire department may not even try to approach the local officials for support as they may see it as too difficult a process for too little gain or think they will have to sacrifice too much autonomy if the local government is involved.

One of the greatest contributing factors in a poor relationship between a fire or EMS department and local officials is lack of transparency and insight into response and operational data. However, the government officials need this additional information to justify potential expenditure for the department. Another point of tension is a fundamental lack of understanding exhibited by elected officials about the department. It is not uncommon for those who are in positions of power to simply not understand the information being presented to them, and they are often placed in scenarios of making decisions in a short amount of time.

The local government can and should be a great source of support for the fire department. In addition to financial support, the local government has a plethora of resources at its disposal that can be utilized by fire and EMS departments to help alleviate some of its staffing challenges. These include assistance with administration, human resources and legal support; funding incentives that help with recruitment

and retention; and raising awareness in the community of the need for fire service volunteers. Open and honest communication, transparency, and a willingness to cooperate are keys to breaking down barriers that exist between the department and the local government.

Section 11: Other challenges

Volunteer firefighters contribute millions of hours to staffing apparatus, maintaining buildings and equipment, training, fundraising, and a host of other activities related to serving their communities. In doing so, they must often adhere to legislation, standards, codes and best practices. Achieving compliance can challenge even the most progressive and well-equipped volunteer department. Some of these challenges include the following.

The Fair Labor Standards Act

This federal law defining compensation and overtime is most critical for volunteer leadership tobe aware of when considering what constitutes a "volunteer" firefighter and incentives departments can use for recruiting and retaining their members. The Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) includes caveats as part of the definition of "employee" that allow for volunteers who receive nominal benefits and/or are employed by the employer, but in a different capacity thanthe one in which they volunteer, to provide services on a volunteer basis.

29 USC 203(e)(4)(A) The term "employee" does not include any individual who volunteers toperform services for a public agency which is a State, a political subdivision of a State, or aninterstate governmental agency, if –

(i) the individual receives no compensation or is paid expenses, reasonable benefits, or a nominal fee to perform the services for which the individual volunteered; and
(ii) such services are not the same type of services which the individual is employed to perform for such public agency.

Subsection (i) is significant because it establishes that volunteers can receive some benefits without being considered an employee by the DOL. In a 2006 letter to the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC), the DOL established that for a fee paid to a volunteer to be considered "nominal," it cannot exceed 20% of what the public agency employer would otherwise pay to hire a full-time employee for the same services. There are also a number of other stipulations beyond the 20% rule that must be met in order for benefits to be considered "nominal."

Subsection (ii) allows for someone to volunteer for their employer as long as they are not providing the same services on a volunteer basis that they provide in their role as an employee. In other words, a career firefighter is not allowed to volunteer as a firefighter for the same fire department that they work for, but an employee of the city who works in a different part of the municipal government could still volunteer for the municipal fire department. This can become an issue when a volunteer fire department hires 1 or more of its volunteers to fill a paid staff position.

The IAFC's "Managing Volunteer Firefighters for FLSA Compliance: A Guide for Fire Chiefs and Community Leaders" is a great resource to help volunteer fire service leaders navigate these and other FLSA-related issues.

Medical examinations

Fire departments should take every step possible to minimize the physical and mental risks their members may face. Some volunteer fire departments may require annual or regular medical examinations. Other fire departments may fear losing members if medical examinations are required, so their only requirement is for a member's physician to sign a form stating that the member is fit for duty. This reduces the liability of the fire department but doesn't protect the member from physical risk. To best protect members and reduce fire department liability, it is a recommended best practice for members to have a thorough examination following NFPA 1582, *Standard on Comprehensive Occupational Medical Program for Fire Departments*.

If a fire department is unable to provide an annual physical, it is important that members' primary care providers understand the health risks firefighters face and the most up-to-date research on firefighter health. The IAFC released the "Healthcare Provider's Guide to Firefighter Physicals," which can be downloaded and provided to the primary care provider to help evaluate and treat firefighters. The NVFC Position on Firefighter Medical Assessments provides guidance to volunteer departments on firefighter physical options.

Financial limitations are often cited as the reason why a volunteer fire department doesn't provide medical examinations to members or potential members. Requiring members to pay for their own medical examination may often be a barrier to recruitment and retention. One way to address this is to actively recruit a local doctor to provide physicals for free or at a discounted rate.

2 in-2 out

Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) Regulation 1910.134(g)(4) is a component within the OSHA Respiratory Protection Standard that requires a rescue team of at least 2 properly equipped and trained personnel to be in place prior to 2 other properly equipped and trained firefighters entering an Immediately Dangerous to Life Hazard environment. The requirement is an outgrowth of OSHA requirements for workers entering environments that are oxygen deficient, poisonous or have elevated temperatures. The impact of the ruling has caused strains to volunteer departments as they have had to increase staffing per duty shift, member rolls and/or units assigned to calls. The requirement can be used as a talking point in recruitment efforts.

State and local challenges

In addition to challenges presented on a federal level, there are also state and local regulations that may impact a fire department's ability to recruit and retain volunteers. These challenges typically include a set number of hours of training required to be certified (or recertified) as a firefighter, fire officer, EMT or paramedic, etc. Additionally, there are minimum age requirements at which a person can fully function as a firefighter, EMT, etc. Costs of initial and annual medical examinations also impact fire departments. Departments can work with their municipal government to identify and address any local challenges that may exist. The state firefighters' association should be able to assist in identifying statewide challenges or pointing departments to the right state agency for assistance.

Part II: Collaborating With Local Government

Many states require local government to provide for fire protection. Yet, while local governments pay for many kinds of services for their residents — including police, water and sewer, among others — in many cases, volunteer fire and EMS departments are either left largely on their own to fund their services or are provided a revenue from the local government that does not meet the full costs of operating a department and purchasing necessary equipment. These fire and EMS departments provide essential public safety services in their community, from responding to emergencies of all kinds to preventing them from happening in the first place.

It is the local government's role and responsibility to reach out and develop, support and maintain an open partnership with the volunteer fire and emergency services in order to ensure that their citizens have adequate fire protection. At the same time, fire and emergency service departments need to foster and maintain this relationship with local government to get the support they need to operate effectively.

According to the NFPA, it would cost communities across the country nearly $47 billion annually to replace volunteer firefighters with career staffing. Many small town and rural communities cannot afford to switch their staffing model to paid firefighters. In addition, community members may pay a high price in property damage or life-threatening situations if there is slow fire department response due to a lack of active volunteers. Residents may also have to pay higher insurance premiums if poor department response times and insufficient training and equipment leads to a worse rating from the Insurance Services Office or American Association of Insurance Services. It is in the best interest of the local government to support the fire department and provide them with the resources and assistance they need to be successful. The costs related to such support are far more manageable than the cost community members would face if the locality switched to an all-paid fire service.

Consider this: The state government in Pennsylvania realized it needed to step up as the numbers of volunteers dwindled in the state. In recognition of the situation, the state legislature passed Senate Resolution 6 in 2017, which included establishing a commission of lawmakers, municipal officials, and fire and emergency service leaders to work on solutions to assist fire and EMS systems. The commission issued a report the following year urging action and warning of a public safety crisis as the number of volunteer firefighters in Pennsylvania dropped from 300,000 in the 1970s to just 38,000 in 2018. The report listed close to 100 recommendations for how the state and local governments can be part of the solution.

The Delaware General Assembly also created a task force to determine how to improve volunteer firefighter recruitment and retention within the state. A June 16, 2021, article from First State Update reprinted the findings and recommendations of the task force, which included additional training; a website and marketing campaign; vocational training, college credits and tuition reimbursement for students; and a tax deduction.

The NVFC conducted a survey in 2020 to gain a better understanding of how local governments across the country currently support volunteer fire departments, as well as the types of support volunteer fire departments still need. The majority of the departments that responded to the survey were either nonprofit (45%) or municipal/local government (41%). 80% were located in communities with a population under 25,000.

On the positive side, 74% of respondents described their department's relationship with local government to be good or excellent. In addition, 82% said they receive support from local government. However, the survey found that this support did not always match the needs of the department. For instance, 41% indicated they need local government support with volunteer recruitment, but only 7% said they have this support. 29% need help with awards/recognition, but only 12% have the support. 32% need help with pension/Length of Service Award Program (LOSAP) programs, while 20% have this help.

While just a snapshot of fire departments, the survey does show that when it comes to working with local government, there are many areas that can be improved. From providing more funding, to offering staffing support in the form of human resources and retention benefits, to assisting with marketing to gain new recruits, there are many ways that local governments can support their community's fire and EMS department. Both department leaders and local governments need to take the initiative to build a better partnership to ensure that the department has what it needs to serve the community safely, effectively and efficiently. This includes department leaders educating local leaders on what is needed, why it is needed and the importance of this assistance to the municipality.

In action: According to a spring 2021 article in the Sea Isle Times, the Sea Isle (New Jersey) City Council showed its support for the Sea Isle City Volunteer Fire Company by establishing a duty crew program to ensure the department would have staffing at all hours. Volunteer firefighters who take night duty shifts during the summer and other select times will get a $160 payment per 12-hour overnight shift. This is in addition to the pay-per-call stipend that was already established. Up to 4 volunteers can participate each night. The council capped the program at $30,000 per month.

Section 1: Department funding

How volunteer fire and EMS departments are funded is wildly variable across the U.S. Some departments are fully funded by local government, others get no local government funding at all, and then there are those that get local government funding that does not support the entire operation.

However, while there is some similarity with how local recreation programs and libraries may be funded through a mix of tax dollars and donations, the volunteer fire service is far and away the public service that is most reliant on fundraising to provide essential public services.

There is no reliable data that reports how much volunteer fire and EMS departments rely on fundraising, but observations indicate it is widespread and a deeply ingrained practice. The "Fifth Needs Assessment of the U.S. Fire Service" published by the NFPA in 2021 found that fire departments in communities under 2,500 averaged 12% share of revenue from fundraising compared with 74% from taxes. However, that statistic does not tell the full picture. There are departments that rely on fundraising for a far greater percentage of their revenue, and there are many departments where the revenue from taxes or other government funding sources only covers basic operational expenses and not enough for new equipment, gear and apparatus. In the world of $500,000 fire engines, $300 helmets and $600 nozzles, most long-held fundraising practices cannot keep up with the costs of running a modern fire department.

Consider: How does a small town of 500 residents raise $250,000 to purchase a modest fire engine? Selling 16,666 chicken dinners at $15 a piece is not a realistic goal. The fundraising challenges are compounded if all the neighboring towns are also trying to do the same thing.

Budget concerns also impact recruitment and retention in various ways. For one, the department may not have the time or resources to spend on recruitment or retention initiatives if they have to prioritize fundraising to make ends meet. Also, prospective and new recruits may think twice about joining or staying with the department if much of their time is spent cooking chicken or setting up bingo halls.

Meanwhile, the gap between the "haves" and the "have nots" is growing wider and wider. A group of chronically underfunded volunteer fire departments is developing. These departments are falling behind on equipment, training, new missions and their operational ability to serve their communities. These departments have old trucks, unsafe personal protective equipment (PPE) and substandard stations. On the other side, departments with significant public funding, and/or with adequate public funding supplemented by fundraising, are progressing faster and further. They are keeping up with training needs and generally have better equipment.

Many community members assume that public safety is a necessary public service afforded to residents, but the costs of this public safety often aren't factored into this assumption. Public safety protection can be highly effective given adequate funding to provide for the necessary equipment and PPE to provide that protection. However,

in areas where that funding is simply not available, there is likely to be a degradation in service, and yet the link between funding and service isn't often clear to the general community.

Closer look: The need for local government to support volunteer fire and EMS departments cannot be overstated. If volunteer departments fail due to lack of funding or members, the entire community suffers and critical public services may be lost. In some communities, this is no longer a hypothetical. According to an article in the New York Times from April 25, 2021, at least 10 localities in Wyoming were in danger of losing ambulance service due to budget and/or volunteer shortages, which would leave communities without nearby EMS.

A May 12, 2021, story from ABC 12 News in Flint, Michigan, reported that volunteer fire department staffing shortages in mid-Michigan have resulted in cases where there are too few firefighters responding to the scene, with departments relying on mutual-aid deployments that then leave those communities with thin staffing. Adequate volunteer numbers are needed to improve response times and save lives and property.

Barriers to local government funding support

There are many barriers to increased local government support of volunteer fire and EMS departments. For starters, there are 50 different state laws regarding how to organize, fund and operate a fire department. This means that the funding issues vary from state to state, and many states have multiple systems. The result is that no one solution is going to address the hundreds of different types of situations that exist.

For example, in Massachusetts, cities, towns and counties are not required to provide fire protection. Whether they do and what level of protection they provide is strictly a local matter. And, while every fire department in Massachusetts is a municipal department, the funding varies dramatically from town to town. According to data from the Massachusetts Call/Volunteer Firefighters Association, the typical small town (under population 2,500) fire department in Massachusetts had an annual budget of $58,663 in 2015. As a result, many of these departments are supplementing their budgets with fundraising while running 25- and 30-year-old trucks, operating out of old garages, and struggling to keep firefighters in compliant PPE.

Another barrier to local government funding of volunteer fire departments is that some departments, or at least their leadership, do not want government funding. They feel that government funding comes with too many strings attached and may also not want the transparency that comes with public money. They are unwilling to give up the traditional ways, even if it means better funding and being better able to meet their mission through the training, newer trucks and new equipment that tax dollars will bring.

These departments see purchasing and bidding requirements as an impediment to success. They see accounting rules, human resource procedures and having to report response times as burdens that interfere with their operation. They may also have had bad experiences working with local government officials in the past and are reluctant to try again. These perceived obstacles are not cumbersome and can be resolved with frequent updates to the local government with automated reports that are readily

available through the public safety answering point or the department itself. Elected leaders are in the business of making sure their constituents are properly represented, and their safety is a top priority. The indication that departments encounter burdens is easily resolved if effective lines of communication are established and followed.

> **Closer look:** Some fire departments report that it is difficult to build long-term relationships with government officials when the positions keep revolving. This frustration is felt by the Berwyn (Pennsylvania) Fire Company. "Our townships have supervisors that take years to be brought up to speed on the inadequacies of our operations. Seems like just about the time they 'get it' there is a new group of supervisors and we have to start all over. Too much passing the buck down the road."

The public officials and community leaders that fire departments are turning to with those requests (when they make them) are also part of the problem. Many are reluctant to fund the fire department. Given the choice between spending public money on replacing a 15-year-old snowplow for $189,000 or replacing a 30-year-old fire truck for $300,000, they will pick the snowplow every time. For a fire department that goes to 80 or 100 emergency calls per year, and less than 10 of these calls are actual fires of any kind, the need to invest hundreds of thousands of dollars in a response vehicle is a tough sell to town officials.

In addition, when the fire department becomes part of small-town politics and finance, it also falls into competition with other public services that impact citizens daily and have powerful advocates, such as the highway department or schools.

> **Closer look:** The Aberdeen (Maryland) Fire Department Inc. notes that challenges they face in working with local government include developing an understanding with city council of the difference between fire department services and other civic groups, establishing the department as a resource to city government, and being involved with appropriate decisions that affect public safety.

Section 2: Making the case for support

The importance of educating governing bodies about the services provided by the fire/EMS department and encouraging a symbiotic relationship cannot be underestimated. Ensuring local government understands the value volunteers bring to the community in clear, specific terms can go a long way in obtaining their buy-in to the mission, goals and needs of the department and can better position the department to be able to recruit and retain much-needed volunteers.

Consider this: Local government officials may benefit from a better understanding of the day-to-day needs of the fire or EMS department through experiencing it firsthand and talking to department members. Consider hosting a training day that local government representatives can attend, invite them for a ride-along or to participate in the department's Citizen's Academy, work with a local training facility to allow them to experience certain aspects of the job, and/or ask them to attend fundraisers and other community activities the department hosts. These events can also be used to educate local officials on all the fire department does for the community besides fighting fires.

Lines of communication between the department and local government should be ongoing. Department leaders should be transparent about how local support is being used and how the community is benefiting.

There are resources to help departments better engage public officials at all levels of government, including the NVFC's "Guide to Communicating with Elected Officials," and the "Beginner's Guide to Working with Elected Officials" offered by ICMA. See Appendix B: Considerations for Department/Government Support for a list of considerations that departments and local governments should keep in mind to facilitate effective communication.

In action: The West Whiteland Fire Company (Exton, Pennsylvania) stresses that communication and transparency are key in building a strong relationship between the department and local government. "Being transparent has reaped the rewards over the years. We are in almost daily contact with the township management and meet monthly with the Board of Supervisors." Their tip for fire departments working with local government: "Communicate, communicate! Ultimately the governing bodies will have to address the level of service. There should be no surprises."

The Berwyn (Pennsylvania) Fire Company recommends keeping open, honest and direct communication with local officials as frequently as possible. They have monthly reports and bimonthly meetings with the 2 townships they serve and the other area fire departments. In addition, they annually present an "ask" for funding from the 2 townships. "We are an open-book organization with our townships and share all information."

The Gaston (North Carolina) Volunteer Fire Department formed a partnership with local government through one-on-one talks with the county manager and board of commissioners. Their tip for other departments is to: "Have a good working relationship with government leaders and be able to demonstrate how their efforts equate into a better emergency response."

Conversely, a poor working relationship and lack of communication between the local government and the volunteer fire department

could have dire consequences. News stories in May 2021 reported on a volunteer fire department in Burlington County (New Jersey) that was suspended by the township, leaving protection of its residents up to outside fire services. While the local officials claimed they had made the department aware of its concerns, the department leaders said they had gotten no warnings and were not given any reason as to why the department was suspended. While subsequent talks helped both sides see common ground and work toward a resolution, the situation could have been avoided with better ongoing communication and collaboration.

In communicating to city and town leaders concerning why they need additional support, volunteer departments should utilize data-driven requests, reports or proposals. More information on data is provided in Part VI: Using Data to Drive Recruitment and Retention Efforts of this guide. The NVFC's Cost Saving Calculators can help fire and EMS departments determine and present the local cost-savings their volunteers provide the community. Similarly, the local government may need support from the department in terms of data, reports or even something as simple as extra staffing at community-sponsored events.

Department leaders need to remember that their request for support requires validity. Far too often, departments present funding requests that are considered unrealistic by local officials without supporting documentation. One suggestion is to offer viable options when requesting the funding or ancillary support. Engage local elected officials and provide them with the information and solutions the department needs to operate.

In action: Mulvane (Kansas) Fire Rescue realizes that in order to maintain government support, they need to show the value of the department. "I use every chance I get to remind my city council and fire board that the money they save utilizing volunteers should be invested in having the best equipment possible so our firefighters go home safe at the end of the call!"

The Carlisle (Massachusetts) Fire Department emphasizes to local officials the better service that a dynamic staffing model allows. They also have become the go-to department for solving the town's logistical problems. They provide manpower and services for things like building temporary buildings or doing COVID-19 testing for all the town's residents during the pandemic.

According to the Royersford (Pennsylvania) Fire Department, "The biggest thing that we have found is that most decisions from the local government are data-driven. Without proper data to reflect your needs, it becomes tough to justify the department needs."

Section 3: Working together to meet the community's needs

Government entities can provide support in a variety of ways, and not all of them have to be costly. The following are some examples of how the local government can partner with the fire department to assist with staffing needs such as recruitment, retention and administration. Additional examples are included throughout this guide and in Appendix B.

Many states have laws that prohibit a town from using public funds or resources to benefit private organizations, including nonprofit volunteer fire or EMS departments. In cases where these laws would impede the local government from helping a fire or EMS department, the laws might have to be amended or repealed, or in some cases a contractual agreement could be made that makes support services by the town a part of the agreement for public fire and emergency service protection.

Consider this: Local governments and departments should think outside of the box when it comes to opportunities to collaborate in order to bolster volunteer recruitment and retention. For instance, there is some movement in Carlisle, Massachusetts, to turn unused town buildings into housing for on-call personnel, which could make a major difference in recruiting and retaining community members.

Administration

Many chiefs are overwhelmed with paperwork. At the same time, they may lack the specific skill set to best deal with the administrative aspect of the job. Local government can provide a professional administrator to assist department leadership. Depending on the size and activity level of the department, this might be a 1 or 2 days a week, part-time position, or it might be a full-time job. Another option would be for a group of towns to band together to hire a full-time administrator that would help a group of departments.

The administrator would ideally excel at filing, deadlines, responding to document requests, writing reports, gathering data and tracking training. While the department chiefs would have the overall authority in their department, the administrator would have limited authority to complete reports, chase members for compliance with regulations and filling out forms, and handle bill paying, routine purchasing and monthly reports.

To avoid the costs of hiring a full-time administrator, another option is to obtain the services of a consultant to help bridge the gap to complete the tasks that inundate the chief/director. There are companies that provide temporary assistance for administrative tasks at a fraction of the overall cost of a full-time employee.

In action: The Blue Ridge (Virginia) Volunteer Fire Department maintains a good partnership with the career staff of the county fire and EMS department. Through this partnership with the county, they were able to get a full-time recruitment and retention specialist to help with administration and marketing for new recruits. The recruitment and retention committee meets monthly with the specialist. However, keeping the volunteers involved is critical to success. "Continue to stress how important it is for the volunteers to feel a part of the overall system. A suburban/rural mixed county will not have the tax base to support a full-time career staff, so it is important to keep the volunteers involved and part of the process."

Moscow (Idaho) Volunteer Fire and Ambulance relies on their local government for administrative support, which benefits their recruitment and retention efforts. "The City of Moscow supports the volunteer agency with administrative staff to help volunteers through onboarding, training, equipment, and general support. This allows for more consistent follow-through with new volunteers and allows our volunteers who signed up to volunteer as firefighters and EMTs to actually be first responders and not agency administrators."

In Centre County (Pennsylvania), the Centre Region Council of Governments set up a Regional Fire Protection Program to provide the support and assistance necessary to ensure the volunteer Alpha Fire Company can deliver quality services to the community. This includes ensuring the fire company has the facilities, equipment, personnel, and recruitment and retention support it needs. Program administration is handled by a fire director, volunteer fire chief, 2 full-time and 2 volunteer assistant chiefs, a full-time office manager, and other volunteer officers.

Accounting

Requesting that the community's accounting office assist in managing the fire or EMS department's books and procurement systems could allow the department to focus resources on emergency response, so long as the government support is focused on ministerial duties and does not try to strip the fire/EMS company of making its own financial decisions. Local government involvement can also add another layer of checks and balances when it comes to ensuring the financial integrity of the department.

Human resources

The government entity could provide guidance from a human resource professional to ensure the fire/EMS department is following rules and best practices in their recruitment and onboarding processes. This support can alleviate the burden felt by department leadership and provide much-needed expertise the department may not otherwise have access to. In addition, the government's human resources department or other entity that performs background checks for government employees could assist the department by performing the necessary background checks for potential department recruits.

Marketing and awareness

The government entity can help communicate the need for volunteers, promote department activities, provide awards and recognition for high-performing department members, and highlight department successes, thereby aiding in recruitment and retention efforts.

In action: Royersford (Pennsylvania) Fire Department relies on local officials to help amplify the department's messages. "Social media and engaging with the community is a game-changer. Royersford Borough is a tremendous community with a phenomenal mayor and Borough Council who routinely share and spread the posts from the department. Don't underestimate the value of those partnerships."

A Jan. 29, 2021, article in the Daily Progress highlighted a new marketing campaign that the Orange County (Virginia) Board of Supervisors and the 5 volunteer departments that make up Orange County's fire service were getting ready to implement. The county planned to hire a marketing firm to create a new recruitment campaign to attract volunteer fire and rescue personnel.

Volunteer pool

Local government employees could be a source of prospective fire or EMS department volunteers. Government officials can distribute recruitment information or host informational sessions with the fire/EMS department and local government employees to encourage them to consider volunteering in their off time. Government agencies could consider offering incentives or flexible scheduling to those who volunteer.

In action: The West Whiteland Fire Company (Exton, Pennsylvania) received 4 additional daytime certified firefighters thanks to their partnership with the local government. The Board of Supervisors encourages government employees to participate as volunteers for daytime response and provides an annual stipend for those who do. They also provide an income tax credit up to $500 for volunteers who live or work in the township and continuously promote the department's need for volunteers in their monthly newsletters.

However, the Carlisle (Massachusetts) Fire Department warns that paid-on-call departments that are part of the local government may meet obstacles when it comes to town employees volunteering. Their town discourages or disallows town employees from joining the fire department because of overtime rules.

Health and wellness

There are many ways the local government can support the health and wellness of its community's volunteer firefighters and emergency services personnel. This includes giving volunteer fire and EMS department members access to their Employee Assistance

Program (EAP), adding volunteers to their health insurance plans, providing annual NFPA 1582 physicals and offering life insurance to volunteers. In addition, if the local government runs any community centers with gym equipment or exercise classes, they can provide complimentary access to emergency services volunteers.

Consider this: One hurdle that may need to be overcome is the local government entity not being on the same timeline as the department is when it comes to onboarding new recruits. The Carlisle (Massachusetts) Fire Department, for instance, notes that it can take months to get a town physical for new recruits, which is an impediment to onboarding. "Full-time employees do not understand the needs of recruiting and getting new personnel involved ASAP after recruitment." Department leaders may need to educate local officials as to why a specific timeline should be followed, such as needing a quick onboarding process so as not to lose any potential new recruits or because the department is short on members and needs to get new personnel trained quickly to keep up with response demands. Having examples or data to back up the need for a specific timeline will be helpful in communicating the urgency.

Retention benefits

The local government can support the retention of volunteers through benefits such as real estate tax exemptions, establishing a LOSAP or setting up a 457 retirement plan for volunteers where the town contributes matching funds.

In action: Having a positive working relationship with the town government has enabled the South Windsor (Connecticut) Fire Department to have a robust retention program for its 120 members.

"We are very blessed with great support from the community leaders — especially through the budget process. When a member joins, there is NOTHING out of pocket. We provide a full NFPA 1582 physical [and] full background and motor vehicle checks. Upon completion of the intake process, they are issued a full NFPA-compliant set of turnout gear, pager, access to I Am Responding, and full coverage of insurance by the town. All training, from tuition to books, is covered in addition to a training stipend. They have full use of department vehicles to travel to/from training.

"Additionally, the town/department provides a Length of Service Awards Program (LOSAP). It's similar to a retirement program, but not exactly. The average member will receive between $200-300 monthly after being fully vested.

"We also offer a tax abatement program based on a tiered system of a percentage of $1,500 annual — after 2 years 25%, after 5 years 50%, after 7 years 75%, and after 10 years 100%."

Section 4: Case studies

While there are a variety of approaches to forming a collaboration between the local government and the volunteer emergency service department, the following case studies spotlight how 3 departments are able to enhance their recruitment and retention initiatives by working with local government.

Moscow Volunteer Fire and Ambulance

Moscow Volunteer Fire and Ambulance is a rural, mostly volunteer department located in northern Idaho on the border of Washington state. The department has approximately 115 volunteers and has had great success recruiting local college students.

As volunteers found themselves taking on more and more administrative responsibilities, they advocated using funds generated from the ambulance service — which would typically be used to purchase equipment, vehicles, uniforms, etc. — to pay for a specialist that could handle the recruitment, retention and administrative tasks that were difficult for time-constrained volunteer first responders to manage. The city of Moscow stepped in and added this job as a paid city position in 2018.

Pam Rogers, a 10-year volunteer with the department, took the paid administrative position with the city, helping to ease the transition and build initial trust with the department. To keep the relationship strong and continue to build trust with new volunteers she never served with, Rogers continually solicits volunteer feedback about decisions and communicates as much as possible through a variety of methods, such as email, group text and, for a while, a department newsletter. She also makes herself available outside of city business hours to meet the needs of volunteer schedules.

The city also helps the department maintain continuity when volunteers who head a program, conduct trainings or lead a station must leave their post due to life or family circumstances. In these situations, a city staff member will step in to assume the responsibilities until another volunteer can take over. Again, communication has been key to make sure no toes are stepped on.

The city is invested in supporting the volunteer system, and the department relies on the city to handle the significant workload involved in hiring, onboarding, managing and supporting over 100 volunteers. In coordination with the department leadership, a small administrative team employed by the city of Moscow manages the entire application process, including background checks, coordinating interviews and subsequent onboarding for applicants the department accepts. They also contact applicants not chosen by the department to be volunteers.

In Rogers' position with the city, she also helps ensure volunteers are meeting participation requirements. She works with department leadership to identify those not meeting the minimum requirements and contacts them after a month for an initial check-in to make sure the volunteer is OK and let them know the department misses them. Most of the time this is sufficient to resolve the issue. When it's not, she follows up again after 2 months with a reminder that the volunteer needs to meet minimum requirements and that the next step is either probation, leave of absence or resignation. If the department ultimately decides to terminate the volunteer, the city staff handles the meeting and correspondence.

In addition, Rogers provides the department with information technology (IT) support, updates the website, manages Google accounts and training logins, develops training videos and manages social media. She solicits input and help from any volunteer that wants to assist and offers training to interested volunteers in various areas such as creating graphics or making training videos.

To facilitate collaboration and communication, volunteer EMS leaders from local agencies in Latah County and the local government staff supporting the agencies meet every few months to talk about updates in protocols, training opportunities, communications with each department and volunteer leadership. They have a small budget provided by Latah County that can be used to purchase equipment and conduct trainings. This helps ensure that all of the stakeholders are on the same page and support each other in service to their rural area.

Says Rogers: "There has been a significant increase in call volume with EMS over the last five years, and there are current strains on our national and local health system with COVID. [The city of Moscow] is currently working with the volunteer leadership [at Moscow Volunteer Fire and Ambulance] to identify opportunities in improving participation and response times and to identify any other resources that may be needed. We are all working together to make sure our community continues to get the care they need by our volunteer department, first responders, and city."

Briarcliff Manor Fire Department

Briarcliff Manor Fire Department is an all-volunteer department with 150 members in a suburban community in New York. The department is part of the local government and works with the mayor's office, village manager's office, department of public works, American Legion Post and Rotary Club to enhance recruitment and retention initiatives.

Communication was key in solidifying the partnership with local government, and the department also created partnership opportunities at village events. Challenges they have experienced include personality conflicts, fears of losing staff attention to primary government tasks and tightening budgets.

Among the ways that local government supports the department's volunteer staffing initiatives are:

- Supporting administration of LOSAP.
- Marketing through community-based publications and events.
- Supporting new membership through recruiting, retention and engagement initiatives.

Thanks to the local government support, the department was able to launch a digital advertising campaign aimed at recruitment in the spring of 2021. In addition, they encourage other departments to dig deep to uncover outreach programs where partnerships may attract fire department prospects, such as high school internship programs, children and family events, and holiday events.

Culpeper County Volunteer Fire & Rescue

Culpeper County Volunteer Fire & Rescue is an all-volunteer department serving a rural community in Virginia with 590 volunteers. The department is separate from the local government but works with the Culpeper County Board of Supervisors, county administrator and county attorney for administrative support, recruitment and retention benefits, and funding for training and resources that support volunteer staffing.

The county provides the department with an operations budget for recruitment and retention activities and supplies a part-time administrative assistant to assist with recruitment and retention. They also offer incentives to the fire department volunteers, including a property tax waiver on 1 vehicle, workers' compensation insurance and death benefits.

In order to establish a partnership with the local government, the department worked with the county administrator to create the part-time administrative assistant position for the benefit of all 8 volunteer agencies in the county. The position reports directly to the Culpeper County Volunteer Fire and Rescue Association and also works with the department's recruitment and retention committee.

The key in building the partnership is open and ongoing communication, transparency, and a strong dialog between the department and the county government, including the Board of Supervisors, town council and planning commission. They have regular meetings where the department provides updates on successes as well as their needs and areas of improvement. They communicate to local officials the efforts required to provide service in an all-volunteer system, including time, training, fundraising, community involvement, fire prevention, the growing demands the community places on emergency services and feedback on new infrastructure. The department has a solid financial process that provides checks and balances and reports on income efforts in fundraising, as well as training and equipment needs.

The partnership between the department and the local government has opened up avenues for volunteer recruitment. For instance, thanks to the part-time administrative assistant, the department has been able to foster an ongoing relationship with the Chamber of Commerce as well as with local radio and television stations, the library, and other outlets for recruitment. Having an administrative assistant has also enabled the department to post information on social media more regularly. The budget provided by the local government enables the recruitment and retention committee to expand their reach through things such as banners, brochures and paid social media promotion.

Part III: Recruitment Strategies

Part III will discuss various strategies to help departments identify and recruit volunteers, from identifying policies that may inhibit recruitment to locating prospective volunteers to onboarding successful applicants. Part III will also discuss how department culture and image can impact recruitment as well as ways to ensure the department makeup reflects the community it serves.

> **Closer look:** It is important to remember there is no one-size-fits-all strategy when it comes to recruiting and retaining volunteers. Instead, consider the options that are the best fit for the specific department and community. The key, however, is to do something. The Woodstock (Virginia) Fire Department offers this tip: "In order to recruit and retain people, you have to do something. It won't always be right, but you can adjust to continue what is working and to reevaluate what is not. A department that simply stands around complaining that no one is around is the only one doing the wrong thing."

Section 1: Membership requirements

Most departments have rules or criteria that determine who is eligible for volunteer membership. Many of these rules were established years ago, when the community may have looked much different than it does today. One of the most common criteria is a residency requirement such as living within a minimum distance from the firehouse. Such a requirement immediately eliminates a wide swath of prospective volunteers and may no longer be relevant depending on your department structure and service area. When possible, it is recommended that departments eliminate any residency requirement that is not required by local ordinance or benefit eligibility requirement. In some cases, this may mean volunteers having assigned duty shifts and responding from the station rather than home, but eliminating residency requirements can allow for a much broader pool of prospective volunteers.

Another common obstacle to attracting new members is the lack of reciprocity between states and/or regional training programs. This means an already trained firefighter's certifications may not be recognized in another state or jurisdiction, thus requiring that individual to retake coursework. Oftentimes the most basic courses are not recognized, which, in turn, invalidates the upper-level courses. This can be a significant deterrent for volunteers who move from one state or area to another but do not want to repeat this time-intensive training. It is important to become familiar with the laws and requirements in your state when it comes to accepting training from other jurisdictions, states or the military. In some cases, the local governing body can choose to accept training that does not satisfy the state or region's certification requirements; however, the governing body would accept any liability for this uncertified member. Finding ways to encourage reciprocity across jurisdictions or advocating to state agencies the importance of establishing training reciprocity may be the better solution to this ongoing challenge.

To assist with other necessary training requirements, it is recommended that departments sponsor required classes within the local area or form partnerships with adjacent departments for convenience and to reduce travel time for members. Hybrid classes, consisting of both face-to-face training and online instruction, are other possible means in which to make training more accessible. Offering the same class at multiple times and on various dates may better accommodate the busy schedules of volunteer members.

Many departments have minimum requirements in terms of hours, percentage of calls, duty shifts, etc., which volunteers may struggle to meet. Some departments have successfully eliminated minimum weekly hour requirements in lieu of a flexible schedule so long as minimum staffing is maintained. To obtain an active membership, a minimum level of activity can be established which must be met on a monthly or yearly basis, allowing each member to schedule shifts that accommodate the busy and not-so-busy periods in their life and work schedules.

Closer look: In the course of a 3-year research project on volunteer fire service retention, Dr. Candice McDonald found that 70% of volunteer firefighters report a failure to balance volunteer and family commitments. She proposed several solutions that emergency service departments can implement to help their volunteers achieve a better work-life-volunteer balance. One of the top strategies is to move away from the typical 1-night-a-week training schedule and offer training on multiple days, including both a weeknight and a weekend. Another strategy is to switch from requiring a certain percentage of calls to a set number of hours per month so the volunteer can fit service into their busy schedules. For instance, if the department requires 10 hours per month, one firefighter may be able to meet this requirement by spending a full Saturday at the department while another may need to break it up into a couple hours each week depending on their work or child care schedule. Allowing for temporary leaves of absence without ridicule is another way to help ensure that those who need a break from the fire service are welcomed back when they once again have more time to give.

It is also still common to find membership requirements that only recognize emergency first responders as members. Every organization needs members to fill nonemergency roles such as mechanic, bookkeeper, data entry, recruiter, station attendant and fundraiser, to name just a few. Individuals interested in filling these positions should not be overlooked. Including nonoperational volunteers as members will ensure they feel valued, and, in some cases, it may also allow them to be covered under the department's insurance policies and LOSAP, which are pension-like programs offered by some volunteer emergency service departments.

Policies are inherently intended to enhance the ability of an organization to operate efficiently and effectively, yet over time these policies can become outdated or irrelevant. In any organization, it is a good idea to review policies on a regular, ongoing basis, and membership requirements should be included in this review.

In action: The Rapid Valley Volunteer Fire Department (Rapid City, South Dakota) decided to accept volunteers from outside its coverage area as long as the volunteer agrees to spend time at the station instead of trying to respond from their home for every incident. They have gotten several members through this expansion. The Brighton Fire Department Inc. (Rochester, New York) created a "cafeteria plan" of participation models for their volunteers that includes on-duty at the station, privately owned vehicle (POV) response from home, on-duty flycar response from home, on-duty at the fire house, bunker program for college students and off-duty POV response from home.

The West Barnstable (Massachusetts) Fire Department was struggling to find new members in a village where 30% of residents are over 60. They decided to throw out counterproductive residency requirements, allowing volunteers to come from outside the community. The department now has college students volunteer from as far as 65 miles away who spend one weekend a month at the station to respond to calls. Other volunteers who live 10-20 miles away stay at the station when they are on call. In addition, the department abandoned a membership requirement for volunteers to be both firefighters and EMS providers, which was preventing people from joining. Now people can choose to join as a firefighter or an EMS provider and then learn about other aspects of the job at their own pace.

Section 2: Understanding volunteer needs and motivators

To be successful in volunteer recruitment, it is important to understand why people volunteer. Some motivators frequently cited by current volunteers include:

- Giving back to the community.
- Learning or developing new skills.
- Developing pride and a sense of accomplishment.
- Having a family history of volunteerism.
- Finding friendships and camaraderie.

Recruitment messages can be strengthened by focusing on these motivators. Highlight how department members are giving back to their community, learning valuable new skills, and the great camaraderie that is universal and unique to the fire service family. Consider using member quotes about all they have gained by volunteering and accomplishments they are proud of. This serves not only to highlight current volunteers but can speak volumes to someone who is looking for a meaningful way to get involved in their community. Invite family and friends of current members to attend department events. This will strengthen these relationships and also introduce them to the department, perhaps sparking that desire to get involved.

In action: Showcasing how their members give back has proven to be a successful recruitment and community relations strategy for the Gilt Edge (Tennessee) Volunteer Fire Department. "Social media, specifically Facebook, has been our bread and butter in direct and indirect recruiting. We have used the department's social media page as a tool to tell our department's story and to show the public what their volunteers are doing every day and at all hours. In addition to sharing fire prevention and safety tips, we show our members training, in action on incidents, and serving the public by installing address signs and smoke alarms. While we always accept applications, during certain times of the year we also use the Facebook page to advertise that we are actively recruiting. This social media presence, as well as other positive reputation management tools such as news media, has led to a positive image of our department through word of mouth in the community."

The work doesn't end there, however. Volunteers must continue to feel that their needs are being met throughout their volunteer experience and, in some cases, these needs may change over time. A new recruit may be looking to learn new skills or gain experience, while a seasoned member may find tangible benefits such as pension plans an appealing motivator. In the NVFC's 2015 "Volunteer Firefighter Recruitment and Retention Formative Research Results," isolation, unmet expectations, frustration with leadership, and lack of support from family or employers were cited by current volunteers as challenges to a sustained commitment to the department. It is important for leadership to keep a finger on the pulse of the membership, identifying areas where needs are not being met or where needs have changed. This can be accomplished by surveying new and existing members to determine current needs and wants as well as any possible challenges that may cause them to leave. These are often called "stay surveys" since they have the added benefit of catching issues before the volunteer makes the decision to leave and instead result in them staying. For members that do leave, exit surveys should be conducted to determine why they left so that trends can be identified and adjustments made to ensure that, moving forward, volunteer needs are met to the best of the department's ability. See Appendix D: Sample Exit Survey and Appendix E: Sample Stay Survey for examples.

In action: The town of Canton (Connecticut) Volunteer Fire and EMS Department understands that the satisfaction of its current members is directly related to its ability to attract new members. "Because recruitment is a daily and ongoing priority, we have found that it is critical to continually assess what new recruits see when they walk in the door — on day one. To that end, we have embarked on a strategic planning process that will inform the work of the department for years to come. Significant time has already been spent on phase 1, developing and assessing town-wide surveys of not only members, but community groups, town officials, and the general public.

> "While strategic planning is a long-view exercise, we are also following best practices by addressing any significant issues that become apparent, in the short term, as a found opportunity. If this strategic directive, 'We listen to our members and react accordingly,' is built into the fabric of the department, it becomes a tool for how we promote the department and treat fellow members and others. It is an indisputable truth that the most successful recruitment 'tools' are happy, busy, and proud members who feel appreciated and heard."

Section 3: Finding prospective volunteers

Prospective volunteers are all around you — at work, in your neighborhood, in line at the grocery store, at places of worship and maybe even in your own family. The first step in reaching prospective volunteers is to make them aware of the need. According to the 2015 research from the NVFC, 41% of the population doesn't know if their department is career, combination or volunteer, and 79% don't know if their department needs volunteers. Make sure these messages are clear in department communications, on social media, in press releases and in other ways in which the department interacts with the community.

It is also important to consider the target audience. While there is an indisputable need to recruit younger members to replace those that age out of or retire from the volunteer emergency services, it is important to also consider the life stage of the recruits you are seeking. Members as young as high school may have fewer outside commitments, but they may also soon leave for college or move out of the area as they launch a career. Conversely, more established residents, such as those in their mid-30s who may be homeowners and more settled in a career and in the community, may become longer-term volunteers, but may also struggle to balance family and other outside commitments. More mature volunteers may bring experience and an ability to mentor others. Finding balance and diversity in your volunteer force is imperative to sustainability.

Closer look: Having an online presence is critical for reaching prospective volunteers in today's world. Keeping the department's website up to date and with a clear call to action for joining are musts as the website is often a community member's first stop to find more information about the department. Sites that haven't been updated in months or even years as well as sites with hard-to-find information on joining will quickly turn away potential recruits.

Social media is also an important and highly effective tool for connecting with the public. It is another way to recognize the great work your volunteers are doing, let the public know what the department does for them, impart important safety information and get out recruitment messages. Posting frequently will help build engagement and interest in your department. Time-constrained departments may find social management tools like Hootsuite and SocialPilot beneficial to manage and preschedule posts across all the department's social media pages.

Make sure that your department has policies in place for members who use social media. Remember that everything a member posts on social media could reflect back on the department. In terms of the department's social media accounts, there should be designated administrators who do the posting and make sure that all content adheres to the department's policies. Refrain from posting anything from incident scenes that violates privacy or Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) laws or disrespects those impacted by the incident or the seriousness of the situation.

The Fire Law Blog provides a framework that departments can use to develop a social media policy. While not specific to emergency service departments, the Society for Human Resources Management has an informative article on "Managing and Leveraging Workplace Use of Social Media." Appendix F: Sample Social Media Policies also provides example social media policies.

To best support recruitment through online outreach, make it easy for people to apply to be a volunteer with your department. Include a link to the application on the department's and municipality's social media pages, and establish a dedicated and easy-to-find page on the department's website focusing on why community members should volunteer, along with a link to the application.

Online campaigns can garner positive results for a department often with little or no monetary cost. The East Dubuque (Illinois) Fire Department noted: "The methods that have proven to be successful for us to recruit new members is our presence on Facebook, Instagram, and other social media platforms, along with members spreading our information via word of mouth."

According to Foothills Fire & Rescue (Golden, Colorado), to find new volunteers, "We launched a social media campaign, posting pictures and videos of our volunteers on Facebook and Nextdoor to introduce

our team to the community, a look at the everyday people behind the mask. We have created marketing mailers and a lot of web site content using Canva."

South Windsor (Connecticut) Fire Department reports: "Our department uses Facebook and Twitter. We are very active in keeping the media and public up to date with all our activities, incidents, training, public relations, etc. With most posts, we not only share fire prevention tips, but messages on joining the department."

Royersford (Pennsylvania) Fire Department also found success online. "Over the last handful of years, we've greatly expanded our social media and online presence, purchasing a new web site and regularly updating the information. We've acquired 5,800+ followers via Facebook and approximately 1,500 followers on Instagram. We post pictures and quick-hit stories often and also unveiled a Virtual Tour Series during the COVID-19 outbreak. Our PIO team highlighted our apparatus and then was able to connect with mutual aid and outside agencies to highlight their specialty apparatus."

The Secaucus (New Jersey) Volunteer Fire Department has built up its digital profile to connect with recruits and enable them to take direct action to apply. "Over the past few years, our presence on social media has grown immensely. In the past two years, we have set up multiple Facebook and Instagram pages that allow us to further connect with our community. Additionally, we have launched a department web site that has an entire section dedicated to joining the department. One key feature on this section is that we have a general information form that potential applicants can complete to let our recruitment team know that an individual is interested in joining."

Consider the many ways and places departments can reach prospective volunteers:

Personal contacts

The most common source of new recruits is through referrals by current members or family members. Many departments rely on their members to recruit. Giving current members something tangible to provide to prospective volunteers is useful. Fire Corps® teams, auxiliary programs and other nonoperational volunteers that are already engaged with the department may also be interested in taking that next step to become an operational member.

Door-to-door

Some departments go door-to-door to recruit or link their recruitment efforts with home fire safety inspections or fundraising. Consider other methods to reach homes as well. For example, if your department offers a property tax benefit to its volunteers, ask local government to include a small flyer about volunteering in the annual property tax bill.

New community members

Volunteer departments should make a special effort to reach new people in the community to explain the function of the department and its membership options. The fire department can include this information in literature disseminated by welcome wagons, the chamber of commerce, local realtors and others.

> **In action:** Foothills Fire & Rescue (Golden, Colorado) combines a door-to-door approach with reaching new residents. "One of our biggest annual recruitment efforts is to do walk-arounds, knocking on the doors of homes that recently sold within our district to introduce ourselves, provide fire mitigation information, and ask if they are interested in volunteering." The Carlisle (Massachusetts) Fire Department has a plan to work with the town clerk to include an explanation of the fire department and invitation to join in the information packet sent to new residents.

Schools

Recruitment materials can be sent to parents and teachers and disseminated on career days in grade schools and high schools. However, it is even better to work directly on educating guidance and/or career counselors on the benefits of being a volunteer and to participate in career fairs. Departments can also tie recruitment efforts to their visits to schools to conduct fire education and safety programs. High visibility helps the department make contacts at the school, sparks the students' interest, and can go toward building long-term relationships with the community. Departments with a junior firefighter program can talk to the school about making this an eligible activity for any volunteer service requirements the school has for its students.

> **In action:** The Westminster (Maryland) Volunteer Fire Department works with school officials to showcase to students the benefits of volunteering. "By gaining access to the administrators and career counselors in the local schools, we've been able to pitch the free training and benefits of being a volunteer firefighter. We are also pursuing middle schools, both public and private, to promote our junior program. The junior program has been very beneficial to bringing in volunteers that stay."

Some high schools have emergency services programs that train students to a certain certification level (such as Firefighter I or EMT). This provides a great pool of potential recruits for local volunteer fire and EMS departments, as the students are trained, ready to respond and likely looking for some real-life experience in a department.

> **In action:** Departments can work with the local school system to set up a vocational program that offers fire and EMS classes if one doesn't already exist, which worked for the Lewisville (North Carolina) Fire Department. "Lewisville Fire partnered with the school system and NC Department of Public Instruction to bring a vocational fire academy to our local high school. This program certifies students to be firefighters and EMTs as a part of their curriculum. This provides the local volunteer departments in the area with fully qualified fire/EMS responders right

out of high school. An added benefit to the student: they are capable of entering the professional fire/EMS workforce immediately."

According to an article in the Williamsport Sun-Gazette, the Williamsport (Pennsylvania) Area School Board voted in July 2021 to allow high school students to take an EMT course at the Pennsylvania College of Technology. The course will act as an elective for high school students, and the cost will be paid by the students' families.

Departments that are in or near college towns can recruit students to serve as firefighters during their college stay. Some departments offer a live-in program where the participants are given free room and kitchen privileges in return for volunteering. Live-ins may be required to serve weekend duty and a specified number of incidents and drills. While the students eventually graduate and may leave the area, the pool of student members is constantly refreshed by the new students. These students may go on to volunteer elsewhere or serve the emergency services in some other capacity.

In action: The Rapid Valley Volunteer Fire Department (Rapid City, South Dakota) implemented a student resident program to reach college students. "We provide a dormitory-type residence, kitchen, living area, rooms for schoolwork, and high-speed internet for four students per school year. The students live in the station and respond to incidents over night when incidents are hardest to staff. The students receive a monthly stipend and a small scholarship. We provide all their training and certifications to be a full-trained member."

The Daggett (California) Fire Department partners with local colleges to attract EMT students. "We consistently collaborate with local community colleges by offering students who are enrolled in an EMT course the opportunity to apply for our department. Once accepted, the new hires are required to continue and complete their EMT course to be eligible to continue with the department. Once the candidate completes their EMT course, they are ready to begin their in-house fire training by our state certified fire instructors."

Explorer, junior firefighter and cadet programs

Explorer, junior firefighter and cadet programs are an organized way to encourage young peoples' interest in the fire department as well as gain assistance with nonoperational tasks. Some fire departments run programs that accept youth as young as age 13. They train the juniors like recruits. When the juniors turn 18, they can join the department as full members. Most departments require the parents of recruits to sign an approval form and liability waiver.

Because the minors are still in school, departments involved in these programs usually stress that education is very important and that their volunteering should not be done at the cost of their schoolwork. Some departments require that their juniors maintain an 80% grade

average to participate. Each state has rules that govern child labor practices and set age limits. These must be reviewed before implementing a junior program. For additional information on state labor laws, visit www.osha.gov. The NVFC's National Junior Firefighter Program provides information and resources to help departments implement a youth program.

In action: Many departments find that junior firefighter programs engage participants so that they want to join as full members when they turn the appropriate age. The South Windsor (Connecticut) Fire Department considers its junior firefighter program to be its best source for gaining new firefighters. "We have the oldest serving Fire Explorer Post in CT. Like most things, the numbers fluctuate, but we average 15-25 young adults, male and female between the ages of 14-18. We generally see about 75 percent continue on to join the department as regular firefighters."

The Secaucus (New Jersey) Volunteer Fire Department launched a junior firefighter program in 2014 for residents between the ages of 16 and 18. "This allows us to build the future of the fire department while also instilling core mindsets and lessons in younger individuals that reside in our community."

The Sardis (Ohio) Volunteer Fire Department found that once they started a cadet program, it led to new young adult members as well. "Once we got a few cadets, word spread and we started getting interest from younger residents between the ages of 18 and 25. We have added 12 members in the last two years!"

According to an April 21, 2021, article in the Kokomo Tribune, the Cicero Township (Indiana) Volunteer Fire Department's junior firefighter program is open to any high school student who wants training to prepare for a future in the fire service. The deputy chief of the department estimated that about 75% of the juniors end up working either in a volunteer or career department. The department's view is that even if the juniors go on to a different department, they are still helping to fill needed volunteer positions.

Retirement communities

Retirement communities are a rich source of people who could serve in a nonemergency capacity. Retirees often look for ways they can stay active and give back to their communities. Fire departments should approach the retirement community's activity coordinator to set up a meeting to educate residents about volunteer opportunities. The meeting can also provide life safety information important for mature adults while creating yet another connection with the community served.

In action: The Secaucus (New Jersey) Volunteer Fire Department finds that community engagement benefits recruitment. "Our department visits local public schools, senior citizen centers, and businesses to keep everyone up to date on the latest in fire prevention. This also allows us an outlet to recruit and inform the public about the benefits of joining the department."

Civic organizations and churches

In many areas, clubs and civic organizations such as the Elks, Veterans of Foreign Wars and Knights of Columbus are very prominent. These groups have civic-minded citizens who volunteer for many activities. Some may be interested in volunteering in the fire service. Parent-Teacher Association meetings and places of worship are other good sources for potential volunteers.

Department of parks and recreation

Many communities have a government-run parks and recreation department. Consider workingwith this department to reach people who are physically active, such as those who like to hike, kayak or swim in the parks, or who participate in sports or fitness classes. Fire and EMS departments could set up a recruitment table at local recreational hot spots or work with the department to distribute information on volunteering to their customers.

Previous or current firefighters

Individuals who have served in other departments, either career or volunteer, may be interested in volunteering and can often make an easy and seamless transition to a new department. When recruiting a volunteer from another department, it is still important to follow your application process, including any background checks, to maintain consistency and fairness among all recruits. It is also important to follow the FLSA, which prohibits career firefighters from volunteering in the same capacity in a fire department in the same jurisdiction in which they work as a paid firefighter.

In action: The Kiowa (Colorado) Fire Protection District found an out-of-the-box method for reaching potential volunteers. "A lot of our firefighters are looking to go career; we support them in their efforts but ask them to wear our FD's t-shirt when they go test. You'd be surprised how well this works!" The East Dubuque (Illinois) Fire Department has had success recruiting volunteers from a neighboring city that has a career department. "We are not taking people away from their recruitment; it has actually helped these members obtain jobs in the fire and EMS career field."

County fairs/events

County fairs are often good sites for recruitment efforts. Fire and EMS units are usually present for display and should have volunteer applications and information on-hand. Other community events such as Fourth of July festivals, job fairs, garden festivals, parades or community get-togethers can also prove to be an effective way to get out in the community and invite people to experience all your department can offer.

Resorts

During the in-season, population swells enormously in resort areas. Demand for services, especially EMS, also rises sharply. Resorts are good places to advertise for volunteers for the entire region, as well as for the department that protects the resort. Resort areas attract many healthy, able-bodied men and women who are oriented toward physical activities.

Fire and EMS departments can recruit volunteers to serve only during the tourist season to help handle the surge in calls. Sometimes they can be recruited from the visitor population itself, or from volunteer firefighters and EMS providers from other areas who take jobs in the resort area during tourist season. Some departments in resort towns allow a few out-of-town volunteers who have relocated for the resort season to sleep at the station. This is a major incentive for recruiting volunteers in resort areas.

Local businesses

Recruiting from nearby local businesses, with their permission, is another option. This may appeal to business owners whose employees would learn critical leadership and life-saving skills. Creating this relationship with business owners may also go a long way toward securing buy-in for flexible schedules, allowing volunteers to respond during daytime hours when many volunteer departments have difficulty getting adequate turnout.

Publicly staged events

Fire departments can use Fire Prevention Week as a chance to show off apparatus and attract new recruits. Other events that are good for recruiting include parades, demonstrations for fire and life safety education, gatherings for elected officials, training events, department open houses, and local festivals and events.

Fitness events or challenges

Physical fitness can be an important attribute of the job, and the volunteer emergency services may be attractive to individuals seeking a mental or physical challenge. Departments may consider setting up a recruitment table at a local fitness event or challenge, such as a Tough Mudder or Spartan Race, or reaching out to local gyms to distribute or display flyers about volunteer opportunities.

Utility companies and county and local government employees

Law enforcement officials, gas and electrical utility workers, public works employees, recreationemployees, and other local workers make good volunteers and can provide special assistance intheir areas of knowledge. County workers employed in road and park maintenance and utilities may also be well-positioned during the day to respond to calls.

In action: The Royersford (Pennsylvania) Fire Department demonstrated to the local government through personnel response numbers during daytime hours the need for the borough to assist with getting more volunteers on board. They now partner with the borough's public works department to encourage employees to volunteer. The borough allows the public works employees to respond to calls, and when they hire, they look for personnel who are already state-certified firefighters.

Military bases and veterans groups

Military personnel are accustomed to discipline, may be physically fit, have a history of service and often have acquired relevant skills. Current and retired military personnel may find solace in the similar leadership structure of the fire service, and the camaraderie they find may help outgoing military members transition back to civilian life. Consider reaching out to a local veteran affairs office or other veteran groups to reach former military personnel.

Closer look: The Pennsylvania Fire & Emergency Services Institute provides the following advice for recruiting veterans:

"Each year over 200,000 individuals leave military service and return to the community, most from where they were born and raised. These are very talented individuals who have worked within an organized structure to achieve objectives in sometimes difficult and life-threatening situations.

"Those in the military make good fire and EMS personnel, many times coming with the skills and knowledge already needed to fight fires, rescue people, and perform medical services. This is a very talented pool of job seekers looking for a military-like or military-friendly organization to become a part of for a career or to volunteer. Veterans can play a big part in your organization. Recruit them, engage them, make them welcome and they will help make your organization successful.

"So, the question becomes — how do I attract them? Here are some steps:

1. Develop a recruitment strategy for veterans. Find out who is returning home, when they are returning home, etc. If there are local groups such as the VFW or American Legion, work with them to recruit.
2. If you have connections to current members of the armed forces (their parents, relatives, or friends), advise them that the fire company is a way for the returning service member to get engaged with civilians and the community, make new friends, etc.
3. Work with local military recruiters when individuals leave the service to route them to you for engagement. Provide promotional items, if necessary, to pique their interest.
4. If there are existing veteran websites in your area, they may be willing to allow you to advertise your organization.
5. Be able to translate the current military activities, language, and engagement into your organization. Current members with prior military experience can help achieve this."

Other emergency volunteers

Citizens who have volunteered in the time of an emergency are often well suited to be fire and emergency service department volunteers. People offer to help at community disasters ranging from floods to hurricanes. These individuals may already be part of emergency response groups such as Medical Reserve Corps, Red Cross, Community Emergency Response Team or others. They may be interested in more consistent volunteer opportunities that the fire department offers, which can supplement their existing volunteer activities.

Consider this: Potential recruits are all around, but it takes effort to reach them. Recruitment is an ongoing process, and success often comes from a coordinated campaign that targets multiple audiences in various ways. It is not realistic to think that simply attending one community event or putting up one flyer will be enough to have significant results over the long term.

The town of Canton (Connecticut) Volunteer Fire and EMS Department encourages identifying new markets to find volunteers. "Deliberately seek out untraditional markets. Is there a pool of: stay-at-home parents with school-age kids; college/tech school students; small business owners who have flexible schedules and are looking for a different way to enhance their skills?"

Siuslaw Valley Fire and Rescue (Oregon) set up a table at a local department store with positive results. They also have gained recruits from their Reader Board and by recruiting at a gym. According to the Kiowa (Colorado) Fire Protection District, to reach audiences: "You can't just do one thing; it takes visiting colleges, social media, web sites, and much more." The East Franklin Fire Department (New Jersey) utilizes this same strategy by going out in the community as much as possible through community events, camp programs with community partners, fire prevention programs in the schools, advertising to local college students and hosting holiday events.

This type of campaign proved to be very successful for the Woodstock (Virginia) Fire Department. "To address the challenges we face with recruitment, we launched a coordinated recruitment campaign that has helped us recruit 11 new members [in about six months]. The most successful thing about it is the fact it is a saturation campaign. We have reached every aspect of our community through as many avenues as possible. The campaign included social media outreach, a dedicated recruitment page on our website, free print advertisements, visits to local schools, visits to a wide array of community events, and has included several recruitment events at the fire station. Basically, we push recruitment and promote our department all the time. This means individuals in the community learn about us and see us in a positive light, become interested, and then are easily able to find how to become a member of the department and start the process."

Section 4: Personal invitations

While social media, newspaper ads and the station marquees are great ways to let the community know volunteers are needed, research shows that most people volunteer because they were personally invited to do so. The NVFC's 2015 study on volunteer recruitment indicated that most current volunteer firefighters were personally invited by a family member or friend to join. A personal invitation can go a long way in communicating trust and faith that that person has what it takes to become a fire and emergency service volunteer and can give them the nudge they may need to overcome self-doubt or simply to take that first step to becoming a volunteer.

A personal invitation doesn't need to be fancy or even time-consuming; it could simply involve verbally inviting a friend, family member, neighbor, coworker or even an acquaintance to come to the department and check it out. For those wanting to take that extra step, the NVFC's Make Me A Firefighter™ campaign portal offers an online materials generator that allows the user to create email invitations and print handouts in a matter of minutes.

Consider this: A personal connection goes a long way. Even if you are able to get people interested through other means, it is a personal connection that often seals their commitment to the department. The Brighton Fire Department Inc. (Rochester, New York) recognizes this need for a connection. "People don't join the fire department based upon a Facebook post or a billboard (and we spend a lot of money on those); they join on because of a personal connection. Remember that the money you spend on advertising is to get more people to make a personal connection with your organization — you need a good team of recruitment people to quickly and personally make that connection with those who express interest."

Section 5: Provide sampling opportunities

The NVFC's 2015 recruitment research also showed that many current volunteers reported that they were more likely to join after being given a taste of what it's like to be a volunteer. Having an opportunity to experience various firefighting tasks firsthand allowed them to picture themselves in that role and overcome doubts and fears. Furthermore, interactions with the fire department allowed them to see how they could fit in.

One way to provide these valuable interactions is through sampling events where members of the community can get a small taste of what it's like to volunteer. These sampling events include things like ride-alongs or fun contests at community events where they can practice donning or doffing gear quickly. Explorer programs, citizen fire academies, open houses and other recruitment events can help interested individuals connect with departments and build the confidence and excitement that is needed to truly consider the opportunity.

In action: The Firemen's Association of the State of New York annually holds a RecruitNY Weekend in April where hundreds of fire departments across the state open their doors to allow the public to get a taste of what it's like to be a firefighter. Visitors take a station tour, try on gear and see demonstrations of firefighting techniques. While the event had to be canceled in 2020 due to COVID-19, it ramped up again in 2021, with many stations opting to do a virtual open house or participate in other digital outreach. While most states may not have a coordinated open house weekend, departments can tie in events like this to National Volunteer Week in April and Fire Prevention Week in October.

Section 6: Effective onboarding

A department's onboarding process will communicate a lot about the department. Is the department responsive to inquiries? Organized? Clear on what the steps are for any prospective or new recruit? Is the department proactive and does it follow up with new and prospective recruits? Onboarding requires a series of steps from the initial contact with prospective volunteers to training them as recruits and ensuring they become an integral, accepted part of the team.

Consider this: The amount of time required of volunteers may seem daunting to new recruits. The onboarding process can be a critical component of retention to help recruits adjust and learn how to manage their new responsibilities. Moscow (Idaho) Volunteer Fire and Ambulance recommends having "dedicated people to support volunteers through onboarding to consistently check in with volunteers who are not meeting training or call volume expectations and to provide encouragement through the process." They also recommend that departments value volunteers' time and "maintain a balance of accountability for meeting call and training requirements with opportunities to thank volunteers and make them feel appreciated and valued."

Application process

The application process should be clear, easy to follow, and resolved quickly with a membership acceptance or decline. What follows is an example of a 6-step approach to the application process to build upon based on a fire department's needs and resources. Ensure the application process is in line with the FLSA and other best practices in human resources. This is a good opportunity to involve a volunteer human resources professional from local government or a local business. It is also valuable to have a recruitment committee or one person solely responsible for the application process to maintain the confidentiality of the process.

Most departments have a packet of information they provide to an applicant that includes the written job description of the position, the agency's expectations of volunteers, and the requirements and expectations of a probationary firefighter and a full member.

Consider this: Local government already has a system in place for administration and human resources that fire departments may be able to tap into for support with their onboarding process. This may include help with managing the application process, conducting background checks on applicants, questions to ask during the interview, practices to follow to ensure a fair and equitable evaluation of all applicants, and even guidance on how to decline an applicant if they are not the right fit for the department.

Moscow (Idaho) Volunteer Fire and Ambulance relies on assistance from the city to help with the application and onboarding process. A very small team of city of Moscow administrative staff manage the whole application process, run background checks and coordinate everything for interviews. The department chooses the candidates to bring on, but city staff handle calling the candidates, walking them through the next steps, and communicating training and leadership opportunities, as well as contacting the applicants that are not chosen as volunteers. The city staff also works with the department leadership to coordinate onboarding calendars and timelines, then meets 1-on-1 with newly accepted volunteers to go over dates, expectations and deadlines, equipment, etc. Department leadership is included on all important correspondence, provides input on the schedule, and does a large part of onboarding trainings, but the administrative staff is also there to help coordinate the space and resources needed and follow up with trainees as well as with the department leadership to remind them to check in with their volunteers, if needed.

Step 1: Application

Some departments use an electronic application while others use a paper application. Departments need to ensure that whatever process they use is secure and that personally identifiable information is protected. Departments can use the NVFC's Make Me A Firefighter campaign to create a volunteer opportunity landing page that includes a volunteer inquiry form and a tracking system where departments can manage their applications. Online form-making solutions such as JotForms, Google Forms, Wufoo and others provide a quick and easy method of creating, distributing and tracking online applications. See Appendix C: Sample Department Application for a sample department application.

It is important to verify receipt of the application to the applicant, and it is equally important to provide them feedback and information on the next steps in a timely manner so they don't lose interest in volunteering or lose confidence in the department due to lack of response. This is another reason it is beneficial to have a designated person or committee in charge of the application process to ensure no applications fall through the cracks.

In action: Bay County (Florida) Fire Services offers an online application process, or prospective volunteers can get an application from the county's human resources department. They also emphasize that library computers can be used to fill out the application online. As part of the application process, they require prospective volunteers to complete a bloodborne pathogens presentation and quiz.

The West Barnstable (Massachusetts) Fire Department revamped its application process after realizing in 2005 that their application was over 20 years old, asked unlawful and irrelevant questions, and just looked sloppy. They created a new application, attached a current job description to it and made sure it was easily available to community members — including keeping a stack at the front counter of the fire station. They now update the application every 3 to 5 years to keep it relevant and lawful and have added an extra attachment that provides an overview of what being a volunteer firefighter/EMS provider is like, including the rewarding and enjoyable aspects of public service.

Step 2: Background checks

It is important to verify the laws governing your state for background checks for volunteers, especially for operational firefighters, EMS personnel, and department members who work with children such as in public education efforts or with junior firefighter programs. Background checks are highly recommended and can protect departments from liability risks. The local government or police department may be able to provide background checks for fire and EMS volunteer applicants. Develop a written policy regarding background screenings and ensure these are implemented equally for all applicants.

Background checks may include the following:

- Driving and criminal background.
- Social Security number/address history.
- Education and employment verification.
- Drug tests.
- Credit history.
- Sexual crimes database.

Step 3: Interview

The interview is an opportunity for the department to determine if the individual is a good fit for the department and for the individual to determine if they are a good fit for the department. It is recommended to divide the interview into 3 phases. The first phase would allow the individual to learn more about the organization. These are some sample topics to be discussed with the individual:

- Provide an overview of the organization and both the tangible and intangible benefits of volunteering.
- List different types of operational and nonoperational volunteer opportunities.
- Give a realistic overview of the types and frequency of calls the department typically receives.
- Discuss the requirements and expectations (training, fundraising, administrative duties, hours per month).

- Discuss what the department provides in terms of paid training, PPE, firefighter physicals, etc.
- Give a tour of the station.
- Answer their questions.

The second phase of the interview should provide more detailed information about the applicant. Aside from asking questions based on their application (where they have volunteered before, past firefighting experience, etc.), other general questions could include:

- Why are you interested in volunteering with this organization?
- What types of roles are you interested in serving in at the department (firefighting, EMS, driver, support, etc.)?
- What do you hope to gain from this volunteer experience?
- Do you prefer to work alone or in a team?
- Do you have any questions about the interview, membership process or the organization?

If it is determined that the applicant may be considered for department membership, the third phase of the interview should provide more details for the applicant such as training requirements, schedules and expectations during the probationary period.

Step 4: Application decision

The recruitment committee or department leadership should determine if the applicant will be offered a volunteer position. It is best to have a small cadre of committed people make this determination to ensure the process is managed in a fair and balanced manner and with department needs in mind.

Step 5: Notification to applicant

Applicants should be notified in a timely manner if they have or have not been accepted. Ensure they understand the next steps such as their schedule and what is expected of them in terms of duty shifts, training and other participation requirements. Provide a primary contact for them to reach out to with questions along the way.

Step 6: Welcoming new recruits

Onboarding doesn't end with notifying the new recruit of their acceptance. It is important to pay special attention to a new volunteer to ensure they feel included and well-informed. Provide a tour of the station, introduce them to their fellow volunteers, and provide ample time for them to ask questions and learn about the department and their peers. It is recommended to assign them a mentor to help them assimilate to the department environment and to cheer them along as they take on challenging new tasks and responsibilities (see

Part IV, Section 9: Mentor Programs for more information). Check in with them often, and ask for feedback on their recruit experience, using this feedback to improve the process for others.

Consider this: Some departments have found success in a cohort style to onboard and train recruits. Moscow (Idaho) Volunteer Fire and Ambulance recently adopted this strategy for their ambulance company. "We now onboard new volunteers in groups 2-3 times a year, instead of every other month. The new volunteers have a group (5-12 volunteers) of people to train with; all get the same message, initial training, and timeline/deadlines for trainee task book completion. We've seen a significant increase in retention rates, and more camaraderie and communication with new trainees and trainers/crew coordinators. It's also been more efficient for our administrative, leadership, and EMS training teams."

The Richmond (Maine) Fire Department also found success with the cohort method:

"A recruitment campaign was established in the fall of 2019 using social media as well as flyers in the community and word of mouth by our staff. A recruitment information session was held in November of 2019 with six people attending, in addition to others filing applications. In January 2020 we took on seven new department members, and they attended a full-day orientation session. This orientation session served as the first class of the Maine Basic Fire School Program, [which is] a 75-hour training academy. The training program meets the minimum Maine Bureau of Labor firefighter training requirements. It was run as an academy over three months and included live fire trainings. While in training, members also attended department meetings and began running calls.

"This process modeled the process that full-time departments do when hiring and seemed to be a successful approach that will hopefully be repeated in the future. Possibly an every-other- year process.

"The method of taking on a group/cohort worked best as we were able to train them equally and recognize them as a graduating class just the same as full-time departments do when they hire a batch of recruits. It made it seem more professional, and a graduation ceremony was held as part of a first annual awards ceremony when they completed the in-house academy. The group became close and had camaraderie together; however, given the small size of our department [they still] blended well with existing staff."

Section 7: Maintaining a positive image and culture

It is important to understand that recruitment is marketing. Consider what retail stores do to attract your business. The ones that are most successful have attractive displays in the store, are well stocked and kept clean, and offer good customer service. Employees are happy and invested in the outcome of customer transactions. Fire and EMS departments should build a public image in the same manner that these retailers attract business. Apparatus and tools should be kept clean and ready for use. Staffing levels should be adequate to handle each response and the members trained to perform the necessary tasks. And above all, members must be invested in the customer service experience.

When members of the community see the department, do they see a high-achieving organization with camaraderie among its staff and leadership? Can community members see themselves becoming part of the current department makeup — for example, are there women, minorities and various generations reflected in current department outreach materials? If a community member does an online search for the department, will they see dedicated members working to serve the community?

Fortunately, the department has a great deal of control over the image the community sees. Highlighting department or member accomplishments on social media, through news stories and press releases, and on the department's website, are a few options for bringing attention to the many positive ways a department contributes to the community. Increasing exposure in the community through fire prevention and educational activities, communicating with the community through a newsletter, and training in visible locations can demonstrate the important role the department plays in keeping the community and its citizens safe.

Many departments use web-based platforms and social media to disseminate information about the department to the public and communicate its need for volunteers as well as financial support. Truth in advertising can go a long way in ensuring the department is seeking and accepting the right individuals for the job and attracting donors and other community supporters. Information that is posted on public media must reflect the culture of the organization and communicate that everyone is welcome and needed. Showing instances of camaraderie and skill-building on social media can demonstrate what prospective volunteers stand to gain from joining the department ranks.

Department image must go deeper than a public perception and reflect the underlying culture and values of the department. Strong, effective leadership will result in happy volunteers who will speak positively about their experience to others. Maintaining a department culture that supports its members, is inclusive and prohibits harmful practices such as hazing, harassment or cliques will reflect a positive image of a welcoming place that people want to be part of.

But perhaps the single most important influence on a positive department image is fostering a team of fulfilled, happy members who have quality interactions with the public. Members must remember that they represent the department when they are responding to a call as well as when they have their department T-shirt on in public, are driving their vehicle with firefighter tags or a department sticker in their rear window, or even when they are talking about their volunteer experience with a neighbor, friend or coworker. Every member is a direct representative of the department, from the chief to the newest recruit.

Consider this: Prospective volunteers want to feel like they will belong at the fire department. Many departments find success using messaging that makes the department relatable and open to new recruits. An article from Hudson Valley 360 on Sept. 3, 2020, highlighted the Chatham (New York) Fire Department for its award-winning recruitment campaign that featured photos of their members with the theme that these volunteers are your friends, neighbors and family. The ads were displayed at the local movie theater, outdoor billboards and in local businesses. Thanks to the campaign, the department saw a 20% increase in membership over 2 years.

The Ulster County (New York) Volunteer Firemen's Association sponsored a web series featuring local fire departments and giving the public a behind-the-scenes look into the firehouse and the equipment and tools firefighters use as well as a chance to meet the firefighters themselves. The series is called "Ride With Us" to emphasize camaraderie and friendship, and the running theme is that there is a job for everyone at their local volunteer fire department. In addition to distribution on social media, episodes have been played at community events, department open houses and during previews at a local movie theater.

A Sept. 2, 2020, article in The Times Herald announced that the Harmonville Fire Company (Plymouth Meeting, Pennsylvania) used a Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grant to launch a new website and recruitment campaign centered around the slogan "Honor. Family. Community." The campaign highlights the department's strengths and vision and promotes all the different volunteer opportunities available through the department.

Consider the following policies and resources that can help ensure a positive image within your community and a positive culture within the organization:

Reputation management

The Cumberland Valley Volunteer Firemen's Association has a "Reputation Management White Paper" that outlines actions taken by individuals that have a negative effect on the public image of the emergency services and individual departments. Topics covered include misuse of department facilities, theft, substance abuse, harassment and discrimination, and misuse of social media. The white paper recommends that every department establish a code of conduct or code of ethics that clearly defines expected behaviors of its members.

Code of ethics

A code of conduct or code of ethics spells out the expected behaviors of a department's members. It is important for departments to establish and maintain a code of ethics, and to get buy-in from all stakeholders. There are numerous tools departments can use to set guidelines and serve as a compass for behavior at the station, on scene at an incident and in public. Building on the "Reputation Management White Paper," the National Society of Executive Fire Officers created a Code of Ethics to serve as a model for departments. Fire and EMS departments may also consult with the human resources department of local government for samples of this and other policies.

Social and traditional media policies

A social media policy is another critical tool that outlines appropriate and inappropriate use of social media by department members. A negative or inappropriate social media post can cause irreparable harm to the department's reputation, open the door for possible litigation or liability, and make recruitment and retention more challenging. Similarly, posting images of training events, camaraderie around the station, or accomplishments of members or the department can entice others to want to join while elevating those whose accomplishments and successes are celebrated by the department. The IAFC offers a Social Media Toolkit to help departments use and manage social media. Also see Appendix F for sample social media policies.

Departments should have a traditional media policy as well for public information officers (PIOs) and others who will be talking with local media. How department members represent themselves and the department in the media is critical to public perception. For instance, a department member who is interviewed by the local news station can damage the department's reputation by speaking callously of the incident, disrespecting the victim or saying something that makes the department look incompetent or uncompassionate. A mishandled interview could even have legal repercussions if the person interviewed discloses confidential or privileged information or says something slanderous or derogatory. On the other hand, a media-trained member who knows how to handle the interview, is compassionate and speaks competently, and uses the opportunity to respectfully provide fire prevention and life safety advice to the audience can enhance the reputation of the department. See Appendix G: Sample Media Policy for a sample media policy.

Anti-harassment, bullying and discrimination statement

Harassment, bullying and discrimination must never be tolerated within an emergency services department. As representatives of the emergency services profession, fire and EMS members pledge to protect the public against all hazards. Likewise, department leaders must take action to protect their members from the hazards generated by a threatening workplace.

The NVFC, International Association of Black Professional Firefighters, IAFC, IAFC-VCOS, International Association of Women in the Fire & Emergency Services, National Association of Fire Training Directors, and National Association of Hispanic Firefighters released a Joint Anti-Harassment, Bullying, and Discrimination Statement. This statement asserts that all members of fire, EMS and rescue services should be treated and treat others with respect and dignity, and makes it clear that harassment, bullying and discrimination of any kind will not be tolerated. The statement issues a call to action that all fire and emergency service organizations implement an anti-harassment, bullying

and discrimination policy that is actively communicated to personnel and actively and consistently enforced. See Appendix H: Sample Nondiscrimination Statements for sample nondiscrimination statements.

Diversity and inclusivity

Diversity in the workplace is defined as an organization that includes a membership that is reflective of the community that it serves. Inclusivity is defined as an environment where all individuals are treated fairly and equally, have equal access to opportunities and resources, and can contribute to the organization's success. Every fire and EMS department must value the participation of each member and develop a culture where diversity and inclusivity are part of the organization. Concepts that strengthen diversity and inclusion should be incorporated into the department's policies and procedures. All department members should receive training to include anti-harassment policies and why diversity and inclusivity are important to the department's success so that each member understands their responsibility for creating an all- inclusive culture. This topic is further discussed in Section 8: Embracing Diversity and Inclusion.

Equality and equity

Equality in a workplace means that all members are treated in a systematic, impartial and evenhanded manner regarding access to all department activities and opportunities. Equity means different people are offered necessary accommodations to do the same job or validate a skill, including people with disabilities. This allows for individual variables like reach or ability to lift so long as the job is completed following all safety procedures and functions. Another example is providing women PPE that fits them rather than issuing one-size-fits-all gear designed for men.

Consider this: In addition to harming the image of the department in the community and lowering rates of recruitment and retention of volunteers, harmful actions such as harassment, bullying, discrimination, and inappropriate social media usage can open the department up to lawsuits and liability. The Fire Law Blog founded by Curt Varone delves into legal issues that confront the fire service as well as offers templates and training to help departments establish policies that can strengthen the department and lessen liability.

Crisis management plan

Despite all best efforts, sometimes a crisis does befall a department that has the potential to damage its reputation, decrease morale and hurt its ability to recruit and retain volunteers. It is important to have a crisis management plan in place for when/if such a disaster hits, whether it is a poor customer service experience, a mishandled incident, a member who commits a crime or any event that can negatively impact the department. This plan should lay the groundwork for both an internal and external response that is clear, immediate and focused. The plan should include communication to department members who may be seeking leadership and guidance, as well as guidelines on who is authorized to speak on behalf of the department to ensure consistent, informed messaging. A department that consistently does its due diligence through things like background checks, proper training, having anti-harassment and bullying policies in place, not tolerating a toxic culture, etc., not only decreases the chance of many types of potential crises, but also may lessen its legal liability and mitigate the damage to its public reputation should a crisis arise.

Positive department culture

Just as important as policies and guidelines is the department culture. A positive culture that encourages idea-sharing and innovation and values the contributions of its members will result in happy members. Happy members are the department's single best recruitment tool as they share their positive experiences with others. The NVFC's "Volunteer Fire Service Culture: Essential Strategies For Success" discusses fire and emergency department culture in depth, as well as strategies to improve it.

In action: The Lewisville (North Carolina) Fire Department recognizes the impact that department culture has on recruiting and retaining volunteers. "We have focused on changing our environment more than any other single factor. With a previous large recruitment and retention grant we attempted paid-for-call response and other financial incentive ideas. Money is a short-term motivator. Stipend expenditures are still an option to offset out-of-pocket costs for volunteers. At the end of the day, we have found that much like new recruits, we must make current members 'want' to be here. Positivity has been key. The fire service is often quick to judge, yet slow to praise. Members have been challenged to self-reflect before voicing a complaint. If a complaint remains, bring one or more ideas on how we can improve in the area to the conversation also. This subtle change has provided an attitude shift. Even our complaints come with a way in which we may improve our service. If you're not planted firm and at risk for failure, dig in, and don't back-slide. Once you've restored a strong foundation, move forward!"

Section 8: Embracing diversity and inclusion

Fostering a diverse and inclusive membership and department culture has many benefits, including increasing recruitment and retention, strengthening an organization, and providing robust skills, experience and backgrounds that can allow departments to achieve their mission more easily. To fully embrace these concepts, it is important to understand what these terms really mean.

Diversity

Diversity refers to people of different ages, experience, educational backgrounds, cultural backgrounds, abilities, genders, religions, personalities, sexual orientation, skill sets and more. Diversity is an attribute or attributes of an individual.

While many departments may have a volunteer force that is diverse in many ways such as age, experience, personalities and more, the fire service is significantly less diverse when it comes to gender, race and ethnicity. According to U.S. Census Bureau data analyzed by DataUSA (2020), an estimated 77.3% of the nation's firefighters are white,

1.96% are Hispanic/Latino, 6.9% are Black, and 1.3% are Asian. While women make up half of the population, the NFPA's "U.S. Fire Department Profile 2020" estimates that only 89,600 firefighters are female, with a higher ratio of women on the volunteer side (11%) than the career side (5%).

The fact that the fire service is historically made up primarily of white males means there are significant areas of opportunity for today's departments looking to recruit new members. The NVFC's 2015 research on recruitment indicates that there is considerable interest in volunteering as first responders among minority groups (36% were either definitely or possibly interested) while women were just as interested as men in volunteering as first responders. Those in the 18-34 age group showed a 44% interest in volunteering. These numbers point to largely untapped markets of potential recruits.

Departments should consider if their staffing mirrors their community makeup. Encouraging diversity can be as simple as communicating that everyone is welcome, regardless of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, age, etc. Ensure department recruitment messages are welcoming and reflect the diversity of the community through images and words. Individuals recruiting on behalf of the department should also reflect diversity. If the department is seeking more female recruits or younger members, consider asking existing female firefighters and younger members to help with outreach in the community or at recruitment events.

Inclusion

Inclusion is an environment where people are treated fairly and respectfully, have equal access to opportunities and resources, and contribute fully to the department's success. Creating an inclusive environment is a conscious effort that requires the buy-in and commitment of department leadership.

Below are some characteristics of an inclusive environment:

- **Empowerment.** Encourage team members to learn new skills, bring ideas to the table and solve problems. Provide opportunities for growth.
- **Equality.** The consistent and systematic fair, just and impartial treatment of all individuals.
- **Equity.** Different people need different things to reach the same goal or demonstrate a skill. As long as the job gets done and safety protocols are followed, equity may mean making adjustments for differences such as height or strength or shape.
- **Acceptance.** Make room for everyone in the department. Each individual brings skills, knowledge and experience that can benefit the team.
- **Camaraderie.** Lift each other up instead of tearing each other down. Everyone in the department is on the same team. Help each other out.
- **Respect.** Treat others as you want them to treat you. Learn from different points of view and seek to understand others. Handle disagreements in a constructive and professional manner.
- **Accountability.** Take personal responsibility for your decisions and performance. Have pride in your successes, learn from mistakes and be open to criticism in areas where you can improve.

- **Courage.** Stand up for what you think is right, even when it means taking a risk. Try to find support from others.

Diversity is a fact, while inclusion is an act. Diversity comes when you invite and welcome people with varying attributes to join your department, while inclusion is a conscious effort to ensure those individuals are treated as an integral part of your organization. A department that is both diverse and inclusive will be attractive to a much broader audience of potential recruits and will be more successful in retaining those recruits over time. The IAFC's "Guide for Creating a Diverse and Inclusive Department" is one tool to help departments plan, implement and preserve a diverse and inclusive environment.

Photo courtesy of iStock.

Part IV: Retention Strategies

Retaining volunteers requires a multi-pronged approach that showcases the department's support of and commitment to its volunteers and considers what the volunteers want. Conducting an internal retention assessment each year will help department leaders remain current on what is important to their volunteers, what changes should be considered, or benefits added, and if there are any issues that may be causing members to consider leaving.

Part IV will talk about the many factors that affect volunteer retention. Topics include effective leadership, setting realistic expectations upfront, health and safety considerations, building camaraderie, meeting training requirements, volunteer benefits and recognition, utilizing nonoperational volunteers, mentor programs, family support, and what to do when volunteers leave, retire or just aren't a good fit for the department.

Closer look: Successful departments are in tune with what their members want and employ multiple strategies to keep their volunteers engaged, connected and part of the department. For instance, at the East Dubuque (Illinois) Fire Department: "We provide a stipend for responding to calls, pay for training for both fire and EMS, and encourage our members to bring their families to the station on a regular basis. This along with being cognizant of an individual's time and the willingness to listen to their concerns has helped us keep people on the department."

The Westminster (Maryland) Volunteer Fire Department has a robust retention program that includes a LOSAP benefit, state income tax credit, free training, all turnout gear and equipment provided, on-duty insurance coverage and workers' compensation, college/technical school tuition reimbursement program, and a live-in program tailored to local college students.

The solutions that the East Franklin Fire Department (Somerset, New Jersey) implement include:

- A culture that operates under the premise that they are one family and does not allow multiple cliques within the fire station.
- A duty crew program consisting of daytime and nightly shifts 6 days a week excluding Saturdays, as well as bonus credit programs for attending overnight duty shifts.
- Providing almost unlimited training, both classroom-based and hands-on, free of charge.
- Several hangout rooms within the firehouse, including quiet study rooms for students.

- Free Wi-Fi internet access for everyone, as well as multiple printing stations for their college and high school students to complete their required coursework.
- Paid-per-call response for showing up for fire calls.
- LOSAP, which can be taken after 5 years of continuous service in good standing.
- T-shirts, hats, stickers and other various fire department merchandise free of charge, as well as merchandise that can be purchased by the member to show company pride.
- Free washer and dryer for use by the membership.
- Sleeping quarters for any member that wishes to stay overnight and does not reside close to the fire station.

Section 1: Developing effective leadership

Strong fire and emergency service department leaders understand and accept that their job is about serving the community and serving their members, thereby fulfilling the organization's mission. As a firefighter or EMS provider rises up through the ranks and takes on a greater leadership role, they take on more responsibility for the success of the department and the safety of the citizens. Strong leaders make sure their staff has all the tools and knowledge needed to accomplish the mission. Chiefs work for their members, not the other way around.

In action: The Gilt Edge (Tennessee) Volunteer Fire Department understands the critical role of leadership in retaining volunteers and creating a positive department culture. "ALL levels of leadership must care about their people as both people and firefighters. Our department follows the Fully Involved Leadership philosophy of the 'Big 4': Do your job. Treat people right. Give all-out effort. Have an all-in attitude. Those are the four things that we ask from people on day one of joining."

Of all the resources that a volunteer emergency services department needs, volunteers themselves — human resources — are the most important. While the station, apparatus and the budget need attention, they are secondary to the needs of the people that make up the department.

There are 9 key characteristics of successful volunteer fire and EMS department leadership:

1. **Accountability.** Chief officers must hold themselves accountable to the same standards and procedures they set for the members of the department, otherwise they lose respect and authority. If firefighters or EMS providers are required to pass an annual skills test or physical exam, the chief better be first in line and pass the test.

2. **Forward-thinking mindset.** Great department leaders cannot afford to become emotionally attached to the past, including old apparatus, favored vendors, outdated standards and tactics, the old guard members, and the big fires of yesteryear. Nostalgia that hinders progress is the enemy and will prevent leaders from seeing and leading into the future. There is always a place for tradition and honoring the past, but these are best left to the pictures and plaques on the department's walls or website, and through reminiscing at social events.

3. **Empowering.** Delegating is a crucial skill that department leaders must have and practice. It is how a leader demonstrates trust in others and empowers them to take action. Good leaders also understand that even when they delegate, they are still ultimately responsible for the outcome of the project. Leaders do not blame their staff for failures. They take responsibility, find a solution and coach their staff for the future.

4. **Respect.** Department leaders should make sure that everyone on the department feels respected. A great leader understands that everyone brings important skills and knowledge to the department. If favoritism is shown, others will likely take sides and morale problems will ensue. This is especially true in combination departments, where both career and volunteer members are critical to departmental success. The failure of many combination departments can be traced to leadership that takes sides or plays one group against the other.

> **Consider this:** The Gilt Edge (Tennessee) Fire Department advises departments looking to improve their retention to respect their volunteers. "Treat your people with respect! You are asking folks to give up their free time, time with their families, etc., to do a job that can get them killed for a small stipend or no pay at all. They keep showing up because they want to be there, not because they have to be there. Don't forget that. You can enforce high standards and still keep people motivated to show up. Create a family-friendly atmosphere in the firehouse. Let people know that their work and sacrifice is valued and appreciated."

5. **Humility.** Leaders must be prepared to accept criticism from staff when it comes. If members feel that leadership isn't listening, then leadership isn't listening. If they don't feel supported, then leadership isn't supporting them. What matters is how members perceive the words and actions of leadership, as this will affect their performance, loyalty and desire to volunteer. A great leader is willing to hear difficult feedback and take steps toward continual improvement.

Closer look: There is oftentimes a disconnect between what leaders perceive as a problem and what members perceive as a problem. This disconnect creates a barrier to finding practical solutions that work to address the real issues affecting retention.

In 2020, the NVFC conducted a national survey of current and former volunteer firefighters to find out why volunteers leave. 20% of fire department leaders said that inflexible training was a reason people left their departments, yet only 7% of former volunteers agreed. 41% of department leaders said volunteers left because they could not juggle their department commitments with their jobs and family life, but only 8% of former volunteers agreed. Here is a case of leadership not listening to their volunteers.

On the flip side, when asked why they stopped volunteering, the biggest reason former members cited (22%) was that the department atmosphere was full of cliques and groups that exclude others. 30% of current nonleadership volunteers agreed with them. This illustrates that far too often department leadership does not see the problem or see their role in the problem. Poor leadership that allows cliques to dominate the firehouse is the number 1 reason people are quitting the volunteer fire service.

Similarly, in the "2020 EMS Trend Report" produced by EMS1, Fitch & Associates, and the National EMS Management Association, a number of problematic trends in EMS have been tracked over the past 5 years. These trends are industrywide and applicable to the volunteer EMS world. One of the report's findings is that 70% of EMS medical directors described themselves as being engaged with the field providers they oversee, but only 21% of field providers reported having an EMS director they felt was engaging with them.

Change the title EMS director to fire chief, mayor or town administrator, and the problem is the same. Those at the top can fall into believing that all the work they are doing is engaging with those they lead, and while that work is important, meaningful and sometimes overwhelming, it isn't necessarily engaging members and addressing their needs. Great leaders must work at not falling into this trap.

6. **Transparency.** Successful leaders share knowledge and information with everyone in the organization. There may be some confidential information that cannot be shared, but 99% of all that goes on is not protected by privacy laws. Everyone in the organization should know or have access to the budget, how the promotional process works, preplans, policies and procedures, who gets paid what and why, the chief's schedule, as well as all of the technical information about equipment and apparatus. Sharing information publicly builds trust with members and the community. It pushes leadership to hold themselves accountable.

7. **Integrity.** Department leaders are the face of their department. On duty and off duty, everyone is watching. They need to understand and accept that how they behave is how their first responders will behave. How they are seen by their

community will determine the reputation of their department. Departments with excellent reputations are able to recruit new volunteers; those with poor reputations won't attract the new members they need. Great leaders actively manage and protect the reputation of their department.

8. **Principled.** Leading by example is how a chief officer or department leader becomes respected, trusted and followed. Leaders must demonstrate knowledge and skills. They must have courage — the courage to speak up against dangerous or unjust practices, to insist all members are equal and treated well, to ask for help when they need it, and to accept feedback from their staff and community. They cannot be complainers or gossip about their members. They must be honest. Attitudes are contagious.

9. **Strategic.** Taking a long-term strategic view and planning for the future is a critical role of a chief officer. They must bring a vision to the department and the community. Maintaining a status quo is not a vision and will not motivate or inspire current members or recruit new volunteers. It is hard to break through all of the day-to-day administrative issues and emergency calls to focus on the big picture and the long-term plan, but this is an essential role of a successful leader.

Some of these elements are easier to adopt than others. Leadership does not always come naturally. It is a myth that the only way to be a great leader is to be born into it. Leadership is something that can be learned. Great organizations and their leaders teach others to be leaders. For instance, the Disney Corporation created the Disney Institute for the sole purpose of teaching leadership, and now it offers its leadership classes to others outside of Disney.

There are thousands of colleges and organizations that successfully teach people to be leaders. There is no need to limit a department's leadership training to emergency services programs. Leadership cuts across industries, job titles and ranks. The skills it takes to manage a nonprofit food bank or a multinational corporation are equally applicable to the emergency services.

Other sources of fire and EMS leadership training include the NVFC Virtual Classroom, the IAFC-VCOS and the NFA.

Section 2: Setting realistic expectations

When recruiting and onboarding new members, the department must set clear and realistic expectations so that everyone understands what they have signed up for. They must also understand the expectations that recruits have for the department when they join, such as being accepted and respected. The following are tips for setting clear expectations for the volunteer so they understand what is required of them as well as meeting the volunteer's expectations of how they will be treated.

- **Hold an orientation session for new applicants before conducting interviews or making hiring decisions.** Tell them what the job truly entails and the number and mix of calls. Tell them how often they should expect to be called upon. Explain all of the non-fire and EMS duties such as apparatus checks,

report writing, station cleaning and community service projects. Explain the duty and training schedule (if applicable) and time requirements. Departments that do this find that many applicants drop out at this stage, but this is good. Having people drop out early in the process saves the department time and money in training someone who is not interested or cannot commit the time. It prevents morale issues and makes for a smoother-running organization. Those that stay on through the process will be happier and better members of the department because their expectations are being met.

- **Post written training schedules at either quarterly, semiannual or annual intervals.** Duty calendars and written policies on trading duty shifts or absences for things such as work conflicts, sick children and vacations are critical. These policies and schedules need to be flexible and realistic, taking into account today's hectic schedules and the need for a work-life-volunteer balance.

- **Influence the department's public image by posting what's real on social media.** Departments can shape their public image on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube and in media releases. Don't just show heroic images or repost stock images from other sources. Show actual day-to-day activities, such as firefighters testing hose, cleaning the station and checking out a possible gas leak in knee-deep snow. Use images of staff in the rain at motor vehicle incidents, sitting in a class on stroke protocols and cleaning the ambulance after a call. This approach sets realistic expectations and will attract new members by being authentic and genuine.

- **Immediately stop any and all hazing and bullying.** New recruits join the department with the expectation that they will be accepted. If a department is going to successfully recruit new people and foster a functional, effective team, it needs to think of hazing and bullying behaviors from the perspective of new recruits. Why would someone want to be part of an organization that treats them negatively and possibly harmfully? Hazing or bullying done under the guise of "good intentions" on the part of long-time members doesn't matter. Nor does their view of what new people should be able to bear in terms of ribbing, teasing or other hazing practices. What matters is how new people perceive these behaviors. The quickest way to drive out new members is to have them feel unwelcomed, harassed, bullied or that their safety is threatened by other members. Put policies in place to address these behaviors and their consequences and consistently enforce them.

- **Demonstrate that leadership values all members.** Departments need to look at their policies and procedures to make sure they are supporting their new and long-term members equally. They need to consider their customs and ask how they might be perceived by new members joining the department. Will they see any of these customs as department leadership not caring about them? Some behaviors are so habitual the leaders may not even notice that they are detrimental. For example, when a new member comes on board, it is still common to hand them a set of ill-fitting, worn-out PPE and tell them the department will get them new gear once they've earned it or proven themselves. The new recruit will likely perceive this as being told they are not valuable and that protecting them from injury and illness is not important. This might not be the intention, but that is what that action says to the new member.

In order to foster retention, new recruits need to know what they are signing up for — the whole of it. Leadership also needs to adjust department images, policies and customs so that new recruits feel valued from the first moment they become part of

the department. To both attract and retain members, the influence of bullies, hazers and other negative department members has to be neutralized by overwhelmingly better and more productive behavior from the rest of the department's members, and from the training and example set by other peers and leaders.

Case study: The Woodstock (Virginia) Fire Department finds setting high expectations to be an important component of its retention strategy.

"Primarily we retain volunteers by having high expectations for our members, by treating everyone fairly, and by providing our members with the flexibility they need to volunteer with us. Our department requires each of our members to attend a certain number of activities throughout the year, no matter who you are or what position you hold. These expectations are clearly spelled out and can be met no matter what an individual's level of experience, work schedule, or other commitments.

"While it may not be obvious how this helps with retention, the simple fact is that by requiring our volunteers to be a part of the organization and by making sure everyone is meeting those standards, we encourage involvement, brotherhood, and professionalism. This means members trust each other, want to help each other, want to be part of the department, and will call each other out when they do not meet expectations.

"Our department also works to make our organization fun and family friendly. We have events at the station where members can enjoy themselves outside the typically stressful role they play, including visits to pools, dinners, sporting events, etc. and by making the station an enjoyable place with a nice lounge, welcoming atmosphere, etc."

The department also provides these additional tips for recruitment and retention:

- Be positive about your department all the time; no one wants to join if they think there is something wrong with your department.
- Recruit all the time. You never know when you might spark an interest.
- Communicate with the community through every avenue possible. People aren't going to join if they don't know about you, and they get information in a wide variety of ways.
- Make room for everyone. Hundreds of super athletic, dedicated, brilliant recruits aren't out there. Instead, you have to bring in people to fill each role in your organization.
- Be prepared for people. Have a smooth membership process, mentorship program, train them and be welcoming.
- Address negative attitudes and actions. If someone in your department is not going to accept new members, that needs to be addressed before it scares every potential person away. Likewise if there are demographic issues, internal fighting, etc.

Section 3: Health and safety considerations

As with all operational and functional practices, every fire and EMS department should have clear policies and procedures in place when it comes to the health and safety of first responders. Personnel is the most important asset any department has. Building and maintaining a safety culture will enhance the health and safety of members, build loyalty, and ensure members are able to respond for many years to come.

The National Fallen Firefighters Foundation's 16 Firefighter Life Safety Initiatives are recommended for all fire department operations. Initiative #1 states: "Define and advocate the need for a cultural change within the fire service relating to safety; incorporating leadership, management, supervision, accountability and personal responsibility." For safety's sake, it is imperative that fire service leaders incorporate this life safety initiative in order to maintain a safe work environment.

Physical health and safety

Designing and adhering to standard operating policies and procedures to protect members is critical. Ensure that these policies and procedures are up to date, infiltrate all department trainings, and that they are enforced and reinforced well beyond training. It is all too common to see something taught in training and then negated later by cultural norms that dictate something is done a different (less safe) way. Provide annual physicals for members and encourage them to talk to their own doctors about the hazards they face as a first responder. Ensure members are aware of other risks, such as chemical exposures that can lead to cancer, and provide a mechanism for them to track these exposures as well as tools to wash and decontaminate their gear. Ensure PPE fits properly and isn't too big or too small, posing a hazard to the wearer.

Even small things can communicate concern and care for the health of members, such as negotiating a first responder discount with a local gym or access to a community rec center, starting a friendly fitness competition, or providing healthy snacks at the station.

Behavioral health

Behavioral health is as important as physical health. The continued number of tragic deaths to suicide in the fire and emergency services is difficult to comprehend. In addition, many firefighters and EMS providers leave the service due to mental health impacts they experience that go untreated. Department leaders must work to identify the impact of behavioral health challenges on the well-being of members. Know how to recognize signs, symptoms, risks and protective factors for behavioral health challenges, including depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and addiction. According to the National Center for PTSD, roughly 50% of the U.S. population is exposed to traumatic stress, but only 7-8% develop PTSD. In the emergency services, these rates are higher. It is reasonable to assume that 100% of emergency responders are exposed to traumatic stress. In a 2015 study of 1,027 firefighters conducted by Stanley et al., rates of suicidal ideation were 46.8%, suicide planning were 19.2% and suicide attempts were 15.5%.

Limiting the number of responders exposed to traumatic scenes and keeping junior members away from difficult calls can help reduce the impact. Providing resources, maintaining open communications through stress debriefings, and establishing peer support and chaplain programs will benefit all members. If necessary, bring in professional help or clergy to provide a safe haven for discussion after a traumatic incident. It is the duty of department leadership to support their members by making sure they have the means available to get the help they need.

The NVFC, in partnership with the American Psychological Association and the Firefighter Behavioral Health Alliance released the "Psychologically Healthy Fire Departments: Implementation Toolkit" to help fire department leaders promote and support well-being among their members. They also compiled the "Directory of Behavioral Health Professionals," which is a listing of local providers who either have firsthand knowledge of the fire and emergency services or have been trained to help emergency responders and their families. EAPs are another source of support to first responders. Such programs may be available through the department's insurance carrier or by collaborating with local government to expand an existing EAP to volunteers.

In action: Recognizing that mental health is directly tied to retention and wanting to better support their members, Moscow (Idaho) Volunteer Fire and Ambulance increased their emphasis on peer support and mental health resources. The city of Moscow provides an EAP to the volunteers; volunteers can receive a certain number of counseling visits through the program to address any issues, such as trauma, relationship difficulties, financial challenges, etc. Additional mental health services are provided through the University of Idaho Counseling and Testing Center.

The department also offers free mental health training to their volunteers on topics, including PTSD; resiliency; critical incident stress management; Question, Persuade, Refer; and Mental Health First Aid. "All trainings on mental health and resiliency (and pretty much any other trainings on other topics) are free to volunteers. These trainings have been funded through our department, through Latah County, through our local hospital Gritman Medical Center, the City of Moscow and/or City of Pullman, and University of Idaho. We tap into any resources available and share this with our volunteers and volunteer leadership."

Insurance

Insurance is another important consideration when it comes to the health and safety of first responders. First responders operate in dangerous environments, and many volunteers do so without the protections afforded to their full-time, career counterparts who have robust workers' compensation, retirement and disability plans. Most states provide some underlying workers' compensation for volunteer responders, but it typically is not sufficient in the case of a long-term disability due to an injury or illness.

For example, wage calculation for workers' compensation for a firefighter may be based on a state average for the equivalent salary for their level of firefighting certification, yet the firefighter could be earning significantly more than this in their career. Some

states make workers' compensation for volunteer firefighters a voluntary (not mandated) purchase, and some states do not provide any workers' compensation coverage to volunteers. Some states may only provide coverage for medical expenses but do not account for lost wages for that firefighter who cannot work due to illness or injury. In many states, a heart attack or cardiovascular event may not be included in workers' compensation coverage.

As a result, volunteer firefighters and EMS providers have unique insurance needs that should be considered by their respective emergency services organizations. Coverage options can include the following:

- **Accident and health (A&H)/accident and sickness (A&S) coverage:** Typically provides coverage in excess of workers' compensation and includes covered injury/illness lump sum death benefits, short- and long-term disability benefits, and other medical expense benefits that help bridge the gap between what workers' compensation pays and actual lost wages and incurred expenses; in the instances of a workers' compensation denial, the A&H/A&S coverage may be all that a volunteer responder has.
- **24-hour accidental death and dismemberment coverage:** Provides injury, death and dismemberment coverage both "on-duty" and 24 hours a day when not performing an activity for the department; may include an increased death benefit for line-of-duty deaths. This is an affordable way to provide coverage for volunteer responders that gives them coverage beyond department activities.
- **Group life coverage:** Guaranteed-issue group life insurance for all department members with no individual medical underwriting; provides life insurance coverage for department activities as well as anything outside of the department.
- **Critical illness coverage:** Provides coverage for certain covered illnesses and cancers regardless of how they manifested.
- **Cancer insurance coverage:** Provides cancer coverage for certain covered cancers and may be state-specific based on cancer presumption or cancer insurance laws for volunteer firefighters.
- **First Responder Assistance Program (or an EAP):** Provides a variety of support services for volunteer firefighters, EMS providers and their families for issues such as mental health, substance abuse, relationship problems and gambling problems; may be purchased as a stand-alone product or through an A&H policy.

Consider working with local government to determine if there are existing policies that can be expanded to cover department volunteers. While insurance policies come with a cost, it is important to note that volunteers save their communities thousands of dollars every year. The cost of insurance is still significantly less than hiring and insuring a paid fire and emergency services department staff.

In action: Mulvane (Kansas) Fire Rescue works with the state government to provide insurance and retirement benefits to support volunteer retention. "Kansas has a statewide Firefighter Relief Benefit Fund sponsored through the Kansas Insurance Department. We receive monies each year from the state to purchase insurance benefits for our firefighters, and we issue a $10,000 retirement annuity to each member at 10 years of service. They receive the annuity with interest after they retire with a minimum of 20 years of service."

Section 4: Building camaraderie

Camaraderie is mutual trust and friendship among people who spend a lot of time together. It is no surprise that volunteers frequently cite camaraderie and friendships as primary reasons why they join or continue to volunteer with a department. Camaraderie can get first responders through difficult calls, challenging personal times, and the many highs and lows that go hand-in- hand with emergency response.

Building camaraderie and cohesiveness fosters a connection between volunteers that keeps morale high and volunteers motivated to respond, train and engage. There are several ways to do this.

- **Create a welcoming environment.** Have a defined onboarding process where new members are welcomed from day 1. Introduce the new member to their peers and explain the roles and responsibilities of each position and member. Ensure they understand the goals of the organization and the team and maintain accessibility to leadership.
- **Value individual differences.** People from different backgrounds and generations bring different skill sets to the department. Learn what their skills and interests are and how they can best fit the team. Perhaps a more senior member loves to share knowledge and would make a great mentor for younger members. Maybe a petite member devised a way to accomplish a challenging fireground task safely and can share that technique with new recruits. Or maybe a multilingual member can help translate department materials for the community.
- **Discourage toxic behaviors.** Avoid any appearance of favoritism, discourage cliques and address any conflicts as soon as they arise. Avoid gossip and rumors with clear communication and policies that prevent bullying and harassment.
- **Encourage social events.** In addition to training and responding to calls together, find ways team members can have fun on and off duty. Schedule a time to work out together, ask members to make and share a favorite family dish during station meals, or schedule outside events such as picnics or sporting events where members can bond. Celebrate milestones together such as birthdays, work anniversaries and more.

The challenge is to maintain that unity and dedication to the mission. Fire and emergency services leaders should work to create and maintain a supportive and inclusive atmosphere. Members that feel they are heard and can be part of the solution will bring unity within the department. Creating that second family — that fire service family — will strengthen the bond between members, improve morale, and set an outward-facing image of teamwork and unity that will only serve to make recruitment and retention easier.

Section 5. Training requirements

The time commitment of being a volunteer is a consistent concern voiced by both current and prospective first responders. Training alone requires countless hours across multiple evenings and weekends, placing a strain on volunteers who often juggle a full-time job along with family and other commitments. According to the NVFC's 2020 study on volunteer retention, "while the volunteers recognized the importance of training, many spoke to the inflexibility of training and times offered." Some volunteers believe that the requirements are too much, and others believe that the intensive training standards have increased the professionalism and pride of the volunteer fire and emergency services. It seems clear that there is a need to make training more accessible and flexible for members, while still meeting department needs. Otherwise, the time required to meet training requirements will continue to be a major negative factor in the recruitment and retention of volunteer members.

Closer look: Training doesn't have to be a barrier to retention. Many departments leverage training as an asset for members and a tool to advance retention. The Gilt Edge (Tennessee) Volunteer Fire Department makes training a part of its culture. "We have a high standard of training, which instills pride in the organization. Members are required to obtain Hazardous Materials Awareness/Hazardous Materials Operations, Firefighter I, Firefighter II, and Emergency Medical Responder within 24 months of joining. We were told by some that this was too much and that we would drive people away or discourage new members. Four years later, we are stronger than we have ever been in the department's 33-year history. We train hard on weekly drills, and we regularly send members to outside training opportunities."

Some departments use training as a retention tool by offering state certifications to help their members advance. For instance, at the Daggett (California) Fire Department: "We support the retention of our volunteers by offering continuing training by our state-certified fire instructors. These courses allow the volunteers to gain valuable knowledge while obtaining various state certifications. We also partner with a local nonprofit, Silver Valley Fire Alliance, who provides monetary reimbursement for fees paid to attend fire training courses not offered by the department."

Foothills Fire and Rescue (Golden, Colorado) also found certifications to be an incentive for its members. "We provide in-house training programs for new recruits to receive state certification at no charge. We also provide weekly training classes throughout the year for continuing education and recertification hours, partnering with neighboring departments including Highlands Rescue, Alpine Rescue, and Evergreen Fire Department for well-rounded training."

At the Royersford (Pennsylvania) Fire Department, members appreciate the opportunity to expand their training in a convenient location. "We have an EMS Division which operates multiple ALS units in two counties. Many of our members have been cross-trained in EMS, opening opportunities to gain experience in the medical arena as well. We've also created a partnership with Harrisburg Area Community College to host Emergency Medical Responder (EMR) & Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) courses in-house. Bringing the training to our members has certainly helped to keep them interested and more versatile."

Some ways to accomplish more flexible and accessible training opportunities include the following:

- Training delivery models for volunteers should be structured in a manner that contains elements of creativity and flexibility.
- Training schedules and required training should be published at the beginning of the department's year (either calendar or fiscal) so volunteers can have the longest possible lead time to arrange their schedules in order to attend training.
- Department training officers should combine mandatory training into the training schedule to accomplish departmental objectives and maximize training opportunities.
- A training progression plan should be established so all volunteers have a clear understanding of the class sequence necessary to accomplish their training goals.
- Adopt a training regimen that maximizes the use of the online, modular delivery systems and hybrid programs so volunteers can acquire knowledge in a way that fits their work schedules and busy lifestyles, while ensuring that training objectives are met.

In action: The Florida Bureau of Fire Standards and Training launched a new approach to train the state's volunteer firefighters. The "Grow as You Go" program provides a modular online training program that allows volunteer firefighters to serve their department at 5 different levels as they complete the modules needed to receive their Volunteer Firefighter Certificate of Completion.

- Develop training schedules that offer repeated presentations throughout the year at different times and days of the week. For each training, make sure both weekday evening and weekend offerings are available to accommodate different schedules.
- Ensure instructors are competent, certified where required, engaging and adhere to the time schedule laid out for the training session.

- Sponsor out-of-town travel to conferences and other training events so members can acquire training on the latest operational techniques, health and safety, and other current issues that is not available locally.
- While some training can only be hands on, there is a lot that can be accomplished online. To make it easier for members to complete required training, utilize online resources as appropriate, supplemented with in-person drills.
- Online courses can be taught through a variety of platforms such as Zoom, WebEx or Microsoft Teams, and many state and national emergency services organizations offer online training, such as the NVFC, IAFC, NFA, Underwriters Laboratories (UL), NFPA, colleges and universities with fire science programs, and some state training academies.

Case study: Innovation and flexibility helped improve basic training rates in the State of Oklahoma. Thanks to a SAFER grant, the Oklahoma State Firefighters Association (OSFA) was able to conduct a study to identify the biggest needs of their local fire departments. The top answer by far was training. Without any state training mandates or any permanent source of funding for the state training agency, Oklahoma fire departments were having trouble getting their members to complete Firefighter I.

Armed with this information and with an understanding of the lifestyles and work/family commitments of their members, OSFA used the SAFER funding to develop a hybrid training model throughout the state. Instead of firefighters having to travel to the state fire academy, OSFA began implementing Firefighter I classes online, supplemented with regional skills days for the hands-on requirements. Firefighters can complete the classroom portion of their coursework online and at their own leisure, with OSFA assigning deadlines for them to get their work done before they can attend the hands-on skills days.

To help students that aren't as confident in their reading and testing abilities, or that lack the time to sit down and read the course material, OSFA partnered with Fire Protection Publications to develop an audiobook that students can listen to while they read along or while they are driving their combines through their farm ground.

The hands-on regional skills days take place every other weekend for about 12 weeks. OSFA has found that the camaraderie and confidence gained by students who participate in this hybrid model match that of students who attend a traditional fire academy format.

To further support the initiative, OSFA also offers new recruits a full NFPA firefighter physical, and once they pass the required International Fire Service Accreditation Congress test at the end of their class, they give them a full set of PPE.

The program has had great success in Oklahoma, enabling firefighters in even the most rural parts of the state to complete their Firefighter I training. Before the program was implemented, about 45 firefighters each year completed their Firefighter I training. Since the program launched, that annual average has increased to 125.

When determining the training requirements necessary for an individual department, the volunteer fire and emergency services must not lose sight that the most essential training is on those incidents and situations which frequently occur within the primary response area. In addition, it's likely that not every volunteer needs to be trained in every possible skill. Often, the volunteer emergency services attempt to be a "jack-of-all-trades," but this can lead to burnout as it increases the time demand on already busy volunteers. Many times, there are technical response teams that offer specialty classes. Consider if this technical training could be considered optional and not essential, or made available for some, but not required by all.

Ensure that volunteers understand why training is so important and be respectful of time during training sessions. Let participants know their time is valued by starting and ending at the scheduled times, avoid war stories, and stick to the core requirements of the course or training session. Finding ways to accomplish training objectives and goals while minimizing the extraordinary time burden placed on volunteers will benefit the department and staff alike.

Consider this: The amount of training it takes for a volunteer to be able to respond to all needs is an immovable barrier to some prospective volunteers and may result in current volunteers leaving the department. One solution involves an adjustment to the traditional way of thinking that requires every volunteer to do everything. Instead, departments can consider allowing volunteers to just focus on specific areas of response, keeping in mind minimum state training requirements and also the minimum training requirements the department needs to ensure adequate response.

The Lewisville (North Carolina) Fire Department found that allowing volunteers to focus on just the roles they want to play in the department has positively impacted their membership.

"Citizens working full-time jobs don't have the time available to commit to hundreds of hours of training to become certified responders. EMT is 190 hours minimum, Firefighter training is 340-hour minimum, and Technical Rescuer is 120 hours minimum. These three base certifications total 650 hours, just to learn the basics! We have lowered mandatory requirements for new members. Every volunteer no longer has to meet certified firefighter training requirements.

They can serve as firefighters only, EMS only, technical rescuers only, or support team members only.

"For many years, the volunteer fire service has responded to the increasing demand for training by mandating more and more time from its volunteers. In Lewisville, we have shifted our focus from making volunteers be present to making them 'want' to be present. We have shortened pre-training business meetings to significant event awareness only. This way we dive head-first into active training. Train like you want to perform... get in, get the work done, go home."

Section 6: Volunteer benefits and incentives

Incentives, benefits and awards are used in the volunteer emergency services as a retention tool. Successful incentive programs are diverse and appeal to members of all ages, experiences and ranks. There is not a one-size- fits-all incentive program that works in every fire department; however, it should be equitable within the fire department. It is recommended that a menu list of options, based on budget and resource restrictions, be provided to the membership on an annual or regular basis to get feedback on what members want to receive.

Although benefits are not typically the reason why individuals volunteer, it is important to have a strategy informed by member input on how to structure incentives to maximize their member-retention value. For some departments, an annual awards dinner with family members may be sufficient. For other departments, T-shirts may be the key. It cannot be stressed enough that the ideas in this section are not intended to be a comprehensive list of incentives, benefits and awards. Rather, it is a starting place to begin to think creatively about what can be offered in a fire department depending on the membership needs and wants.

Departments must also consider local, state, tribal or territorial laws and regulations when implementing a retention program to ensure all applicable laws are being followed. For instance, there may be tax implications, charitable or labor regulations, or other factors to consider.

> **Consider this:** The Carlisle (Massachusetts) Fire Department warns that volunteer benefits should be tied to actual service. "Be VERY CAREFUL about blanket benefits that are not tied to engagement. We know the number of hours a week/month that a member is available for calls and can tie benefits to that. Benefits that are blanket can cause friction for someone who comes to every call versus those who seldom respond, etc."

Department-inclusion incentives

Broadly speaking, incentives can serve 2 purposes: compensation for a volunteer's time, effort and personal expense related to volunteering, and recognition of the value of the service being provided by a volunteer, which helps them to feel included in the department. Uniform and department paraphernalia (T-shirts, caps, pins, etc., with the department logo) are relatively low-cost ways of signaling to volunteers that they are valued members of the department.

Direct monetary incentives

The key reason why someone volunteers or continues to volunteer shouldn't be a monetary incentive. However, it can often be an incentive to continue to volunteer even when feeling overextended with other responsibilities. Monetary incentives may include direct payment for calls, retirement plans, tax credits, access to insurance (health, dental and life), and tuition and housing assistance.

Direct payments for calls

Some departments are able to offer a monetary incentive for responding to calls and/or training hours. Volunteer stipends vary considerably among departments, states and regions. Sometimes pay is linked to the number of calls or the number of hours spent on calls and training or a comprehensive points system. Other departments budget a specific dollar amount that is then distributed at the end of the year.

> **In action:** According to an article in the Observer-Reporter on Sept. 2, 2020, the North Franklin Township (Pennsylvania) supervisors voted to support volunteer firefighter retention by providing funding to the fire department for a pay-per-call option. The township will provide a lump sum to the department on a quarterly basis, and the department can then distribute a $20 per call stipend to volunteer firefighters who meet the eligibility requirements. The funding comes from the township's general fund. The department hopes it will provide an incentive for existing members to come to calls, as well as attract new members. In addition, the local government had also recently implemented a 20% tax reduction for volunteer firefighters.

It is recommended that the department seek legal counsel with someone who specializes in employment law to assist with formulating a compensation plan. A qualified expert can provide the language needed to create a policy that conforms to labor laws and help the department avoid potential issues with withholding taxes and other payroll-related concerns.

Retirement plans

Retirement plans, pension plans and LOSAPs can be used as powerful retention motivators. They are complex to manage because of state and federal tax codes, so it is important to do research and seek clarity on what is available in your state. For example, most pension plans exclude LOSAP from being a Deferred Compensation Plan as long as 2 criteria are met: The individual must be a bona fide volunteer, and the annual contribution for any person in the plan cannot exceed $6,000 (as of 2020), though this cap is expected to increase over time with inflation. LOSAPs may provide a lifetime monthly income payment once a volunteer reaches a certain entitlement age or a specified amount of service. Other LOSAPs may provide a lump sum award based on the number of years of service and the individual's age.

It is important to note that retirement plans appeal mostly to long-term volunteers. According to the NFPA, 41% of volunteer firefighters have served for more than 10 years, so this is an important group. 10% have served for less than 1 year, and 27% have served for 1-5 years. Based on anecdotal evidence, there tends to be significant turnover among this under-5-years cohort, and a LOSAP probably will not appeal to them as much as a regular stipend would. As such, it is important to know what your members want when it comes to incentives and benefits.

Many communities have a difficult time offering these types of incentives because of a lack of money to contribute to these plans. It may be useful to actively and regularly engage local government entities to determine what is available for volunteers and if there is room for increasing the availability of a retirement plan. In addition, the SAFER grant offered through FEMA can be used to fund these incentives.

Tax credits

Personal property tax exemptions and credits for volunteers contributing a set number of qualifications can be a motivator for some members to maintain their membership. Tax credits can be a powerful incentive to younger or shorter-term volunteers who are not thinking about retirement benefits as a motivating factor. Partnering with local government to discuss this possibility can often have positive outcomes. It is another example of an opportunity to work with local government agencies to afford them the opportunity to view volunteers as a cost-saving entity in their community who should be rewarded for their service.

Property tax credits are particularly useful in high-cost-of-living areas. Property tax credits make it less expensive for volunteers to live in the community, thus making it less likely that they will move and leave the department.

In action: Local government can be a great ally to enable the fire department to offer an array of incentives to their volunteers. The Holiday Park Volunteer Fire Department (Plum Borough, Pennsylvania) partners with several local government agencies to help provide retention incentives. The borough of Plum provides tax exemptions and insurance while Allegheny County offers free community college as well as free ski lift, wave pool and park pavilion rentals in the county parks.

According to a June 1, 2021, article in The Reading Eagle, Exeter Township in Pennsylvania adopted a tax forgiveness ordinance for residents who are active volunteers, in complement to a 2016 state legislature decision to offer property and earned-income tax breaks to volunteer firefighters who meet certain criteria, as long as the municipality adopts an enabling ordinance. The article reported that the Exeter supervisors updated the enabling ordinance to increase the municipal property tax credit from 15% to 50%. Firefighters that reside in the township can also receive an earned income tax rebate of up to $500 per year.

Insurance

Health, dental or life insurance can be a strong motivator for retaining membership, especially if they do not have insurance through their employers. It may be cost-effective for a municipality to include volunteers in their group health insurance. The local municipality can purchase health insurance from a health care provider and add the volunteers on to their policy. The department may need to establish a limit to which it will contribute to the policy, and members may be required to pay any additional costs.

Tuition and housing assistance

A very popular recruitment tool has been providing tuition and housing assistance for volunteers who have been active for a set number of years. Some states provide tuition-free scholarships for volunteers in state schools. Some fire and EMS departments provide education stipends or scholarships for volunteers who have met certain milestones, sometimes even extending these opportunities to the volunteers' children. Housing assistance can be provided in many different aspects, such as residency programs. Some departments in rural communities have purchased a home near the

fire station where volunteers can live in exchange for being available on specific days or for a certain number of hours per month. Some states offer low-interest housing loans to volunteer emergency responders.

> **In action:** An article from Oct. 22, 2020, in The Morning Call reported the Fogelsville Volunteer Fire Co. (Upper Macungie Township, Pennsylvania) allows firefighters to live rent free at the firehouse in exchange for 40 hours of volunteer fire service. Those in the live-in program are able to get to calls significantly faster than volunteers responding from home. The live-in program is utilized by younger members who are now responding to overnight calls as well, whereas before the average age of those responding to calls after midnight was about 60.

Indirect monetary incentives

Indirect monetary incentives are useful for communities that do not have the financial resources to offer monetary incentives. Some examples of indirect monetary incentives include discounts to local family-friendly attractions, gym memberships, medical examinations, training or education benefits at local schools, and take-home vehicles that can be used for personal business as needed. A good place to start is to ask local businesses and local government if they would be interested in offering discounts to active members. Even something as cost-efficient as a movie theater offering a free movie night once a month, or local government providing access to a community center, can go a long way in having a member feel appreciated. This can also help promote local businesses.

> **Consider this:** The federal Volunteer Responder Incentive Protection Act of 2019 exempts property tax benefits and up to $600 per year of other non-LOSAP incentives that volunteer emergency responders receive as retention benefits from being subject to federal income tax, withholding and reporting requirements. This exemption was made permanent in December 2020.

Section 7. Recognizing volunteers

Volunteers want to feel appreciated within their department and within their community. Even volunteers who receive their satisfaction from serving their community and the camaraderie within the department want to know that their contributions matter. According to NVFC's "Psychologically Healthy Fire Departments: Implementation Toolkit," recognition of efforts can increase member satisfaction, morale and self-esteem. This may also lead to better engagement, performance, lower turnover and the ability to attract and retain high-quality members.

Appreciation can come in many forms. Something as simple as a handwritten thank you note from a community member, fire chief or a government official can be very meaningful. If the department has a PIO or someone

who acts in that role, a press release to local media can be used to spotlight the accomplishments of volunteers who have completed a training course or achieved a professional or personal accomplishment. Department and community newsletters and social media can also be a good tool to highlight milestones and achievements. Consider asking the mayor or other local government official to issue a proclamation during National Volunteer Week to recognize the contributions of department volunteers.

Awards banquets allow members a chance to enjoy some downtime together while celebrating accomplishments. Consider establishing awards for lengths of service, rookie of the year, firefighter of the year or for other topics of importance to the organization such as a health and safety award or recruiter of the year for the individual who recruits the most volunteers for the department. Invite the mayor, city/town manager or county superintendent to help present these awards and meet the extraordinary volunteers who earned them.

There are many ways to let volunteers know they are appreciated, and not all of them require a substantial budget or big fanfare. Sometimes a simple acknowledgment at a department meeting or even in day-to-day activities can go a long way in communicating appreciation.

Consider this: Recognition is a low-cost but effective way to let volunteers know they are valued and appreciated. In the NVFC's retention study conducted in 2020, 44% of former volunteers and 58% of current volunteers cited giving out awards or honors annually and when members reach service milestones as something they think would have a positive impact on volunteer retention. As the Richmond (Maine) Fire Department notes: "Staff recognition is important. [Our volunteers] are constantly being recognized on social media, monthly newsletters, and town reports." At Foothills Fire & Rescue (Golden, Colorado), "We host annual events to recognize our volunteers and show our appreciation, including family bowling nights, annual awards banquet, firefighter Olympics, BBQs, and other fun gatherings."

The Rapid Valley Volunteer Fire Department (Rapid City, South Dakota) recognizes volunteers with awards as well as utilizes community involvement to help volunteers feel connected, appreciated and part of something bigger. "The department has recognition packages for every five years of commitment. We have [also] added several public education and public involvement opportunities. These opportunities allow the members to participate in a light-hearted time, interacting with the public without there being an emergency incident involved. These events include open houses (recruitment), pancake suppers (fundraisers), participating in the community holiday parade of lights (social), and our newest — truck-or-treat (community event). This has given the longer serving members some new interest and it shows the new members the essence of family and community involvement that the volunteer fire service is all about."

Section 8: Nonoperational volunteers

Fire and EMS departments are faced with a variety of tasks to keep the doors open and the department functioning, and not all of these include fighting fires and responding to emergency calls. Consider seeking nonoperational volunteers to assist with these tasks, removing this burden from your operational volunteers and providing the community with other, meaningful ways to engage with your department.

Volunteers with specific skill sets

Departments often need specific skills to help them function efficiently and effectively. From providing physicals to members to assisting with training, accounting functions or even providing legal advice, there are members of the community that may be eager to help in these less conventional roles:

- **Accountants:** From managing day-to-day finances to conducting audits and setting up sound financial policies, departments can benefit from accounting expertise to guide or help with their work.
- **Boat operators/scuba divers:** In response areas with bodies of water, boat operators and scuba divers can spearhead water rescue teams.
- **Construction workers:** Individuals in the construction industry are familiar with building codes and building construction and can assist with training.
- **Fire protection engineers, sprinkler and fire alarm system contractors and inspectors:** People in supporting roles of fire prevention and community risk reduction often already have much knowledge about fire science and can offer training to fire department members and the community at large.
- **Grant writers:** Grant writing can be time-intensive and requires a specific skill set. A local grant writer can help the department secure funds for their recruitment and retention efforts, new gear and equipment, and more.
- **Human resources professionals:** From recruiting new volunteers and designing or managing the onboarding process, to tracking ongoing training and certifications, human resources professionals have many skills that would benefit a volunteer emergency services department. Whether they volunteer on a regular basis or simply serve as an advisor to the department, their skill set is unique and beneficial.
- **Lawyers:** Some volunteer departments recruit lawyers to volunteer or to offer pro bono services. Since most volunteer fire and EMS departments are corporations, these individuals can provide necessary and free guidance to the board of directors or trustees. Lawyers are often willing to consult with their fellow department members about issues of liability and possibly even more personal matters for members — for example, wills, trusts and other legal issues.
- **Marketing professionals:** Individuals with experience in communications and fundraising can serve as PIOs or help inform the community that volunteers are needed. A social media expert or website developer can help departments build a solid online presence.

- **Physicians and nurses:** They are easily trained to the paramedic level. Some states allow doctors and nurses to directly challenge EMT tests without taking the full class. Doctors, physician assistants and nurse practitioners can also be recruited to give physicals to members.
- **Restaurateurs:** Chefs are often knowledgeable and helpful for department fundraisers, such as breakfasts and barbecues.
- **Teachers:** Teachers provide a myriad of skills and may have extended periods of time off from the classroom. They can also provide guidance on public education efforts.
- **Trade professionals:** Electricians; plumbers; and heating, ventilating and air conditioning specialists can offer experience that is valuable to emergency services departments.
- **Truck drivers:** Truck drivers are familiar with driving large apparatus and may be able to assist with training drivers and offering highway safety training.

In action: The Lewisville (North Carolina) Fire Department found that delving into new areas and creating opportunities for all has expanded its services and helped its membership thrive. "Lewisville Fire Department has tried to be forward-thinking regarding emerging technologies. We recently added a new UAV (drone) program to our arsenal of abilities. We have experienced more interest in this program than any service delivery addition in over two decades. Through new programming such as UAV, an increased social media presence across multiple platforms, and the new 'there is something for everyone at Lewisville Fire Department' mentality, we have experienced a surge in membership from new and returning former members alike."

Consider this: In addition to finding individual volunteers with special skill sets, departments can consider approaching other organizations or companies for assistance with specialized areas. For instance, the local hospital may be able to provide human resources assistance to the department, tap into their network as a source for volunteer recruitment and/or provide annual medical evaluations to department personnel. A local business may have resources to assist with things like marketing, accounting or even legal advice.

Fire Corps and auxiliary programs

Departments have used auxiliary programs for decades as a way to incorporate nonoperational volunteers into daily operations. Auxiliaries have served many roles, from operating a department canteen to conducting fundraisers or assisting with the department open house.

Historically, departments frequently called these programs Ladies' Auxiliaries; however, with the growing diversity of the fire and emergency services, this is outdated, and the name alone could deter perfectly capable and enthusiastic volunteers.

Since 2004, the NVFC has operated the national Fire Corps program to help departments create and maintain teams of skilled volunteers to assist with any number of nonoperational duties, from rehab services, to public education, to community risk reduction activities and so much more. Whatever the name, nonoperational volunteers provide an excellent way of engaging community members in meaningful ways while reducing the burden placed on firefighters and EMS providers to keep the department operating smoothly. As an added bonus, these programs have proven to be an effective recruitment tool, with many members making the leap from a nonoperational to operational role once they get a chance to see and experience the emergency services lifestyle.

In action: Nonoperational volunteers can be a big asset to an emergency services department. Mulvane (Kansas) Fire Rescue has a resource team that assists the department in various ways. "The resource team are citizens with an interest in helping us, but do not want to run into burning buildings. One of our resource members is a photographer; he goes with us to capture some incredible images of us at work to share in our station and on social media. Another member of this team is a county dispatcher/EMT who comes in and helps staff our EOC when needed. We have also had a mechanic and a secretary/treasurer on our resource team. Many times, these people are friends or relatives of department members."

Section 9: Mentor programs

According to the NVFC's 2020 retention research, former volunteers cited the following as the top reasons for leaving their department:

- Cliques and groups that exclude others.
- Department leadership that doesn't understand or support the needs of members.
- A department atmosphere where members of different generations don't get along.
- A lack of camaraderie or sense of community among everyone.

In this same study, current volunteers listed mentor programs as most likely to have a positive impact on retention. A successful mentoring program which pairs new volunteers with more experienced members may assist in helping recruits feel less isolated, help address any generational tension by forming bonds between younger and senior members, provide a link between senior/leadership and newer recruits, and help to establish a better sense of community and camaraderie.

In addition, mentor programs can positively affect the culture of the organization, allow for leadership development and facilitate camaraderie between the mentors and mentees. The purpose of a mentoring program is to share knowledge, help synthesize and articulate experiences and actions, facilitate problem-solving, and provide an encouraging environment. Mentoring is also highly effective in passing along soft skills such as leadership, team building, communications, and department history and culture.

There are several resources that can assist departments in developing mentor programs. One such resource is the IAFC/Volunteer Workforce Solutions' online, self-paced courses on mentoring: "Mentoring I: Re-energizing Your Department Culture Through Positive Influence" and "Mentoring II: Developing and Retaining Firefighters Through Relationships." These courses describe how to set program goals and objectives, establish performance measures, demonstrate communications skills, build trust, and identify strategies for developing the mentee's behavior and performance.

Section 10: Family support

Volunteering as a first responder affects more than just the individual volunteer. The training schedule, duty shifts and/or answering calls from home, along with the risks associated with the job, affect the entire family. The schedule may mean long hours away from home, unexpected absences, missed family events and sometimes even emotional impacts that can carry over from the station to the home. Having an emergency services volunteer in the family can also be exciting, rewarding and a great source of pride for family members. Helping families understand and adapt to the unique attributes of the volunteer lifestyle can make all the difference in volunteer retention.

In the NVFC's 2015 survey on volunteer recruitment, current and prospective volunteers cited strong family support as a driving factor in becoming and remaining a volunteer. Taking steps to facilitate that strong family support will benefit the department as well as the individual volunteer. Being open and transparent with family members, helping them to understand the change in family dynamics that volunteering can bring, and making them feel like part of the extended emergency services family can go a long way. Consider the following ways departments can foster these strong family relationships:

- Provide information to families of new members on what they can expect as a family and the importance of the work the volunteer will being doing, such as the NVFC's "What to Expect: A Guide for Family Members of Volunteer Firefighters."
- Host a family information session to help family members understand and prepare for this new lifestyle. Possible topics can include training and response schedules, community response statistics demonstrating the need for volunteers, health and safety measures in place to keep their loved ones safe, and any benefits and incentives available for volunteers and their families.
- Including family in department events such as award ceremonies, off-duty get-togethers or inviting them to help out at various community events are other great ways to bring them into the fold and make them feel like part of the team.

In addition to playing a critical role in the ability of the volunteer to stay on with the department, family members have also proven to be an excellent recruitment source, with most volunteer firefighters indicating they joined the department because they were invited by a family member or friend.

In action: The South Windsor (Connecticut) Fire Department makes sure to include families in department activities to keep them involved. "Our social side of the department provides numerous events throughout the year with a clambake, family picnic, holiday party, spouse appreciation, and numerous company level events — most at no or very little cost to the member/family."

Section 11: When it's time to say goodbye

At some point, every volunteer term will come to an end. Whether it is because the volunteer is moving, needs to step back for personal reasons or they have reached retirement age, the time to say goodbye will come. In some cases, a volunteer may just not be a good fit, and rather than choosing to leave, the department must make the difficult choice to let them go. How the department handles these situations says a lot about the organization and may communicate volumes to current volunteers who are faced daily with the decision to stay or leave.

Moving

Whether volunteers are switching jobs, looking to be closer to family or just want to change up their surroundings, occasionally they move out of the area. While this means your department is losing a valuable teammate, it could mean their new community stands to gain one. Leadership may consider reaching out to the department in the member's new community to introduce them to a prospective volunteer or provide a reference. Or perhaps the member would be willing to invite a local friend or relative to join the department or write a positive review of their experience with the department that could be used in recruitment materials.

Taking a career firefighter position

A growing trend, particularly in the Northeast and West Coast, is for volunteer fire departments to become feeder organizations or farm teams for nearby career fire departments. Volunteers get their certifications, training and field experience and then have highly sought-after skills that land them at the top of the hiring list for career departments. This creates a high turnover rate at the volunteer fire department. Managing this turnover can be expensive for the volunteer fire department, from both a financial and time investment standpoint. In many cases, career firefighters cannot or will not continue volunteering because of the rules or peer pressure at their new department.

However, some departments have been able to embrace this role as a "feeder" for career departments and make it work for them. They recognize they have a high turnover rate but get several years of service from these firefighters before they move on to their career positions. This pattern has been compared to running a college basketball team: You train them as freshmen/first years, you get great play from them as sophomores and juniors, and then they are off to the big leagues as seniors. Anything beyond their senior year is a bonus. Succeeding under these conditions requires a well-oiled recruitment, on-boarding and training system to maintain the flow of firefighters you need to meet the mission.

Retirement

As volunteers get older and look toward retirement, this may include the fire or EMS department as well. However, sending a volunteer off into retirement doesn't have to be a permanent goodbye. Often retirees are looking for ways to stay active in their community, and many of them found much of their identity within the department. Perhaps the department has nonoperational roles that retirees can help with, such as staffing rehab units, serving on the board, mentoring newer members or delivering mail or gear between stations. At a minimum, the department can take steps to ensure retirees are not forgotten and include them in activities such as an annual awards banquet or perhaps a regular retiree luncheon where they can catch up and maintain that sense of family. The department may also consider providing additional services such as counseling or transition planning to those facing retirement.

Other reasons for leaving

The are many other reasons members may have for leaving the department. Perhaps a member took on a more demanding job or family issues have occurred, such as having new child, a recent marriage or needing to step up to care for a family member who has fallen ill. Maybe they are not feeling valued or appreciated by department leadership. Unless the department knows why its members are leaving, there is little that can be done to try to retain them.

The NVFC's 2020 retention research indicates former volunteers believe a simple exit survey would have a positive impact on retention. Second in line to an exit interview is a stay interview of current volunteers who have lapsed attendance and may be considering leaving the department. These types of surveys help a department understand why a volunteer left or is considering leaving, providing the opportunity to make changes that may help keep the volunteer or assist with retention moving forward. The lack of such interviews may reinforce the perception that leadership is not concerned with member needs. See Appendices D and E for example exit and stay surveys.

By understanding why members are leaving (or considering leaving), the department can put measures in place to try to retain valued volunteers. Whether it is offering a leave of absence to get through a difficult time, putting together a more flexible schedule to allow for a better work-life-volunteer balance, or finding ways to make sure volunteers feel appreciated, knowledge is power (even when that knowledge may involve something that is difficult to hear) and may be the deciding factor between retention and attrition.

Terminating volunteers

While your department may be desperately in need of volunteers, not every volunteer is a great fit, and sometimes the wrong fit can do more harm than good. A negative personality can drag others down and degrade the morale of the department. Someone who taunts, harasses or bullies others may drive good volunteers away and can open the department to lawsuits and other liabilities. While it is never an easy task, the act of letting that volunteer go can preserve a positive department culture and sets the tone for what will or will not be tolerated at the station and on the fireground.

As there could potentially be legal ramifications for terminating a volunteer, it is best to consult with legal counsel first to make sure everything is done properly and mitigate any unforeseen consequences. This should be done in conjunction with the

local government's human resources and legal offices if the department falls under their umbrella. Departments that are separate from the local government may still be able to tap into the municipality's human resources and legal departments for their expertise. Departments that do not have legal counsel may be able to find a lawyer who can assist with the department's legal needs, including terminations, on a pro bono basis.

In action: The Kiowa (Colorado) Fire Protection District understands that those who create a toxic environment can do more harm than good for the department. "After having the responsibility of recruiting for two different fire departments, I have found that culture and good morale are imperative. Culture can be changed quicker than you think. Morale is easy, but there cannot be any cancerous people on the department. Those people should be heard and helped or go away if needed... Just over a year ago we had around eight people TOTAL on our fire department, and now we have 25 volunteers in addition to the three full-time staff. It took trimming the toxic people, having fun, and sharing what we do. Value your people and it will all fall into place."

Photo courtesy of iStock.

Part V: Marketing for the Fire Service

Most fire and EMS departments work hard to disseminate fire prevention and life safety messages, raise funds and promote volunteerism. However, like most nonprofits, many emergency services departments lack the knowledge to leverage content marketing to maximize recruitment efforts. This is because most do not fully understand the fundamentals of marketing; they fail to take a strategic approach and develop a plan, and when they do post really great content, they fail to provide a call to action.

> **Closer look:** Awareness is a significant obstacle to gaining volunteers. A national omnibus survey by the NVFC in 2014 found that 41% of respondents did not know if their local department was career, volunteer or combination, while 80% did not know if their local department was looking for volunteers. This is an issue that resonates with the South Windsor (Connecticut) Fire Department. "Many of the residents do not know that we are a volunteer fire department. We pride ourselves on being an extremely well-trained, professional department, [and] many assume we are career."

Marketing in the volunteer emergency services is the strategic use of tactics to amplify the organization's cause, recruit volunteers, solicit donations and attract supporters. Marketing is a persuasion tool used to change behavior. Marketing strategies can include a wide variety of elements and tactics, such as traditional print advertising, events, social media campaigns, words, images, experiences, compelling stories, relationships, humor, etc. Effective marketing strategies can spark action and alter how individuals will respond to a call to action.

For the volunteer fire and emergency services, one of the main goals for marketing is to move someone from being a potential volunteer to a committed volunteer. To this end, the role of marketing has 3 goals: identify, satisfy and retain.

1. **Identify.** To create an opportunity of value to a potential volunteer, a fire or EMS department must first identify a want or need the organization can address for the potential volunteer.

2. **Satisfy.** To satisfy potential volunteers, a department must work to deliver an opportunity that addresses the needs of the volunteers. The key to volunteer satisfaction is to make sure both the volunteer and the organization benefit from the exchange. This leaves the volunteer happy with the value they receive for their time and the organization satisfied with what the volunteer is giving in return.

3. **Retain.** Effective marketing in the department does not stop at identify and satisfy. Successful marketing involves retaining volunteers by creating new opportunities to foster loyalty and continued service. This prevents the costly cycle of volunteer turnover.

> **Consider this:** The message a department conveys to potential and current volunteers is important. The Gilt Edge (Tennessee) Volunteer Fire Department advises keeping the messages inspirational and focused on the positive. "Stop the 'sinking ship' recruitment messages such as 'Volunteers desperately needed' or 'What if no one answers the call.' Nobody wants to join a sinking ship! Your recruitment message should inspire people to want to serve or accept a challenge."

When taking stock in what needs or wants the fire/EMS department can address for a potential volunteer, brainstorming the following questions can be useful:

- What roles do we as an organization need filled?
- How can our roles help others meet their personal goals?
- What success stories can we use as content to show how we can meet an identified need of a potential volunteer?

Using these answers, make a list of each role that needs to be filled (firefighter, EMS, webmaster, fundraiser, educator, etc.). Next, brainstorm all the benefits gained from serving in each specific role. Then, identify stories of how volunteering with the department has helped current or past members with personal success in meeting such goals.

Brainstorming example:

Fire department volunteer needs	What we can offer that provides value to a potential member filling our need	Marketing content ideas
EMTs to staff the ambulance	Learn lifesaving skills that you can use outside of the fire/EMS department. A job skill: hospitals hire EMTs as medical technicians. A job skill for a career in EMS. A job skill: an introduction to the medical field for those considering going into the health care profession (nursing, medicine). Tuition reimbursement for hours volunteered.	Highlight a current member story of how they used their EMS skills to help someone while "off duty," such as performing CPR, dressing an injury, tending to someone who was choking. Highlight a member who used their department-provided training to get a job at a hospital. Highlight a member who used their department training to obtain a career in EMS. Highlight a member who used their department tuition benefit to obtain a degree.

Case study: The town of Canton (Connecticut) Volunteer Fire and EMS Department looked for target markets that had been trending versus diminishing. They used their findings to tap into a new audience with targeted messaging on how the department could fulfill a need:

"National trending and surveying (2018 Bureau of Labor Statistics) indicates that a key to business success is offering employees the flexibility to work from home, in an effort to enhance work/life balance. Apparently, over 40 percent of employees with advanced degrees were working remotely, at least part-time. Couple this trend with our state's highly educated workforce, and we have a formula for rethinking the role of volunteerism as an enhancement to balancing lifestyle and career.

"There are very few other volunteer opportunities that offer the diverse skills training, unique leadership experiences, flexible hours, and networking opportunities that are both transferable and valuable in any work environment than the fire and emergency medical service. And there's the opportunity.

"We've found that many of our members, after a tough day on their jobs — as educators, executives, construction workers, medical professionals, business owners, parents — actually look forward to volunteering on the ambulance, participating in a skills drill, or responding with their crew. They get so focused on the important work to be done, they can't think about anything else.

"Inspired by this information, our department's executive officer penned a letter to the editor titled 'Build Your Career Tomorrow by Volunteering Today: Rethinking the Role of Volunteering in the Age of Flexible Hours, Home-based Businesses, & the Gig Economy.'

"Our pitch: Think of it. So, you're working from home when a 911 call is dispatched. Whether you perform CPR, climb a ladder to vent a roof, or participate in a river rescue, these experiences will act as a mental escape from your workplace stress. This type of separation is critical to getting clarity, to innovate, and be more creative at work. You learn to avoid tunnel vision and instead to focus on the range of other possibilities for successful outcomes. And that's good for business and for life.

"The letter was posted in our area-wide paper, and we intend to leverage the message with additional initiatives to attract this untapped demographic that may just be waiting to be asked."

Identifying and understanding potential volunteers: Segmentation and targeting

Once the roles needed and benefits provided have been identified, explore who these roles and benefits are intended for. To be successful with marketing efforts, it is key for departments to take the necessary steps to know as much as possible about potential volunteers and design efforts around that information. Emergency services leaders can use targeting and segmentation to reach a greater number of potential volunteers that have a need the department can meet.

Segmentation is the starting point for understanding who the department is trying to reach as potential volunteers. Through segmentation, potential volunteers are divided into groups to better understand them. This will help drive marketing efforts to those potential volunteer segments that are most promising. There are different methods that can be used to segment the audience into groups that have similar wants or needs.

Using the EMT need example, a large pool of potential volunteers can be segmented into smaller sections. Specific segments for the EMT need might include the following:

- Young parents who want to learn lifesaving skills to benefit their family.
- Recent graduates who are looking for a new skill set to find employment.
- People who are interested in health care as a career or who want to gain experience prior to applying for a competitive health care education program.
- Current college students who want experience in health care to prepare them for future careers.
- Students who are trying to find ways to pay for college.

Next, create profiles of the potential volunteer segments to better visualize each group and determine which groups to invest in. To do this, describe these potential volunteers in full detail by asking the following questions:

- Who will actually volunteer?
- What do you know about this group?

- Where are they located geographically?
- Where do they shop?
- Where do they go for entertainment?
- What type of community groups are they engaged in?
- What languages do they speak?
- What types of websites and social media platforms do they use?
- What are their demographics?

Targeting can then be used to help customize resources to specific groups that will see the greatest value from the opportunity and are most likely to be recruited. Targeting is a method to determine which segments have the highest probability of becoming volunteers and then directing the marketing efforts to satisfy the need. For example, take the segment from the EMS need:

Segment:	**Current students who want experience in health care to prepare them for future careers**
Profile/Research Question #3: Where are these students located geographically compared to our need?	ABC Community College is in our jurisdiction and offers health care programs. The college advisor indicated that 65% of the students in the health care program are from our county. ABC University is in our jurisdiction and offers health care programs. The advisor indicated that the majority of the students are from out of state and attend online. Anytown High School offers a medical assistant vocational program. 100% of the students in the program are from our jurisdiction.

The answers from the profile questions will help determine if the potential volunteer base should be considered for additional research and market opportunity. In the example, looking at the answers to the profile question on geographic location, ABC University would be excluded as a target segment due to the students not residing in the jurisdiction. With students not living in the jurisdiction, marketing efforts to the target segment would most likely result in little value for the department. The focus of targeting efforts would then shift to ABC Community College and Anytown High School.

Closer look: In a March 9, 2020, article for FireRescue1, Jason Caughey wrote that in order to successfully recruit in the present, departments need to abandon the old ways of thinking that no longer work while retaining the values and traits that define the fire service. He highlighted the following keys to approaching recruitment, which were derived from the 1999 book by Marcus Buckingham, "First, Break All the Rules: What the World's Greatest Managers Do Differently."

- **Select for talent:** Instead of casting a too-broad net in search of volunteers, specifically seek out talent. Look at where the department's best members were found, ask new members why they joined, and enlist these new members in identifying the organizations, locations and events to recruit new members. Utilize junior firefighter programs to reach the next generation.
- **Define the right outcomes:** Take a broad, 30,000-foot look at your organization and the community's needs and use that to define the right outcomes for the department that will help guide the recruitment process.
- **Focus on strengths:** Departments must learn to identify and promote their strengths. Highlight members' stories, and connect with the community through fundraiser, charity and other public events.
- **Find the right fit:** Each community and department are different. There is no one-size-fits-all approach. Departments must work constructively to identify what the best course of action is for their department and community, understanding that plans may need to adjust or evolve over time.

Developing a marketing plan and tactics

Once a department has identified target segments to pursue, the next step is to develop a marketing plan using the information to craft messaging that appeals to what a potential volunteer wants/needs, informs the potential volunteer of what it will cost them to be a volunteer, and offers a convenient way for the potential volunteer to transition into a volunteer opportunity.

Outreach activities and methods for promotion will look different based on the target group. To be effective with marketing efforts, it is key that the messaging type and delivery is customized for each segment. To reduce time and resources, it is important for departments to identify marketing tactics (print, email, social media, flyers, community events, videos, stories, etc.) that will be attractive to the target segment they are trying to reach.

To ease the burden on volunteer fire and EMS departments, the NVFC created the Make Me A Firefighter recruitment resource portal. Resources found in the portal include tools to create and customize outreach materials based on different target segments and messaging delivery methods. This tool allows department recruiters to quickly create custom marketing materials using some of the most common methods of message delivery. These include emails, flyers, postcards, event invitations, public service announcements and social media posts. Every activity should include a call to action to take potential volunteers to the next step.

Consider this: Local government and media can help amplify the department's recruitment message in the community. The Royersford (Pennsylvania) Fire Department notes that "The local government is involved with our social media page and daily will share stories and incidents, increasing our readership." The Secaucus (New Jersey) Volunteer Fire Department recommends to "Get your department in the news and in the spotlight as much as possible. Furthermore, when in said opportunities, make sure you mention how to join the department, the benefits of doing so, and perhaps even why it is vital to recruit new volunteers."

Moving past the call to action

Marketing efforts do not end with the dissemination of campaign messaging. Offering a clear path to connect with volunteers and tracking the response to the call to action is key. Tracking results should include both responses and nonresponses. A lack of response from a target segment might be an indication that the marketing tactic selected was ineffective and should be avoided in the future. For example, if a department disseminates recruitment flyers to a local high school health care program and yields zero results, they may want to consider how the target segment receives information. Instead of flyers, a social media campaign or a live demo in the classroom might be more effective for catching the attention of potential volunteers in that segment.

Once a connection is made, fostering the relationship with the potential volunteer is important. Having a follow-up conversation with a potential volunteer can be the persuading factor in moving an interested individual to an actual recruit status. Potential volunteer connections can be tracked through a spreadsheet, or the Make Me A Firefighter portal offers a free tool to track where a potential volunteer is in the recruitment process.

The NVFC describes the volunteer courting relationship as a 5-step process, known as the Marketing Funnel.

Step 1: Interest

Use marketing tactics to draw interest by educating the public and raising awareness of the opportunities available at the department.

Step 2: Invite

Make a personal invitation to a potential volunteer to get involved or learn more information.

Step 3: Sample

Provide the potential volunteer the opportunity to sample what the department has to offer. Sampling activities include ride-alongs, junior firefighter/Explorer programs, open houses and other recruitment events.

Step 4: Commit

Commit to the potential volunteer and ask them to commit to the department. At this stage in the marketing funnel, a potential volunteer will decide if they are ready for the commitment. Follow-up with the individual is key at this stage. Don't let interested individuals fall through the cracks due to a lack of follow-through.

Step 5: Train

Training new recruits is time intensive and can be overwhelming. Offer flexibility whenever possible. It is also a good idea to assign mentors to help new recruits acclimate and learn. Recruits that feel a personal connection to the department through a mentor program and/or bonding with other recruits through shared training experiences are more likely to want to remain.

Part VI: Using Data To Drive Recruitment and Retention Efforts

In a desperate need for bodies, the volunteer fire service has a long history of recruiting quantity over quality. This leads to a poor investment in time, PPE and training for individuals who fail to provide a beneficial return. Data collected and used properly by emergency services departments can be a gold mine of useful information to ensure recruitment and retention investments are profitable. Having a solid set of metrics allows an organization to visualize the impact of their efforts and determine interventions for a better approach. Having concrete data to back up your requests is also beneficial when trying to get support from local government, businesses or grant sources.

Using data to determine department staffing needs

Data is a critical piece in calculating volunteer needs. Determining the needed level of staffing, even in the volunteer world, is a key part of human resource planning. Determining the level of volunteers goes beyond counting individuals. Human resource planning focuses on having available the right number of volunteers with the required skill level to effectively carry out the mission of the department. It is key for fire and emergency services leadership to staff their department with enough skilled volunteers to meet the current need and future goals. This is known as workforce planning.

Workforce planning involves using a needs analysis to determine the number of open volunteer positions that need to be filled due to turnover and operational growth. In addition to predicting future volunteer needs, workforce planning is also critical for planning staff training needs and succession planning. Workforce planning should take place before a recruitment and retention plan is implemented. Data collected from a needs analysis should be a driving factor in strategic planning.

Conducting a trend analysis

One step in the needs analysis process is to identify key trends, such as the level of volunteer staffing needed to manage the workload, organizational structure and volunteer satisfaction. A trend analysis will also provide data on the retention rate and the average number of years a volunteer gives to a fire or EMS department.

In order to conduct a trend analysis, the department needs a method of data documentation. Departments will need statistical data on the number of volunteers, their length of service (to include dates of resignation) and volunteer turnover rates. Demographic information on each volunteer should also be collected as it becomes available. This includes age group, education level, prior work and/or volunteer experience, current work situation (geographical location, type of job and shift requirements), and family situation. Volunteer home addresses can be geocoded and presented on a map to obtain a picture of where volunteers are coming from in the community. This in turn could inform recruiting efforts from underrepresented areas as well as operational planning. Collecting and using this same type of data for the current time frame and for the previous 2 years will allow an organization to compare current volunteer staffing with former to establish trends. Using the collected data will allow the department to conduct comparisons by highlighting common trends across groups. The data will then allow an organization to understand the commonalities of those volunteers who continued to serve and those who left.

Looking at common themes among volunteers who leave or simply stop showing up allows for intervention among future volunteers with commonalties. For example, if the data showed that a common theme among 30% of the volunteers who stopped serving was working at a job past 6 p.m., then the data could be revealing that a weekly training requirement of Monday at 6:30 p.m. is conflicting with the volunteers' work-life-volunteer balance. An intervention could be to offer daytime trainings on the weekend to allow the volunteers working past 6 p.m. to meet department training requirements. Data tells an organization what it can do differently to meet the needs of stakeholders.

Using predictive analysis for recruitment and retention

The turnover of high performing and loyal volunteers can have a significant financial and psychological impact on a fire or EMS department. Predictive analytics provide a way to make predictions about future or unknown events based on historical data. Predictive analytics can be used to help find the hidden connections between key contributing factors and volunteer turnover. To reduce turnover, it is important for organizations to look at historical data to predict how new recruits will adjust to or change the department culture. Predictive data informs fire and emergency services leaders about the steps they need to take to get new recruits to their fullest potential, how onboarding should be conducted and how training should be delivered. In addition to predicting what will happen, data will also indicate the steps leaders should take in the future to influence behaviors.

Collecting engagement data will help determine how volunteers will respond and their level of commitment. Lining up demographic and engagement data will lead to a visual of motivation trends to predict recruitment efforts and which nonwage benefits should be implemented. Identifying patterns in volunteer data allows leaders to design retention strategies with the best outcome and eliminate assumption-based strategy making. For example, many fire and emergency services organizations make the assumption that adding a financial incentive will increase volunteer retention of younger generations. According to a 2016 study by Dr. Candice McDonald, "Retention of Internal Stakeholders in the Volunteer Fire Service," just the opposite is true — money and financial gain is not the main motivator for millennial engagement.

Removing assumptions is key to developing strategies to meet volunteer needs. Poor decisions are made when perceptions are compromised by assumption-based information. Using data analytics removes human emotions and allows strategies to be designed based on accurate, factual information. Volunteer turnover should not be predicted based on the volunteer's emotions, but instead on satisfaction with consistent factors across your organization such as nonwage benefits, volunteer development, attendance records and engagement opportunities.

Data sets should tell a story and should be factual. This is true of the earlier example of the data set that showed a common theme among 30% of the volunteers who stopped serving: they were all working at a job past 6 p.m. General feelings or complaints that volunteers are dissatisfied with training nights do not tell the story. Identifying that a volunteer's work schedule conflicts with the time of the training night is a factual data set and not an opinion. This information allows leaders to see the full story of why a volunteer has disengaged **and** provides them an opportunity to intervene.

Collecting fact-based data on volunteer insight is key for predicting retention. Leveraging annual volunteer surveys as a way to collect data is one method for determining if the fire department is meeting volunteer needs to prevent turnover. Fire departments that predict high-risk volunteer demographics can design strategies to address the problem to lessen turnover rates.

Leveraging resources for data collection and analysis

While we know that effective data collection and management are key for fire and emergency services organizations, the idea can seem overwhelming. The phrases "data collection" and "data management" can be intimidating for some emergency service leaders. Many do not know where to start.

The first step is determining what type of data the department wants to collect and outlining a clear process of how that desired data will be collected. Next, determine how data entry will be conducted and what platform will be used to store data. Departments can use a spreadsheet to store data or purchase volunteer management software. Identify who will be responsible for data entry and ensure that they are trained to correctly look at and input data.

Fire departments that participate in the NFIRS can access all their data stored on the national database immediately using the e-NFIRS portal. In addition, through the FEMA/USFA Enterprise Data Warehouse (EDW), within 24 hours of uploading their data to the national database, departments can access standard reports as well as incident data, not only for their own fire department but from all participating fire departments. For access to the NFIRS EDW, contact your NFIRS state program manager.

Once data has been collected, an analysis will need to take place. Data is useless without being able to provide meaningful outcomes. Data analysis is the process of moving data into actionable insights that leaders can use for decision-making. The visualization of data helps tell a story without being overwhelmed by the raw data. Data visualization highlights useful information tied to trends and outliers that can be easily understood.

There are many tools for moving data into visualizations. This includes simple, free tools and more complex software that must be purchased. Common types of data visualization include leveraging tools such as Excel to create a chart, graph or pivot table, and more creative methods such as infographics and dashboards.

Partnering with local universities and community colleges is one way to leverage external resources. Most statistics and mathematics-based programs require students to conduct a data analysis project or a formal internship. Many data analytics students are actively seeking a research project for their final year thesis. Most programs require students to conduct a focused project that requires them to demonstrate their grasp on fundamental data analysis. Seeking assistance from local government agencies that have experience in data gathering and analytics is another option.

Photo courtesy of iStock.

Part VII: Funding Recruitment and Retention Efforts

While many recruitment and retention efforts can be low- and even no-cost — such as word-of-mouth advertising, personal invitations and ensuring the department culture is one that volunteers want to be a part of — there are aspects of recruitment and retention that cost money. These include but are not limited to advertising the need for volunteers, equipping and training new recruits, and LOSAP and other benefits programs. In these cases, things such as local support, in-kind donations and grant programs can help fill the gap between what the department needs and what it has.

Utilizing existing resources

Volunteer emergency services departments often operate on tight budgets with limited funds for marketing activities. However, there are existing resources departments can tap into to eliminate or reduce the costs. The NVFC's Make Me A Firefighter campaign's department portal includes a free materials generator that removes the cost of hiring a graphic artist to design campaign materials. The portal also allows departments to create a webpage with details of their volunteer opportunities and a direct contact form, along with other tools and resources for recruitment and retention. Departments can also consider partnering with other departments or associations in the region to collaborate on a campaign, reducing the cost burden for each department. In addition, departments can check with regional and state fire associations to see if they have recruitment materials and resources that the department can utilize in their campaign.

Closer look: Many state fire associations or organizations have recruitment and retention initiatives to help departments in their state recruit new volunteers, including ready-to-use outreach and marketing materials. For instance, the Oregon Fire Recruitment Network is a state-wide group of recruiters who joined together to provide resources and tools to help fire departments in Oregon and beyond recruit and retain firefighters. RecruitNY is an initiative of the Firemen's Association of the State of New York that provides materials departments throughout the state can use year-round or in conjunction with an open house or community event. The Firemen's Association of the State of Pennsylvania offers a recruitment and retention website with resources and tips for local fire departments. The IAFC used a SAFER grant to partner with state associations in Connecticut, Indiana, North Carolina, Tennessee and Virginia for the Volunteer Workforce Solutions state recruitment campaigns to offer departments turnkey solutions for their recruitment and retention efforts.

Fire and EMS departments not wishing to pay to print materials can also partner with local businesses or other sources to ask if they would include the department's advertisement on existing materials they send out via print or email. Partnering with external sources also expands the department's reach. Examples of groups that might be willing to include the campaign in their existing newsletter or mailings could include a university, local government agencies, hospital, local high school, church, community service club or recreation center.

Content marketing

Content marketing via social media is also highly effective and can be free. Social media is a way for departments to connect with their stakeholders and engage with them daily. The use of high-quality visuals is key for successful online marketing. The fire and emergency services are fortunate to have a library of images the general public is attracted to. Visuals, such as videos and photographs, can tell a story of the many aspects of the department. Images speak to various demographics of potential recruits (gender, age, race), highlight the work being done by the department and show who benefits from the organization's mission.

Social media platforms allow existing stakeholders to help spread messaging through the sharing of posted imagery and messaging. According to Nonprofit Source, 84% of Facebook users share messaging of causes they support. 55% of people who engage with nonprofits on Twitter end up answering a call to action. 75% of Instagram users report taking action by either visiting a website or making a purchase from an advertisement.

A department-sponsored newsletter sent via email, posted on the department website, and available at local libraries, community centers and other places prospective volunteers may be is another way to connect with supporters while marketing department needs. Monthly department newsletters should include upcoming events, blog posts, eye-catching images, news about current volunteers, a sense of urgency for donations and needs, and a call to action for potential volunteer engagement.

Local support

There are many types of local support a department may seek, from government funding to donations from businesses to direct community fundraising. A more in-depth look at local government funding is provided in Part II.

Volunteer fire and emergency services departments are no strangers to holding pancake breakfasts, spaghetti dinners, raffles and boot drives to raise money. These are all valid fundraising efforts with the added benefit of engaging the community and potentially attracting new recruits along the way. Local businesses or local government might offer community grant programs that can fund small projects or department needs, or departments can ask a business to sponsor an event or a certain item such as a piece of equipment, recruitment signage or T-shirts for department members. While these efforts can keep a department afloat, they typically don't bring in enough money to fund large-ticket items such as gear, training equipment or apparatus. In addition, these efforts require the time and attention of already very busy and possibly overworked volunteers. When seeking local support, departments may be well-served by identifying a nonoperational volunteer who is experienced in grant writing and fundraising for assistance.

In action: Departments can be creative to formulate fundraisers that work in their communities. An article in The Gazette-Virginian from Sept. 16, 2020, highlighted the Cluster Springs Volunteer Fire Department's (Alton, Virginia) annual trail ride fundraiser. While the department does get an operational budget from the county, it is not enough to cover all of the department's expenses. The trail ride typically raises over $10,000 for the department each year. Participants can enjoy the trail ride, entertainment and a fundraiser dinner for $25 ($15 for children) or just attend the dinner with entertainment for $15.

In-kind donations

Often the department needs items a business in the community can provide. This could includedepartment T-shirts for their members, a table or canopy for recruitment events, signage for anevent or to promote recruitment, food or beverages for department open houses or rehab units, or printing of recruitment materials. At the same time, many local businesses are seeking ways to support their community. Many local businesses will donate, or at least discount, the items needed. Put a request on social media, contact a well-connected local leader or reach out to local businesses directly to see if they will help support the department with in-kind donations.

Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response Grants

The SAFER Grants Program, available through FEMA, was created to provide funding directly to fire departments and volunteer firefighter interest organizations to help them increase or maintain the number of trained, frontline firefighters available in their communities. Departments of all sizes can apply for grants to help with recruitment and retention needs. Grant funds can be used to hire a recruitment and retention coordinator, fund incentives for volunteers such as tuition reimbursement programs or LOSAPs, develop recruitment outreach materials, conduct advertising to attract members to the department, and more. Departments wishing to apply for SAFER funding are encouraged to review the grant guidance documents on FEMA's website beforehand, participate in SAFER workshops offered by FEMA, and collect data about the community and the recruitment/retention need in their local area as they prepare to make the case for their funding needs.

In the SAFER Grant application, applicants are typically asked to describe their current marketing plan or the marketing plan that will be implemented upon funding. Fire departments can leverage their own knowledge, propose to hire a marketing firm or recruitment specialist, or use the free Make Me A Firefighter recruitment campaign resources and tools as a method to market and track efforts.

In action: The Ringing Hill Fire Company (Pottstown, Pennsylvania) received a 4-year SAFER Grant in 2019, and just over a year later they had already brought on 27 new volunteers. The campaign launched with a new website at JoinRingingHill.org which focuses on why residents should join the department and all the volunteer opportunities that are available. In addition, the campaign utilized a variety of awareness methods including media coverage, videos, social media, a recruitment brochure, lawn signs and an event booth display. On the retention side, the grant enabled the department to implement a volunteer shift program, which resulted in better response times for emergency calls.

Photo courtesy of iStock.

Appendix A: Resources

An updated list of these and additional downloadable resources are available at www.nvfc.org.

Grants and funding

Assistance to Firefighters Grants
FEMA
Assistance to Firefighters Grants helps fire and EMS departments obtain critically needed equipment, protective gear, emergency vehicles, training and other resources necessary for protecting the public and emergency personnel from fire and related hazards.

Grants and Funding
NVFC
The compendium of resources includes tips and best practices for applying for grants as well as sources for grant opportunities. Also included are guides for securing sponsorships for junior firefighter programs and health and wellness programs, which can serve as inspiration for securing sponsorships for other initiatives as well.

Grant Writing Guide
NVFC
This guide is designed to help departments navigate the complexities of applying for federal grants. It includes a brief list of expectations and requirements associated with grant applications as well as a quick overview of select grants.

Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response grants
FEMA
This grant program provides funding directly to fire departments and volunteer firefighter interest organizations for recruitment and retention efforts to help them increase or maintain the number of trained, front-line firefighters available in their communities.

Guides and tools

The Beginners Guide to Working with Elected Officials
ICMA
This blog post covers key tips for developing effective working relationships with elected officials.

Climate Survey Toolkit
IAFC's Volunteer Workforce Solutions
This toolkit helps departments take the internal temperature of their members and identify areas for strengthening diversity, inclusion, teamwork and leadership to create a more inclusive organization.

Cost Savings Calculators
NVFC
The NVFC Foundation and VFIS developed the Fire and EMS Cost Savings Calculators for both volunteer fire and EMS departments. These tools allow departments to calculate out how much money they save the community and provide resources for presenting data to the municipalities that fund the department in order to increase community and governmental support.

Directory of Behavioral Health Professionals
NVFC
Updated with new providers monthly, this directory lists local behavioral health professionals who are ready and equipped to help firefighters, EMS providers, rescue workers, dispatchers and their families.

Fire Law Blog
Curt Varone
This blog looks at legal issues fire departments need to consider and offers tools and templates to help departments establish policies to better protect them from negative impacts and reduce liability.

Guide for Creating a Diverse and Inclusive Department
IAFC-VCOS
This guide offers ways that departments can increase the levels of diversity, inclusiveness and equity in 8 specific areas.

Guide to Communicating with Elected Officials
NVFC
Designed to help members of the fire and emergency service with grassroots advocacy, the guide includes tools on drafting letters and emails, using social media to interact with elected officials, how to set and conduct meetings with elected officials and their staff, and how to develop a public relations strategy.

Lavender Ribbon Report
IAFC-VCOS/NVFC
This guide details the 11 actions firefighters and departments should take to reduce exposure risks and protect personnel from occupationally caused cancer.

Managing Volunteer Firefighters for FLSA Compliance: A Guide for Fire Chiefs and Community Leaders
IAFC
The IAFC published this document in 2006 as a guide for fire chiefs and community leaders to better manage volunteer firefighters for FLSA compliance.

National Safety Culture Change Initiative
IAFC/USFA
This study identifies both positive and negative elements of fire service culture and recommends changes to enhance safety and health in the fire and emergency service.

NFPA 1582: *Standard on Comprehensive Occupational Medical Program for Fire Departments*
NFPA
This standard outlines an occupational medical program that will reduce risks and provide for the health, safety and effectiveness of firefighters.

Preserving the Tradition of Neighbors Helping Neighbors: Steps Toward Success
IAFC's Volunteer Workforce Solutions
This white paper highlights ideas, resources and tools intended to provide emergency service organizations with proven retention and recruitment methods to promote a more diverse and inclusive workforce.

Psychologically Healthy Fire Departments: Implementation Toolkit
NVFC
Having a healthy and engaged workforce creates successful, high-performing departments. This toolkit covers 6 key categories to promote and foster wellbeing among department members along with specific actions that can be taken, special issues to consider, case studies from successful departments and additional resources.

Social Media Toolkit
IAFC
This handbook provides guidance to departments on how to use and navigate social media.

Volunteer Fire Service Culture: Essential Strategies for Success
NVFC
This textbook is designed to train department personnel and leaders about key issues relating to fire service health and safety and how to embrace safe and healthy practices in all areas of fire department operations and culture.

What to Expect: A Guide for Family Members of Volunteer Firefighters
NVFC
This guide helps family members of volunteer firefighters navigate the realities of the volunteer fire service life and provides guidance for keeping family relationships strong.

Organizations and programs

Fire Corps
NVFC
Fire Corps is a national grassroots effort to help fire/EMS departments engage with community members to assist with nonemergency tasks.

Firefighter Life Safety Initiatives
National Fallen Firefighters Foundation
The 16 Firefighter Life Safety Initiatives serve as the foundation for fire and EMS departments who have a desire to ensure that their firefighters and EMS providers return home safely after every shift.

Make Me a Firefighter Program
NVFC
Make Me a Firefighter is the first and only national volunteer firefighter and EMS recruitment campaign to help departments reach new members. The campaign features a department portal with resources and tools for implementing a local recruitment campaign as well as a public website to enable potential volunteers to find local opportunities.

National Junior Firefighter Program
NVFC
The National Junior Firefighter Program supports fire and emergency service departments by fostering relationships and engaging youth in learning about and ultimately becoming members of the emergency services.

Serve Strong
NVFC
This program provides firefighters and EMS providers with proven health and safety tools and resources to help reduce exposure risks, reduce heart attack risk, cope with behavioral health issues and engage in safe practices on and off the fireground.

Share the Load Program
NVFC
This program provides responders with tools, resources and training to proactively address behavioral health issues as well as establish or expand a department behavioral health program.

Volunteer Workforce Solutions
IAFC
This program offers volunteer and combination fire departments turnkey materials to help with recruitment and retention efforts.

Policies and procedures

Firefighter Code of Ethics
National Society of Executive Fire Officers
To preserve the public's trust, this Code of Ethics was developed by a group of fire service leaders and calls on individual firefighters to pledge their support for maintaining the highest level of professionalism and behavior.

Joint Anti-Harassment, Bullying, and Discrimination Statement
Signed by 7 national organizations representing the fire and emergency services, this statement issues a call to action that all fire and emergency service organizations implement an anti-harassment, bullying and discrimination policy that is actively communicated to personnel and actively and consistently enforced. Departments should also adopt a code of conduct or code of ethics that clearly defines expected behaviors among personnel.

Managing and Leveraging Workplace Use of Social Media
Society for Human Resources Management
This article outlines common considerations for the use of social media by employers and their employees.

NVFC Position on Firefighter Medical Assessments
NVFC
This position supports annual medical assessments for all firefighters and identifies options that volunteer departments can consider in developing a firefighter medical assessment program.

Reputation Management White Paper
Cumberland Valley Volunteer Firemen's Association
This white paper looks at key issues that have a negative effect on the public image of the fire service and individual departments and recommends that every department establish a code of conduct or code of ethics that clearly defines expected behaviors of its members.

Research

2020 Department Survey on Local Government Support
NVFC
This report explores the ways in which local government currently supports volunteer fire departments, as well as the types of support volunteer fire departments are seeking from local government.

Volunteer Firefighter Recruitment and Retention Formative Research Report
NVFC
This 2015 report details the results from research conducted as part of the formation of the NVFC's Make Me A Firefighter recruitment campaign.

Retention of Internal Stakeholders in the U.S. Volunteer Fire Service
Dr. Candice McDonald
This 2016 doctoral study/dissertation explores the strategies fire service leaders have used to retain firefighters in the United States.

Volunteer Retention Research Report
NVFC
This 2020 report details the results from research conducted by the NVFC to gain a better understanding of the institutional drivers of why volunteers leave the fire service and what factors may improve retention in a fire department.

Training

International Association of Fire Chiefs — Volunteer & Combination Officers Section
IAFC-VCOS offers a variety of online and in-person training on topics including recruitment, mentoring, leadership and transitioning to a combination department.

National Fire Academy
The NFA provides free training on a vast array of fire and EMS topics delivered at their campus in Emmitsburg (Maryland), online and throughout the nation.

National Volunteer Fire Council
The NVFC Virtual Classroom is home to a wide range of online, on-demand training including volunteer recruitment, retention, leadership, grants/funding, health and safety issues, and other topics that affect recruitment and retention efforts.

New York University — School of Fire Engineering
Find on-demand training on a variety of fire service operational topics.

North American Fire Training Directors
Use the North American Fire Training Directors website to find your state training organization.

UL Fire Safety Research Institute Fire Safety Academy
The UL Fire Safety Research Institute Fire Safety Academy offers free science-based courses for fire service personnel. Topics include fire dynamics, firefighting tactics and firefighter health.

Photo courtesy of iStock.

Appendix B: Considerations for Department/Government Support

Information in this appendix courtesy of the Center for Public Safety Management of the ICMA.

Formation

One of the major challenges faced by many volunteer and combination departments is their underlying authority.

- Is the department LEGALLY recognized by the city, town, county, or other government?
- Is the department created by an ordinance? _____ (ordinance number)
- Is the department created or recognized in the city's charter? _____ (section)
- Does the department comply with the ordinance or charter requirements and specifications?
- How is command selected? How is it replaced or ended (i.e., chief selection)? Can the local government help in establishing job descriptions and advertising for candidates?
- How does the volunteer agency interact with the municipal government(s) it protects? (Examples: provide staffing to the governmentally recognized agency; contract for full services to the government agency; a department of the government agency)
- Are buildings and equipment appropriately titled and who holds those titles?
- Are buildings and equipment properly insured? Can the department be included in the municipality's coverage?
- To whom do employees belong? Is it documented? If a wrong occurs, who is liable?

Reporting

Most municipal departments are required to provide annual reports; be subject to audit processes; create mission, vision, values and strategic plans; and present those plans along with achievements.

- Does the department provide regular reports to the municipal government?
- Is your volunteer department audited yearly and is that report public? Shared with the municipality? Accepted at a council or board meeting?
- Are minutes kept for all volunteer meetings and business?
- Does the department report monthly activity, outcomes, and other information to the governing jurisdiction?
- Does the department have a strategic plan? Could it be included in the municipality's strategic plan? Or master plan?

- Can the local government assist the department in creating a master plan? Strategic plan? Reporting template?
- Can the municipal government include the department's documents with their reports for consistency, clarity and opportunity to engage with the public?

Staffing/human resources

One challenge for most volunteer and combination departments is in the area of human resources. Failure to withhold necessary payments or dollars for employees can be catastrophic for departments that violate state and federal laws.

- Does the municipality have a human resources department?
- Can the local government assist the volunteer or combination department with human resources?
  - Background checks.
  - Withholdings for taxes and other purposes.
  - Physicals (before hired and annual).
  - Drug and alcohol screening.
  - Employee assistance programs.
  - Workers' compensation issues.
  - Keeping the employee records (which are required to be kept forever).
  - Health and life insurance.
  - Pensions, 401K, etc.
  - HSAs for medical purposes.
  - Filing the necessary W-2 statements, withholding and payments to the IRS and state.
  - Assisting when volunteers or POC must be terminated to ensure legal requirements are met.
  - Exit interviews.
  - Annual reviews.
  - Ensuring training requirements are being met and recording all training taken.

Legal

When things go right, there usually are not questions. When things go wrong, that's when it is critical to have clarified, documented, and followed standards that are established for good operations.

- If staff are paid by the volunteer organization and used to fill necessary openings in the department, who carries the workers' compensation? Can the department receive coverage through the municipality?
- Is there a clear contractual recognition of employees paid on call or paid members?
- Is there workers' compensation, death and disability, and other insurance for members? Can the municipality assist with getting quotations, bids or coverage?
- If a municipal employee works for the volunteer fire company, who provides coverage in the event that person is injured? Killed? Disabled? Is that recorded and could the municipality help with ensuring those areas are covered?

- Who owns the equipment and station?
- What happens if the volunteer fire company disbands or becomes insolvent? Is there a documented process for handling disposal of assets?
- Is there titular interest in fixed locations and rolling stock by the municipality? What happens if there is an accident; who is liable?

Operations

Policies, procedures, operating guidelines, rules, and regulations are designed to protect the organization from violations that cause harm as well as set a standard for expectations by the department and its customers — often the local government.

- Are the department's rules and regulations current? Could the municipality be involved with review or assist with legal review?
- Does the agency use a provider for policies and procedures such as Lexipol or other national firm? Does it create its own policies and procedures? Are those reviewed by legal? Are those shared with the local government? Is there an opportunity for comment or correction?
- Does the department regularly review these documents for changes required or conditions that have changed? Is the local government or its attorney involved in the process?
- If violations occur, who enforces? Is there a step process for discipline (e.g., verbal warning, written notice, time off, termination)? Could the municipality or its human resources department assist to ensure compliance steps are followed?
- Are violations tracked and reported?
- Is there a process if command does not enforce these documents and subjects the organization or municipality to legal consequences?

Maintenance

Stations, rolling stock and PPE are expensive to purchase and require regular inspection and maintenance to ensure they work when required.

- Could the local government assist with inspections of fixed assets (buildings)? Could it ensure proper insurance coverage exists?
- Could local government assist with regular maintenance such as lawn mowing, painting, lighting, etc.?
- Could the local government assist with oil changes and maintenance tracking on rolling stock? Hand tools (chainsaws, etc.)?
- Are regular inspections made of all assets? Are these recorded? Does the local government have a tracking mechanism or software?
- Are regular and recommended inspections made of hose? Nozzles? Pump tests? Ladders? Could the local government perform these or train staff to assist?

Planning

One of the challenges for smaller agencies is planning for the future. Large rolling stock can cost anywhere from $650,000 for an engine to $1.5 million for a ladder.

- Can the local government assist with developing 1-5-10-20-year strategic equipment replacement plans?
- Could these items be included in the municipal capital improvement plan that is approved by the council or board with the funding identified?
- Can the municipality assist with writing grants for the department? Tracking grant expenses and purchases? Assist with filing necessary reports? Keeping the grant records for the required time period (normally 7 years but some programs have longer retention)?
- Is the department incorporated into the municipality's emergency plans? Are roles identified? Exercised?
- Is mutual aid automatic or requested? Is it memorialized in a document? Should the local government also be a signatory? Should the board or council approve of the action?
- Is the municipality part of Emergency Management Assistance Compact? Is the department included? Who ensures compliance, reimbursement and requests?

Social media

Newspapers, radio and, for some, television, are becoming less significant media to communicate with on a regular basis.

- Does the department have a social media policy? Is it enforced?
- Could the local government assist by creating Facebook, Twitter, and other social media pages for the department and regularly ensuring updates?
- If violations occur (posting victim pictures or releasing prohibited health information), who is responsible? Could the local government assist in prescreening posts?
- If questions or comments appear, who is responsible for a response? For deletion?

Training

Volunteer and combination departments often struggle to meet training requirements of ISO and other standard-setting bodies.

- Can the local government provide a training area?
- Can the local government's public works, police, electrical, water, and sewer departments coordinate training with the fire department? Can they provide props such as manholes, pipes, trenches, tanks, etc.?
- Does the local government work with the department to plan, create, and exercise?
- Are resources shared when needed (e.g., backhoes or front-end loaders that a department of public works might have)?
- Can the local government help with signage, barricades and other resources when the fire department is engaged on scenes? Do they train together and know what each has to contribute?

Communications

Many volunteer and combination departments lack sufficient resources for modern communication equipment.

- Can the local government provide a computer(s) for use by the department?
- Can the local government provide IT support?
- Can the local government apply for grants for radios (portable and mobile)?
- Does the local government have the ability to tax for radio equipment and upgrades? Can they be interoperable with police and other municipal agencies?
- Does the local government have server capacity to store records for the department?
- Can the local government provide fiber-optic capacity for rapid transfer of information?
- Can the local government provide classes and training for the department on software, hardware, and new technology as well as skill building (Excel, Word, etc.)?

Photo courtesy of iStock.

Appendix C: Sample Department Application

Information in this appendix courtesy of Chelan County (Washington) Fire District #1.

Volunteer Application Packet

Fire Department Code of Conduct

Thank you for expressing interest in our fire department. Before completing the attached application, carefully review the Code of Conduct. The district operates and manages the department as a customer service business. As a volunteer, resident, or paid staff, you will be expected to conduct yourself in a manner that recognizes that we provide members of this community with excellent emergency service. It is paramount that as a member of this organization, you will deliver this service in a professional, honest, courteous, and timely manner. Failure to meet these standards will result in being asked to resign.

- **Honesty and integrity.** It is understood that honesty and integrity begin with full disclosure of personal information on the application. This includes full disclosure of work-related experience, past supervisors, and qualifying training. If a background check proves that false information has been provided, you will be informed not to apply or pursue membership with the Fire Department now or in the future.

- **Respecting community members.** Volunteering with the department by its very nature means providing a service to our citizens within the district. In most cases, services are provided on private property, and as a result, it must be ensured that our personnel are honest, respectful, and professional and interact well with community members.

- **Working in teams.** Most of the services provided are performed in teams. It is critical that team members work harmoniously under the direction of an officer. It is believed that team results are greater than individual achievement.

- **Ability to follow command.** Emergency incidents can be stressful and traumatic. The public expects its emergency service workers to remain calm, deliver a professional service, and provide comfort to those who require it. You may not agree with directions being given or you might do the task differently, but you will be expected to follow orders in a timely and safe manner without delay, unless it threatens your life directly.

- **Chain of command (as practical).** Within the organization, there is a chain of command process followed. The chain of command process starts by reporting to the station Captain as the first step to resolving problems or conflicts. If the station Captain is unable to resolve the issue in a timely manner, then the next step in resolving problems or conflicts is reporting to the Battalion Chief, who will expect you to provide specific details including that the initial report was discussed with the station Captain. If the Battalion Chief cannot resolve the problem or conflict, the issue will be reported to the Deputy Chief. If the issue is reported to the Deputy Chief, the Deputy Chief or Fire Chief shall require all involved parties to provide written statements of fact, including statements by witnesses. The Fire Chief will be the final authority.

- **Rumors, hearsay.** These two critical issues can damage an organization's image and/or morale. A member who starts, carries, or promotes rumors or hearsay will be asked to resign if facts prove the member is responsible for initiating the rumors or hearsay.

- **Morale, esprit de corps.** You have obviously chosen our fire department for a reason. We hope it is because you have witnessed our pride and commitment towards our organization. We do not try to duplicate what other departments do, yet we strive to adopt industry standards while maintaining our uniqueness. If you can't support our organization and its mission, we ask that you do not apply.
- **Discrimination policy.** Compliance is required with Discrimination Policies that are on file.
- **Probationary period.** Once your application and background check have been verified and cleared, you will start a one-year probationary period. During this period, you will be evaluated on your conduct, participation in all aspects of our organization, and how well you successfully work in a team setting. If these standards are not met, you will be asked to resign.

I _____ (signature) have read, fully understand, and support the Code of Conduct. I further acknowledge that I may be asked to resign if I do not meet the Organization's Policies, Procedures, Mission, or Code of Conduct.

Witness _____ Date _____

YOU WILL ALSO NEED TO PROVIDE: Three-year Driver's Abstract from the Washington State Department of Licensing (there is a $13.00 fee). No appointment is necessary. The office is located at 325 N. Chelan Avenue, Wenatchee (phone: 509-662-5451). Or, you can also go online for the abstract at: http://www.dol.wa.gov/driverslicense/requestyourrecord.html

Contact Deputy Chief Rick McBride with any questions or to submit an application.
Deputy Chief Rick McBride, Volunteer and Resident Coordinator
731 N. Wenatchee Avenue, P.O. Box 2106, Wenatchee, WA 98801
Phone: 509-662-4734
Email: rmcbride@chelancountyfire.com

Fire Department Volunteer Application

Application Date _____

What Volunteer opportunity is of interest to you?

Combat Firefighter ☐ Resident Firefighter ☐ Support ☐ EMS ☐

Name	
Address	
Phone Number	
Date of Birth	
Email	

1. How long have you resided at the above address? Years/Months _____.
2. How long have you lived in Washington State? Years/Months _____.
3. Is there any additional information about a change in your name, or use of an assumed name or nickname necessary to enable a check on your eligibility for membership?

   Yes ☐ If yes, please provide details on the additional information page.

   No ☐
4. Do you have a physical condition which might limit the fire service tasks you perform?

   Yes ☐ If yes, please explain _____ .

   No ☐
5. Have you ever been convicted of or found guilty of a felony, misdemeanor, insurance fraud, arson, alcohol-related vehicle or traffic offense, or pleaded guilty to a reduction of one of these offenses?

   Yes ☐ If yes, please provide details on the additional information page.

   No ☐
6. Do you have a valid Washington State Driver's License?

   Yes ☐ Driver's License Number _____ Expiration Date_____.

   No ☐
7. Have you ever been a member of the US Armed Forces?

   Yes ☐

   No ☐

   If yes, did you receive an honorable discharge? Yes ☐ No ☐

   If No, please give a brief description.

   _____

   _____

8. Do you have previous emergency services experience?

   Yes ☐ If yes, please list below. Note: Please indicate Fire, Rescue, EMS, or HazMat experience and your reason for leaving. Use additional information page if needed.

   No ☐

Dates	Department

9. Do you have a valid first aid card, first responder or EMT certification?

   Yes ☐ If yes, please list below.

   No ☐

Type	Expiration Date

10. Washington State regulations require that you pass a physical examination to be a member of this department. The department's designated physician will provide you with a free medical examination. Will you be willing to undergo a free medical examination?

    Yes ☐

    No ☐

Employment: List your employment for the last five years. We will conduct a background check on your past employment history. Please list, starting with your current employer, immediate supervisor, and contact number.

Years	Business / Department	Job Title	Supervisor	Contact Phone

References: List the names of three persons other than former employers and relatives who have knowledge of your character, experience, or ability.

Name	Address	Relationship	Phone and Email

Emergency Contact Information

Name	
Relationship	
Address	
Phone Number	

Appendix D: Sample Exit Survey

Information in this appendix courtesy of NVFC.

Departments may use or modify any of the suggested questions below to capture information on why volunteers are leaving. There are numerous no-cost or low-cost survey platforms available such as Survey Monkey, Type Form, Google forms, Wufoo, and others.

Introduction:

The [DEPARTMENT NAME] is committed to our many volunteers. This Exit Survey provides us with valuable information to identify ways in which the volunteer experience and environment can be improved.

This survey is confidential, and the results will be presented in a manner which protects anonymity and confidentiality. We appreciate your service, and we are thankful for your willingness to complete this survey to enhance our department's operations.

1. Age

   - 16-19
   - 20-29
   - 30-39
   - 40-49
   - 50-59
   - 60 and over

2. Gender

   - Male
   - Female
   - Prefer not to say
   - Other (please specify)

3. Race/Ethnicity

   - Caucasian
   - Asian/Pacific Islander
   - Hispanic or Latino
   - Black or African American
   - Native American or American Indian
   - Other
   - Prefer not to say

4. In what capacity were you a volunteer?

   - Fire suppression only
   - Emergency medical only
   - Support/administrative only
   - Fire and emergency medical
   - Other (please specify)

5. How long did you volunteer?

- Less than 1 year
- 1-3 years
- 4-6 years
- 7-10 years
- 11-15 years
- 16-20 years
- 21-29 years
- 30-39 years
- 40-49 years
- 50+ years

6. How long did you consider leaving the department?

- Less than 2 months
- 2-6 months
- 7-12 months
- More than 1 year

7. Why did you initially decide to volunteer? Please check all that apply.

- Help my community
- Friend/family connection
- Learn new skills
- Career development
- Meet new people
- Incentives associated with volunteering (tax relief, affordable housing programs, tuition reimbursement, etc.)
- Other (please describe)

8. What factors influenced your decision to leave? Please check all that apply.

- Relocation/moved out of area
- Poor leadership
- Career or job demands
- Commute
- Training requirements too stringent
- Attitude of existing personnel to newcomers
- Lack of support from existing members/leadership
- Issues with other members
- Too many cliques
- Uncomfortable atmosphere/environment
- Concerns about health/safety risks
- Lack of call volume/excitement
- Family circumstances
- Accepted career fire/EMS position
- Retirement
- It was not my decision to leave (i.e., termination or forced resignation)
- Other (please specify)

9. The training opportunities offered by my department/organization:
   Choice Selection: Never, seldom, sometimes, most of the time, always, N/A

   - Were well organized
   - Were relevant to my job/volunteer functions
   - Met my expectations
   - Were appropriate for volunteer time constraints
   - Followed an acceptable standard
   - Were complemented by station training/drills
   - Comments:

10. On incident scenes, emergency operations:
    Choice Selection: Never, seldom, sometimes, most of the time, always, N/A

    - Were safe
    - Were competently managed
    - Followed our training
    - Followed standards (IMS, ICS, etc.)
    - Followed operating guidelines and policies
    - Had sufficient personnel to function safely and effectively
    - Were reviewed post-incident to identify areas of improvement
    - Comments:

11. Leadership:
    Choice Selection: Never, seldom, sometimes, most of the time, always, N/A

    - Made safety a top priority
    - Communicated policies, guidelines, and practices effectively
    - Followed operating guidelines and policies
    - Made me feel part of the organization
    - Respected my personal obligations and time
    - Provided recognition for a job well done
    - Resolved complaints and problems promptly and efficiently
    - Valued feedback and input from the team
    - Comments:

12. Overall, leadership was:

    - Poor
    - Fair
    - Good
    - Excellent

13. What did you enjoy most about your volunteer experience? (open-ended)

14. What did you enjoy least about your volunteer experience? (open-ended)

15. What factors would have encouraged you to stay? Please check all that apply.

- A personal invitation/request to stay by leadership
- Improved leadership
- Tuition reimbursement
- Retirement benefit
- Flexible training options (option for online training, flexible training schedule, etc.)
- Flexible duty shifts
- Tax relief
- Affordable housing program
- More support from family
- A more positive and inclusive department culture
- Other (please specify)

16. Do you plan to volunteer with a fire, rescue or EMS organization again in the future?

- Yes
- No
- Undecided

Appendix E: Sample Stay Survey

Information in this appendix courtesy of the NVFC.

Departments may use or modify any of the suggested questions below to capture information on what is working well in the department, as well as areas of frustration. It is recommended that this survey be conducted annually. There are numerous no-cost or low-cost survey platforms available such as Survey Monkey, Type Form, Google forms, Wufoo, and others.

Introduction:

The [DEPARTMENT NAME] is committed to our many volunteers. This Stay Survey provides us with valuable information to identify ways in which we can better support our staff and crews.

This survey is confidential and results will be presented in a manner which protects confidentiality. We appreciate your service, and we are thankful for your willingness to complete this survey to enhance our department's operations.

1. Why did you initially decide to volunteer? Please check all that apply.

   - Help my community
   - Friend/family connection
   - Learn new skills
   - Career development
   - Meet new people
   - Incentives associated with volunteering (tax relief, affordable housing programs, tuition reimbursement, etc.)
   - Other (please describe)

2. Why do you volunteer today? Please check all that apply.

   - Help my community
   - Friend/family connection
   - Learn new skills
   - Career development
   - Meet new people
   - Incentives associated with volunteering (tax relief, affordable housing programs, tuition reimbursement, etc.)
   - Other (please describe)

3. The training opportunities offered by my department/organization:
   Choice Selection: Never, seldom, sometimes, most of the time, always, N/A

   - Are well organized
   - Are relevant to my job/volunteer functions
   - Meet my expectations
   - Are appropriate for volunteer time constraints
   - Follow an acceptable standard
   - Comments:

4. Describe your thoughts regarding the tangible benefits offered by the department/organization (PSOB, awards, tax relief, childcare, etc.):

   - I volunteer primarily because of the benefits I receive.
   - I appreciate them, but they are not the primary reason I volunteer.
   - They are unnecessary.
   - I'm not familiar with the benefits I receive as a volunteer.

5. Are there additional benefits you would like to see department/organization offer? Please describe:

6. On incident scenes, emergency operations:
   Choice Selection: Never, seldom, sometimes, most of the time, always, N/A

   - Are safe
   - Are competently managed
   - Follow our training
   - Follow standards (IMS, ICS, etc.)
   - Follow operating guidelines and policies
   - Have sufficient personnel to function safely and effectively
   - Are reviewed post-incident to identify areas of improvement
   - Comments:

7. Leadership:
   Choice Selection: Never, seldom, sometimes, most of the time, always, N/A

   - Makes safety a top priority
   - Communicates policies, guidelines, and practices effectively
   - Follows operating guidelines and policies
   - Makes me feel part of the organization
   - Respects my personal obligations and time
   - Provides recognition for a job well done
   - Resolves complaints and problems promptly and efficiently
   - Values feedback and input from the team
   - Comments:

8. Think of the best officer you ever worked with. What is an attribute of that person that motivated others? (open-ended)

9. What makes you proud about being a member of this department? (open-ended)

10. What do you like least about volunteering with this department? (open-ended)

11. What might tempt you to leave? Please check all that apply.

    - Possible relocation/moving out of area
    - Poor leadership
    - Career or job demands
    - Commute
    - Training requirements too stringent
    - Attitude of existing personnel to newcomers
    - Lack of support from existing members/leadership
    - Issues with other members

- Too many cliques
- Uncomfortable atmosphere/environment
- Concerns about health/safety risks
- Lack of call volume/excitement
- Family circumstances
- Lack of support from family
- Transition to career fire/EMS position
- Retirement
- Other (please specify)

12. What would improve your experience with the department? (open-ended)

13. If you'd like us to follow up with you specifically regarding this survey, please include your contact information here. (optional)

    - Name
    - Phone
    - Email

Photo courtesy of Defense Visual Information Distribution Service. Photo by Patrick Buffett

Appendix F: Sample Social Media Policies

Sample 1

Information in this sample is courtesy of the West Barnstable (Massachusetts) Fire District (WBFD), based on a template provided by the Fire Law Group. Find the full template at https://www.firelawblog.com/links/.

The following policy and procedures shall apply to the use of social media by WBFD members:

1. **Purpose:** The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance to members of the WBFD to clarify the boundaries between appropriate and inappropriate use of social media by fire department personnel. Nothing in these rules is intended to restrict a member's right to discuss, as a private citizen, matters of public concern, nor to restrict their right to engage in concerted activity with coworkers.

2. **Social media is:** Social media means the use of the spoken or written word, or the use of images, on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, Myspace, blogs, websites, and other similar electronic social gathering/networking places or news sites. For purposes of this policy, traditional print media, television, and radio (newspapers, for example, because of the close link between electronic and print media) are social media. Engaging in social media and social networking is a form of speech.

3. **Avoid being a spokesperson:** WBFD members have an affirmative obligation to avoid being perceived as a spokesperson for the department. Members shall at all times exercise diligence to avoid holding themselves out as spokespeople for the department except when duly authorized. The use of titles, department logos and department images that would give a reasonable person the impression that the member is a spokesperson for the department is prohibited.

4. **Disruption prohibited:** No member, while speaking as a private citizen on a matter of public concern regarding the fire department, shall speak in such a way as to cause actual harm or disruption to the operations of the fire department.

5. **Being a spokesperson:** Members may speak on a matter of public concern as a spokesperson for the department only with permission through the chain of command.

6. **Not of public concern**: Members are prohibited from publicly discussing WBFD matters that are not of public concern, unless doing so is with other members of the department (or their representatives) and is for the purpose of engaging in concerted activities relative to workplace issues.

7. **Lies:** Members shall not engage in speech that is false, deceptive, libelous, slanderous, misleading, or causes harm to others, including speech that constitutes hate speech or harassment.

8. **Confidential matters:** Members shall not discuss protected or confidential matters including matters under investigation, patient/victim information and personnel matters that are protected from disclosure by law.

9. **Prohibited:** Members may not use department-owned digital images, audio, or video without department approval. Members are prohibited from engaging in sexually explicit or illegal activities, unlawful activities, or conduct that may bring discredit upon the department or other members of the department.

10. **Social media code of conduct:** When engaging in social networking or social media activities, all personnel will maintain a level of professionalism in both on-duty and off-duty conduct that is consistent with the honorable mission and excellent reputation of our department. The publication of any statement, comment, imagery, or other information through any medium of communication, indicated herein, that is potentially adverse to the operation, morale, or efficiency of the department is prohibited and will be deemed a violation of this policy.

11. **Social media at the FD:** Members will not participate in social networking or social media while identifiable as a member of the WBFD (except official spokespersons). For instance, participating in a video chat in uniform (full or partial), with WBFD apparatus in the background or with the WBFD logo in the background is prohibited.

Sample 2

Information in this sample courtesy of NVFC.

As an employee or board member of the NVFC, your online actions and presence is important, even if you don't manage the organization's social media channels. Below are some guidelines to remember to protect the reputation of the NVFC and yourself.

Using social media in a personal capacity

You are responsible for your actions.

While the NVFC encourages employees and board members to maintain individual social media accounts if they choose, refrain from posting anything that could ultimately harm the NVFC's reputation. Remember to exercise sound judgment and common sense online.

Be aware when mixing work with your personal life.

You are free to identify yourself as an NVFC employee or board member in your individual social media profiles and to share NVFC content to your social media pages, but refrain from any language that indicates you are speaking for the NVFC through your personal social media accounts. Only official NVFC social media accounts can speak for the organization.

Remember that as an employee or board member, the content you post can reflect on the organization.

The NVFC respects the free speech rights of all its employees and board members, but remember that supervisors, colleagues, and the public often have access to the online content you post. Keep this in mind when sharing or posting information or content that can be seen by more than just family or friends, and remember that information or content initially intended for just family and friends can be easily passed on.

Let the designated employees respond to negative content.

If you come across negative or disparaging posts or comments about the NVFC or any of its employees or representatives, avoid the temptation to react yourself. Pass the post(s) or comment(s) on to the NVFC communications team so they can determine the best course of action.

Be a scout for content.

Keep an eye out for content the NVFC could share or promote on social media. If you hear or watch something on the news or read something online that could be useful and/or interesting to the NVFC's members and followers, please send it to the communications team for possible posting on the NVFC's social media pages.

Using social media in an official capacity.

Only designated staff members can post content coming from the NVFC's official social media accounts. When posting information to the NVFC's social media channels, you are acting as a representative of the organization. There are certain standards and policies that anyone who manages the NVFC's social media presence should follow.

Be mindful that you represent the organization.

When interacting with the public through social media, be respectful and accepting of all individuals, races, religions, and cultures. How you conduct yourself in these situations reflects on the entire NVFC.

Make sure content remains respectful and follows all privacy laws.

Don't post any content that is or would appear disrespectful to the subject or that violates any privacy or HIPAA laws. For instance, if posting an item from an emergency scene, focus on the work of the firefighters and do not show any identifying photo or video of the victim or any images that would seemingly disrespect the severity of the situation.

Do not tolerate spam or offensive content.

The NVFC does not tolerate content posted to our social media channels that we deem offensive or divisive in nature or that can be categorized as spam. We reserve the right to delete such posts or comments and ban users from our channels if necessary.

Be respectful and helpful when responding to criticism or complaints.

Unless the post is offensive, divisive, or spam, be respectful of the opinions expressed by others on the NVFC's social media channels and try to be helpful. Your response to criticisms against the organization should be informative and professional. Consider using the following format:

- Let them know you heard the complaint: "We're sorry to hear…" or "We're sorry that you feel…"
- Inform: Provide them with as much relevant information as you can to respond to their comment or question.
- Offer: "If you have any further questions or concerns, please email…" or "If you need further information, check out this link…"

Sometimes it is better to address the comment in a direct message to the individual who made the complaint rather than in a public-facing area such as the comments section. If you are unsure of how to respond or the best method for response, consult with the Chief of Communications.

Know when to disengage.

If you have responded to someone's complaint or criticism to the best of your abilities yet they continue to leave comments or send messages, do not engage further. It may be appropriate to hide or delete their comments or posts or ban the user from the NVFC's social media channels.

Best practices for social media

Respond to all messages, comments and mentions promptly.

Make sure you are responding to every message, comment, and mention that needs a response in at most one business day. Although not every comment or mention warrants a response, it may be appropriate to like or share that content to the organization's channels.

Do not post the same content across all channels.

Try to refrain from posting the same content at the same time across all the NVFC's channels. Instead, mix it up by changing the wording and date that content is posted (e.g., post to Twitter on Monday and Facebook on Wednesday). Some content might not be relevant for followers on a specific channel and therefore does not need to be posted there. Also make sure the content is worded appropriately for the platform, such as using relevant hashtags for Twitter posts.

Relax the wording.

The wording of social media posts does not need to be as formal as you would find in a press release. Keep it professional, but feel free to use a more relaxed tone, utilize conjunctions, and shorten words (especially on Twitter, where this is sometimes a necessity).

Use images and videos as much as possible.

Research shows that posts with images or videos generate more engagement than those without, so use them whenever possible. Sometimes a link preview includes an image.

Research hashtags beforehand.

This ensures that the NVFC is not left out of conversations occurring on social media. It also prevents embarrassing or controversial misuse of hashtags.

Appendix G: Sample Media Policy

Information in this appendix courtesy of the WBFD.

Media relations: The WBFD is routinely called to incidents that are newsworthy. The WBFD endeavors to have a favorable relationship with the media and will make reasonable efforts to develop media contacts and a favorable relationship. Staff may be asked by the media to answer questions or give an opinion on a topic or an incident. WBFD staff should follow the following procedures and guidance when responding to or interacting with the media:

A. Do not publicize or release any information that may be construed as confidential to any source.

B. Refrain from saying "No Comment." This could end up as the lead on the evening news and implies a cover-up or wrongdoing.

C. Do not tell media personnel anything "off the record."

D. WBFD staff may provide the following basic information to the media, however, whenever reasonably possible (don't send it to voicemail of someone who's not around) staff should refer the request to the chief, deputy chief, shift commander or incident commander (in the overwhelming number of situations, the highest-ranking person available should handle the request):

   a. Incident number

   b. Time of incident

   c. Location of incident

   d. Nature of incident. For EMS calls, the nature of the incident is "emergency medical call." The precise nature of the injury or illness cannot be provided without additional authorization. In the event of an MCI, the fact that an MCI was declared and the number of patients may be provided.

   e. Receiving hospital (and if transport was by ambulance or Medflight)

   f. Number/type of apparatus and firefighters that responded (other participating fire and police agencies may be listed)

   g. In the event of fires, hazmat, and other incidents not involving patients, a brief statement of the incident, similar to a 360 size-up, may be provided.

   h. If additional information is requested, the media should be directed to the chief, deputy chief, shift commander, or incident commander.

   i. Minimize comments regarding any incident we go to outside of the WB Fire District to the fact that we went to the incident, what units were sent, and the time they were sent (if requested).

E. WBFD staff may not:

   a. Provide any information regarding a patient, including assessment of injuries and treatment provided;

   b. Any information prejudicial to law enforcement or investigations;

   c. Information not based upon facts; or

   d. Information that might be an invasion of privacy, such as a suicide, AIDS, HIV status, overdose, psychiatric, etc. In the case of death, only the medical examiner may give the cause.

F. When an incident or event occurs that the WBFD feels will generate positive media coverage or provide relevant information to the community, the chief or deputy chief will contact the media, and the information will be placed on the WBFD Facebook page and/or website.

G. WBFD staff should provide information about community events and meetings as requested.

H. Attached as Exhibit B to these policies is a media statement template.

I. All staff should review and be familiar with the policies for requesting information (see the forms on the wall outside of the Administrative Office and the fire district website): http://westbarnstablefiredistrict.com/public-records-request-forms/.

Appendix H: Sample Nondiscrimination Statements

Sample 1

In principle and in practice, [DEPARTMENT NAME] is committed to cultivating a culture of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

As a premier organization representing a broad and diverse community, we must take positive steps to promote diversity and inclusion by eliminating any vestiges of discrimination or unequal treatment including, but not limited to, on a basis of race, color, religion, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, national origin, age, disability status, citizenship, genetic information, protected veteran status, or any other legally protected characteristic. To allow such discrimination or unequal treatment to persist, whether through active or passive facilitation, weakens our abilities to respond to our varied customer base and to act effectively as an organization.

All members of [DEPARTMENT NAME] have a responsibility to treat others with dignity and respect, participate in respectful communication, cooperate with others, and allow for all groups and member perspectives to be represented. Members are expected to exhibit conduct that reflects this commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion while on-duty, at department functions, at department-sponsored events, or while representing the department in any capacity.

Any member found to have exhibited inappropriate conduct or behavior may be subject to disciplinary actions. Members who believe they have been subject to conduct or behavior that conflicts with the department's diversity, equity, and inclusion policy should seek assistance from an officer, chief, or other designated party.

Sample 2

Information in this sample courtesy of WBFD.

All members are equal: All members of the WBFD are equal and have an equal voice in the department. Once a person is appointed to the department, he or she is a full member. No member should feel he or she is prohibited in presenting ideas or participating in policy discussions because of their lack of seniority. All members have an equal opportunity to participate. New members are as equal as veterans. (Except where required by law) PPE, training opportunities, shift coverage, participation in committees or events, response to incidents, and other activities shall not be provided or withheld on the basis of seniority.

The WBFD will not discriminate against personnel on the basis of pregnancy or a condition related to pregnancy.

Nondiscrimination: In accordance with requirements of federal and state anti-discrimination statutes, no person shall discriminate on the grounds of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, age, national origin, ancestry, or disability in any aspect of the provisions of ambulance or EMS first response service or in employment practices.

No Retaliation: Retaliation by members of the department against anyone for the filing of a complaint, for taking actions to prevent unsafe situations, for taking actions to ensure compliance with the law or department policy, or any other lawful or ethical action is unacceptable behavior. Retaliation is a serious breach of fire district policy and may subject individuals to disciplinary action (including termination) and/or criminal prosecution.

Acronyms

A&H	Accident & Health
A&S	Accident & Sickness
CEU	continuing education unit
DOL	Department of Labor
EMS	emergency medical services
EMT	emergency medical technician
EAP	Employee Assistance Program
EDW	Enterprise Data Warehouse
FLSA	Fair Labor Standards Act
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
HIPAA	Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act
IAFC-VCOS	International Association of Fire Chiefs — Volunteer & Combination Officers Section
IAFC	International Association of Fire Chiefs
ICMA	International City/County Management Association
IT	information technology
LOSAP	Length of Service Award Program
NFA	National Fire Academy
NFDC	National Fire Data Center
NFIRS	National Fire Incident Reporting System
NFPA	National Fire Protection Association
NLC	National League of Cities
NVFC	National Volunteer Fire Council
OSHA	Occupational Safety and Health Administration
OSFA	Oklahoma State Firefighters Association
PIO	public information officer
PPE	personal protective equipment
PTSD	post-traumatic stress disorder
POV	privately owned vehicle

SAFER	Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response
UL	Underwriters Laboratories
USFA	U.S. Fire Administration
WBFD	West Barnstable (Massachusetts) Fire District

U.S. Fire Administration
Working for a fire-safe America

16825 South Seton Ave.
Emmitsburg, MD 21727
usfa.fema.gov

FA-361 | May 2023

Volunteer Retention Research Report

Prepared for National Volunteer Fire Council

August 2020

Marketing for Change

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Research Goals 3
Methodology..... 4
Executive Summary 5
Quantitative Research Findings 10
Qualitative Research Findings 23
Appendix A: Department Leadership Interview Guide..... 29
Appendix B: Volunteer Interview Guide..... 34
Appendix C: Quantitative Survey Questionnaire 40

RESEARCH GOALS

The specific goals of this research included:

- **Understanding the institutional drivers of why volunteers leave the fire service** in order to develop targeted strategies aimed at stabilizing and increasing retention. This entailed building a more robust understanding of:
    - the differences between firefighters who stay and those who leave
    - how those insights can be used to extend length of service in the volunteer sector

- **Developing a stable, repeatable measure of retention rates across the volunteer fire service.**
    - This included the development of a scale that is meaningful to a range of industry stakeholders and can be used to track progress of retention efforts over time. This work will result in a concise series of questions and analysis procedures that NVFC can regularly implement, perhaps in partnership with the NFPA's Fire Department Profile survey.

METHODOLOGY

This research study unfolded over three phases:

The initial phase of research included interviews with current and former volunteer firefighters (N=20) as well as department leadership in the fire service (N=7). Participants were identified by NVFC and through an online recruiting screener that was distributed by the NVFC team and key committee members. The purpose of the leadership interviews was to discuss their perceptions of what's working and what's not as well as how they measured retention. For the volunteer interviews, the purpose was to understand reasons for staying and leaving the service, with an emphasis on developing a hypothesis about programs to improve retention to test further.

The second phase included a synthesis session with the NVFC's SAFER Work Group to share and prioritize findings and implications from the interviews and develop content for the follow-up survey.

The last phase was a quantitative survey of current and former volunteers, as well as current department leadership. The survey was fielded between April 10 and May 11, 2020 and broadly distributed through NVFC's email list, social media, and partners organizations. Respondents included a total of 1,030 volunteers, including current (N=922) and former (N=108) members.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Magnitude of the Retention Issue

Results from the survey of current and former members show that over two thirds of respondents feel their departments have (or had) a problem with volunteer retention. This includes nearly 70% of current department leadership.

Additionally, nearly half of all current volunteers have considered leaving the fire service at some point.

Reasons for Leaving

Former volunteers cited a lack of department cohesion and unsupportive leadership as their main reasons for leaving the service in the survey, which reinforces feedback received in the qualitative phase of research. The specific reasons for leaving most selected by former volunteers in the survey were:

- Department atmosphere full of cliques and groups that exclude others
- Department leadership that doesn't focus on or support the needs of members
- Department atmosphere where members of different generations don't get along
- Lack of camaraderie or sense of community among everyone in the department

Notably, the survey revealed current volunteers have a mostly different list of top reasons for why they think volunteers leave, focusing more on unclear expectations and how volunteering fits in with the rest of an individual's life. The top reasons cited by current volunteers were:

- Lack of support and flexibility in juggling volunteer responsibilities with other life commitments
- The realities of volunteering changed or didn't meet the expectations that were set before signing up
- Lack of clear expectations of how much time and effort will be required each week or month for meetings and trainings
- Department atmosphere full of cliques and groups that exclude others

It's worth noting that on the two most frequently mentioned reasons for leaving among former volunteers – department cliques and leadership that doesn't focus enough on member needs – there are significant differences between how big an issue these are among current volunteers and current leadership; current non-leaders are much more likely to cite them compared to leadership.

On the other hand, department leadership were much more likely to think juggling volunteering responsibilities was a problem than non-leadership and former volunteers.

This could be reflective of a disconnect between both the experiences of current and former members, as well as between leadership and rank-and-file members.

Members who considered leaving but didn't were bothered by leadership, cliques, and training requirements, but ultimately their desire to serve the community and sense of responsibility kept them at their departments.

	What do you think are the three biggest reasons that volunteers have left or would consider leaving your department?			**What were the three biggest reasons that you stopped volunteering?**
	CURRENT VOLUNTEERS			
	ALL Current Volunteers	**Current Leadership**	**Current Non-Leadership**	**Former Volunteers**
SAMPLE SIZE	*922*	*445*	*477*	*108*
Lack of support and flexibility in juggling volunteer responsibilities with other life commitments	37%	**41%**	**33%**	8%
The realities of volunteering changed or didn't meet the expectations that were set before signing up	30%	31%	29%	4%
Lack of clear expectations of how much time and effort will be required each week or month for meetings and trainings	28%	31%	26%	9%
Department atmosphere full of cliques and groups that exclude others	25%	**20%**	**30%**	22%
Lack of camaraderie or sense of community among everyone in the department	20%	18%	21%	13%
Lack of flexibility in training requirements and schedules	20%	20%	19%	7%
Lack of social life within the department, where members train and go on calls, but don't spend time together otherwise	19%	19%	18%	8%
Department leadership that doesn't focus on or support the needs of members	17%	**13%**	**21%**	18%
Department atmosphere where members of different generations don't get along	16%	15%	17%	14%

Bolded numbers indicate significant differences between current leadership and non-leadership.

Positive Factors Impacting Retention

For all current volunteers combined – both leadership and non-leadership – a mentorship program between new volunteers and more experienced members was the top choice for having a positive impact on retention. This reinforced what we heard in the qualitative responses on why volunteers leave, as new recruits who feel isolated and were not a part of any group were frequently cited as much more likely to leave.

For former volunteers, the top choice for what could have had a positive impact on retention was conducting exit interviews when a volunteer leaves the department. The lack of this exit interview could be reinforcing their perception that leadership isn't concerned with the needs of members. Their second highest rated choice was conducting stay interviews with volunteers who have lapsed attendance and may be considering leaving the department.

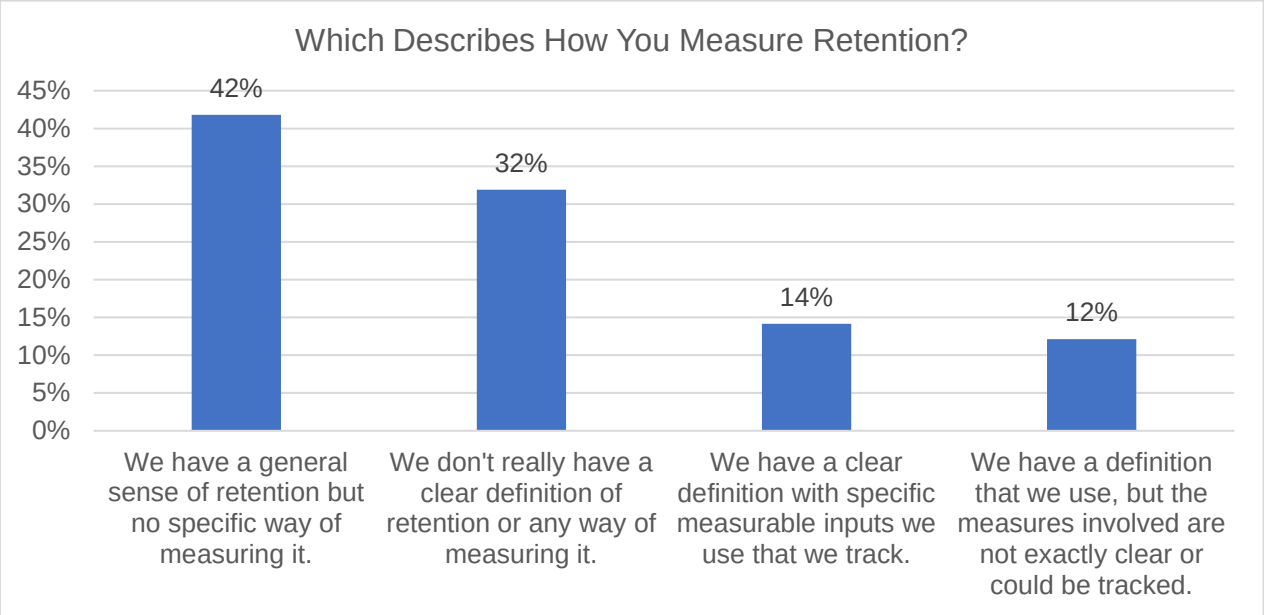
	Which, if any, of these do you think could have (have had) a positive impact on retention at your department (most recent department)?			
	CURRENT VOLUNTEERS			
	ALL Current Volunteers	**Current Leadership**	**Current Non-Leadership**	**Former Volunteers**
SAMPLE SIZE	*922*	*445*	*477*	*108*
A mentorship program that pairs new volunteers with more experienced members	61%	**60%**	62%	**42%**
Giving out awards or honors when members reach service milestones (1 year, 5 years, 10 years, etc.) and/or superlatives at the end of the year	58%	**61%**	54%	**44%**
Conduct stay interviews with volunteers who have lapsed attendance and may be considering leaving the department	56%	54%	58%	53%
Conduct exit interviews when a volunteer leaves the department	50%	49%	51%	57%
Providing new volunteers with advice on how to fit volunteering into the rest of their life	52%	**56%**	47%	**29%**

Bolded numbers indicate significant differences between current leadership and former volunteers.

Also, note in the above table the discrepancy on "providing new volunteers with advice on how to fit volunteering into the rest of their life" between current leadership and former volunteers. In the previous table, leadership had also cited "lack of support and flexibility in juggling volunteer responsibilities with other life commitments" as the top reason they think volunteers leave. There seems to be a gap between the importance leadership places on this versus former volunteers.

Measuring Retention

Reflecting what we saw in the qualitative phase of research, the survey showed that a majority of leadership do not have clear definitions of retention or approaches for measuring it.



Having said that, when asked to assess a suite of potential tools aimed specifically at leadership, respondents ranked having a standard definition of recruitment and retention first, so there is a desire for one.

When prompted with an example way of measuring retention – dividing the number of members at the end of the year by the number of members at the beginning – a majority of leaders felt that calculation would be easy to use, but needed to incorporate other dimensions such as whether a member is active and tenure to be more accurate. Some leaders also felt that since every department's situation is unique to the area they're in, it would be challenging to develop a universal definition that would be meaningful to all.

Implications and Recommendations

- While flexibility in training requirements and volunteering schedules remain important factors in retention, these data indicate that department leadership and culture are at least as, if not more, influential when it comes to volunteers choosing to leave the service.

- These findings provide guidance on a number of initiatives NVFC could spearhead, specifically:
    - Mentorship programs
    - Recognition efforts

- Touchpoints/interventions such as the stay and exit interviews
- Volunteer engagement kits
- The development of a foundational – if imperfect – retention measure as a starting point to establish the norm, such as this one suggested by a respondent: *The number of active firefighters at end of year divided by the number of active firefighters at beginning of year, plus new volunteers added during year.*

FINDINGS FROM THE QUANTITATIVE SURVEY WITH CURRENT AND FORMER MEMBERS

Overall, more than 6 out of 10 respondents think their current or former departments have a retention problem, including nearly 7 out of 10 current leadership. [For purposes of the survey, leadership was defined as the following positions: Chief, Assistant Chief, Battalion Chief, Captain, President, or Fire Marshal.]

	In your opinion, do you think your department has a problem with retention?			In your opinion, do you think your most recent department had a problem with retention?
	CURRENT VOLUNTEERS			
	ALL Current Volunteers	Current Leadership	Current Non-Leadership	Former Volunteers
SAMPLE SIZE	*922*	*445*	*477*	*108*
Yes	64%	68%	61%	63%
No	35%	32%	39%	37%

Almost half [47%] of all current volunteers said they have thought about no longer volunteering at their department.

	Have you ever considered no longer volunteering at the department?		
	CURRENT VOLUNTEERS		
	ALL Current Volunteers	Current Leadership	Current Non-Leadership
SAMPLE SIZE	*922*	*445*	*477*
Yes	47%	47%	47%
No	53%	53%	53%

Reasons for Considering Leaving

In an open-ended question, it was reported that problems stemming from leadership was one of the most common reasons for volunteers thinking about leaving their department. Many cited the "old school" mindset as an issue with their leadership – an unwillingness to adapt to the times, listen to new ideas, and poor treatment of the volunteers who don't conform to their norm.

> ***"Because the volunteers are treated like second class citizens. The volunteers are treated like they are just disposable assets."***
>
> ***"Don't find that my dept is working towards the future. It's pretty much been stuck in the 1990s for the past 30 years."***
>
> ***"Fire Chief is not trained to state best practices, or to a standard, nor are any chief officers required to have any training."***
>
> ***"Plainly said, the good old boys club is the problem."***

Favoritism in leadership and cliques were also frequently mentioned in regard to poor leadership and were a contributing factor to many volunteers leaving. The favoritism can lead to bitterness – not everyone at the department is held to the same standards. The cliques cause isolation for those not included, which causes new recruits to leave and creates silos that lead to poor collaboration and camaraderie among members.

> ***"Department is very cliquey and only those who conform to the clique survive, the majority of members do not and a typical new member lasts no more than a year or two."***
>
> ***"Lack of respect for the members who do the bulk of the call response, and favoritism towards the boys who grew up local. It's very demoralizing to run rescue calls all week then get bumped from a fire apparatus by a member who runs in just for the fire call. Despite a requirement for members to make 10% of calls, these local boys have not met their 10% for years but there are no consequences for them. It makes those of us doing the bulk of the calls feel disrespected and unsupported."***
>
> ***"A lot of silos built in the department and groups of people who team together to obtain power of the department."***

The time commitment of being a volunteer was cited as another big factor in why volunteers decide to leave as it can be very taxing to a volunteer juggling a full-time job and/or a family. Training was at the top of the list for why the time commitment of being a volunteer is so demanding. While the volunteers recognized the importance of training, many spoke to the inflexibility of training times offered. Others spoke of the

frustration of having to attend more than the “essential” amount of training necessary to do their job as a volunteer. Some believe any training not deemed “essential” should be an option for more engaged volunteers.

Other reasons cited for considering leaving their department were age, emotional burnout, depression, and personal conflicts within the department, sometimes between the paid/career side and volunteer.

What Could Have Kept the Former Volunteers from Leaving

In an open-ended question, former volunteers cited many of the same reasons as things that would have had to have changed in order for them to stay on, namely:

- More appreciative, fair leadership
- More flexible training and staffing requirements
- Less cliques and better department interactions

“Lighten up the government-mandated training requirements.”

“Nothing [could have made them stay] the upper management is all about cliques versus what you can bring to the table.”

“The Fire Chief needed to be a leader and stop being a politician, internally and externally. We had older FFs and Officers putting down the new generations and crippling our retention efforts. Chief did nothing to fix it, too worried about re-election!”

“Respect, more appreciation, leadership who cares about individuals.”

“Wellness contacts. Know your people and be available for them and their families if needed. Leaders should always keep in contact if a member is away for an extended amount of time. More structure so everyone knows their place and can function appropriately when the need arises. More mentorship involvement and leadership development. Assign relevant tasks with clear and timely goals, focusing on mentorship and leadership. By all means reward accomplishment. Create more social activities to include member families.”

“Development of an Auxiliary firefighter program that did not require 24/7 response to emergency calls.”

“Improved morale within the department. It became more of a popularity contest and members treated it as a social club rather than taking it seriously. Members who pursued further training and improving their skills were ridiculed and voted out of the department.”

"Stop the good old boy system. I was tired of having to do everything and then told I was wrong. I went to over 300 hours of training every year. I [was] always told that most of the training was dumb and we won't do that."

"My station required a minimum 12 consecutive hour shift per week. Same night every week. i.e. - Monday crew, etc. Difficult for people with shift work jobs to commit to always working the same duty night each week. In some cases, it makes sense to work with trained committed members to stay on rather than hold to rigid policies."

Reasons for Staying

For current volunteers who considered leaving but did not, their reasons for staying were less diffuse and generally came back to the original reasons they began volunteering – their desire to give back to the community and help people. They spoke of honor, not wanting to leave the community in need, a desire to help mentor younger firefighters, and to try to bring about departmental change from within.

"Well, if the old guys quit there will be no one to respond."

"Will serve the community regardless of bad leaders."

"Love helping people."

"Too many young members that don't know what they are doing."

"I went on a call and remembered why I was here!"

"Still enjoy it, still active, like to teach the young new ones."

"I have to remember that I do this because I love it and I'm here for my community."

"Committed to Community. Didn't volunteer due to leaders."

"I am still volunteering so department won't fail."

Reasons for Leaving

We asked current members what they think the three main reasons are that cause volunteers to leave the force. We also asked former volunteers what their three main reasons were for leaving the department. We saw some notable differences between former and current volunteers, as well as between current leadership and non-leadership.

Current volunteers' top three reasons were:

- Lack of support and flexibility in juggling volunteer responsibilities with other life commitments
- The realities of volunteering changed or didn't meet the expectations that were set before signing up
- Lack of clear expectations of how much time and effort will be required each week or month for meetings and trainings

These were relatively lower in the list for former volunteers, who cited their top reasons as:

- Department atmosphere full of cliques and groups that exclude others
- Department leadership that doesn't focus on or support the needs of members
- Department atmosphere where members of different generations don't get along

It is worth noting that current non-leadership also cited two of the top reasons former members left – cliques and leadership that doesn't support members – much higher than current leadership.

	What do you think are the three biggest reasons that volunteers have left or would consider leaving your department?			**What were the three biggest reasons that you stopped volunteering?**
	CURRENT VOLUNTEERS			
	ALL Current Volunteers	**Current Leadership**	**Current Non-Leadership**	**Former Volunteers**
SAMPLE SIZE	*922*	*445*	*477*	*108*
Lack of support and flexibility in juggling volunteer responsibilities with other life commitments	**37%**	41%	33%	**8%**
The realities of volunteering changed or didn't meet the expectations that were set before signing up	**30%**	31%	29%	**4%**
Lack of clear expectations of how much time and effort will be required each week or month for meetings and trainings	**28%**	31%	26%	**9%**
Department atmosphere full of cliques and groups that exclude others	25%	20%	30%	22%
Lack of camaraderie or sense of community among everyone in the department	**20%**	18%	21%	**13%**

Lack of flexibility in training requirements and schedules	**20%**	20%	19%	**7%**
Lack of social life within the department, where members train and go on calls, but don't spend time together otherwise	**19%**	19%	18%	**8%**
Department leadership that doesn't focus on or support the needs of members	17%	13%	21%	18%
Department atmosphere where members of different generations don't get along	16%	15%	17%	14%
Department culture that doesn't engage members outside of calls or training	16%	14%	17%	12%
Department leadership that is rigid and does not support or allow for new ideas and new leaders	15%	11%	19%	13%
Department culture that isolates new members	10%	7%	14%	6%
Lack of trust and cooperation between volunteer and career sides of the department	8%	5%	10%	9%
Department atmosphere that is too serious and not enough fun	6%	7%	6%	2%
Lack of support and professional development for volunteers who want to move to the career side	4%	3%	5%	5%

Bolded numbers indicate significant differences between current and former volunteers.

Positive Factors Impacting Retention

When asked what initiatives or programs could have a positive impact on retention, current volunteers cited:

- A mentorship program that pairs new volunteers with more experienced members
- Giving out awards or honors when members reach service milestones (1 year, 5 years, 10 years, etc.) and/or superlatives at the end of the year
- Conducting stay interviews with volunteers who have lapsed attendance and may be considering leaving the department
- Conducting exit interviews when a volunteer leaves the department
- Providing new volunteers with advice on how to fit volunteering into the rest of their life

A mentorship program between new volunteers and more experienced members was the top choice among current volunteers for having a positive impact on retention. This would help address what we heard in the qualitative responses that new recruits who feel isolated and not a part of any group are much more likely to leave. This also could help address any generational tension in a department – which we know can cause issues with retention – by potentially forming bonds between younger and senior members.

	Which, if any, of these do you think could have (have had) a positive impact on retention at your department (most recent department)?			
	CURRENT VOLUNTEERS			
	ALL Current Volunteers	Current Leadership	Current Non-Leadership	Former Volunteers
SAMPLE SIZE	*922*	*445*	*477*	*108*
A mentorship program that pairs new volunteers with more experienced members	61%	60%	62%	42%
Giving out awards or honors when members reach service milestones (1 year, 5 years, 10 years, etc.) and/or superlatives at the end of the year	58%	61%	54%	44%
Conduct stay interviews with volunteers who have lapsed attendance and may be considering leaving the department	56%	54%	58%	53%
Conduct exit interviews when a volunteer leaves the department	50%	49%	51%	57%
Providing new volunteers with advice on how to fit volunteering into the rest of their life	52%	56%	47%	29%
Hold essential training sessions on multiple days	47%	48%	46%	45%
Offer online training for nonessential training	47%	48%	45%	44%
Allow and encourage new and younger members to own specific projects and tasks	47%	52%	42%	32%
Leadership providing a clearer understanding to new volunteers of the monthly time commitment, goals, and responsibilities that are expected so they're on the same page	46%	48%	44%	33%
Having department leadership actively participate in training to lead by example	38%	40%	35%	27%
Have department leadership hold more regular and personal check-ins with new volunteers	37%	39%	35%	30%
Offer micro-volunteer opportunities (1 day or 1 week a month) for those that are unable to commit to traditional volunteer time commitments	36%	35%	36%	29%

Build the essential training calendar around members with less flexibility in their schedule	33%	36%	30%	39%
Set up a comment box for anonymous feedback and/or create dedicated office hours to provide members a clear opportunity to express their opinions	33%	33%	32%	21%
Enrolling rising volunteers in an officer candidate course to gain leadership skills and training	31%	29%	32%	20%
Break up cliques and groups by assigning members to workgroups they wouldn't normally choose	27%	27%	27%	25%
Offer virtual reality training modules	26%	26%	26%	21%
Create a database of former volunteers to stay in touch with them and try and re-engage on future opportunities	25%	22%	29%	19%
Holding cross-generational training to help members and leaders of different ages better understand each other	25%	27%	24%	18%
Following a set of national leadership standards and core competencies	21%	22%	20%	25%
Leadership making it clear up front the minimum length of service they expect of new recruits	21%	22%	20%	12%
Immersive virtual reality/360-degree video of firefighting experiences as part of training modules and morale boosts	21%	20%	21%	10%
Make it easier to compare your department's retention rate and efforts with other departments	18%	17%	20%	16%
Create a Chief People Officer at the department who constantly takes the temperature of members' happiness and satisfaction	14%	12%	17%	15%
Holding joint trainings with career and volunteer staff	14%	13%	15%	16%
Providing department leadership with training focused on managing combination departments	13%	14%	12%	21%
Providing department leadership with sales and marketing training	12%	14%	9%	5%
Mentorships with career members for volunteers who are career-bound	11%	10%	11%	7%

Leadership Tools

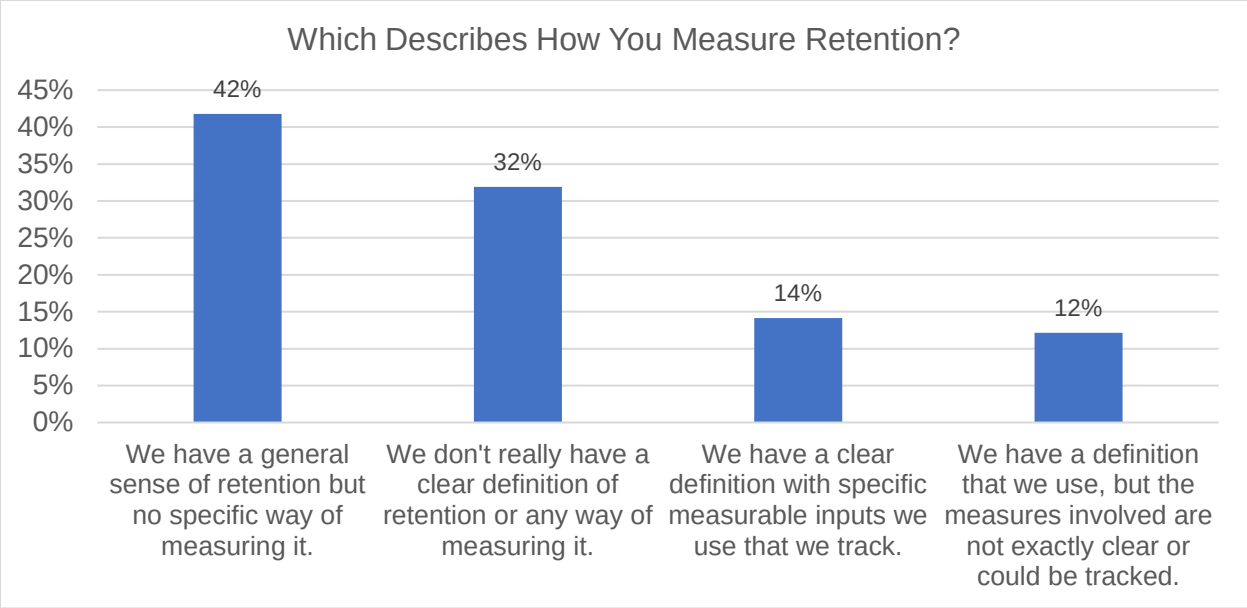
Current leadership were asked to assess a suite of potential tools aimed specifically at leadership. Respondents ranked having a standard definition of recruitment and retention first, followed by an immersive training experience and then volunteer engagement kits.

Potential Leadership Tool (Ranked by Usefulness)	Ranked 1st	Ranked 1st or 2nd
Standard definition of recruitment and retention success that can be shared and compared among departments	31%	44%
An immersive 360-video of firefighting experience (a first-hand point-of-view video that places the viewer in the boots of a volunteer during an emergency) to show as a training module and morale boost	23%	41%
Volunteer engagement kits with guidance and materials, including a webinar series, highlighting and discussing retention strategies and tools	19%	48%
Recruitment and retention video collection of simple, peer-to-peer videos focused on retention challenges and solutions from other department leaders	16%	43%
Online training transition support that offers tools and guidance on how to move in-person training to an online platform.	11%	25%

Measuring Retention

Over 7 out of 10 (74%) of current department leadership reported either having a general sense of retention but no specific way of measuring it or not having a clear definition of retention at all.

Another 12% reported having a firmer retention definition, but that the data involved aren't clear or trackable. Only 14% of leadership said they have a clear definition and trackable data.



For those who have a clear definition, the measures they offered revolved around how they define a volunteer as an active member and that member's length of service. The most common measures given were if a member stays active for 3 or 10 years. Some of the respondents' measures are noted below.

<u>Defining an "active" volunteer</u>

> ***"30% of calls, 36 hours per year of training, up to 12 allowed outside the department, 10 hours of community service through the department, and 1, 3, 5, 10, 15, 20, etc. years of service milestones."***
>
> ***"Active member=attends 50% of all meetings and trainings and attends 25% of all calls."***
>
> ***"Members making 20% of the events."***
>
> ***"Members must make 30% of calls and 50% of training."***
>
> ***"20% calls OR combination of calls, trainings, events, certifications that equal 50 points or more."***
>
> ***"The firefighter must attend 80 percent of all calls practices and 50 percent of all calls."***

<u>Measuring retention</u>

> ***"A member is in good standing for a period of 10+ years."***
>
> ***"Keeping members active for more than 3 years."***

"Does not leave for 10 yrs.; makes VIP points annually."

"Keeping members active members past 3-year mark."

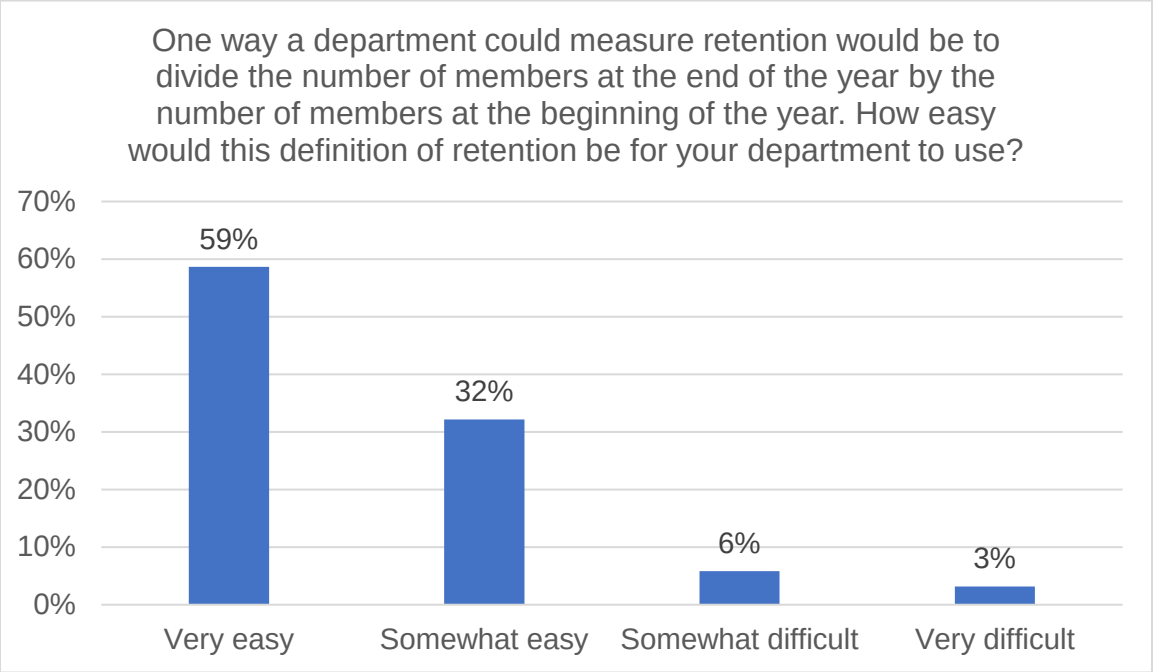
"Member remains on active status for 3 or more years."

"We try to keep them on for at least 10 years."

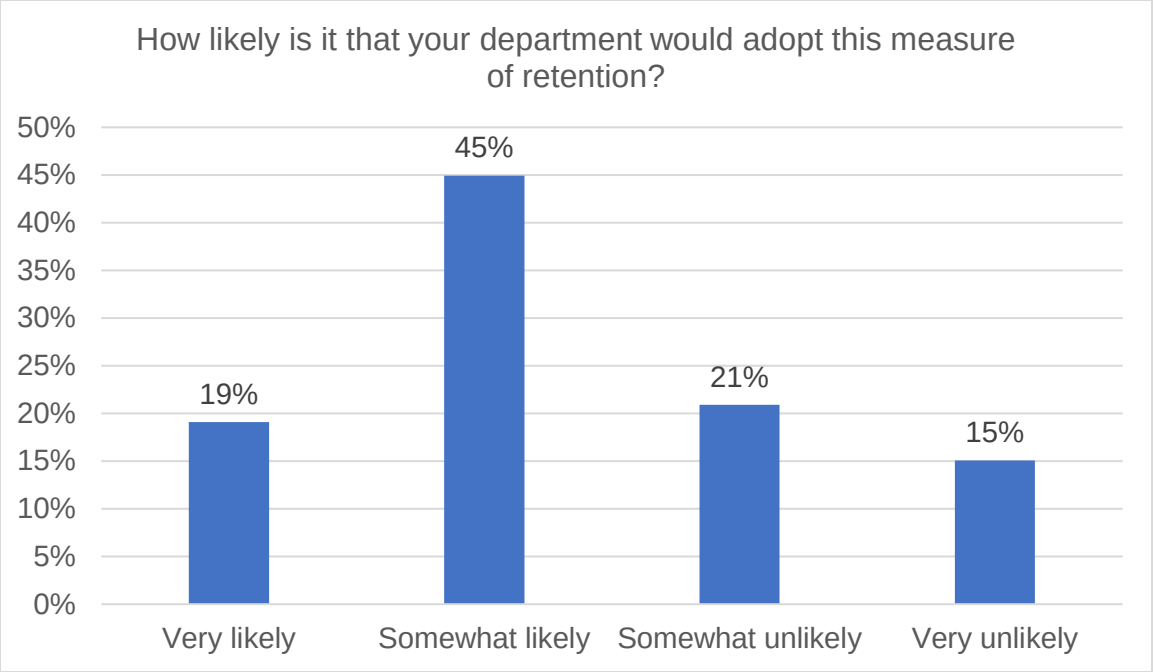
The number of volunteers who join compared to those who leave was mentioned by some respondents as a way of measuring retention.

"The number of members that we take in, compared against the number of members who progress through the length of service. Normally, our first year is the lowest number of retention. Mostly due to new members with training requirements, and even though we explain everything, they still leave because of commitment."

When prompted with an example way of measuring annual retention – dividing the number of members at the end of the year by the number of members at the beginning – a majority of members felt that calculation would be easy to use.



While almost 1 in 5 leadership respondents said they'd be very likely to adopt this measure, 45% reported softer support, and 36% said they would be unlikely.



In an open-ended follow-up question, many respondents noted that in the definition of retention, the issue of active versus inactive volunteers needs to be addressed. If a department gains one new member who turns out to not be very active, it may not replace the amount of work lost if a veteran volunteer retired. Many felt other data needed to be factored into any definition, such as how much time a volunteer gave versus the amount they had to offer, or their tenure. Otherwise, an overall number could disguise a retention problem in a department.

Multiple respondents also mentioned they understand retention and how to track it, but the issues are going to be unique to every department, so it would be hard to come up with a universal definition for all departments.

> ***"We know what retention is. Our issues are unique to our area."***
>
> ***"Your start of year divided by end of year is impossibly vague. You need much more data to view trends within the department."***
>
> ***"Gaining one recruit is not making up for losing a 20-year veteran."***
>
> ***"Retention should look at individuals' tenure, not at the overall number. Using overall number would disguise a retention problem and not lend itself to analyzing the causes of drop out."***
>
> ***"The number of active firefighters at end of year divided by the number of active firefighters at beginning of year, plus new volunteers added during year."***

“Length of service and qualifications achieved during tenure. If we just measure beginning and end of year membership, we could potentially have a zero-sum. We lose 4 during year, gain 4 during year doesn't define retention. We need longevity.”

FINDINGS FROM QUALITATIVE RESEARCH WITH LEADERSHIP AND CURRENT AND FORMER VOLUNTEERS

Prior to conducting the quantitative survey discussed above, we conducted exploratory, qualitative research with current and former volunteers, as well as department leadership. We specifically did the following:

1. **Conducted 7 one-on-one, semi-structured interviews with department leaders**, identified and selected in partnership with the NVFC team and key committee members, to reflect environments with both optimal retention among volunteers, as well as those struggling with retention. The purpose of this design was to discuss leadership perceptions of what's working and what's not. We also discussed how they measure retention, including getting their reactions to potential alternative approaches.
2. **Interviewed 20 current and former volunteers.** The discussions delved into reasons for staying and leaving the service, with an emphasis on using prior findings to have more in-depth conversations, as well as exploring reactions to potential ideas designed to stem attrition. Participants were identified, recruited and selected in two primary ways – 1) having been identified by the NVFC team, key committee members, and leadership interviewees and 2) through an online recruiting screener that was distributed by the NVFC team and key committee members.

The goal of this initial phase of research was to build on prior investigations into volunteer retention to validate hypotheses and develop items to incorporate into the quantitative survey that was to follow.

The main findings from this discovery phase are recapped below.

Current Results Reinforce Existing Research

Findings from the interviews aligned with other retention research as all participants spoke the most about time (a lack of it), training (a lot of it), and interpersonal department tensions as the key obstacles of retention.

Past research conducted by the NVFC in 2015 similarly showed that unmet expectations, isolation within the department, frustration with department leadership, and lack of support from family and employers are factors that can make it difficult for volunteers to continue serving.

Going further back, a 2007 U.S. Fire Administration report[1], developed in partnership with the NVFC, included survey results that revealed lack of time, organizational conflicts, leadership issues, and training requirements were the most frequently cited reasons volunteers left departments.

What Makes Your Members Leave Your Organization?*

No time to volunteer	92.3%
Conflicts in organization	47.8%
Organizational leadership created adverse atmosphere	46.7%
Too much training	45.6%
Attitude of existing personnel to newcomers	39.1%
Criticism received from officers/older members	38.0%
Lack of camaraderie	19.5%

* *Many respondents indicated more than one reason for leaving the organization*

[1] Retention and Recruitment for the Volunteer Emergency Services Challenges and Solutions FA-310/May 2007

Given the exploratory nature of the interviews, participants were encouraged to reflect and elaborate on the dimensions impacting the volunteer service experience. They touched on far-ranging issues impacting both recruitment and retention, from broad societal trends to detailed dynamics impacting departments today. The most frequently discussed topics are presented below, all of which helped inform specific questions that were incorporated into the survey.

Departments are reflections of their communities.

Participants commented, for example, that more rural areas of the country where volunteers are needed often face a level of malaise within the department leadership that is reflective of their community. They cited that these communities are often struggling with poverty, depression, health complications, and rapidly aging and shrinking populations. Many leaders talked about a loss of culture, community, and history that seems insurmountable and can lead to a particularly uninspired form of leadership.

Continuing with the theme that departments mirror their community, a few of the leaders interviewed characterized NVFC's push for diversity in recruitment as unrealistic, as it is not reflective of their community demographics.

Additionally, for many departments, being continually understaffed has become the norm, so their focus is more on recruitment than retention.

Departments face different challenges, making uniform solutions difficult.

We spoke with volunteers and leadership in a range of different types of departments (all volunteer and combination) and in different geographic areas. The stories we heard varied significantly.

For example, departments in rapidly growing areas (exurbs of growing metropolitan areas) where the population requires (and the tax base supports) a broad presence may be struggling with issues of transitioning to a combination department model. By contrast, in shrinking rural areas, volunteer departments are closing down, forcing fewer departments to service a broader area.

Generational differences are often cited.

Both volunteers and leadership often brought up generational issues as impacting retention.

- Repeatedly, more experienced leaders (including those at departments relatively more effective at retention) talked about how "volunteering just isn't the same today." In discussing this they mentioned things like neighbors not knowing each other, people developing a different sense of community, and a resulting decline in altruism. A universal undercurrent was the *perception* that younger

generations, particularly millennials, were uninterested in volunteering and more focused on self-interests.

- Some department leaders looked at this as a gulf in generational attitudes that could not be overcome (often refusing to adjust their own expectations), whereas other leaders looked at it more as a challenge of what the volunteer experience was and recognized that they needed to adjust their expectations and offer to meet newer, younger recruits with an approach they were looking for.

- Younger volunteers spoke of older leaders who were resistant to change on issues ranging from being willing to modify service schedules, to how they communicated with volunteers (not being willing to text notifications on last minute training schedule changes, for example).

Age and tenure were also said to sometimes be factors contributing to cliques within departments that can alienate new members. As one volunteer put it: "*If you aren't dating someone, related to someone, or not in a clique, you don't matter."*

Lack of clear expectations impacts retention, particularly on length of service.

Leaders from departments reporting more success with retention said they provide clear expectations of what to expect in the first year or so of volunteering. Conversely both rank-and-file volunteers and leaders from departments struggling with retention acknowledged that such expectations were not always shared in their departments.

- Department leaders that balanced setting clear expectations about the amount of training and time required with a clear commitment of their own to help deliver often had better retention results.
- Regardless of leadership effectiveness, however, expected length of service was rarely, if ever, discussed or even considered. Many leaders expressed a desire for lifelong participation and to see volunteers outlast themselves.
- While that's the ideal, when pressed, the leaders tended to have more realistic expectations, simply hoping to get 3-5 years out of a volunteer.
- The non-leadership volunteers, however, seemed to have less defined expectations of their service; rather, they'll do it as long as their home/work schedule allows, and, importantly, they get value out of it.
- Both leadership and non-leadership volunteers held the view that out of the TOTAL volunteers at departments, usually half or less are considered "active."
    - "Active" was typically defined by respondents as showing up consistently at the firehouse, especially for calls and trainings.

Life stage fit is an important consideration.

Leaders recognized the NVFC's focus on younger member recruitment, but at least a few of them noted that life stage was the more important dimension to consider than simply age. By this they meant that sometimes recruiting slightly "older" or "more

established" recruits was preferable (e.g. in their thirties and established / settled in the community, homeowners, etc.), explaining that these recruits are more likely to be long-term members of the community, and as long as they're in the community, they've got a better shot at retaining them or bringing them back into the fold if they leave for family commitments.

- This is contrasted with younger recruits still figuring out life plans who may be more likely to move out of the area for jobs or college.
- All participants noted the clear need for the volunteer force to get younger, so this discussion is one of nuance to a degree, but the notion of life stage is an important factor in retention.

The career/volunteer dynamic can be tricky.

From all participants, we heard several stories of tension between career and volunteer members within combination departments. Often these stories of tension came from departments that were transitioning to a combination model.

We heard that career members often distrust volunteers and can be critical of their approach (on matters big and small). This often comes from a real place of concern, as less active volunteers may not have enough training (there tends to be less tension with active volunteers) and certainly have less familiarity with each other as a team.

On the other hand, we also heard that volunteers often look at career members as both entitled, with little regard for the sacrifices being made by volunteers, and as a threat, feeling their roles and responsibilities within the department slipping away.

- Departments that have had successful transitions tend to have leaders with experience on both the career and volunteer side, and who put systems in place to force more combined trainings and cross-functional experiences.
    - They also spoke of the importance of having both volunteers and career firefighters celebrating the contributions from both sides, and placing trust in their volunteers (at least two department leaders mentioned the importance of letting the crew who first arrived continue to lead at the scene of a fire, especially if the first to arrive is a volunteer crew).

An additional part of this equation is that numerous volunteers we spoke with said that serving as a volunteer was largely to gain experience to get hired on the career side (a stepping-stone approach that was often advised by other career firefighters). Once they get the experience and training, they will try to find a career position. Those who made this transition and had good volunteer experiences, and helpful department leaders who were supportive of their career goals, often continued volunteering even after they attained a paid position.

Retention measures are rare.

Every leader we talked with had given considerable thought to the issue of retention. However, none of them had a clear definition or measurement that they used to judge their department. That realization generally made them recognize they needed a standard way of measuring retention, indicating they're open to suggestions and clear steps to do this.

Having said that, record keeping and data availability vary significantly by department, so any measure which depends on self-reported data will need to recognize this reality.

APPENDIX A

Department Leadership Interview Guide

Thank you for agreeing to speak with me today. We really appreciate it and promise not to take up too much of your time. I want to make sure that I get to all our questions within the 45 minutes I have you. Because of that, I may interrupt you at a certain point to ask us to move on to something else, but know that it's not because I'm not interested in what you're saying.

Just to give you a little background, I'm working on a project with the National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC) to better understand the issues around retention in order to help work on ways to improve it.

We're planning to talk with both longer-serving rank-and-file members as well as former members to compare their experiences and try to understand the similarities and differences. But we first wanted to start with the perspective of department leadership.

The most important part of this process is to hear the truth about what people like yourself think. So really all I'm looking for is your honest perspective, not what you think NVFC wants to hear, what somebody else wants to hear, or even what you may wish was the case. I'm independent, meaning you won't offend me or get me in trouble with any of your feedback. None of your feedback will be connected with you personally. We'll be combining everything we hear to paint a big picture of the issue. You also don't have to worry about your name being connected to any of your feedback. I hope you will be comfortable speaking openly.

Do you have any questions for me before we get started?

Role, Experience, and Department

I'd like to start by getting to know you and your department a bit better.

1. Let's start with you. Can you talk to me a bit about your role at your department?
    a. Day-to-day, what does that look like?
    b. What are the big picture things you focus on?
2. How long have you been in this role? How long have you been in the volunteer service overall?
    a. Are there any other leadership positions you hold?
3. In your role, what do you wish you got to do more of? What do you wish you had to do less of? How come?
4. Tell me about the area you serve.
    a. Rural, suburban, urban?
    b. Socio-economic?

    c. Demographics?
5. Tell me a bit more about your department.
    a. Capabilities and services?
    b. How many members?
    c. What is the call volume like?
    d. Typical call?
6. Tell me about your volunteers.
    a. Backgrounds?
    b. Similar? Diverse?
    c. Demographics?
7. Who is your typical new recruit? What are they looking for?
    a. What are their expectations? How long do they expect and plan to participate?
    b. How long do you expect them to participate? Want them to participate?
    c. Is that time frame ever communicated? How?
8. How would you describe the atmosphere in the department? What's the attitude like? What's the culture like?
    a. How do you think long-term members would answer that question?
    b. What about new recruits?
9. What are the things your volunteers enjoy most about being part of the department? Please try and be specific.
    a. What are some specifics you'd expect them to complain about?
    b. Do those things differ between longer-serving members and newer recruits? How so?
10. I want to ask about a few specific things that could be part of the volunteer experience, but don't have to be and may not always be. In either case, I'd like you to tell me any specific things you do around these issues and what the interest and involvement is like from your team.
    a. Having an active presence in the community, being recognized by the community, giving back
    b. Learning AND teaching new skills that are unique to the service and that could be applied outside the service
    c. Team development, traditions, camaraderie
    d. Fun and excitement

Retention Definitions

As I mentioned at the beginning of the call, this project is about retention. Pretty much the rest of our interview will be about that.

11. First, how does your department define what “retention” is? Do you have a set definition?
    a. Are there other definitions you’ve heard from other departments? What do you think of those?
12. Thinking about a new recruit, how would you decide if that person had been successfully retained?
    a. Is there a certain point in the process? Some milestone they complete? What about reaching a different rank?
    b. Is there a specific length of service?
    c. At what point do you think you’ve recouped the cost of training somebody? Is that a fair definition of retention? Why/why not?
13. Thinking about those definitions of successful retention you gave me, does that mean anything less than that is considered a failure at retention?
    a. **IF NO** So what is the bare minimum to meet the definition of retention?
14. Have you ever looked at retention as a measure related to specifics of the department as a whole? **IF YES**, How so?
    a. Let me give you some examples and you can react to each if it makes sense as a measure of retention or not. Tell me what works about it and what doesn’t.
        i. Having fewer open positions in the department than the year before.
        ii. The average service tenure for the department as a whole.
        iii. Having more long-term members than new recruits
        iv. Lower percentage of recent recruits who leave
        v. More equal distribution of newer and longer tenured members

Retention Experience

15. Regardless of the definitions that departments could use to define it, how do you think your department does on retaining its volunteers?
    a. How do you think it compares to other departments? Much better, somewhat better, about the same, or worse? What makes you say that?
16. What departments do you think tend to do the best at retention?
    a. Retention aside, how are they different from yours? How are they similar?
17. Which members are the easiest to retain? Which are the hardest? What’s the difference?
    a. Thinking specifically about newer recruits (someone in their first year or so, let’s say) — who are the ones that tend to stay and who are the ones that tend to leave? Describe them. How are they different?
18. What are the things that make retention hard? What could make it easier?
19. What are the reasons you tend to hear from recruits on why they’re leaving?
    a. Do you keep in touch with ex-volunteers? Where do they end up?

20. I want to get your reaction to some reasons we've heard in the past. I'm curious if you've heard the same.
    a. Lack of time to volunteer because of increased work and home-life demands
    b. Health issues and concerns associated with fire service
    c. Poor department leadership
    d. Negative experience on a call
    e. Negative experience in the department
    f. Lack of support or inclusion in the department
    g. Lack of training and resources
    h. Lack of career opportunities nearby, complicating how easily volunteers can meet requirements
    i. Increased training requirements
    j. The financial cost
    k. Lack of financial reward
21. At what point in the journey of becoming and being a volunteer firefighter do you tend to lose the most volunteers? Why do you think that is?
22. What's going well with retention? Have you had success with any specific initiatives or approaches to improve retention? Describe them to me. Why do you think that was so effective?
    a. Have you heard about any initiatives or approaches in other departments that have been successful?
23. What's going poorly with retention? What are some things you've tried or you've heard about other departments trying that haven't been very successful? Why do you think they fell flat?

MMAF UX Interview Recruiting

24. Before I let you go, I have one last question for you. Have you ever heard of the Make Me A Firefighter web tool that NVFC developed to help with recruiting, including tracking of recruits?
    a. IF YES: Have you ever used it?
        i. IF YES: Do you still use it?
            1. IF YES: How often? And what do you find valuable in it?
            2. IF NO: Why'd you stop?
25. As part of this project for retention, we're also helping to update this web tool, and we're looking for department leaders who will share their experience in using the revamped tool later. Would you be willing to help us out with another interview down the line to test this tool?

Wrap Up

26. Thank you so much for taking the time to speak with me today. Before I let you go, I always try to give people an opportunity to ask me any questions or provide any final thoughts on what we've discussed. Is there anything else you'd like to add that you think would be helpful for us to know or are there any questions you have?

    [THANK AND END]

APPENDIX B

Volunteer Interview Guide

Thank you for agreeing to speak with me today. My name is _____ and I'll be leading our conversation. This is opinion research, which means there are no wrong answers. I am interested in everything you have to say. You are the expert.

I am an independent researcher, so I have no stake in what you say. You will not offend me or get me in any trouble. My only goal is to hear your honest opinions. So please be as open and candid as you can be.

We have a number of questions to get through and I don't want to keep you longer than the hour that we agreed to. So that may mean, at some point, if I ask that we move on, it's just because I want to make sure we get to everything. It has nothing to do with what you're saying or what I think about what you're saying.

I am recording our conversation. This is just so I don't miss anything. The recording is entirely confidential. There may also be people listening to this interview to help me take notes and to understand what was said. Ultimately, this interview will be combined with other interviews we're conducting, and we'll write a report and make some recommendations. Your name won't be used in the report, and none of your feedback will be connected with you personally.

Do you have any questions before we get started?

Background and Personal Life

We'll talk more about the purpose of these interviews and this project in a little bit.

For now, I think what would be most useful is to get to know who you are a little bit more.

1. Maybe you could tell me.
    a. Your first name.
    b. A little bit about your family.
    c. What you do for a living or something you do for fun.
2. Where do you live?
    a. What's one thing you love about the area where you live?
    b. What's one thing you wish was different about the area where you live?
    c. Are you originally from there? How long have you lived there?
    d. What are the people like where you live?

This is all helpful background for me. I appreciate it. As you probably know, we're working on this project for the National Volunteer Fire Council. The point of the project is to help them better understand the volunteer experience to see what they can do to improve it.

FORMER VOLUNTEER — Role, Experience, and Department

My notes show that you used to be a volunteer, but that you aren't involved with a department currently. Is that correct? Perfect. We want to make sure to talk to people who have left the service.

3. When did you first sign up?
4. What made you sign up to begin with? What was it that motivated you to take that step?
5. What did you expect volunteering to be like when you first signed up?
    a. What lived up to your expectations? What fell short?
    b. How long did you expect you'd be a volunteer? Did you have any expectations?
6. What was your department like?
    a. Capabilities and services?
    b. How many members?
    c. What was the call volume like?
    d. Typical call?
    e. Modern? Rundown?
7. What were the other volunteers like?
    a. Backgrounds?
    b. Similar? Diverse?
    c. Demographics?
    d. Things in common?
8. What about the leadership?
    a. Active? Passive?
    b. Supportive? Critical?
9. Overall, how would you describe the culture?
10. I want to read you a few statements that may have to do with what a volunteer experience may or may not be like. For each one, I want you to rate your department on a scale of 1 to 10 where 1 means your department did a terrible job at it and 10 means your department did an excellent job at it. Please explain your rating as we go.
    a. Having an active presence in the community, being recognized by the community, giving back
    b. Learning AND teaching new skills that are unique to the service and that could be applied outside the service

    c. Team development, traditions, camaraderie
    d. Fun and excitement
11. How long did you volunteer before you left?
    a. What was your role there?
    b. What did that look like on a day-to-day basis?
12. When did you first think about leaving? Why?
13. Why did you decide to stop volunteering? [PROBE FOR MULTIPLE REASONS]
    a. Do any of the following sound like reasons why you stopped?
        i. Lack of time to volunteer because of increased work and home-life demands
        ii. Health issues and concerns associated with fire service
        iii. Poor department leadership
        iv. Negative experience on a call
        v. Negative experience in the department
        vi. Lack of support or inclusion in the department
        vii. Lack of training and resources
        viii. Lack of career opportunities nearby, complicating how easily volunteers can meet requirements
        ix. Increased training requirements
        x. The financial cost
        xi. Lack of financial reward
14. What do you think was the most important reason why you left? [REPEAT LIST IF NECESSARY]
15. Were there any triggering events? Things that may have been the last straw?
16. What were the good things or the positives that happened for you when you left?
    a. What were the drawbacks to leaving? What did you lose?
17. What about while volunteering? What were the good things you got from that?
    a. What were the drawbacks to volunteering? What did you lose?
18. What are the things that made volunteering difficult?
    a. How could they be made easier?
19. What do you wish you got to do more of as a volunteer? What do you wish you had to do less of?
20. Is there anything that could have been done differently that would have made you stay?
21. Think about the people at the department who are the lifers? What are they like?
    a. Other than that they still volunteer, how are they different from you? What do you have in common with them?
22. How long do you think is a reasonable expectation for a volunteer to stick with a department? Why that amount?
23. How do you think your department did at retaining its volunteers?

    a. How do you think it compared to other departments? Much better, somewhat better, about the same or worse? What makes you say that?
24. What departments do you think tend to do the best at retention?
    a. Retention aside, how are they different from yours? How are they similar?

CURRENT VOLUNTEER — Role, Experience, and Department

My notes show that you're currently a volunteer. Is that correct? Perfect.

25. When did you first sign up?
26. What made you sign up to begin with? What was it that motivated you to take that step?
27. What did you expect volunteering to be like when you first signed up?
    a. What lived up to your expectations? What fell short?
    b. How long did you expect you'd be a volunteer? Did you have expectations?
28. What is your current role at the department?
    a. What does that look like on a day-to-day basis?
29. What is your department like?
    a. Capabilities and services?
    b. How many members?
    c. What is the call volume like?
    d. Typical call?
    e. Modern? Rundown?
30. What are the other volunteers like?
    a. Backgrounds?
    b. Similar? Diverse?
    c. Demographics?
    d. Things in common?
31. What about the leadership?
    a. Active? Passive?
    b. Supportive? Critical?
32. Overall, how would you describe the culture?
33. I want to read you a few statements that may have to do with what a volunteer experience may or may not be like. For each one, I want you to rate your department on a scale of 1 to 10 where 1 means your department does a terrible job at it and 10 means your department does an excellent job at it. Please explain your rating as we go.
    a. Having an active presence in the community, being recognized by the community, giving back

    b. Learning AND teaching new skills that are unique to the service and that could be applied outside the service
    c. Team development, traditions, camaraderie
    d. Fun and excitement
34. What are the good things, the positives, that you get from volunteering?
    a. What are the drawbacks to volunteering? What do you lose?
35. What are the things that make volunteering difficult?
    a. How could they be made easier?
36. What do you wish you got to do more of as a volunteer? What do you wish you had to do less of?
37. Have you ever thought about stopping? When? In what moments?
    a. What made you decide to stay?
38. Think about the people who've left the department for reasons other than retirement or things outside of their control. What are they like?
    a. Other than that they've left the department, how are they different from you? What do you have in common with them?
39. Do you keep in touch with anybody who has left? What are they up to instead?
40. What are the reasons you've heard why volunteers leave?
41. I want to get your reaction to some reasons we've heard in the past. I'm curious if you've heard the same of if you've heard of other reasons as well.
    a. Lack of time to volunteer because of increased work and home-life demands
    b. Health issues and concerns associated with fire service
    c. Poor department leadership
    d. Negative experience on a call
    e. Negative experience in the department
    f. Lack of support or inclusion in the department
    g. Lack of training and resources
    h. Lack of career opportunities nearby, complicating how easily volunteers can meet requirements
    i. Increased training requirements
    j. The financial cost
    k. Lack of financial reward
42. At what point in the journey of becoming and being a volunteer firefighter do most people leave? Why do you think that is?
43. How long do you think is a reasonable expectation for a volunteer to stick with a department? Why that amount?
44. How do you think your department does on retaining its volunteers?
    a. How do you think it compares to other departments? Much better, somewhat better, about the same or worse? What makes you say that?

45. What departments do you think tend to do the best at retention?
    a. Retention aside, how are they different from yours? How are they similar?

FOR ALL — Wrap Up

46. Before we wrap up, I'm curious, do you know anybody else who has left a volunteer fire department where if they're experience had been different maybe they would have stayed?
    a. Would you mind sharing their contact information or putting me in touch with them? I'm very interested in learning more about their experience. I would only reach out to conduct an interview similar to the one we just did.
47. Thank you so much for taking the time to speak with me today. Before I let you go, I always try to give people an opportunity to ask me any questions or provide any final thoughts on what we've discussed. Is there anything else you'd like to add that you think would be helpful for us to know or are there any questions you have?

[THANK AND END]

APPENDIX C

Leadership and Volunteer Retention Quantitative Survey Questionnaire

Fire and EMS departments may use different terms to describe similar things. If you don't see the exact term your department uses in these questions, try to pick the closest one that applies.

The first section of the survey is about you, your department, and your experience.

1. Are you currently a volunteer firefighter or EMS provider?
    a. Yes - current volunteer
    b. No - former volunteer
    c. I was never a volunteer **[TERMINATE]**
2. Which of the following describes your position at your current fire department? Please select all that apply.
    a. Chief
    b. Assistant Chief
    c. Battalion Chief
    d. Captain
    e. President
    f. Fire Marshal
    g. Safety Officer
    h. Training Officer
    i. Volunteer Firefighter
    j. Volunteer EMS Provider
    k. Non-operational support
    l. Other (please specify)
3. How long have you been/were you a volunteer firefighter or EMS provider with your **current/last department**?
    a. Less than a year
    b. 1 to 2 years
    c. 3 to 4 years
    d. 5 to 6 years
    e. 7 to 10 years
    f. 11 to 19 years
    g. 20 years or more
4. How long have you been/were you a volunteer firefighter or EMS provider, **overall**?
    a. Less than a year
    b. 1 to 2 years

    c. 3 to 4 years
    d. 5 to 6 years
    e. 7 to 10 years
    f. 11 to 19 years
    g. 20 years or more
5. How often do you spend time volunteering with your current fire department?
    a. Several times a week
    b. Once a week
    c. A couple times a month
    d. Once a month
    e. Less than once a month
6. Is your current department all volunteer or is it a combination department?
    a. All volunteer
    b. Combination department
        i. **[FOLLOW-UP]** Approximately what percentage of your department is volunteer?
            1. 10% or less
            2. 11-20%
            3. 21-30%
            4. 31-40%
            5. 41-50%
            6. 51-60%
            7. 61-70%
            8. 71-80%
            9. 81-90%
            10. 91-100%
7. Has your current department ever merged or consolidated with another department, either volunteer or career? Please select all that apply.
    a. Yes, with another volunteer department
    b. Yes, with a career department
    c. No **[EXCLUSIVE]**
8. Please enter the zip code where your current department is located. **[FIVE DIGIT OPEN END]**
9. Which of the following best describes the area your current department serves?
    a. All or mostly urban
    b. All or mostly suburban
    c. All or mostly rural
10. Approximately how many calls does your current department handle each month?
    a. 0 to 9
    b. 10 to 24

    c. 25 to 50
    d. 51 to 74
    e. 75 to 99
    f. 100 or more
11. Approximately how many total volunteers does your current department have?
    a. 1 to 10
    b. 11 to 20
    c. 21-50
    d. 51-80
    e. 81-99
    f. 100 or more
12. How many members would you consider active?
    a. All
    b. More than half
    c. About half
    d. Less than half
    e. None
13. Do you consider yourself to be an active volunteer?
    a. Yes
    b. No
14. How do you define if a member is active? Please select all that apply.
    a. Attends a certain percentage of calls
        i. **[FOLLOW-UP]** Which of the following is the minimum percentage of calls that an active member attends?
            1. 10%
            2. 20%
            3. 30%
            4. 40%
            5. 50%
            6. 60%
            7. 70%
            8. 80%
            9. 90%
            10. 100%
    b. Attends a certain percentage of trainings
        i. **[FOLLOW-UP]** Which of the following is the minimum percentage of trainings that an active member attends?
            1. 10%
            2. 20%
            3. 30%

4. 40%
5. 50%
6. 60%
7. 70%
8. 80%
9. 90%
10. 100%

c. Attends a certain percentage of department meetings
   i. **[FOLLOW-UP]** Which of the following is the minimum percentage of meetings that an active member attends?
      1. 10%
      2. 20%
      3. 30%
      4. 40%
      5. 50%
      6. 60%
      7. 70%
      8. 80%
      9. 90%
      10. 100%

d. Reports for a majority of their assigned shifts and finds coverage if has to miss a shift

e. Other (please specify)

15. Have you ever considered no longer volunteering at the department?
    a. Yes
    b. No
16. If yes, why did you consider leaving and why did you decide to keep volunteering? **[OPEN END FOR BOTH]**
17. How old are you? **[OPEN TWO-DIGIT NUMERIC]**
18. Which gender do you identify with most?
    a. Male
    b. Female
    c. Non-binary/third gender
    d. Transgender
    e. Prefer not to say
19. Do you consider yourself Hispanic or Latino?
    a. Yes
    b. No
20. Which of the following best describes your race?
    a. American Indian or Alaska Native

b. Asian
c. Black or African American
d. White or Caucasian
e. Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
f. Mixed race
g. Other (please specify)

21. What is the highest level of education you have completed?
    a. Some high school
    b. High school graduate
    c. Some college
    d. College graduate
    e. Post graduate studies or degree

MAIN QUESTIONNAIRE

The second section of the survey is about the issue of retention at volunteer fire departments.

22. In your opinion, do you think your department has a problem with retention?
    a. Yes
    b. No
23. What do you think are the three biggest reasons that volunteers have left or would consider leaving your department? / What were the three biggest reasons that you stopped volunteering? **[RANDOMIZE ITEMS]**
    a. Lack of clear expectations of how much time and effort will be required each week or month for meetings and trainings
    b. The realities of volunteering changed or didn't meet the expectations that were set before signing up
    c. Lack of support and flexibility in juggling volunteer responsibilities with other life commitments
    d. Department leadership that is rigid and does not support or allow for new ideas and new leaders
    e. Department leadership that doesn't focus on or support the needs of members
    f. Department atmosphere full of cliques and groups that exclude others
    g. Department atmosphere where members of different generations don't get along
    h. Department culture that isolates new members
    i. Department atmosphere that is too serious and not enough fun
    j. Department culture that doesn't engage members outside of calls or training
    k. Lack of social life within the department, where members train and go on calls, but don't spend time together otherwise

l. Lack of camaraderie or sense of community among everyone in the department
m. Lack of trust and cooperation between volunteer and career sides of the department
n. Lack of support and professional development for volunteers who want to move to the career side
o. Lack of flexibility in training requirements and schedules
p. Something else (please specify)

24. And what do you think could be done to address these issues and keep the volunteer? / What do you think could have been done to have kept you as a volunteer? **[OPEN]**
25. Please look at this first set of items a department could do to impact retention. Which, if any, of these do you think could have a positive impact on retention at your department? Select all that apply. **[INCLUDE NONE OF THESE OPTION]**

[ONBOARDING PRACTICES]

a. Leadership providing a clearer understanding to new volunteers of the monthly time commitment, goals, and responsibilities that are expected so they're on the same page
b. Leadership making it clear up front the minimum length of service they expect of new recruits
c. Providing new volunteers with advice on how to fit volunteering into the rest of their life
d. A mentorship program that pairs new volunteers with more experienced members

[COMBINATION DEPARTMENT SOLUTIONS, ASKED ONLY OF COMBINATION DEPARTMENTS]

e. Providing department leadership with training focused on managing combination departments
f. Holding joint trainings with career and volunteer staff
g. Mentorships with career members for volunteers who are career-bound

[FINDING NEW LEADERSHIP]

h. Enrolling rising volunteers in an officer candidate course to gain leadership skills and training
i. Following a set of national leadership standards and core competencies
j. Providing department leadership with sales and marketing training
k. Having department leadership actively participate in training to lead by example

[BROADER MEMBER SATISFACTION PRACTICES]

k. Holding cross-generational training to help members and leaders of different ages better understand each other
l. Create a Chief People Officer at the department who constantly takes the temperature of members' happiness and satisfaction

m. Have department leadership hold more regular and personal check-ins with new volunteers
n. Allow and encourage new and younger members to own specific projects and tasks
o. Break up cliques and groups by assigning members to workgroups they wouldn't normally choose

26. For each thing you selected, please tell us how much of a positive impact you think it would have on volunteer retention. **[SHOW ITEMS PREVIOUSLY SELECTED IN Q22]**

    Slight impact
    Moderate impact
    Major impact

27. Now, please look at this second set of items a department could do to impact retention. Which, if any, of the following do you think could have a positive impact on retention at your department? Select all that apply. **[INCLUDE NONE OF THESE OPTION]**

[FUN STUFF]

a. Giving out awards or honors when members reach service milestones (1 year, 5 years, 10 years, etc.) and/or superlatives at the end of the year
b. Immersive virtual reality/360-degree video of firefighting experiences as part of training modules and morale boosts

[FEEDBACK OPPORTUNITIES]

c. Conduct exit interviews when a volunteer leaves the department
d. Conduct "stay" interviews with volunteers who have lapsed attendance and may be considering leaving the department
e. Create a database of former volunteers to stay in touch with them and try and re-engage on future opportunities
f. Set up a comment box for anonymous feedback and/or create dedicated "office hours" to provide members a clear opportunity to express their opinions
g. Make it easier to compare your department's retention rate and efforts with other departments'

[FLEXIBILITY]

h. Offer "micro-volunteer" opportunities (1 day or 1 week a month) for those that are unable to commit to traditional volunteer time commitments
i. Build the essential training calendar around members with less flexibility in their schedule
j. Hold essential training sessions on multiple days
k. Offer online training for nonessential training
l. Offer virtual reality training modules

28. For each thing you selected, please tell us how much of a positive impact you think it would have on volunteer retention **[SHOW ITEMS PREVIOUSLY SELECTED IN Q24]**

    Slight impact
    Moderate impact
    Major impact

29. **[TOOLS FOR LEADERSHIP, SHOWN ONLY TO LEADERSHIP]** You've looked at a lot of possible ideas. Now take a look at some developed specifically for department leadership and let us know what you think of them.

    Please rank the below items starting with the one you think could be the most useful for you to the one that you think would be the least useful.

    a. Standard definition of recruitment and retention success that can be shared and compared among departments
    b. Volunteer engagement kits that provide guidance and materials, including a webinar series, highlighting and discussing retention strategies and tools
    c. Recruitment and retention video collection of simple, peer-to-peer videos focused on retention challenges and solutions from other department leaders
    d. An immersive 360-video of firefighting experience (a first-hand point-of-view video that places the viewer in the boots of a volunteer during an emergency) to show as a training module and morale boost
    e. Online training transition support that offers tools and guidance on how to move in-person training to an online platform

30. **[RETENTION MEASURES, SHOWN ONLY TO LEADERSHIP]** Which of the following best describes how your department defines and measures volunteer retention, if at all?

    a. We have a clear definition with specific measurable inputs we use that we track
    b. We have a definition that we use, but the measures involved are not exactly clear or not easy to track
    c. We have a general sense of our retention but no specific way of measuring it
    d. We don't really have a clear definition of retention or any way of measuring it

31. **[ASK IF Q30=A]** Please share the specific definition you use to define retention. **[OPEN]**
32. **[ASK IF Q30=A]** How exactly do you measure it? Please be as specific as possible. **[OPEN]**
33. One way a department could measure retention would be to divide the number of members at the end of the year by the number of members at the beginning of the year.

How easy would this definition of retention be for your department to use?

a. Very easy
b. Somewhat easy
c. Somewhat difficult
d. Very difficult

How likely is it that your department would adopt this measure of retention?

a. Very likely
b. Somewhat likely
c. Somewhat unlikely
d. Very unlikely

34. Thinking about the retention definition we just looked at — number of members at the end of the year divided by the number of members at the beginning of the year — how helpful would it be to be able to look at those numbers in each of the below ways:
    a. The entire membership population
    b. Looking at rank-and-file
    c. Looking at leadership
    d. Looking at new recruits
    e. Looking at different tenure lengths
    f. Looking at active members only
    g. Looking only at cases where the department has influence (for instance, removing cases where members moved out of the area)
        i. Very helpful
        ii. Somewhat helpful
        iii. Somewhat unhelpful
        iv. Very unhelpful

    How easy would it be for your department to look at this retention measure among each of the below dimensions?
    a. The entire membership population
    b. Looking at new recruits
    c. Looking at rank-and-file
    d. Looking at leadership
    e. Looking at different tenure lengths
    f. Looking at active members only
    g. Looking only at cases where the department has influence (for instance, removing cases where members moved out of the area)
        i. Very easy
        ii. Somewhat easy
        iii. Somewhat difficult
        iv. Very difficult

35. What is another definition of retention that departments should consider using? **[OPEN]**
    a. I don’t know

21ST CENTURY

Fire and Emergency Services

ICMA

Leaders at the Core of Better Communities

CPSE

Center for Public Safety Excellence

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Table of Contents

Introduction 2
White Paper Development Process 4
Critical Issue A: RE-IDENTIFICATION 9
Critical Issue B: CULTURE 11
Critical Issue C: ROBUST USE OF DATA 13
Critical Issue D: HEALTH AND WELLNESS 16
Critical Issue E: PARTNERSHIPS 19
Critical Issue F: SUSTAINABILITY 21
Critical Issue G: TECHNOLOGY 25
Critical Issue H: INCLUSIVENESS 27
What the Future May Hold 29
Next Steps 30

Introduction

The changing role of local government and its impact on the 21st Century Fire and Emergency Services

As the role of the federal government shifts away from responding to everyday needs, local governments have also begun addressing such issues as climate change, affordable housing, homelessness, immigration, the opioid epidemic, and behavioral health. This reality has led local fire and emergency services to become the health and safety net for communities. The DNA of fire departments is to respond to EVERYTHING and help EVERYTIME. While fires may be diminishing due to better engineering, codes, and enforcement along with an increased focus on community risk reduction activities, calls for service are up for every department. These calls are for help, and the calls received today are much boarder in scope. The services required often fall outside the traditional scope of fire and emergency services. Yet these departments are uniquely positioned to respond to such calls. This paper outlines several critical issues that are impacting local governments today and others that will have an effect over the course of the next three decades. Additionally, it outlines initiatives that local government and the local response agency will need to consider to remain viable in the future. The objective is to remain relevant for our jurisdictions, have the greatest impact in a rapidly changing environment, be sustainable, and address the needs of the whole community — its residents, businesses, governing body, and the personnel who will be tasked with carrying out the mission.

> *"The whole 20th century, because we've been speeding up to this point, is equivalent to 20 years of progress at today's rate of progress, and we'll make another 20 years of progress at today's rate of progress equal to the whole 20th century in the next 14 years, and then we'll do it again in seven years. And because of the explosive power of exponential growth, the 21st century will be equivalent to 20,000 years of progress at today's rate of progress, which is a thousand times greater than the 20th century, which was no slouch to change."*
>
> Ray Kurzweil, American Author, Inventor, and Futurist

The speed of change

Regardless of how long you have been a part of a community – whether serving in local government, living there, or owning a business there – if you reflect on the changes you have witnessed, you will agree that the speed of life has transformed dramatically. A reflective look shows just how much the fire and emergency services have evolved in just the last two decades. From the equipment in use, new applications in technology, changes in the workforce, use of social media, the speed of information, and the shift and

increase in the calls responded to -- all have made for a dramatic difference as we transformed into the 21st century fire and emergency services.

The political dynamic at all levels of government in the past, while still challenging, was less polarized and much more collegial than exists today. This shift has resulted in organizations needing to position their efforts at times as much to address political dynamics as to do what is best for the community.

In the 21st century fire and emergency services are destined to experience much more change than the last several generations. Along with this rapid change, there are several critical global issues that will have long-term impact not only on the fire and emergency services but on local government as well. Thus, the purpose of this white paper is to not only spur dialog around these critical issues, but also to motivate local government to prepare and position their organizations for these anticipated changes. If organizations hope to maintain their effectiveness and remain sustainable in the future, they must act today to address these issues and develop the organizational bandwidth needed to resolve them.

Co-Chairs Statement

It has been our honor to co-chair the 21st Century Fire and Emergency Services White Paper on behalf of the International City/County Mangers Association and the Center for Public Safety Excellence. With more than 70 years of experience in local government between us, we bring a depth of perspective in the role and the importance of local government to every resident, visitor, and those passing through a local community. In the course of our careers, we have experienced a significant amount of change and realize the importance of this white paper to the future of the fire and emergency services.

This white paper is a culmination of several years of discussion between our two organizations and more than two years of work that included seven focus groups at national and regional conferences and two online surveys. Combined these efforts provided more than 1,200 responses from labor, fire department leadership, and city/county managers. That information was coalesced by a group of subject matter experts (SME) comprised of city managers, fire chiefs, and associated industry professionals to provide the structure for this white paper.

It is our hope that this white paper stirs debate, creates dialogue, and promotes the critical conversations needed about the changes facing our next generation of leaders -- not only in the fire and emergency services but also in the entirety of local government. While local government leaders have always faced change, it has never been greater, more rapid, or occuring within an more unforgiving political environment.

This white paper outlines eight emerging issues that will have either positive or negative impacts on local government and the fire and emergency services, depending on how they are handled now and in the future. Two critical themes have emerged that must be addressed today to provide a healthy and sustainable environment for the future.

- First, the past strategies of deferring conclusive action on critical issues with short-term solutions and leaving them for the next set of leadership is not a sustainable strategy for the future. To continue to do so will worsen the eventual correction(s) that will have to be made.
- Second, we must begin recruiting talent with the mindset, skill sets, and resolve to help build a core organizational culture that can adapt and respond to rapid changes and that are not vested in a 20th century fire service paradigm or antiquated local government bureaucracy.

While there are challenges, the next 30 years hold great potential to refine and improve how services are provided at the local level. It is our hope that this white paper will help achieve that result.

Representing the Center for Public Safety Excellence

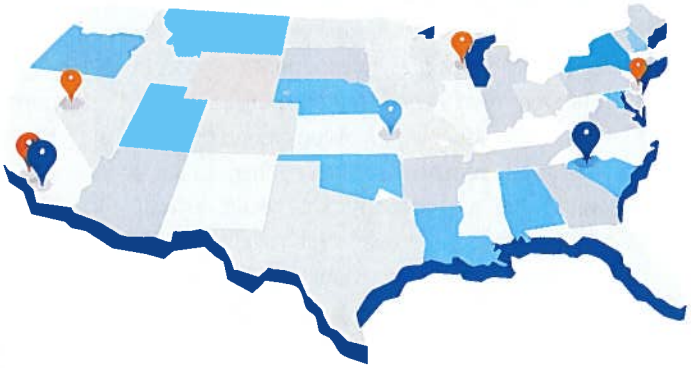
Chief Randy R. Bruegman (Retired), CFO, FIFIReE

Representing the International City/County Management Association

City Manager Pat Martel (Retired), ICMA-CM

White Paper Development Process

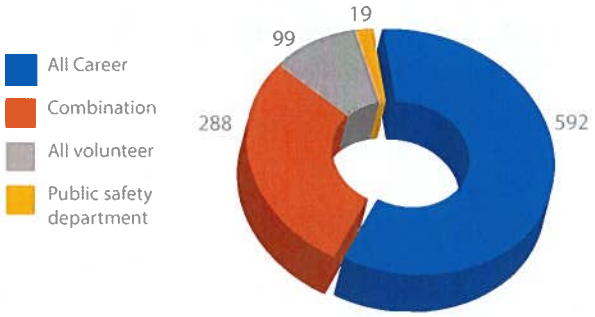
The SME group did not work in a vacuum in developing the white paper. From the onset, the importance of engaging numerous and diverse voices was repeatedly expressed. Seven in-person feedback sessions were held between January and May 2019. Coupled with the two web surveys, this generated feedback from more 1,200 fire and emergency services professionals and local government management professionals.



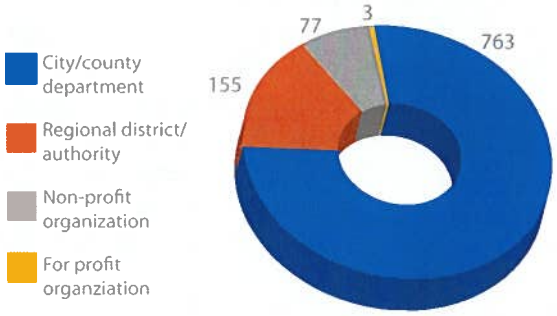
- January 2019 – International Association of Fire Fighters Affiliates Leadership Training Symposium, Los Angeles, CA
- February 2019 – ICMA Southeast Regional Conference, Greenville, SC
- March 2019 – CPSE Excellence Conference, Garden Grove, CA
- March 2019 – ICMA West Coast Regional Conference, Reno, NV
- March 2019 – ICMA Mountain Plains Regional Conference, Omaha, NE
- April 2019 - ICMA Northeast Regional Conference, New Brunswick, NJ
- May 2019 – ICMA Midwest Regional Conference, Evanston, IL

In the web surveys administered by both CPSE and ICMA, identical patterns for fire and emergency services organization and staffing models emerged.

Staffing model | *all respondents*



Organization model | *all respondents*

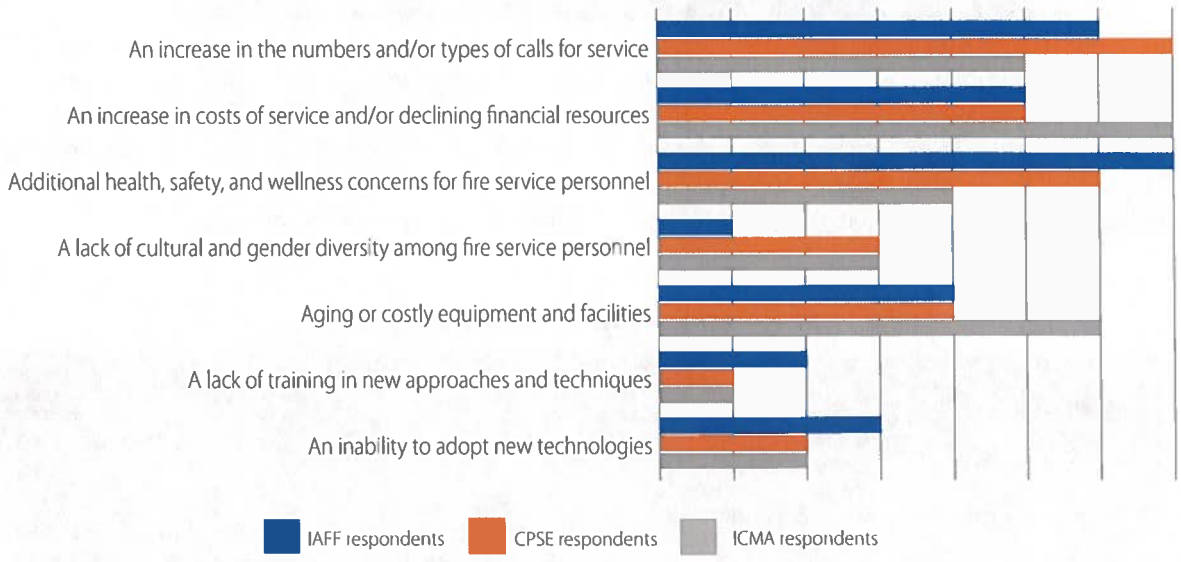


Expected future challenges for the fire and emergency services

Attendees at the IAFF feedback session were asked the same question as CPSE and ICMA survey respondents: Thinking about the fire and emergency services in your community, what are some of the major challenges that you expect your department to face in the future? While the exact order of the provided challenges differed among the groups, three expected future challenges rose to the top for ICMA groups – an increase in the number and/or type of calls for service, an increase in costs of service and/or declining financial resources, additional health, safety, and wellness concerns for fire and emergency services personnel.

The SME group saw an interesting connection between the highest rated future challenge of all three groups. CPSE respondents noted increased demand for services as the top future challenge, while ICMA respondents were most concerned with how to continue to supply fire and emergency services in an era of increased costs and declining financial resources. The IAFF respondents indicated that health, safety, and wellness of fire and emergency services personnel would be most impacted in the future.

Comparison of expected future challenges



How can the fire and emergency services innovate and be sustainable?

The three most important ways to facilitate a culture of innovation in the fire and emergency services were the same for both CPSE and ICMA respondents. During the IAFF feedback session, attendees were asked what changes in skills would be necessary for the fire and emergency services in the future. An overall increase in training emerged as a major theme during the in-person feedback session. Specific examples of training varied from enhanced medical training focused on new drugs and techniques, to increased decontamination training, and training with and on new technologies (e.g. virtual reality-based scenarios, unmanned aerial vehicles, and electric/hybrid vehicles). A frequent response for necessary future skills were leadership skills -- ranging from public speaking, program development, strategic thinking, and research.

Three most important ways to facilitate a culture of innovation in the fire and emergency services

Encouraging greater use of data to assess and use of analytics to solve complex community problems	Ensuring that the services are up to date on the latest professional education, training, and credentialing	Creating a spirit of partnership between the fire and emergency services and local government management

Given the unique perspectives of IAFF, CPSE, and ICMA respondents, the SME group was not surprised to learn that, when asked to select the three most important changes the fire and emergency services must implement to remain viable in the future, responses from the three groups began to diverge. While the environments they work in are identical, the changes impacting them are similar, and they agree on the ability of the fire and emergency services to innovate, their specific solutions were very different.

Most important changes to be implemented

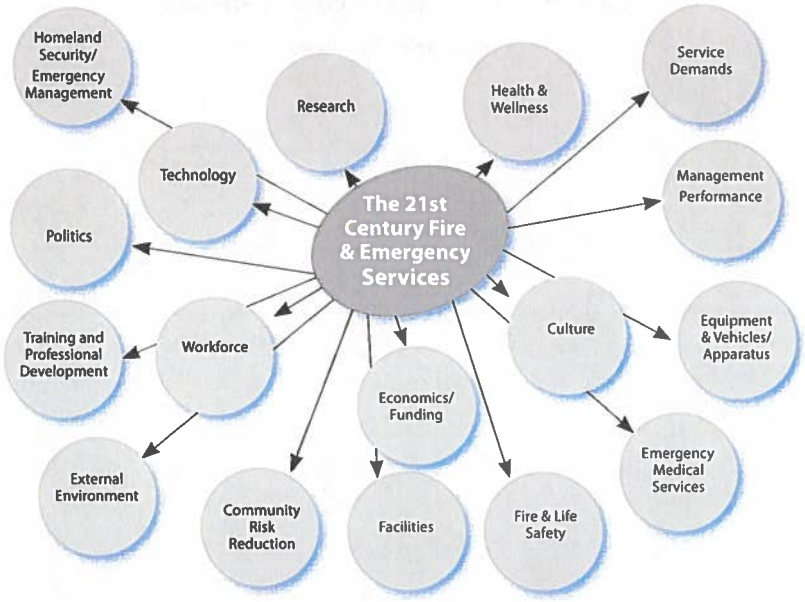
	IAFF	CPSE	ICMA
1	Increasing awareness and resources dedicated to personnel health and wellness	Identifying and implementing community risk reduction efforts	Researching and implementing alternative service delivery options
2	Increasing professional development opportunities for personnel	Increasing usage of data and data analytics	Identifying new partnership opportunities with neighboring jurisdictions and private and/or nonprofit organizations
3	Researching and implementing time and life-saving technologies	Fostering a culture of innovation in the department and among personnel	Fostering a culture of innovation in the department and among personnel

Forces Impacting the 21st Century Fire and Emergency Services

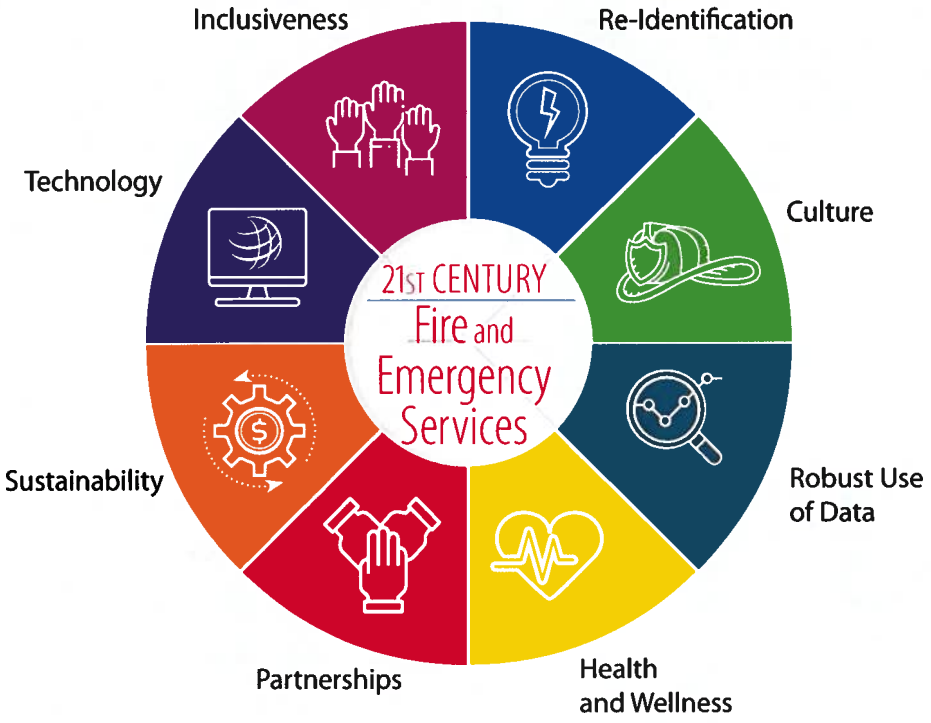
When we began the process of creating a vision for the fire and emergency services in 2050, the SME group began to brainstorm the specific factors having significant impacts today and how they could change the profession's appearance in 30 years. Over the last decade, local governments have witnessed an emerging set of issues including changing political dynamics within the community we serve, new expectations from the electorate, a demand for greater transparency, and a continual shifting of services from the federal and state level to local government. These dynamics have realigned the services we provide. The following graphic illustrates the initial brainstorm of factors that are impacting the 21st century fire and emergency services today and will continue to do so into the foreseeable future. While each will individually impact the fire and emergency services of the future, collectively these create the most change this profession has ever seen.

As the SME group investigated each area of influence, eight overarching themes emerged. These are areas of such importance that each individually, or collectively, will create significant stresses and shocks within the existing fire and emergency services. The SMEs reviewed the survey and in-person sessions feedback and determined that the feedback could be categorized into eight critical issues for the fire and emergency services in the next 30 years. These critical issues demand attention if the fire and emergency services is to thrive in the future:

1. Re-identification of the fire and emergency services
2. Culture of the profession
3. The robust use of data
4. Health and wellness threats
5. Opportunities for partnerships
6. Sustainability challenges
7. Technology advancements and adoption
8. Inclusiveness of the fire and emergency services

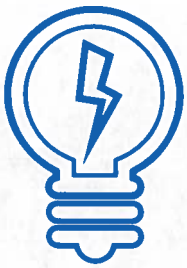


Initial brainstorm of factors



Forces impacting the 21st Century Fire and Emergency Services

CRITICAL ISSUE A:
RE-IDENTIFICATION



Re-identification is the action of establishing a new identity for the fire and emergency services. Today, most agencies that respond to medical emergencies, fires, rescues, and many other types of calls still carry the legacy name "fire department." The fact is that for most agencies, fire response is less than 5 percent of the call types to which they respond. As the fire and emergency services begin to expand their services into mobile integrated health care, and many other related service deliveries, the legacy name fire department may no longer be relevant. While reidentification is not uncommon in the corporate world, this will be an emotional issue for this profession. Even so, creating a new identity is essential for the service to remain relevant and sustainable.

Initiative 1: Celebrate the heritage of the fire and emergency services while recognizing that services provided have evolved and will continue to experience significant changes over the next 30 years.

Strategies:

1. Explore changes to agency names to better reflect the services provided.
2. Engage storytellers and fire and emergency services experts who can provide a modern perspective of the adaptability of the fire and emergency services.
3. Recognize that the fire and emergency services are well positioned to be the hub of service delivery outside the typical emergency response system.
4. Establish focus on the community as the organizational priority.
5. Implement risk reduction, medical and injury prevention, and related social service support efforts for their community.

   Actions

   - Exalt and reward internal and external activities that support risk reduction and medical and injury prevention efforts.
   - Establish messaging strategies for clarifying and supporting the role of first responders in addressing risk reduction, medical and injury prevention, and social services support.
   - Set agency goals and strategies to reduce the number of 911 emergency calls, which reduces risk to the community and the first responder.

6. Provide for better service to the customer, through the deployment of personnel with the appropriate skills needed for the service(s) to be provided. For example, use advanced medical providers, social workers, mental health professionals, and other support service providers as a component of an agency's resource deployment.

Case Study: Mesa Fire & Medical Department (MFMD)

Location: Mesa, AZ

Coverage Area: 511,000 residents over 138 square miles

No. of Employees: 561

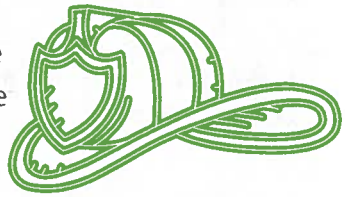
Annual Calls for Service: 68,000

With more than 75 percent of calls for service being medical in nature, in 2012 the department re-identified itself by changing its name to Mesa Fire & Medical Department. Building from this name change, MFMD began reidentifying itself in additional ways. These include deploying smaller medical response units, partnering with crisis counselors to staff a behavioral health unit, and coordinating regular immunization clinics that provide free vaccinations to the insured. MFMD has developed a community outreach division focused on reducing non-emergency 911 calls by providing education and social services. This division conducts such varied functions as training children on CPR, safe driving, and installing grab bars in homes.

CRITICAL ISSUE B:
CULTURE

Culture is often defined as the learned behavior patterns of people – including what they think, say, do, value, and feel. Professional culture is the pervasive values, beliefs, and attitudes that characterize a profession and influence how it operates. The culture of the fire and emergency services is built upon a strong legacy and is steeped in tradition. These traditions are deeply engrained in the way services are provided, the image of the fire and emergency services, beliefs about how it should look, and in many cases, who should be included. The culture often drives decisions that are counter intuitive to what is best for the long-term health of the organization or the provision of better services to the customer. At its worst, the focus on tradition results in resistance to change, adaptation, and/or innovation. This creates a tremendous risk for the emergency services over the next 30 years, as we are entering a period of time which will undoubtably be an era of rapid change. Successful organizations will be able to adapt quickly, try new things, be willing to fail, and be accountable for the outcomes the organization needs to achieve.

In the private sector or local government, agility will be the new capital for organizations as we move into the next three decades. As W. Edwards Deming once stated, "It is not necessary to change. Survival is not mandatory." This is a great reminder that all organizations are vulnerable if they fail to adapt to their changing environment. As we look to the future, the rate of change will be faster than ever, and culture will play a significant part in an organization's ability to sustain through such a period of rapid change.



Initiative 1: Enhance alignment between community, elected officials, management, labor/volunteer representatives, and overall workforce.

Strategies:

1. Create a process that allows for goal setting, strategic planning, and periodic feedback by all stakeholders of the community and the members of the organization.
2. Encourage regular communication between all stakeholders on strategic issues, while continuing to address operational issues through the established chain of command.
3. Embrace the differences in generational understanding and approach to issues to be successful in addressing the opportunities and challenges that will face organizations in the future.
4. Foster alignment between the community, elected officials, management, labor/volunteer representatives, and the overall workforce to create a culture of inclusion, adaptability, and innovation.
5. Establish a mechanism within the agency to monitor and promote cultural awareness and sensitivity reflective of the culture of the community served.

Initiative 2: Promote an organizational environment that is adaptable, open to change, innovative, and focused on continuous improvement.

Strategies:

1. Select and promote leaders and managers in the organization who model the desired organizational behavior of self-assessment and continuous improvement.
2. Encourage members of the organization to be engaged in outside organizations, both professional and community based.
3. Adopt a philosophy that promotes seeking out the best industry practices of other professional organizations and establish a process by which the organization can evaluate those practices and implement those that are relevant in their own organization to improve performance.
4. Develop an organizational culture that embraces continuous improvement for the organization and its employees.
5. Recruit and hire employees who demonstrate the necessary knowledge, skill sets, and abilities to develop an effective and innovative organizational environment.

Initiative 3: Establish organizational expectations for employee education, credentialing, and continued professional development.

Strategies:

1. Encourage and provide incentives for personal growth through a comprehensive organizational professional development plan that includes training and education, that is incorporated into the requirements for promotion to leadership positions, and that results in the increased professionalism of the fire and emergency services.
2. Develop a professional mentoring process to assist individuals in creating and achieving their professional development plan.
3. Develop a reverse mentoring program where new employees engage with senior leadership to familiarize them with the latest technologies and thought processes of the emerging workforce and community.
4. Establish a process to continually assess the skills, knowledge, and abilities needed by the organizational workforce to meet the changing community demands for service, to meet the external challenges placing pressures on the organization, and to help address the changes and innovation that are occurring or will need to occur in the agency.

Case Study: Charleston Fire Department (CFD)

Location: Charleston, SC

Coverage Area: 150,000 residents over 104 square miles

No. of Employees: 401

Annual Calls for Service: 24,000

Serving one of the most historic cities in the United States, CFD is steeped in a rich history and tradition. An unfortunate part of its history is the 2007 Sofa Super Store fire that resulted in the line of duty deaths (LODD) of nine CFD firefighters. Since then CFD strategies have taken two distinct paths: those that advance the modern fire department and those that reinforce what it means to be a CFD firefighter. A recent recruit class was tasked with researching every LODD in the department's history, CFD has become a leader in incident command, fire tactics, and regional partnerships through strong strategic planning and a focus on constant improvement. Such traditions as company pride and badge pinning ceremonies remain integral to CFD's culture.

CRITICAL ISSUE C:

ROBUST USE OF DATA

Data are individual units of information. In analytical processes, data are represented by variables. Although the terms data, information, and knowledge are often used interchangeably, each has a distinct meaning. While there have been significant improvements in data use during the last 20 years, the fire and emergency services have just scratched the surface of the full potential of using data effectively to manage daily operations and make decisions based on an agency's desired outcomes. Available data is often limited due to the poor documentation of an incident by the officer responsible for filling out the report. The exception to that is medical response, which requires substantially greater documentation due to medical and legal oversight. Therefore, establishing systems to ensure collection and management of quality data is critical if it is to be used effectively. Over the next 30 years, the amount of data available to the profession will transform the way the service operates, not only in emergencies, but in all the services provided. Smart cities, smart buildings, medical biometrics, artificial intelligence, predictive analytics, and real-time streaming insights into data are all on the horizon along with many others not yet imagined. Just think of where data use was 30 years ago and where it is today. We can only imagine what it will be like in 30 years. However, if the fire and emergency services hope to harness the true power of data, there has to be a transformation of mindset and culture to leverage data for effective decision making.

Initiative 1: Utilize quality data for evidence-based decision making to assess and produce the best outcomes.

Strategies:

1. Educate and develop accountability for company officers, field inspectors, educators, and others deployed to capture the appropriate data at the incident to provide information that can be analyzed to achieve the organization's desired outcomes.
2. Champion a federal requirement that all fire and emergency services agencies regardless of size and structure be required to complete a National Fire Incident Reporting Systems (NFIRS) report for each call and submit to the state or federal government.
3. Champion a substantial update to NFIRS to become a more relevant and technologically robust system or replace it with another system capable of integrating with new innovative data systems to provide advance analytics, and support evidence-based decision making, built upon the receipt of quality data for local agencies.
4. Leverage technology(s) to assure real-time data capture and analytics that provide insights for use by fire departments at the local level.
5. Assure a process is in place to track physical and traumatic event exposure(s) for all response personnel.

Initiative 2: Implement advanced data analytics to make informed decisions.

Strategies:

1. Employ advanced analytics to assist in making predictive and prescriptive decisions that are focused on the outcomes the agency is trying to achieve.
2. Cultivate a data-driven culture that utilizes data insights to modify strategies, deployment models, and programs.
3. Ensure departmental personnel are aware of public disclosure laws, rules, and best practices in providing data to other organizations, the media, and the general public.
4. Establish best practices for data cleansing and for tracking data access to safeguard its integrity.
5. Establish clear roles and responsibilities among city data managers, private-sector data collection entities, and records management software (RMS) companies.
6. Establish a clear definition of the data ownership the agency produces.

Initiative 3: Develop comprehensive records management systems (RMS) to collect and analyze data effectively.

Strategies:

1. Urge RMS vendors to design systems that bring together all data needs in the agency into an integrated platform, that can provide analytical evaluation for the data collected toward the outcomes trying to be achieved by the agency.
2. Establish data warehousing best practices for collecting data from multiple data sources, including RMS, for complete and faster data analysis.
3. Require department IT managers to use best practices and transmission law(s) relevant to cybersecurity, data collection, and storage.

Initiative 4: Focus on developing outcome-based data for all measurable operations and functions within the organization.

Strategies:

1. Develop an outcome-based performance measurement system consisting of four elements:
   - The goals of the agency to support the health and welfare of the community.
   - The performance metrics relevant to the goals the agency is trying to achieve
   - The benchmark level of performance the agency is striving to achieve.
   - The consequences for the agency and the community being served if the goals are not met.
2. Use aggregated data to inform and improve system performance.
3. Champion legislative changes to allow for sharing of patient data between hospitals and responding agencies and encourage interagency cooperation to promote the evaluation of patient outcomes based upon the entirety of the response to that patient.

Case Study:
Edmonton Fire Rescue Service (EFRS)

Location: Edmonton, AB

Coverage Area: 972,000 residents over 303 square miles

No. of Employees: 1,300

Annual Calls for Service: 55,000

Combining incident data with non-fire databases (such as census and other demographic information) EFRS has harnessed insights to guide planning, development, and community risk reduction. EFRS conducted longitudinal analysis of river rescue operations before and after the closure of a station located along the North Saskatchewan River. Highlighting the negative impact on the outcomes of the rescues following the closure compelled the City Council to reopen the previously closed station. Cross referencing of response data with fire investigator's data has determined the locations for EFRS' smoke alarm program. EFRS robust use of data has aided other governmental entities namely the geocoding of overdose events and naloxone administration by firefighters for the provincial government showing the impact of recently opened supervised consumption services.

CRITICAL ISSUE D:

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

The increase in emergency responder health concerns including post-traumatic stress (PTSD/PTSI), and other health related problems is a critical issue for the profession. Daily exposures in the fire and emergency services include sleep disruption and deprivation, the continual witnessing of tragic events, and exposures to toxic environments. These exposures are all contributing factors to the increased cancer rates in firefighters and their predisposition to many health-related issues and psychiatric disorders, including suicide. To understand the interrelationship of all these factors and their impact on response personnel will require research specifically directed at fire and emergency personnel, necessitated by the fact that similar research conducted in other professions will likely be discounted and not be accepted by the 21st century fire and emergency services. While use of battle-worn gear has been a source of pride for many in the service and is embedded in the tradition and culture of the profession, it has contributed to extended exposure to toxins and many of the health-related issues experienced by fire and emergency services personnel. As such, decontamination plays a vital role in protecting fire and emergency services personnel and their long-term health. The focus for decontamination goes beyond the emergency scene and includes all the transport mechanisms (e.g., personal protective equipment (PPE), hand tools, hose, and apparatus) and facilities where exposure is intensified because of extended time frames and other exposure pathways (e.g., respiratory, dermal, and digestive). Further, there is a real concern that personnel are bringing contaminants outside of fire stations and exposing friends and family members. A prime example is the volunteer firefighter who, because of limited agency resources, takes gear home to be cleaned, cross contaminating their personal vehicles and home washing machines.

Initiative 1: Champion research on the health impacts specific to the fire and emergency services to evaluate the health risk of consecutive hours worked, sleep disruption, and the impacts on employee health.

Strategies:

1. Conduct research on the impacts of current work cycles on the health of the workforce and the impacts of sleep deprivation and sleep hygiene on the long-term health of the individual and their cognitive abilities while on duty.
2. Utilize the results of that research to make any needed operating policy changes, incorporate research results into appropriate standards, and pursue potential legislative changes to protect the health of the workforce.

Initiative 2: Proactively address the increased mental health challenge(s) facing the fire and emergency services.

Strategies:

1. Engage outside professional assistance to allow employees a confidential process to seek assistance for themselves or family members who may be struggling with mental health concerns.
2. Embrace an organizational atmosphere that removes the stigma and barriers for those seeking mental health assistance while safeguarding employee confidentiality.
3. Develop organizational processes that protect the confidentiality of what an employee is being treated for, while alerting the agency to any recommended restrictions to the employee's essential job functions and assignments. .
4. Develop a comprehensive plan to address the need for employee assistance in those situations that warrant immediate intervention.
5. Develop on-going mental health assessments for emergency responders to promote early recognition of developing mental health issues aligned with a mental health assistance process if issues are detected.
6. Develop pre-employment hiring processes that provide for professional mental health pre-screening of candidates to avoid exposure for those that are highly susceptible to post-traumatic stress.

Initiative 3: Adopt and support fitness and wellness best practices throughout the whole organization and incorporate this philosophy in every aspect of operations.

Strategies:

1. Institutionalize employee wellness and fitness into the culture, practices, operational procedures, and training practices of the organization.
2. Provide structured support to maintain a healthy workforce.
3. Evaluate the level of fitness of each employee, and for those found to be unfit, assist employees in attaining a proper fitness level. If unsuccessful, address the issue with the employee.

Initiative 4: Ensure ongoing physical fitness and wellness requirements are standardized, adopted, and used within every department.

Strategies:

1. Adopt physical performance and annual fitness testing requirements for fire and emergency services employees to ensure the responder can safely do the job without injury or risk to their health.
2. Once these policies are developed, engage the workforce to adopt and implement strategies that will be employed by the agency.

Initiative 5: Continue research toward the development of comprehensive decontamination procedures for the fire and emergency services.

Strategies:

1. Address the traditional culture of the profession that promotes the wearing of soiled gear and transform it to one that sees it as contamination.
2. Conduct continued research to develop a comprehensive approach to reducing exposures, the best method(s) for decontamination, and periodic testing to help ensure a safer environment for the workforce.
3. Use research to develop best practices, comprehensive standards, and potentially, new legislation to protect the workforce.

Initiative 6: Urge personal protective equipment (PPE) manufacturers to develop new PPE and bio-metric sensors to ensure effectiveness, reduce equipment weight, and provide for the enhanced ability to monitor the physiologic health and stress markers for personnel during response to an incident.

Strategies:

1. Urge the PPE manufactures to develop a more effective ensemble that offers the protection needed and reduces the weight.
2. Champion the research and development of technologies to monitor the physiological health indicators of personnel during incident response and to determine when those indicators indicate personnel are at risk.
3. Urge PPE manufactures to design a more comprehensive ensemble for wildland firefighting that provides for better protection of personnel.
4. Provide recognition awards to manufacturers and vendors that make meaningful improvements to PPE.
5. Challenge the existing practice of allowing the PPE manufacturing industry to vote on standards that affect their business while recognizing their input is critical to the design of the PPE.

Case Study: Broward Sheriff Fire Rescue and Emergency Services Department (Broward)

Location: Fort Lauderdale, FL

Coverage Area: 1.95 million residents over 1,323 square miles

No. of Employees: 775

Annual Calls for Service: 50,000

Broward formalized its health and wellness initiatives under a division chief of health and safety. A departmental joint occupational safety and health committee meets bi-monthly to discuss safety issues and concerns. Broward conducts mandatory biannual Life Scan physicals for all personnel. Numerous exposure reduction steps, such as use of particulate filtration/blocking structural firefighting protective hoods and synthetic radio straps, issuance of post exposure reduction decontamination kits, and deployment of "healthy cab" initiatives, have been implemented by Broward. All front-line personnel have been issued ballistic protection. Working with the local University of Miami Sylvester Cancer Center, Broward has participated in a research project for the education and reduction of cancer exposures.

CRITICAL ISSUE E:
PARTNERSHIPS

A partnership is often thought to be a form of business, where two or more people come together to share ownership, responsibility, and profits from a given business venture. In every community across our nation, a partnership exists between the fire and emergency services and the general public that is built upon a shared commitment to the health and safety of its residents. The fire and emergency services are in an enviable position in communities, as they are well positioned to be the hub of service provision for many supporting services already found within their community, and that align with organization's core mission. The importance of this has been clearly proven during homeland security threats, through the interagency cooperation, intelligence sharing, and joint response to those events by law enforcement and the fire and emergency services. There are significant opportunities to create partnerships with allied health care, mental and behavioral health providers, and various social service agencies to leverage the talents of each agency with a focus on improving service to the community. Too often agencies respond multiple times to the same individual who calls 911 as their only known access for assistance, when the need is truly not an emergency, but could be met by another service provider in the community. Over the next 30 years, the fire and emergency services will need to partner with related service providers to create a local response network that can provide a host of services under the umbrella of a multifaceted organization, if it hopes to meet the needs of the community served.

Initiative 1: Acknowledge the need to work with a wide range of partners to serve the community and develop local strategies to create new approaches to providing services more effectively.

Strategies:

1. Inventory and leverage the allied services (law enforcement, health, social services, non-governmental organizations) in the community to provide more effective and efficient services.
2. Partner with insurers and health providers to innovate existing response strategies, improve patient outcomes, and reduce system costs.

Initiative 2: Promote a symbiotic relationship with other internal departments and outside agencies that are routinely allied responders to an incident.

Strategies:

1. Routinely meet, train, develop standardized operational response plans, and share real-time intelligence of what is happening in communities with allied responders to increase response capability and coordination during a homeland security event.
2. Develop goals and outcomes with a wide array of agency stakeholders, both internally and externally, to meet the objective of providing for a safe and healthy community.
3. Promote regular communication between all stakeholders on strategic issues, while continuing to handle operational issues through the established chain of command.
4. Develop opportunities for stakeholders to appreciate the roles and responsibilities of all other stakeholders toward better alignment of service delivery.

Initiative 3: Continue to expand community emergency response capabilities.

Strategies:

1. Promote individual and neighborhood self-sufficiency though existing programs (e.g. community emergency response teams, the radio amateur civil emergency service, volunteers in patrol, and senior Medicare patrol volunteers) to create greater resiliency in the community.
2. Focus on creating personal accountability in preparation for community-wide emergencies.
3. Identify and support community functions that are critical for recovering from and adapting to community-wide disasters.

Case Study: Rockford Fire Department (RFD)

Location: Rockford, IL

Coverage area: 147,000 residents over 65 square miles

No. of Employees: 318

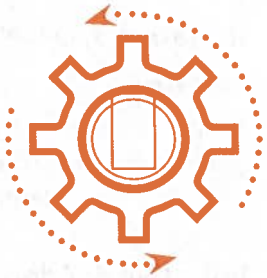
Annual Calls for Service: 29,000

Identifying the increase in EMS calls and understanding that collaboration would benefit the department and community, RFD partnered with Swedish American Health System to develop a mobile integrated health (MIH) program. Twelve patients with chronic illnesses were selected for the 2015 pilot. As a result, ER visits were reduced by 54 percent, hospital admissions by 28 percent, and ambulance transports by 38 percent for this group. Enrollment in the program has grown with visits, admissions, readmissions, and transports continuing to be reduced. The MIH program scope expanded through a partnership with Winnebago County Health Department to train community members to recognize opioid overdoses and treat with them naloxone kits. In a one-year period, 1,500 people were trained, and more than 1,200 naloxone kits were distributed.

CRITICAL ISSUE F:

SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability is often defined as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. The concept of sustainability has three pillars: economic, environmental, and social. If we look through the lens of local government today, there are reasons to be concerned that local government may not be sustainable in the future. Many agencies across the United States are struggling with the cost to provide services at the levels needed to meet a growing population, an aging population, and a population with changing service demands. Those cost pressures are exacerbated by unfunded pension costs along with and the cost to maintain and replace aging infrastructure and response vehicles. Shifting responsibilities from federal and state governments to the local level have forced many local governments to provide new services. These factors have placed tremendous strain on local government to balance ever growing service demands with funding available within their jurisdiction. This will be an on-going issue and will necessitate doing business differently in the future, not only in the fire and emergency services but throughout all services provided by local government as well.



The volunteer fire service has struggled in the last decade in many parts of the United States to recruit and retain enough volunteers to provide adequate services. With the mission of providing services to more than 70 percent of U.S. jurisdictions, volunteer recruitment and retention is becoming a national problem.

Today business, government, and society are learning from the science of change that they must recreate themselves even when they would like to believe the old way of business will go on forever. As Peter Drucker put it, "the best way to predict the future is to create it." The future of the fire and emergency services will rest upon those who are in it. If the fire and emergency services hope to sustain itself in the future, it must be willing to redesign itself and address the issues that are having a negative impact on the service today. Failure to address these issues will lead to what author Max Bazerman calls "predictable surprises." Predictable surprises are those events or outcomes that catch us by surprise, yet both were predictable and preventable. If this occurs, the fire and emergency services will be placed at risk to continue to be the community's safety net. Ultimately, local government will be faced with making difficult choices about how to provide the services needed and the level of services to be provided. That is why the issue of sustainability is so important and must be addressed now, rather than being left to the next generation of leaders to resolve.

Initiative 1: Address aging fire and emergency services vehicles and building structures.

Strategies:

1. Establish a comprehensive building renewal and replacement plan and provide the needed funding to address the short- and long-term community needs.
2. Urge the architectural profession and equipment manufacturing industry to anticipate and plan for the future designs needed by the fire and emergency services to address changes in response and deployment methods, building constructions, building densities, road infrastructure, and SMART cities and SMART building design.

Initiative 2: Reconsider and revamp current deployment methods.

Strategies:

1. Ensure response protocols and opportunities for consolidation are explored to ensure effectiveness of service delivery is balanced with cost efficiency.
2. Adopt staffing models based on statistically known call demand factors, such as time of day, special events, and seasonal changes while maintaining an adequate baseline deployment required to meet the health and safety needs of the community and employees.
3. Evaluate consolidation of seldom used specialty and single-purpose pieces of equipment to maintain effective cost management and capacity of those services for the threat environment that exists within the jurisdiction.
4. Develop a better understanding of community needs and their changing demands for services so as to modify the service delivery model(s) to meet them.

Initiative 3: Develop sustainable pension model.

Strategy:

1. Promote collaboration between labor groups, local government, and state government to ensure existing pension financial commitments are met while ensuring adequate service levels within the communities being served.

Initiative 4: Adopt and implement a community risk reduction strategy

Strategies:

1. Embrace a comprehensive strategy to minimize incidents and, if an incident does occur, to minimize the impact on the people, the community, and the emergency responder.
2. Adopt the concepts outlined in "Vision 20/20 – National Strategies for Fire Loss Prevention," and incorporate these recommendations into the daily agency operation to minimize the impacts to the community and emergency responders.
3. Develop strategies locally and nationally that reduce risk through proper vegetation management, designing new fixed fire protection systems that can be used in wildland urban interface, and zoning changes that prohibit building in the wildland urban interface.
4. Embrace the use of fire sprinkler technology in all buildings through the rapid adoption of codes and ordinances at the federal, state, and local government levels to dramatically reduce the incidence of deadly and costly fires. .
5. Urge the sprinkler industry to develop a more cost-effective means to retrofit existing buildings with sprinklers or other fire suppressant technology.
6. Develop standards and a tiered code methodology that would support a phased in retrofit plan for existing buildings.

Initiative 5: Improve resource allocation by focusing on the outcomes trying to be achieved.

Strategy:

1. Evaluate resource allocation using department response data.
2. Alter deployment methods to assure better outcomes and desired services levels for communities including EMS, community paramedicine, or increased prevention efforts.

Initiative 6: Examine fixed costs associated with current delivery models and associated contracts.

Strategy:

1. Negotiate labor contracts with the flexibility to promote innovation in service delivery and servicing models, while still providing a fair and equitable wage, benefit, and pension package for the workforce that is economically sustainable.

Initiative 7: Explore public/private partnership opportunities.

Strategies:

1. Solicit success stories and best practices of effective public/private partnerships related to capital investments and operating costs.
2. Create, maintain, and regularly update a national repository of best practices available to all agencies at no cost.

Initiative 8: Research strategies to assist communities in sustaining their volunteer fire and emergency services or, if needed, how to transition to a new model.

Strategy:

1. Champion the establishment of a federal commission to develop a national plan of action to ensure volunteer fire and emergency services agencies remain viable in the future.

Initiative 9: Dramatically revamp the fire and emergency services education and training model to provide the needed skill sets, knowledge, and abilities required for the anticipated changes in the future and to remain current with the application of emerging technologies.

Strategy:

1. Urge academic institutions to develop the means to speed up their course development model and to be able to quickly adapt and develop new courses that will be required to sustain the needed workforce skill sets.
2. Encourage academia to use of state-of-the-art technology to meet the educational learning styles of future generations.

Case Study: South Metro Fire Rescue (SMFR)

Location: Centennial, CO
Coverage area: 540,000 residents over 287 square miles
No. of Employees: 716
Annual Calls for Service: 45,000

Serving 12 municipalities and unincorporated areas of three counties, SMFR has addressed the critical issue of sustainability. A 2016 merger with Parker Fire Protection District lowered the mill levy saving taxpayers $11.2 million over 3 years. An upcoming merger with Cunningham Fire Protection District will result in additional savings of $4.7 million. Consolidating dispatch centers and adopting more efficient coverage models has delivered better service to the community with SMFR rated as an ISO Class 1. Funding is now available for staffing community risk reduction efforts that in turn lead to a reduction in demand for service. Enhanced community connectivity and less susceptibility to changing politics has permitted SMFR to adopt long-term strategic initiatives furthering its sustainability.

CRITICAL ISSUE G:
TECHNOLOGY

Futurist Ray Kurzweil's predictions about trends in technological advance, which have been correct 86 percent of the time, are widely used by governments and large companies to prepare for the future. He has predicted that every 12 to 18 months computers will double their capabilities along with the information technologies that use them. Among his predictions are that in five years, we will experience 32 times more technological advancement, and in 10 years, a thousand times more. It is hard to imagine what that will translate to for the 21st century fire and emergency services, but it will undoubtedly change the way the local response agencies are doing business today.

Initiative 1: Adapt to and leverage rapidly evolving technology to improve service delivery.

Strategies:

1. Anticipate that artificial intelligence, smart technology, and robotics will shape future service delivery dramatically in the next 30 years and will change response methods requiring a new skill set and strategic processes for fire and emergency services agencies.
2. Leverage technology developed for other applications, professions, and purposes for use by emergency responders (e.g., robotics for the military, training simulation tools for the gaming industry, aviation flight simulation) to provide for better response and training.
3. Develop data sharing between departments/agencies that could benefit from shared applications and hardware, thus reducing the silos of data information in order to improve services.

Initiative 2: Develop a change mindset to help anticipate and support appropriate use of emerging technology and encourage the development of new technologies.

Strategies:

1. Champion the United States Fire Administration, in concert with other national organizations, to develop a fire advanced research challenge to promote application of technology developments for use in the emergency services through proof of concept and competitive challenges, similar to the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) challenge utilized by the Department of Defense.
2. Coordinate national organizations to recognize and celebrate successful applications of emerging technology and help to spur future innovation at a more rapid pace for the fire and emergency services.

Case Study: City of Lenexa Fire Department (LFD)

Location: Lenexa, KS

Coverage Area: 50,000 residents over 34 square miles

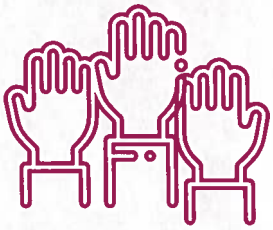
No. of Employees: 96

Annual Calls for Service: 6,300

On the cutting edge of technology adoption, LFD received a FAA Certificate of Waiver or Authorization (COA) for Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) in 2014. The COA permits LFD to use several UAS for aerial viewing and videography of both apparatus and personnel. LFD has utilized UAS for such varied activities as wildland hot-spot recognition, fire investigation, incident mission, and recruit training review. LFD requires interconnected smoke detectors in all new home-based day cares and permits Bluetooth detectors in older properties. Both configurations result in faster alerting of LFD to fire incidents in these high-risk properties. To protect its personnel, LFD has experimented with a waterproof arm band transmitter for its recruits monitoring their biometrics and pushing notifications during adverse situations.

CRITICAL ISSUE H:
INCLUSIVENESS

Communities served have continued to become more diverse in their culture, languages spoken, and norms. The workforce of many fire and emergency services agencies no longer reflect the people they serve. A workforce demographic that mirrors the community make-up helps to build trust with the community and promotes a better understanding by the agency. While firefighting is now a relatively small part of what agencies do, it is the most technically and physically demanding. Many fire departments are working with underrepresented groups to prepare them for the rigorous testing processes of joining the fire and emergency services. If the fire and emergency services hope to attract the right workforce to deliver the services conducted, then changes in culture and current perceptions are necessary to achieve more representative service.



Initiative 1: Make it an organizational priority to recruit, select, and promote members who reflect the demographic makeup of the community they serve.

Strategies:

1. Remove economic barriers to candidates desiring to participate in the fire and emergency services.
2. Remove social barriers to candidates desiring to participate in the fire and emergency services.
3. Remove non-validated physical ability barriers for candidates desiring to participate in the fire and emergency services.
4. Create pathways to attract, prepare, and hire underrepresented personnel into the fire and emergency services.
5. Establish an agency goal for the optimal demographic make-up of the agency.
6. Develop a plan to achieve that optimal goal for the agency within a specified time period.

Initiative 2: Understand the community characteristics, culture, and diversity that exist and determine the most appropriate way to serve and interact with all community members.

Strategies:

1. Provide opportunities for employees to engage with various community groups.
2. Promote cultural understanding and humility within the workforce to increase the quality of interactions and the services provided to the community.
3. Engage the community in helping to develop cultural humility within the agency.
4. Involve the community in agency decisions that affect them.

Case Study: Hartford Fire Department (HFD)

Location: Hartford, CT

Coverage Area: 124,000 residents over 17 square miles

No. of Employees: 361

Annual Calls for Service: 30,000

A majority-minority community, Hartford's residents are 44 percent Hispanic, 35 percent African American, 15 percent White, and 3 percent Asian. Striving to be a more inclusive fire department to better serve their diverse community, HFD has adopted strategies focused on enhanced two-way communication, team building, and fostering a department identity while permitting individuality. Meetings with all affinity groups allowed the chief to discuss challenge and concerns. These groups included the Emerald Society (Irish), Latin Society of Firefighters (Latino/Hispanic), Phoenix Society (African American), St. Florian Society (Italian), and Women in Fire & Emergency Services. Wide department representation on health and safety, strategic planning, and apparatus committees along with involvement of members in the development of HFD's first professional development program led to a greater sense of inclusion. Custom-designed company logos are permitted on apparatus while intra-mural activities bring together the entire department.

What the Future May Hold

The responder of the future and how agencies deploy available resources will likely differ significantly from today's fire and emergency services system of response. While the system will have to rely on a strong core response team to adequately respond to emergency situations, the responder of the future will likely come from a variety of disciplines, with varying education, certifications, and training to provide the array of needed services to their community.

Calling 911 may result in dispatching units to an emergency response or deploying an advanced medical provider, a social worker, a behavioral health specialist, community risk reduction officer, or other specialist who can provide the most appropriate set of skills needed by the caller. The fire and emergency services must be prepared to play a much larger role in the health and welfare of the community and anticipate that there will be a variety of specialists that make up the response team, creating a larger network of professionals that are deemed first responders.

Technologies and robust data analytics will have dramatic impacts on society, the workplace, and the fire and emergency services and will create a time of substantial organizational transformation. As smart cities develop during the next 30 years, the amount of data readily available to local government, the response agency, and the citizen will be substantial. Data will drive decisions as local governments focus to deliver better services, promote economic growth, and provide for a safe and healthy community. But to do so will require a new way of thinking for most local governments and the agencies that work with in them. The quickly advancing fields of automation and artificial intelligence will most certainly revolutionize every aspect of human life and are already making an impact on everything from military strategy to medical procedures. As robots take over increasingly complex tasks, new forms of human-machine interaction will emerge, and the structure of both industry and society will evolve to accommodate this emerging and symbiotic relationship.

For this first time in history, we have five generations in the workforce. Two new generations are just entering: Gen Z and Gen Alpha. Gen Z is the first that is a true digital generation. This generation has been exposed to the internet, mobile systems, and social media from a very young age. They are hypercognitive, comfortable multitasking, and often have multiple devices in operation at the same time. Generation Alpha, also known as the iGeneration, are the first entirely born in the 21st century. This generation is set to be the most transformative generation yet. Alphas haven't just grown up with technology, they've been completely immersed in it since birth.

During the next 30 to 50 years, a nearly equal distribution of population bands will emerge. This will be a shift in global demographics and will undoubtably have dramatic impacts on the workplace and the workforce.

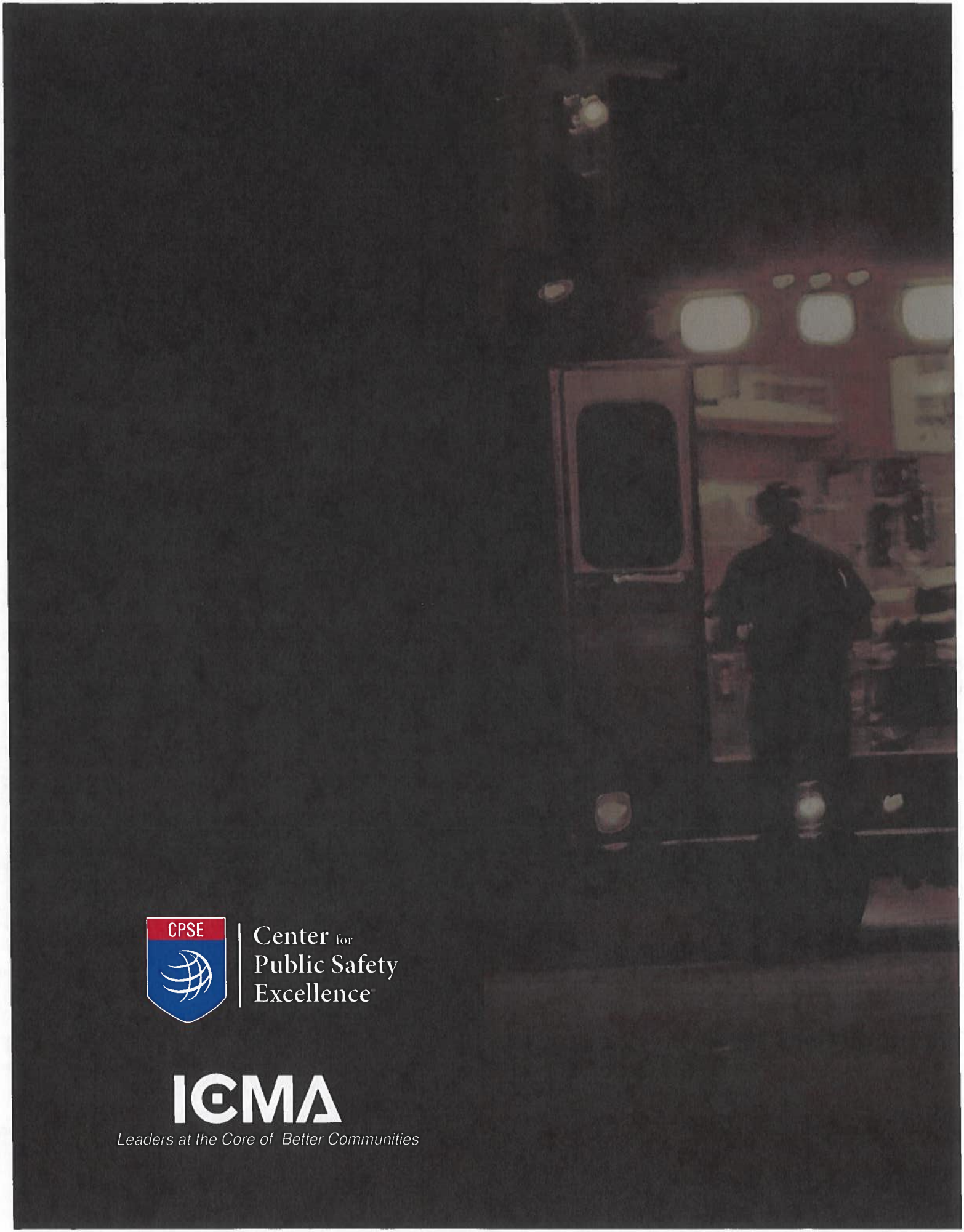
Whether it's a more diverse workforce, a more demanding community, a more complex response system, or a shift caused by societal changes, as we look to 2050, the fire and emergency services will look vastly different that it does today.

Next Steps

If you have been working in local government during the last decade, you have experienced some of the most dramatic shifts in how it operates. Whether it's the political dynamic, the elevated threshold for transparency, the lack of civility, or the demands placed on local government to provide more services, it has been a time of real change. As we look to the future, those dynamics may continue, but other forces of change will emerge, making the leading and managing of tomorrow's governmental system very exciting, very challenging, and very fast.

The more than 1,200 people that shared their vision for the 21st Century Fire and Emergency Services all agreed that the fire and emergency services is an integral local government function. However, they felt that changes will be needed in how these vital services will be provided. The subject matter experts and the CPSE and ICMA boards indicate that a collaborative effort will be needed to address the rapid societal changes coming and should include city/county managers, elected officials, community members, fire and emergency response leadership, and the representative workforce. The changes foreseen and the rate at which change may occur will undoubtably accelerate the transformation of the fire and emergency services. Thus, it is critical that we address the issues outlined in this white paper. We must begin today to position our agencies to be able to create an organizational DNA that can adapt quickly, embrace new technologies, and be open to unforeseen changes. These will need to be critical organizational characteristics if local government hopes to sustain the fire and emergency services so it can continue to serve as the health and safety net for our communities.

We invite local governments and institutions to begin addressing the initiatives and research efforts outlined in this white paper. It is our hope that national organizations, such as CPSE, ICMA, and others, will address the topics outlined in the critical issues and prepare their members to meet these challenges going forward.



CPSE

Center for Public Safety Excellence

ICMA

Leaders at the Core of Better Communities

As Wall Street Chases Profits, Fire Departments Have Paid the Price

Fire engine manufacturing is now largely controlled by three companies. Around the country, prices have soared, and orders can take years to fulfill.

Listen to this article · 13:30 min Learn more

By Mike Baker, Maureen Farrell and Serge F. Kovaleski

Feb. 17, 2025

Desperate to gain control of flames that were raging through Pacific Palisades last month, the Los Angeles Fire Department issued an urgent call for any available personnel to report for possible deployment.

But there was a problem: Dozens of the rigs that would have carried extra crews that day were out of service. The city maintenance yard was filled with aging fire engines and ladder trucks, many of which were beyond their expected service life.

Chuong Ho, a firefighter and union leader who was among those who reported for work on Jan. 7, said many of the firefighters who were available to help that day could not be sent to the front lines.

“We didn’t have a spot for them,” Mr. Ho said.

That breakdown, records show, was in part a result of the city’s failure to hire enough mechanics to keep the rigs in service. But there was also a deeper problem: For years, the fire truck industry had been ratcheting up prices on new rigs and failing to meet delivery dates of those that were ordered. Some departments have waited years for replacement vehicles while hunting the internet for parts to keep their older rigs going.

Those problems have compounded in recent years as Wall Street executives led an aggressive consolidation of the industry in a plan to boost profits from fire engine sales. One company, backed by a private equity firm, cut its own manufacturing lines as part of a streamlining strategy and then saw a backlog of fire engine orders soar into billions of

dollars.

The industry disruption has had effects well beyond Los Angeles — straining big cities like Atlanta and Seattle, and smaller ones, such as Watertown, N.Y., and Camden, N.J. Fire departments have expressed growing frustration with delayed deliveries and rising costs that are leaving them with dilapidated fleets that are more likely to break down, including some that have done just that during emergencies.

Industry officials say that lingering labor shortages and supply chain problems that began during the coronavirus pandemic have led to manufacturing delays, but also concede that the industry has consolidated in an effort to find efficiencies.

Edward Kelly, general president of the International Association of Fire Fighters, said it was clear that the pandemic brought on problems.

“But in hindsight, it was masking what ends up being a main driver of higher cost and lag time in production: the monopolizing of fire truck and ambulance manufacturing in the United States,” Mr. Kelly said. “At the end of the day, absent competition, monopoly capitalism is a shakedown.”

Gil Carpenter, a fire chief in Benton, Ark., said his department was facing steadily rising costs for new trucks. And suppliers who were once responsive, he said, have grown more distant and focused on profits.

“When is enough enough?” Mr. Carpenter asked. “And at what point are you going to sacrifice public safety for profits?”

Industry consolidation

Firefighters battled flames engulfing businesses last month on Sunset Boulevard in Pacific Palisades, Calif. Mark Abramson for The New York Times

The fire engine industry was once made up of small, local manufacturers, many of whom built dozens or hundreds of trucks per year. By the late 1990s and early 2000s, some of those companies were struggling to stay afloat.

Wall Street investment firms saw an opportunity to buy these troubled firms for low prices and combine them. In 2006, a midsize private-equity firm, American Industrial Partners, decided to create one large company out of a collection of small specialty vehicle businesses. They bought up fire truck companies, as well as those making ambulances, school buses, street sweepers and recreation vehicles and combined them into a company called Rev Group. They took it public in 2017 but retained control over all operating decisions and who would serve on the board.

The plan they articulated to shareholders was to make the companies more efficient — and also a lot more profitable. Timothy Sullivan, Rev Group's chief executive, told analysts at the time that the companies they were acquiring were operating with a profit margin of 4 to 5 percent, and that they were on a path "to get all of them above that 10 percent level."

“You bring them into the fold, you got to give them the religion, and they’ve got it now,” he said.

Other companies were adopting a similar model, Mr. Sullivan said, including Pierce Manufacturing, a division of Oshkosh Corporation that has recently sold many vehicles to the Los Angeles Fire Department.

Rev Group now controls as much as 30 percent of the fire truck market, according to industry estimates the company cites. Together, the industry’s three largest companies — Rev Group, Oshkosh and Rosenbauer — control about 70 to 80 percent of the market.

High profits and long delays

Some fire departments have waited years for replacement vehicles. Liam Kennedy for The New York Times

After going public, Rev Group bought up two more key fire truck makers, Spartan and Ferrara, but found it hard to find streamlining efficiencies.

One problem is that there is little room for automation in the industry, said Mike Virnig, who now serves as president of Rev’s division that manufactures fire trucks. Unlike the

automobile industry, fire departments buy trucks every 10 to 15 years on average and have incredibly specific requests, so most trucks are bespoke vehicles.

The pandemic caused global supply chain issues that made it difficult to acquire parts at the same time that fire departments, who were receiving an influx of federal, state and local Covid stimulus grants, started buying new trucks at a pace not seen in more than a decade. Truck manufacturers struggled to find workers.

But the streamlining efforts also had an effect. Rev Group closed two plants in 2021 — one in Pennsylvania, another in Virginia — cutting the company's manufacturing footprint by roughly one third.

Along the way, wait times soared. Before the pandemic, Rev Group had a backlog of roughly $1 billion worth of fire department orders that were expected to take a year to 18 months to fulfill. That has since jumped to $4 billion worth of orders that they estimate will take two to three years to deliver.

Still, Rev Group's profit margins jumped to what they described as an "exceptional 8.9 percent" for the division that includes fire trucks in 2024. That same year, its longtime backer and owner, American Industrial Partners, sold nearly all of its shares, but before doing so awarded a special dividend of $180 million of which nearly $80 million went to A.I.P.

Rev Group wasn't alone in order delays. Oshkosh said its backlog of fire truck orders has increased dramatically, quadrupling from 2019 to 2023, when it reported some $4 billion in orders placed but not fulfilled.

Mark Skonieczny, Rev Group's current chief executive, said at a 2023 conference call that the company did not expect the delays to cause cancellations because once a city sets aside the money, it is "earmarked" and Rev Group gets a deposit. "That money is allocated to those units, so we feel good about that."

Compared to an average manufacturing company, Rev Group spends a small portion of its revenue — about 1 percent — on upgrading its buildings and equipment. Rev said this rate of spending was not a factor in the company's manufacturing delays.

"How can you have a $4 billion backlog and not spend any money to support it?" said Alexander Yaggy, a former investor in Rev Group's stock. "It's reflective of an uncompetitive market."

'It's a nightmare'

Chief Matthew R. Timerman at the Emma Flower Taylor Fire Station in Watertown, N.Y. Liam Kennedy for The New York Times

In May 2021, after the country had passed through the first year of the pandemic, officials in Watertown, N.Y., ordered a $1.2 million ladder truck from a division of Rev Group, with an expectation that the vehicle would be delivered a little more than a year later.

But after department representatives visited the plant in Pennsylvania where it was to be built, the fire chief, Matthew R. Timerman, said they learned that the facility was to be shut down and the truck would be assembled at three different manufacturing sites. Delivery has been delayed multiple times — with the most recent projection for late this year, more than four years after the order was placed.

The department bought a used ladder truck from another city to keep operations running, but that truck is also more than two decades old.

Truck replacement plans have been upended all over the country. In Chicago, firefighters recently held a mock birthday celebration for a 30-year-old fire engine — twice its expected life span. In Seattle, wait times are averaging about four and a half years. Auditors in Atlanta found that at times more than a third of the firefighting fleet was out

of commission, and that while the department had ordered new fire engines, some were still in production.

In Camden, N.J., the fire chief, Jesse M. Flax, said that the manufacturing delays and rising prices were “creating greater risk for the public and firefighters.”

About two weeks ago, one of the city’s aging ladder trucks was smoking and could not be driven faster than 15 miles per hour, and was taken out of service for several days for repairs, according to Samuel Munoz, president of the Camden Fire Officers Local 2578. A replacement that was scheduled to have been delivered in December has yet to arrive.

During a house fire last year, crews were slowed in their response by mechanical trouble on a truck that caused its hose to go limp, Mr. Munoz said. A resident died in that blaze, though other factors could have contributed to the death, according to the union and the department.

While trying to purchase new trucks, the city has in the meantime acquired several used vehicles, parts and equipment that are in good condition, Mr. Flax said.

One of the companies Rev Group acquired was Ferrara in 2017. Mr. Carpenter, the fire chief in Arkansas, said he had noticed changes since then beyond just the rising costs for firefighting vehicles.

Before, he said, when he needed a part for a Ferrara repair, he would call a contact named Charlie who would ship him the part the next day. But last year, when one of the department’s vehicles needed parts, it took more than 10 months, leaving him without one of his eight rigs for nearly a year.

“It’s a nightmare,” he said.

Troubles in Los Angeles

Homes destroyed by the Eaton fire in Altadena, Calif. Mark Abramson for The New York Times

In Los Angeles, records show that the city's fire department has long aimed to have 90 percent of its fleet ready for deployment at any given time, but has averaged only 78 percent in recent years. The department has requested about $100 million for fleet replacement.

"Many vehicles have surpassed their expected service life, leading to increased maintenance costs, reduced parts availability and potential downtime," the department wrote in a budget proposal a month before the January wildfires.

The firefighters union has been concerned about equipment shortages for a while. Department officials said that current build times for new trucks range from two to four years, in part because of supply delays that began during the pandemic. "The checks and balances within the city's procurement system can pose challenges to the timely acquisition of apparatus," the department said in a statement.

Union officials said their own research showed that four ordered trucks had not been delivered, and that a steep rise in prices was also a problem.

Ladder trucks that cost $1.3 million only a few years ago now cost about $2.3 million, Mr. Ho said. The soaring costs have forced the department to order fewer rigs than originally planned.

Kristin Crowley, the fire chief in Los Angeles, has said that about 100 fire vehicles were out of service in January, a situation that impeded the department's ability to respond to the Palisades fire. Mr. Ho said that included about 40 engines and 10 ladder trucks that were out of service, along with about 40 other vehicles, such as ambulances.

In the months prior, the fire department had also requested that the city restore 16 positions focused on supply and maintenance that had been removed from the department's budget. Mr. Ho said the department had also faced challenges acquiring parts for aging vehicles, at times going on the internet to find replacement components.

A Los Angeles City Council member, Traci Park, whose district includes the area of Pacific Palisades ravaged by the recent wildfires, said it was unacceptable that so many emergency vehicles in Los Angeles have been inoperable.

"On any given day, it is dozens that are off line," Ms. Park said.

The fire truck industry, unlike the auto industry, has never been standardized, so cities typically buy a truck where almost every part is specialized for the needs of the fire department and the specific landscape and population it serves. This is partly because only about 10,000 fire trucks are manufactured each year.

To help keep down costs, Rev Group has created a more standardized vehicle that can be made in less than a year. If more fire departments choose this standardized model, said Mr. Virnig, the Rev Group executive, it is likely that overall wait times will drop.

Mr. Virnig said he believed the industry could return to more normalized manufacturing timelines of 12 to 18 months within a few years.

"I'd say it's going to take us a couple of years to work through this bubble again," he said.

Thomas Fuller contributed reporting. Kitty Bennett and Kirsten Noyes contributed research.

Mike Baker is a national reporter for The Times, based in Seattle. More about Mike Baker

Maureen Farrell writes about Wall Street, focusing on private equity, hedge funds and billionaires and how they influence the world of investing. More about Maureen Farrell

Serge F. Kovaleski is an investigative reporter for The Times, based in New York. More about Serge F. Kovaleski

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A version of this article appears in print on , Section A, Page 1 of the New York edition with the headline: As Firms Chase Profits, Firefighting Pays Price

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Neighbors Helping Neighbors

The Team That Cares

Community Volunteers

HOMER VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT

Report on the Homer Volunteer Fire Department

Recommendations for Volunteer Recruitment and Retention

"An Educational Institution that Provides EMS and Fire Services"

Cost Effective Fire Protection

The ISO Evaluation and Rating

Fire Department Budget

Fire Department Staffing

Volunteer Emergency Services

Staffing Recommendations

Immediate Intervention

Benefits

<u>2018</u>

486 EMS Call – 78%

142 Fire Calls

Total 628

Responses

Cost Effective Fire Protection

- **The role of the Fire Department is to achieve the lowest "Cost of Fire" to the community**
- **Appropriate investment in the FD Budget and Code Compliant Construction reduces Fire Loss and Insurance**
- **The goal is to achieve the most cost effective balance**

Fire Department Budget	**Fire Loss**
Fire Code Implementation and Fire Safe Construction	**Fire Insurance Premiums**

Fire Department Economic Impact

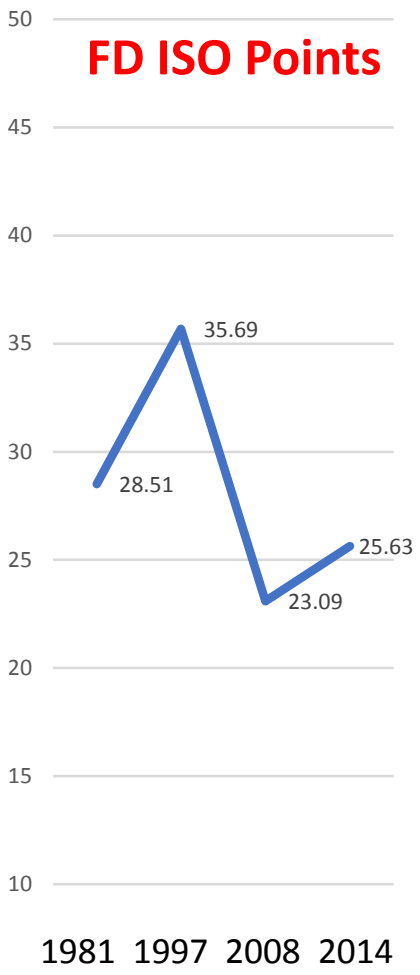
- **HVFD reduces insurance premiums paid by at least 4 to 6 times its annual budget, more than offsetting all of the City property taxes**
- **Insurance premium dollars paid leave the community. Most tax dollars remain in the community**
- **When fire service capacity is neglected, insurance rates rise and property values and property tax revenues are depressed, as is development and investment**
- **To recover requires budget increases to regain the lost capacity. Initially this puts additional downward pressure until insurance rates fall again**
- **Failing to maintain the appropriate level of fire service is a costly mistake for a community**

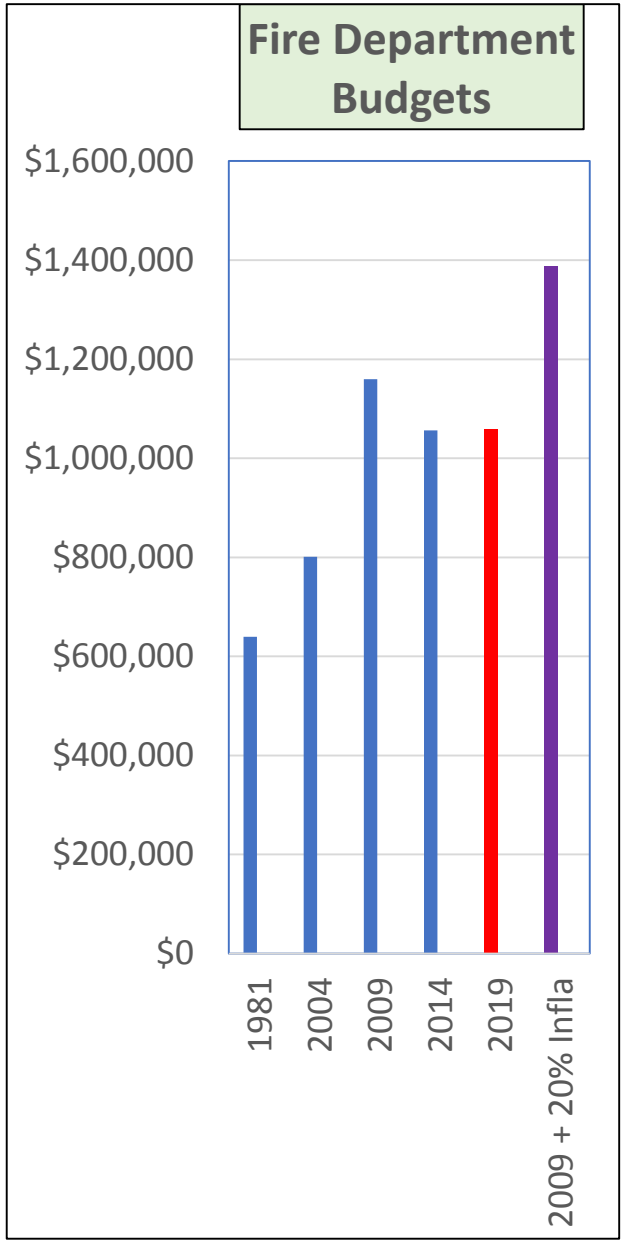
Comparison of Insurance Services Office (ISO) Ratings 1981-2019

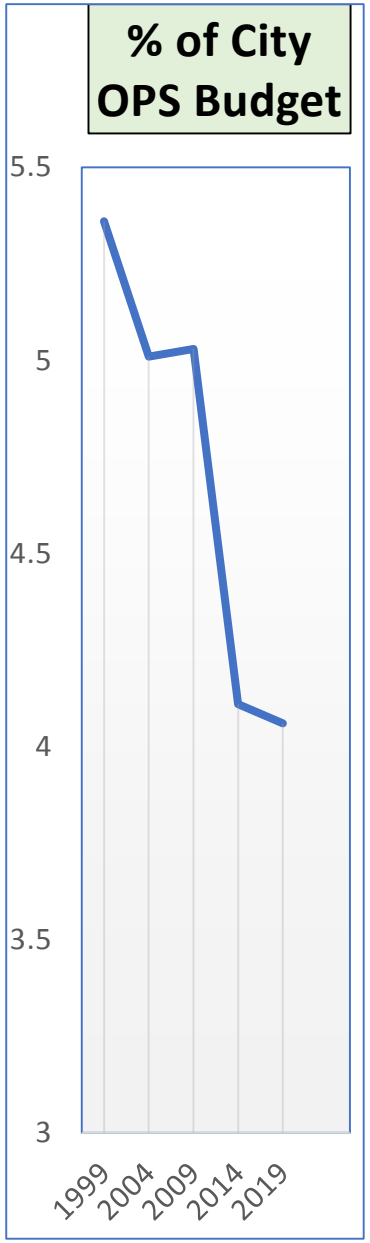
Measure of Capacity to Need

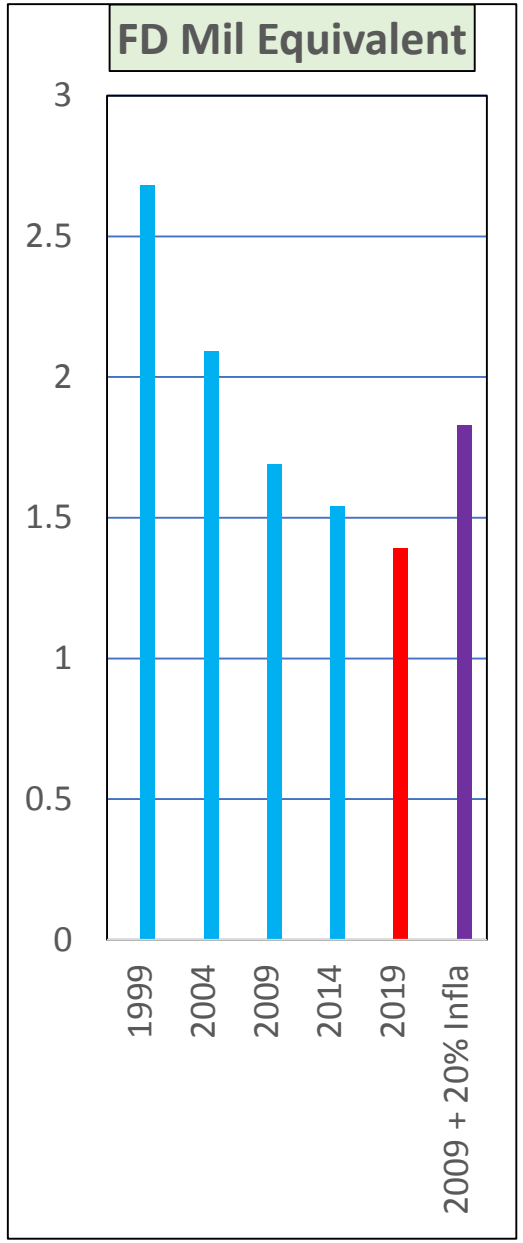
Year	Max Points	1981	1997	*Change*	2008	2014	*Change*
				81-97			*97-14*
Emergency Reporting	10.00	5.40	7.00	*+30%*	6.18	7.40	*+37%*
Fire Dept.	50.00	28.51	35.69	*+25%*	23.09	25.63	*-28%*
Water Supply	40.00	25.47	40.00	*+58%*	25.81	28.83	*-28%*
Divergence		-1.33	-5.72	*-430%*	-3.67	-4.16	*+27%*
Comm. Risk Reduction	5.50					3.99	
Total Points		58.05	76.96	*+33%*	51.41	61.69	*-20%*
ISO Rating		**5/9**	**3/8**		**5/8B**	**4/4Y**	

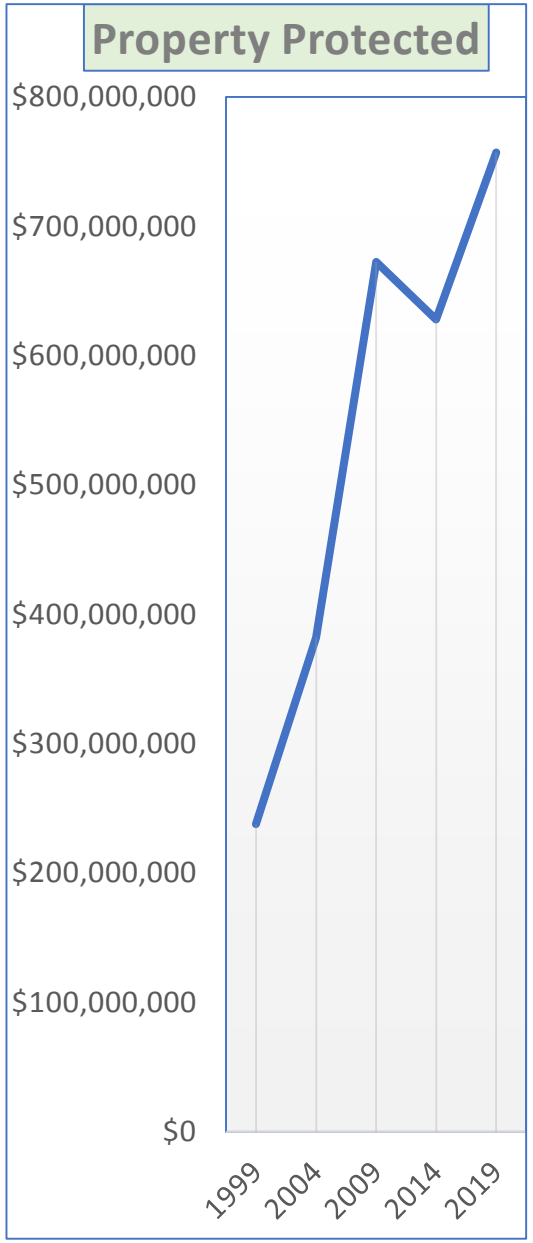
ISO Rating Chart	
ISO Class	Points
1	90+
2	80.00-89.99
3	70.00-79.99
4	60.00-69.99
5	50.00-59.99
6	40.00-49.99
7	30.00-39.99
8	20.00-29.99
9	10.00-19.99
10	0.00-9.99




Fire Department Budgets
$1,600,000
$1,400,000
$1,200,000
$1,000,000
$800,000
$600,000
$400,000
$200,000
$0
1981
2004
2009
2014
2019
2009 + 20% Infla


% of City OPS Budget
5.5
5
4.5
4
3.5
3
1999
2004
2009
2014
2019

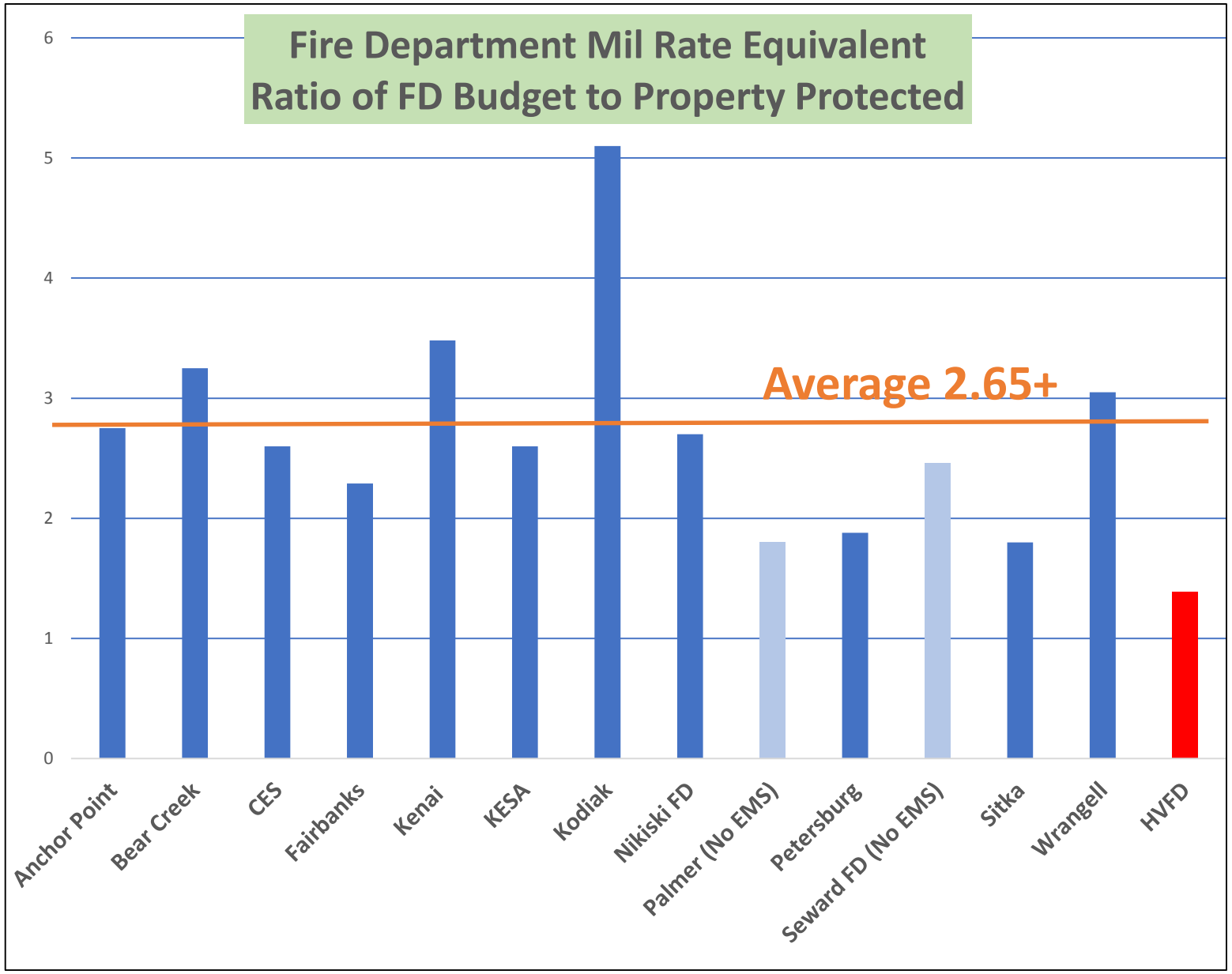

FD Mil Equivalent
3
2.5
2
1.5
1
0.5
0
1999
2004
2009
2014
2019
2009 + 20% Infla


Property Protected
$800,000,000
$700,000,000
$600,000,000
$500,000,000
$400,000,000
$300,000,000
$200,000,000
$100,000,000
$0
1999
2004
2009
2014
2019

Fire Department Comparisons

Fire Department	Pop	ISO	Mill Rate	Budget
Anchor Point FD	2700	5	2.75	**$1,094,500.00**
Kachemak Emergency Service Area	4000	5	2.6	**$1,079,150.00**
Homer Volunteer Fire Department	**6123**	**4**	**1.39**	**$1,059,435.00**
Sitka FD	8830	4	1.83	**$2,095,133.00**
Kenai FD	7745	3	3.48	**$3,103,848.00**
Kodiak	6100	4	5.10	**$2,459,976.00**

Fire Dept.	Mill Rate
Anchor Point	2.75
Bear Creek	3.25
CES / Soldotna	2.60
Fairbanks	2.29
Kenai	3.48
KESA	2.60
Kodiak	5.10
Nikiski FD	2.70
Palmer (No EMS)	1.80
Petersburg	1.88
Seward FD (No EMS)	2.46
Sitka	1.83
Wrangell	3.05
HVFD	1.39
Average	2.65



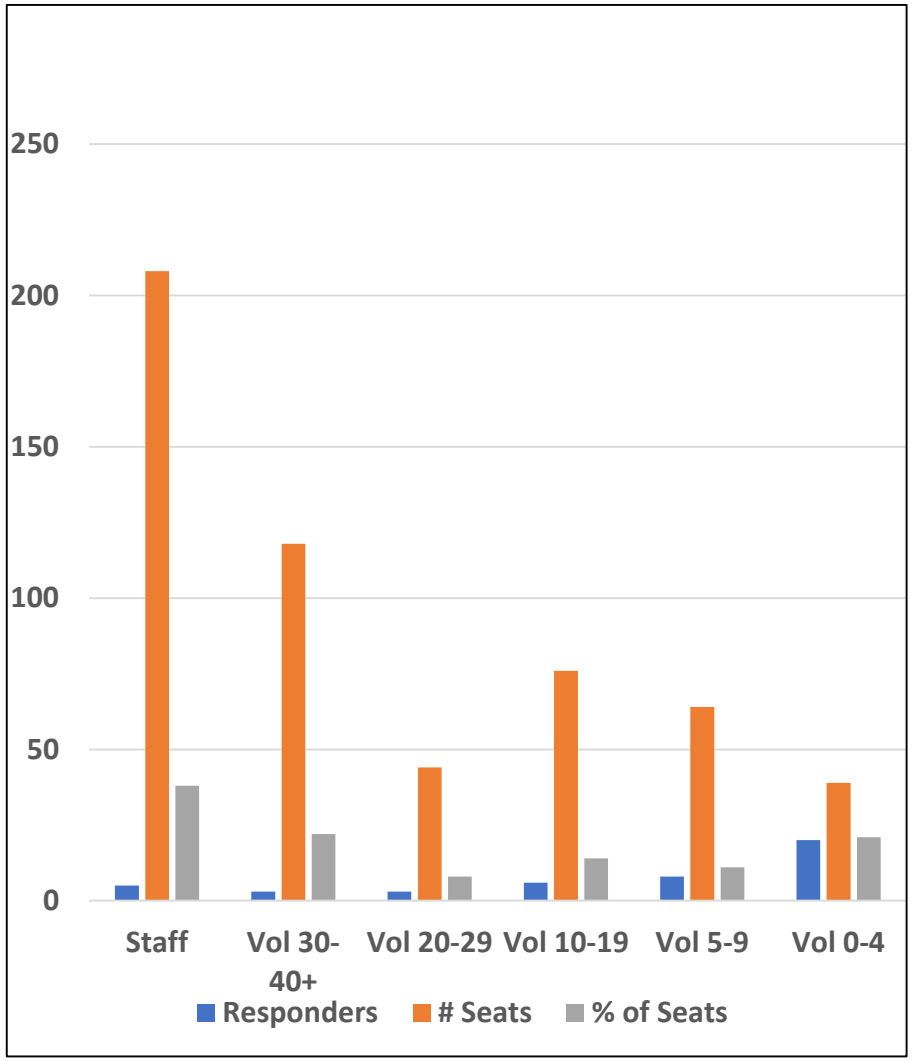
Fire Department at Risk

- **ISO – 28% Reduction in FD Capacity to Need from 1997-2014**
- **ISO - 50% Reduction in the number of Firefighters responding to fire alarms since 1997**
- **Inadequate resources to meet the needs. Effectively a 30% cut to the budget since 2009.**
- **Inadequate 8/40 Staffing to support the volunteers**
- **Commercial Fire and Homeowners Insurance Rates have increased**
- **ISO Evaluations on an a targeted 5 year cycle. Last evaluation in 2014. City faces a potential for a drop to a Class-5**

Jan-Mar 2019 Responses

Responders	Roster = 45 Responders	549 # Seats	% Seats
Staff	5	208	38%
Vol 30-40+	3	118	22%
Sub-Group Total	**8**	**326**	**60%**
Vol 20-29	3	44	8%
Vol 10-19	6	76	14%
Sub-Group Total	9	120	22%
Sub-Total	**17**	**446**	**82%**
Vol 5-9	8	64	11%
Vol 0-4	20	39	7%
Sub-Group Total	28	103	18%
Total	**45**	**549**	**100%**

Responder Participation



The Path Best Not Taken

- When volunteers are unhappy, they drift away quietly, rarely complaining
- It is exceptionally hard to rebuild a successful volunteer fire department once it has failed
- Permitting a volunteer service to degrade results in the hiring of full-time employees at great cost

ANCHORAGE DAILY NEWS

Mat-Su

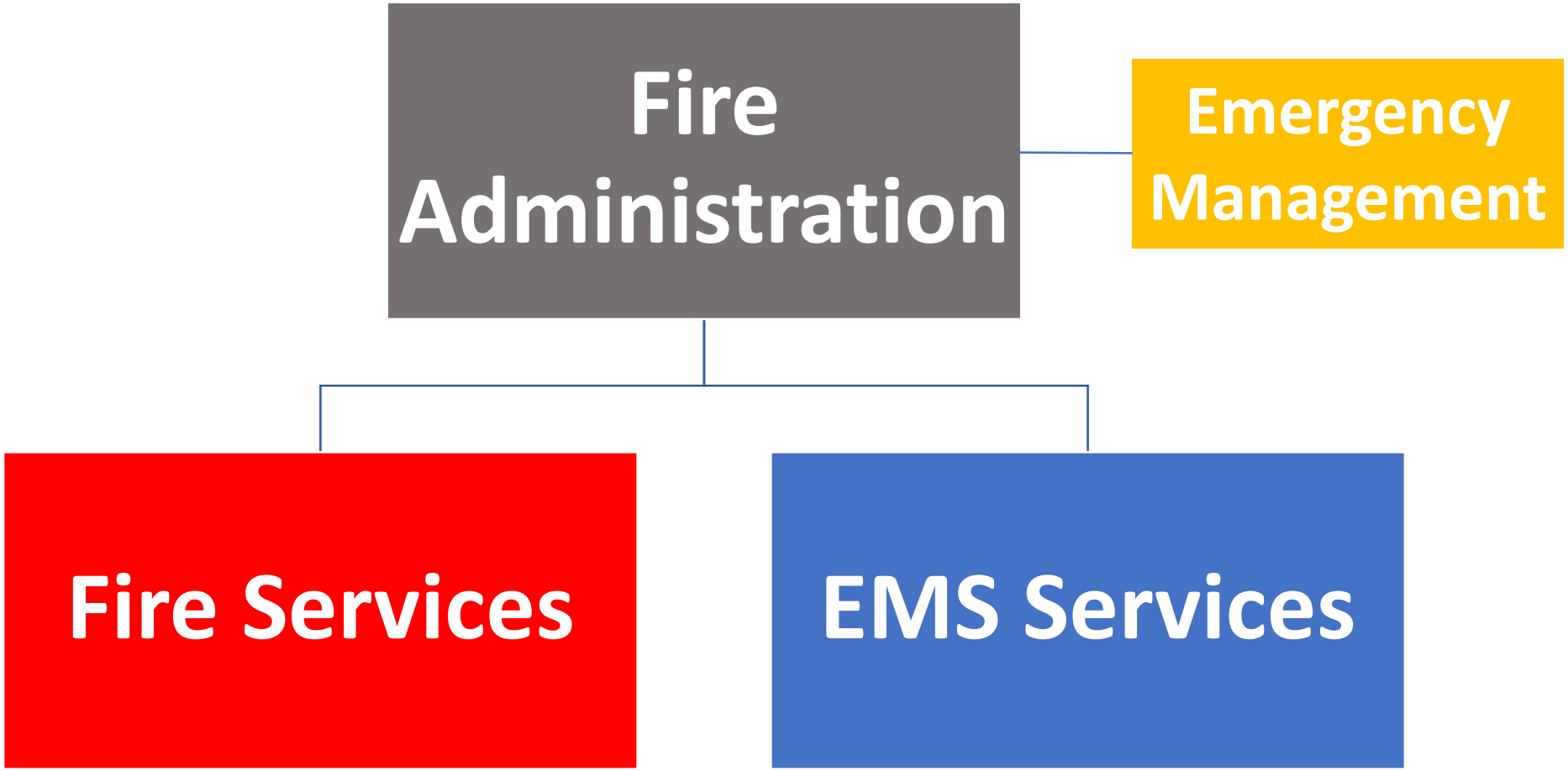
Mat-Su adds 25 medics, 2 ambulances in major shift to full-time force

Author: Zaz Hollander Updated: 21 hours ago Published 21 hours ago

Matanuska-Susitna Borough paramedic April Yost in Central Ambulance 1 on Wednesday, March 20, 2019. The Matanuska-Susitna Borough assembly approved adding 25 EMT's and paramedics. (Bill

Buy This Photo

Fire Department Org Chart



Scope of Services

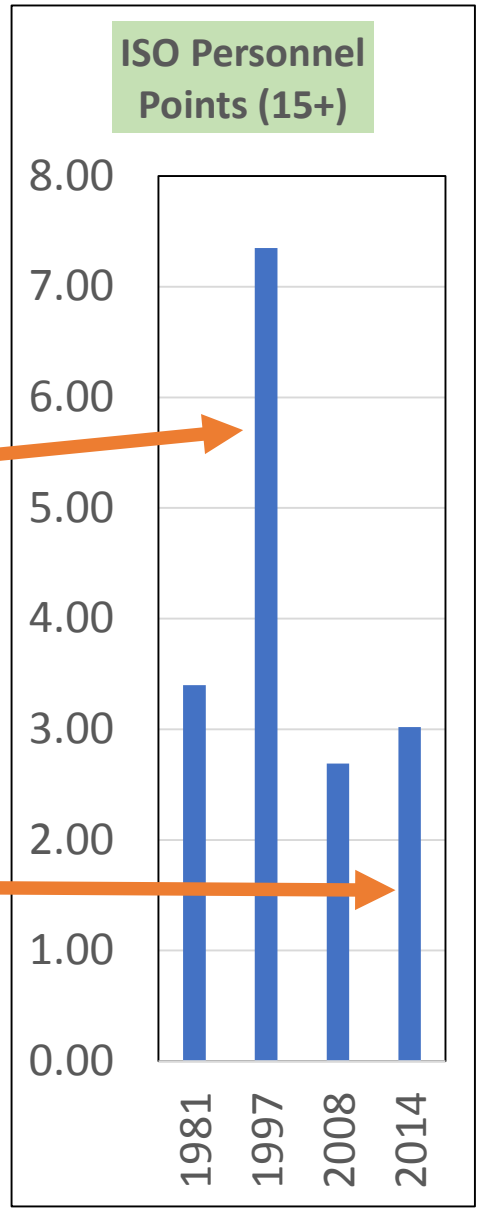
- Fire Services - Structural Fire Suppression, Motor Vehicle Firefighting, Wildland Firefighting, Marine Firefighting, Aircraft Rescue & Firefighting
- EMS - Basic and Advanced Life Support Ambulance Services
- Rescue Services - Vehicle Extrication, Rope Rescue, Water Rescue, Confined Space Rescue
- Hazardous Materials Operations
- Disaster Response and Management
- Public Education, Prevention and Preparedness
- Plan Reviews and Code Consultations

Training

- Every Emergency Service above has a course and continuing education requirements
- In addition we provide Firefighter-I, Firefighter-II, Officer-I, Emergency Vehicle Operations, Fire Apparatus Engineer, Fire Service Hydraulics, etc.
- EMT-I, EMT-II, EMT-III, Paramedic, ACLS, Ambulance Driver, etc.
- Methods of Instruction and Train-the-Trainer

Staffing Distribution

Year Thru	Chief	Fire AC	EMS AC	DSS /DSC	ESS	P.T.-ESS
1999	1	1	1	1		
2000	1	1		1	1	
2010	1			1	3	
2115	1			1	3	2 p.t.
2017	1	1		1	3	2 p.t.
2019	1	1	Add 1		Add 1	2 p.t.



Staffing Recommendations 8/40

- ✓ **The Fire and EMS Assistant Chief positions were the key to the high performance of the Fire Department through 2000**
- ✓ **The complexity of the Fire Service and EMS have both grown substantially since then, as has the volume of calls and work**
- ✓ **The Fire Department currently has 2 Divisions, Fire Services and Emergency Medical Services without Division Leadership**
- ✓ **The Fire Department is the largest City Department with 50+ personnel**

- ❑ **Add an EMS Assistant Chief to provide adequate support to maintain an effective volunteer emergency service – 2 Divisions Fire & EMS**
  - ❑ **EMS Asst. Chief - EMS SME, Training Officer, Operations**
  - ❑ **Fire Asst. Chief - Fire Service SME, Training Officer, and Operations**

Staffing requirements for 24/365 ESS coverage

Hours in a Year	**8,760.00 hours**
Total Annual Hours per Employee	**2,112.50 hours**
Estimated Avg. Leave per Employee per Year	**-200.00 hours**
Estimated Working Hours per Employee	**1,912.50 hours**
Hours in a Year / Working Hours =	**4.6 positions**

24 Hour Staffing Requires 4.6 positions - Current Staffing is 3.6 or 80% Coverage

- **Add 1 Emergency Service Specialist (ESS) to complete staffing of the ESS capability and to provide staff resources to support a wide range of fire department operations**
  - **4 ESS with temp hires is the minimum 4.6 positions required to provide consistent expedited responses 24/365**
  - **The ESS program has had a significant impact, reducing response times by as much as 5-8 minutes, which can be lifesaving.**

Immediate Intervention

Fund and Hire an EMS Assistant Chief to Restore and Sustain a Successful Volunteer Fire Department and EMS Service - Appropriation Request:

- **EMS Assistant Fire Chief (Budgeted at 50/50 to Range 20I and 20J)**
- **Salary & Wages: $77,028.00 Total, Benefits: $44,021.00 Total: $121,049.00**

Fund and Hire a 4th Emergency Service Specialist to complete 24/365 Coverage to Support Consistently Shorter Response Times and Fully Support Daily Operations - Appropriation Request:

- **ESS-II (Budgeted at Range 14A)**
- **Salary & Wages: $51,243.00 Total Benefits: $34,949.00Total: $86,193.00**

- **Estimated Annual Cost $207,242.00**

Total FY2019 Special Appropriation Requested: $120,891.00

Core Fire Department Strengths

- **New Leadership is Coming to Lead the Organization**
- **Core Group of Dedicated Volunteers Responding to Calls**
- **Volunteers Ready to Support the Rebuilding of the Fire Department**
- **3 Highly Competent Staff Members**
- **Community Support for the Volunteers**
- **Volunteer Oriented Community to Draw New Recruits From**
- **Wide Community Support and for Fire and EMS as Priority Services**
- **Mutual Aid from KESA and Anchor Point for Major Incidents**

Goal & Benefits

- **The Fire Department's Trend Line has been Downwards for Years, it is Essential to Bend the Curve Upwards and Begin the Recovery**

"Volunteers are not free, just less expensive"

- **Over time, insurance savings will more than offset the investment in the Fire Department**
- **The Additional Staff will fully support both the Fire Service and EMS Divisions and complete the 24 Hour Rapid Response Capability.**
- **An Adequate Budget will support the work and resources required to assure the HVFD volunteers are successful**
- **Effective Fleet Management will increase reliability and safety, while providing for predictable stable Fleet Expenditures**
- **This will sustain a Responsive, High Quality, Cost-Effective, Viable Volunteer Fire Department well into the future**

City of Homer
www.cityofhomer-ak.gov

Volunteer Fire Department
604 East Pioneer Ave
Homer, Alaska 99603
fire@cityofhomer-ak.gov
(p) 907-235-3155
(f) 907-235-3157

Memorandum

COPY

TO: Katie Koester, City Manager

FROM: Robert Purcell, Interim Fire Chief

DATE: 06/17/2019

SUBJECT: Fire Station Replacement

After assessing the communities emergency service facility needs, the City proposed constructing a project replacing the Police Station and Fire Station with a new facility. When the determination was made to separate the projects, the decision was made to build the Police Station first and defer building the Fire Station. To extend the life of the current Fire Station the plan called for refurbishing the existing building and expanding portions of the current building by 2000 square feet to meet the minimum needs, with the intention of extending the life of building by up to 10 years. Ultimately the expansion was dropped and the project consisted simply of converting the heating to natural gas, improved air handling, fixing the drainage in Bays 2 & 3 and a providing general refurbishment, essentially correcting deferred maintenance. Nothing was done to expand the capacity of the building and the useful life of the facility to meet the needs of the community. Therefore, the Fire Station is as inadequate today as it was when the original assessment was made years ago that identified the Fire Station needed to be replaced. With the Police Station now under construction, the first half of the original project is now close to completion and work should now resume the process to replace the Fire Station.

With the old Police Station being vacated, a determination should be made if the new Fire Station could be constructed on the existing common lot. It appears that an L or T-shaped building immediately behind the current Fire Station may be feasible. The current site, close to the intersections of Lake Street, Pioneer Avenue and Heath Street is an optimum location within the City for the facility. The needs assessment should be updated to reflect the Fire Station as a stand-alone facility, expanding on some of the data collected for the original project. The site feasibility should be determined and preliminary drawings developed.

In the interim the Fire Department needs to make temporary use of the Police Station for storage, parking, and training applications such as search and rescue drills etc. In this scenario the Police Station would be in a warm status requiring minimum heat and utilities (freeze protected) and little to no maintenance since it would be torn down as part of the site preparation for the new Fire Station.

What to do with the Old Police Station?

Sell the property

Pro	Con
Consistent with Resolution 13-091(A), Dedicating any Potential Future Sale of the Fire Hall and Police Station Property to a Special Fund Earmarked for Financing and Construction of the Proposed New Public Safety Building	Property is valuable for a public building given its central location Reso 13-091(A) was passed when it was envisioned that the entire public safety campus would be relocated
If sold to an organization that is not tax exempt, would put the property back on the property tax roles	Currently HVFD and HPD are on the same lot and share utilities. Any sale would require subdividing the lot and installing new utilities
City would not have to maintain and decide what to do with a derelict building	It could take years to sell the building, which would require budgeting to maintain it in warm status in the interim
$$$$$$$$$$	

Convert the building into a home for PW Building Maintenance

Pro	Con
With enough investment, it could solve a future problem of what to do with Building Maintenance, depending on what happens with the HERC property	There is more building there than Building Maintenance needs and retrofitting it to a maintenance shop would require significant expense
	A prefabricated metal shop structure would be a better fit for the needs of Building Maintenance and likely cost less than a retro fit
	It does not remove the expense of maintaining an old and inefficient building from the City operating budget

Preserve for a community use

Pro	Con
Ideas abound on how the building could meet a number of community needs including a homeless shelter, teen center, etc.	A Pandora's box of questions regarding operational costs, reasonability and programing would need to be ironed out
	The cost of bringing the building up to code or retrofitting it could be prohibitively expensive

Demo the facility ASAP

Pro	Con
Eliminates the need to appropriate any operational dollars to keeping a facility with an unknown future	Cost of demolition
Keeps options open for the land, including but not limited to future fire hall expansion	Any existing asset in the facility would be no more
Landscaping and parking at this lot could be an easy short term use that would keep the area aesthetically pleasing	

Put the Building in 'Cold Status' and allow HVFD to use it

Pro	Con
Minimal expense is incurred if heat is turned off (or greatly reduced) and grounds maintenance is done by HVFD volunteers (which is the case at the current station)	Putting it is cold status means demolition is likely the only option in the future
HVFD could use the building for scenario based fire and EMS trainings such as search and recovery, laddering, ventilation and fire attack for the fire aspects and patient scenarios with extrication for EMS. The lot could be used for much needed parking at the Fire Hall	There will be an eventual capital expense in the future to make the property useful to the City
Preserving the property in City ownership allows for the future expansion of HVFD facilities (an equipment bay for a ladder truck, for example) without the need for a new Fire Hall	Committing to keeping the space limits the future growth options of the Fire Hall to that particular lot, which may not be ideal
	Unless clearly designated for a specific future use with a plan to get there, will be open to lots of speculation about potential uses, which could complicate things
	What is the liability associated with keeping a vacant building unused? (an eyesore and potential attractive nuisance, for example)

LorenBerryArchitect

41601 MADRONE, SPRINGFIELD, OREGON 97478 TELEPHONE (541) 896-3692 FAX (541) 896-0231

USKH NOW STANTEC

COPY

CITY OF HOMER, ALASKA
Public Safety Facility

SPACE NEEDS ASSESSMENT

August 26, 2014

LorenBerryArchitect

41601 MADRONE, SPRINGFIELD, OREGON 97478 TELEPHONE (541) 896-3692 FAX (541) 896-0231

August 26, 2014

Carey Meyer, Public Works Director and
Public Safety Building Review Committee
City of Homer, Alaska

On behalf of USKH of Fairbanks, the Project Architect and our firm, it is our pleasure to submit the Space Needs Assessment for the City of Homer Public Safety Facility.

The study projects the building space and site area requirements for the years 2014 and 2034.

The information and assistance provided by Fire Chief Painter, Police Chief Robl, their staffs, and other City representatives has been most helpful.

If you have any questions or need clarifications regarding the study, please call us.

Thank you for involving us in this important project.

Sincerely,

Loren R. Berry, FCSI, CDT, AIA

Jon R. "Jack" Berry, AIA

TABLE OF CONTENTS

		Page No.
I	EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	
	Introduction	I-2
	Summary of Personnel, Space & Site Needs	I-3
II	METHODOLGY	
	Introduction	II-2
	Project Approach	II-3
III	GROWTH & STAFFING	
	Growth Projection	III-2
	Staffing Chart – Fire & Police	III-3
IV	SPACE STANDARDS	
	Fire	IV-2
	Police	IV-22
	Shared	IV-41
V	2014 SPACE NEEDS	
	Introduction	V-2
	Fire	V-3
	Police	V-8
	Shared	V-15
	Site Area Requirements	V-17
VI	2034 SPACE NEEDS	
	Introduction	VI-2
	Fire Police	VI-3
	Shared	VI-8
	Site Area Requirements	VI-15
VII	ADJACENCIES	
	Introduction	VII-3
	Fire	VII-4
	Police	VII-5
	Site	VII-6
	Vertical Adjacencies – Introduction	VII-7
	Fire	VII-8
	Police	VII-9
	Shared	VII-11
VIII	APPENDICES	
	A. Questionnaire	
	Fire	A-2
	Police	A-15
	B. Project Notes (with responses)	
	General	B-2
	Fire	B-5
	Police	B-13
	Shared	B-25
	C. Site Selection Criteria	C-2

I EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

In the Spring of 2014, USKH of Fairbanks, Alaska and its team of consultants was selected to provide architectural and related services for the preliminary design of a new Public Safety Facility, including the Homer Volunteer Fire Department and Police Department. Loren Berry Architect of Springfield, Oregon serves as the Public Safety Facility Design Consultant, assigned to provide a space needs assessment and initial conceptual plan.

Space needs projections have been made for the years 2014 and 2034. Summaries of these needs follow. The detailed space needs are included in Section V and VI.

It is intended that the initial concept plans will be presented at a future date.

SUMMARY OF PERSONNEL SPACE & SITE NEEDS

The following chart is a summary presentation of the 2014 and 2034 personnel, building and site area needs.

Site area requirements are estimated for both a single and a two story facility. A preliminary determination of what functions are to be included on which floor level is shown on the "Vertical Adjacencies" chart in Section VII.

A breakdown of personnel needs is provided in Section III.

Detailed breakdowns of 2014 and 2034 space needs for Fire, Police, and Shared Facilities are provided in Sections V and VI respectively.

SUMMARY OF PERSONNEL SPACE NEEDS

2014

PERSONNEL	MAIN BUILDING	ANCILLARY BUILDINGS	TOTAL BUILDINGS	SITE FACILITIES	ESTIMATED SITE AREA
VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT					
7 STAFF 40 VOLUNTEERS	21,296	1,459	22,755	31,948	54,703
POLICE DEPARTMENT					
31	22,081	7,230	29,311	33,797	63,108
SHARED FACILITIES					
--	4,341	1,320	5,661	4,550	10,211
TOTALS					
N/A	47,718	10,009	57,727	70,295	128,022

SUB-TOTAL ESTIMATED SITE AREA		**128,022**
SITE AREA ALLOWANCES		
DESIGN CONTINGENCY	10%	12,802
LANDSCAPE/HARDSCAPE	25%	32,006
FUTURE EXPANSION	10%	12,802
TOTAL ESTIMATED SITE AREA REQUIREMENT		**185,633**
ALL FACILITIES ON ONE LEVEL		**4.25 Acres**
REDUCE SITE AREA FOR 2 LEVEL FACILITY:		
ASSUME 30% OF MAIN BUILDING ON 2ND FLOOR		
.30 X 47,493		(14,315)
TOTAL ESTIMATED SITE AREA REQUIREMENT		**171,318**
TWO STORY FACILITY		**3.93 Acres**

2034

PERSONNEL	MAIN BUILDING	ANCILLARY BUILDINGS	TOTAL BUILDINGS	SITE FACILITIES	ESTIMATED SITE AREA
VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT					
14 STAFF 50 VOLUNTEERS	22,307	1,459	23,766	34,873	58,639
POLICE DEPARTMENT					
38	24,684	7,230	31,914	39,192	71,106
SHARED FACILITIES					
--	4,585	1,320	5,905	4,550	10,455
TOTALS					
	51,576	10,009	61,585	78,615	140,200

SUB-TOTAL ESTIMATED SITE AREA		**140,200**
SITE AREA ALLOWANCES		
DESIGN CONTINGENCY	10%	14,020
LANDSCAPE/HARDSCAPE	25%	35,050
FUTURE EXPANSION	10%	14,020
TOTAL ESTIMATED SITE AREA REQUIREMENT		**203,290**
ALL FACILITIES ON ONE LEVEL		**4.66 Acres**
REDUCE SITE AREA FOR 2 LEVEL FACILITY:		
ASSUME 30% OF MAIN BUILDING ON 2ND FLOOR		
.30 X 51,639		(15,473)
TOTAL ESTIMATED SITE AREA REQUIREMENT		**187,817**
TWO STORY FACILITY		**4.31 Acres**

II METHODOLOGY

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Following is an outline of the Project Approach used in this Space Needs Assessment for the City of Homer proposed Public Safety Facility. Designed for client involvement, the methodology has been used successfully on many similar projects.

The process was organized around workshops with City representatives for information gathering and with City review of drafts of each element of the study as they are prepared. This study should provide a clear understanding of the current and future building needs.

PROJECT APPROACH

- Questionnaire
  Questionnaires were provided for Police and Fire leadership and other key personnel. The questionnaire addressed such things as department organization charts, internal and external adjacencies, future organizational changes, and long-term needs. Also included were questions regarding specific facility requirements, such as lighting, heating, ventilation and cooling, and special finishes. The questionnaire also inquired of staff positions, both current and future, and special spaces and equipment. Questionnaire responses from the Fire & Police Chiefs are included in Appendix A.

- Workshops with City Representatives
  The work in Home was started with a "kick-off" meeting with leadership from Police, other City departments and the Public Safety Building Review Committee (PSBR).

  Initial discussion was related to the project scope and objectives, and the procedures for implementing the study. From study organization and funding, discussion moved to background issues, such as historic relationships, community perception, and uniqueness of and influences on the community. Finally, the discussion covered facility issues such as potential sites, desired quality and character of new facilities, possible shared spaces, and future programs.

- Department Workshops
  Interviews were then held with key staff for each department area. These sessions included small group and individual meetings. Discussions began with issues covered in the initial "kick-off" meeting, but more specific to individual area needs and concerns. The discussions also included existing or proposed work patterns, desired adjacencies, and needs in the new facility.

- Project Notes
  Project notes were prepared for review. Information obtained from the meetings and the Questionnaires was combined in these notes.

- Space Standards
  Example diagrams of typical spaces were provided to assist the City staff in establishing space standards for various offices, work stations, and other spaces.

- Space Needs Projections
  Based on the current and projected staffing requirements and the suggested space standards, space projections were made for the current and future needs. These projections, for 2014 and 2034 are included in Sections V and VI, respectively of this document.

- Draft Presentation
  The various components of the study, including the Project Notes, Space Standards, Space Projections, and Adjacency Diagrams, were presented in draft form for review as they were completed.

- Concept Plans
  Initial Concept Site and Floor Plans will be presented. The space standards, space needs, and adjacencies will be applied to demonstrate an example site and floor plans, and the site area required for the proposed facilities.

III GROWTH & STAFFING

Population of Homer

Estimating population growth is important in assessing the space needs of community building facilities. Population is often used in determining the number of personnel assigned to public safety facilities, which in turn determines the building space needed.

The U.S. Census had the City of Homer population in 2010 at 5,003. The City's website notes that number as a 27% increase since 2000; an average of 2.7% per year. The growth was due in part to annexation of a large land area in 2002.

The City's population was estimated to be 5,239 in 2012, and average increase of 2.4% per year over the 2 year period. Using that rate of growth, the City's 2014 population would be estimated to be 5,365. If that rate of growth were to continue for 20 years, it would be 8,621 in 2034. Twenty years is generally the recommended span to use in planning public safety facilities.

The Staffing Chart presented in this Section for the Homer Police and Fire Departments indicates the Current Actual, Current Need, and Future Staffing Needs. The following is a discussion of those needs relative to the current and projected future population of the City.

Police

The Department currently has 12 sworn police officers. Chief Mark Robl has indicated that the current need is 15 officers. 15 officers represents 2.8 officers / 1,000 estimated population.

According to the U.S. Department of Justice Bureau of Justice Statistics, the national average of sworn / 1,000 in 2000 was 2.3. It seems reasonable that a community such as Homer that serves a much larger area and has a substantial tourist impact would have a somewhat higher ratio.

The Chief suggests a future need of 18 sworn officers. Using the ratio of 2.8 officers / 1,000 for the estimated 2034 population of 8,621 results in 24 sworn officers; 6 more than the Chief suggests.

Considering the entire Police Staff; the Department currently has 26. The Chief indicates the current need of 31. A staff of 31 represents a ratio of 5.8 / 1,000.

The Chief suggests a future need of 38 total staff. Using the ratio of 5.8 total staff / 1,000 for the estimated population of 8,621 results in a staff of 50; 12 more than the Chief suggests.

Conclusion: The suggested future need for both sworn and total staff could be underestimated for the recommended 20 year period.

Fire

The Department currently has a paid staff of 5. Chief Robert Painter has indicated that the current need is 7. A full-time staff of 7 represents 1.3 / 1,000 estimated population of 5,365.

The Chief suggests a future need of 14 full-time staff. Using the ratio of 1.3 / 1,000 for the estimated 2034 population of 8,621 results in 11, only 3 less than the Chief suggests; which includes adding 6 Emergency Service Specialists (ESS) as well as an Assistant Chief / Training Officer and a Fire Marshal / Plan Reviewer.

Currently the department has about 40 volunteers. This is a ratio of about 7.5 / 1,000 population.

The Chief has suggested 50 volunteers as a future need. Using the ratio of 7.5 / 1,000 for the estimated population 8,621 results in a volunteer force of about 65; 15 more than the Chief suggests.

Conclusion: The Chief's suggested future need for full-time staff would seem to be a bout right (only 3 more than that based on an estimated future population). The number of volunteers for the future suggested by the Chief might be underestimated.

FIRE DEPARTMENT	Number of positions					
	Current Actual		Current Need		Approx. 20 Year Projection	
Position/Title	Total	Largest Shift	Total	Largest Shift	Total	Largest Shift
Chief	1		1		1	
Asst. Chief / Training Officer	0		1		1	
Emergency Service Specialist (ESS)	3	1	3	1	9	3
Dept. Services Coordinator	1	1	1	1	1	1
Fire Marshal / Plans Reviewer	2	0	1	1	2	1
TOTAL FULL-TIME	5	2	7	3	14	5
Volunteers	40	-	40	-	50	-

1
1
7
1
0

POLICE DEPARTMENT	Number of positions					
	Current Actual		Current Need		Approx. 20 Year Projection	
Position/Title	Total	Largest Shift	Total	Largest Shift	Total	Largest Shift
Dispatch	8	2	9	3	11	4
Patrol	11	3	13	4	15	6
Investigations	1	1	2	2	3	3
Jail	6	1	7	2	9	3
TOTAL SWORN	12	4	15	6	18	9
TOTAL STAFF	26	7	31	11	38	16

World Population review
Year 2025 6,366 20
KC 600 2024
Anchor Pt.
WESA
Diamond ridge 1,500
Fitz Creek 2,248

IV SPACE STANDARDS

Attached are examples from our library of space standards and examples specifically for the Homer Public Safety Facility.

OFFICES

Included are 7 examples of offices with layout variations. Sizes range from 100 to 270 sq. ft. (Larger examples are also available.)

Please select an office size for each of the following positions. Our suggestion is shown in each case. Only the size is critical at this time; not the layout.

- Office of the Chief
  - The existing office is approximately 160 sq. ft.
  - Suggested Office: 225 sq. ft.
- Assistant Chief / Training Officer
  - The existing office is approximately 140 sq. ft., plus a library / storage area of about 66 sq. ft.; totaling about 206 sq. ft.
  - Suggested Office: 180 sq. ft., plus adjoining library / storage of 180 sq. ft.; 360 sq. ft. total.
- Fire Marshal / Plans Reviewer
  - No existing office.
  - Suggest Office 150 sq. ft. with drafting board / layout counter, plus public counter and plans storage of 150 sq. ft.; total 300 sq. ft.
- Emergency Service Specialist
  - Suggest Office 100 sq. ft.
  - Alternative: See Work Stations.

WORK STATIONS

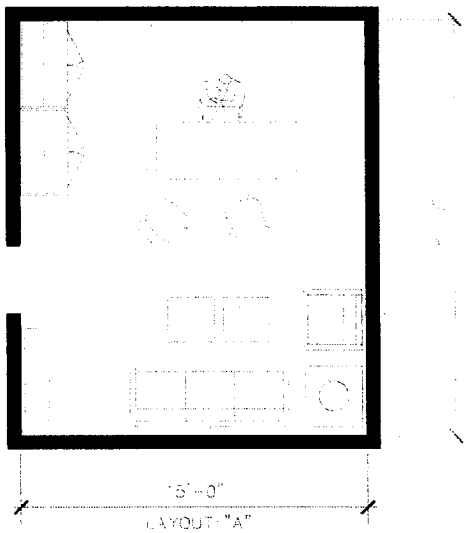
Included are 6 examples from our library. Many others are possible.

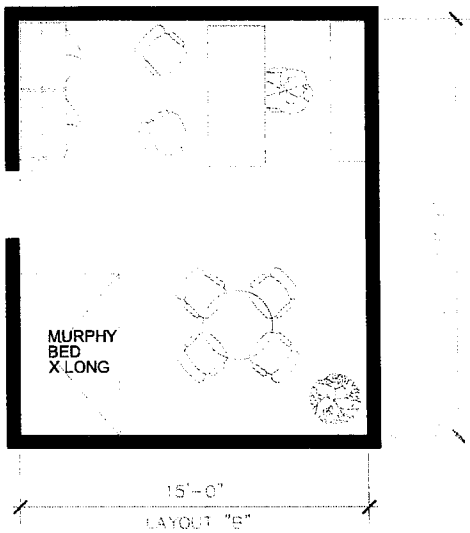
Please select a work station size for each of the following positions. Our suggestion is shown in each case.

- Emergency Service Specialist
  - Alternative to Office area (See Offices):
  - Suggest Work Station 80 sq. ft.; all positions within one room. Add space in room for counter (printer, etc.)
- Member (Volunteer) Office
  - Suggest Work Station 55 sq. ft. all positions within one room. Add space in room for counter (printer, etc.) This alternative shown in the Space Standards.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SPACE OR ELEMENT	PAGE
• OFFICE	IV - 4
• OFFICE	IV - 5
• OFFICE	IV - 6
• OPEN PLAN WORKSTATIONS	IV - 7
• PLANING REVIEW / FIRE MARSHALL	IV - 8
• TRAINING LIBRARY / ASST. CHIEF & TRAINING OFFICER	IV - 8
• DEPARTMENT SERVICES COORDINATOR / RECEPTION	IV - 9
• EMERGENCY SERVICES SPECIALIST	IV - 10
• VOLUNTEER WORK STATIONS / COPY / "PRODUCTION" & STORAGE APPARATUS BAY	IV -11
• DAY ROOM	IV - 12
• DINING / KITCHEN	IV - 13
• SINGLE BUNK ROOM & DOUBLE BUNK ROOM	IV - 14
• FIRE SHOWER & LOCKER ROOMS	IV - 15
• MINIMUM APPARATUS BAY LENGTHS	IV - 16
• LAUNDRY & TURN OUT GEAR - NEW STORAGE & TURNOUT GEAR - WASH / DRY	IV - 17
• TURN OUT GEAR OPEN LOCKERS	IV - 18
• FIRE HOSE WASH / DRY & SPACE FOR HOSE RACK & OTHER EQUIPMENT BETWEEN BAYS	IV - 19
• DECON SHOWERS / BIOHAZARD & SHOP	IV - 20
• MEDICAL EQUIPMENT / SUPPLIES & FOOD / BEVERAGE STORAGE & BREATHING AIR COMPRESSOR / TANKS	IV - 21

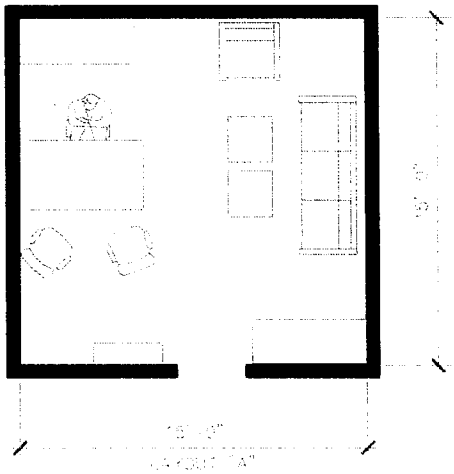


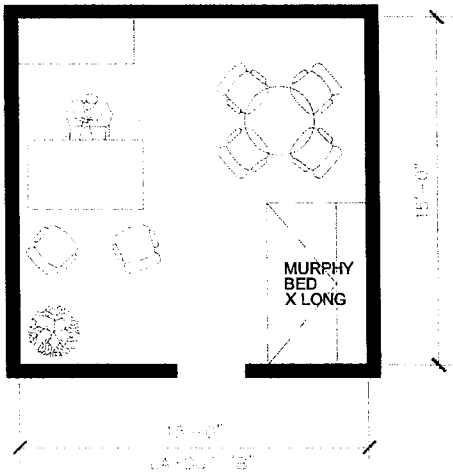


OFFICE

270 SF

SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"



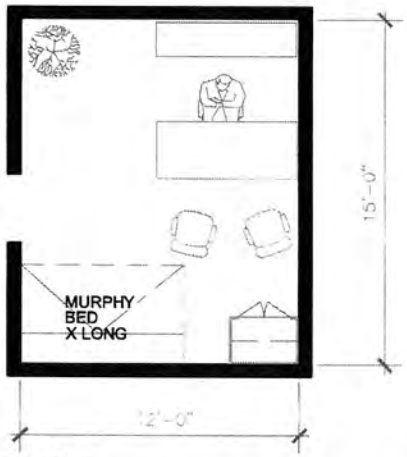


OFFICE

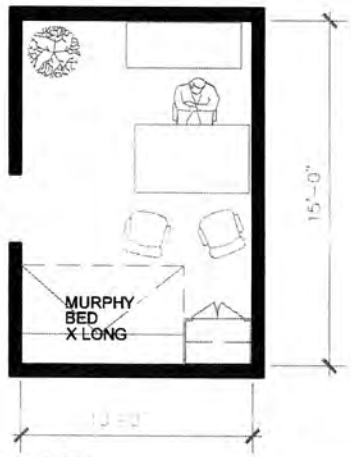
225 SF

SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"

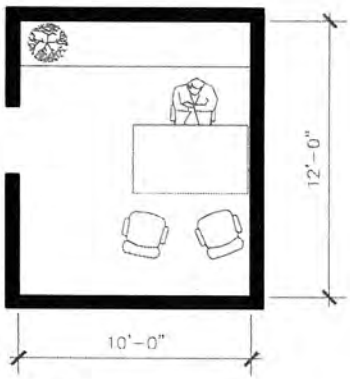
FURNITURE LAYOUT AND DIMENSIONS
ARE FOR ILLUSTRATION PURPOSES ONLY.



OFFICE
180 SF SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"



OFFICE
150 SF SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"



OFFICE
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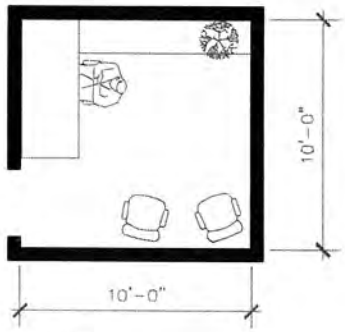

OFFICE
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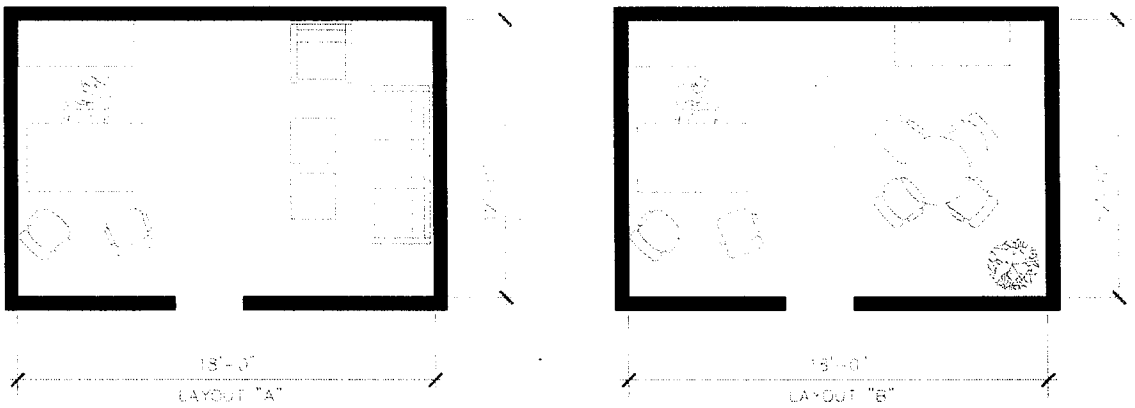
FURNITURE LAYOUT AND DIMENSIONS
ARE FOR ILLUSTRATION PURPOSES ONLY.

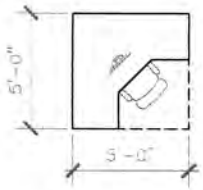


OFFICE

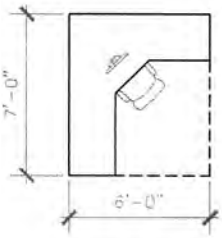
216 SF

SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"

FURNITURE LAYOUT AND DIMENSIONS ARE FOR ILLUSTRATION PURPOSES ONLY.



WS 25 SQ.FT.



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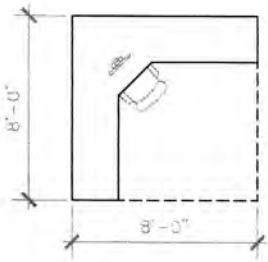
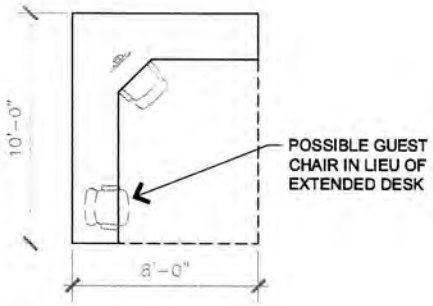
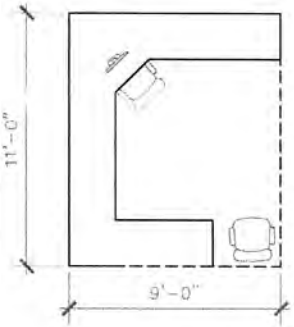


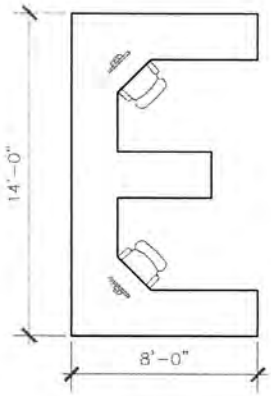
WS 64 SQ.FT.



WS 80 SQ.FT.



WS 99 SQ.FT.

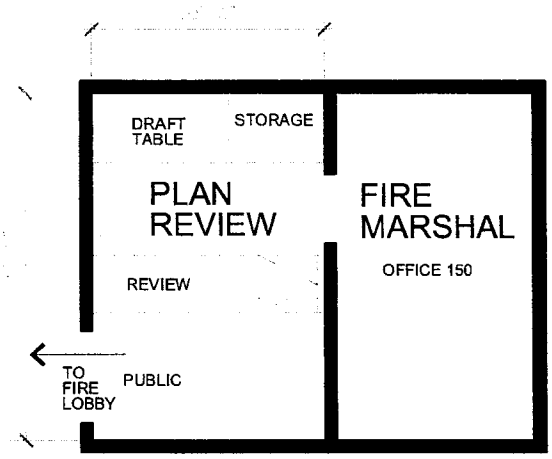


DOUBLE WS 112 SQ.FT.

OPEN PLAN WORKSTATION

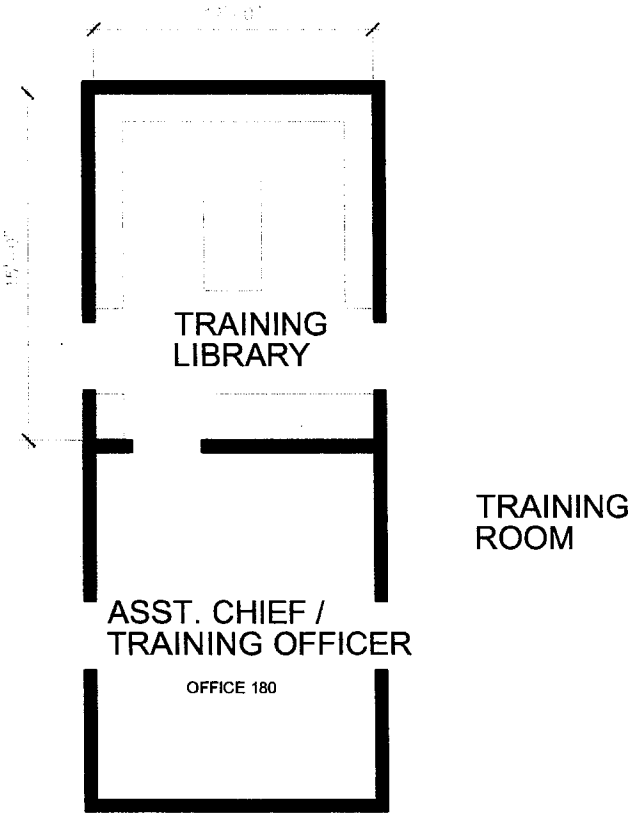
SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"

FURNITURE LAYOUT AND DIMENSIONS
ARE FOR ILLUSTRATION PURPOSES ONLY.



PLAN REVIEW

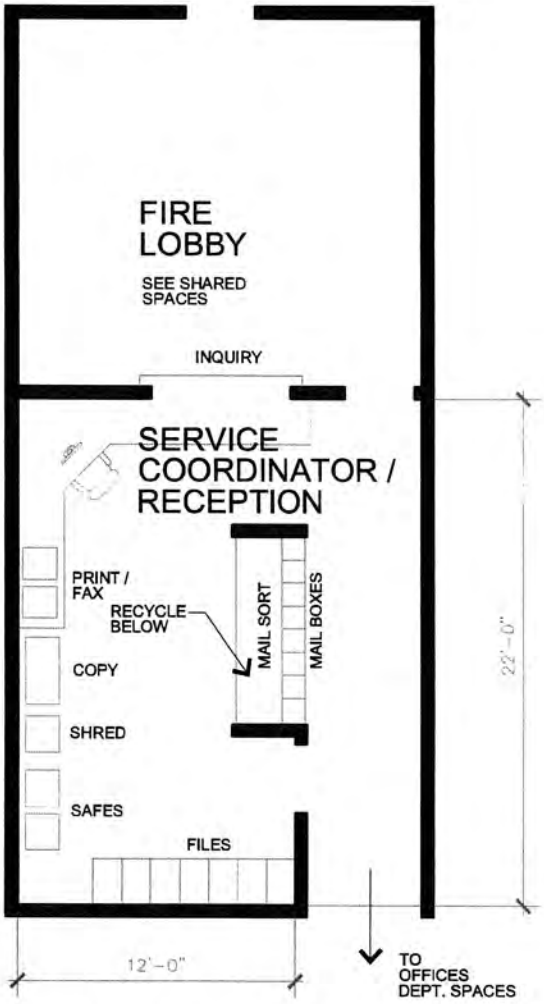
150 SF SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"



TRAINING LIBRARY

225 SF SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"

FURNITURE LAYOUT AND DIMENSIONS ARE FOR ILLUSTRATION PURPOSES ONLY.

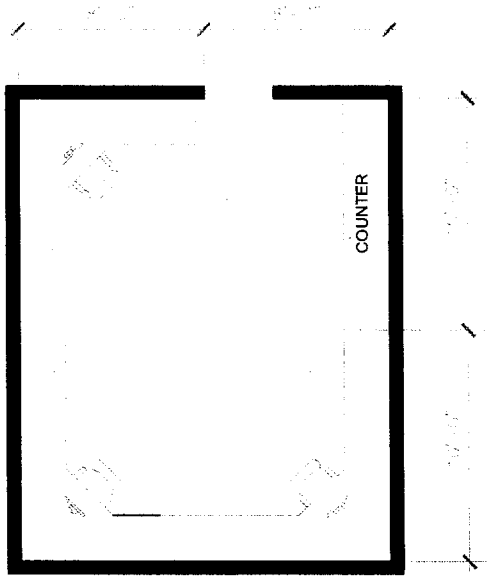


DEPARTMENT SERVICES COORDINATOR / RECEPTION

264 SF

SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"

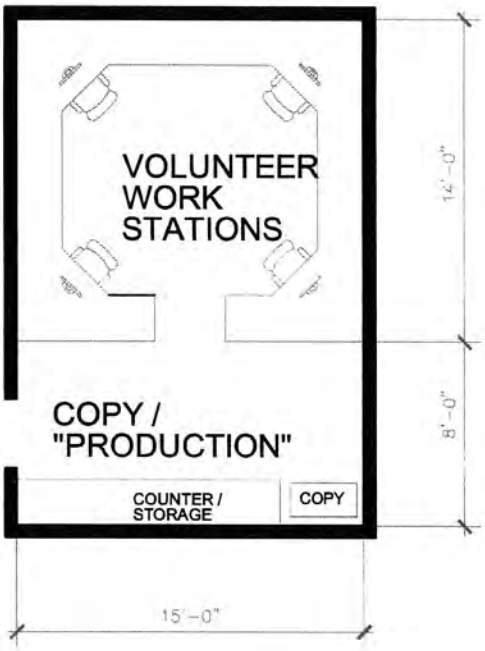
FURNITURE LAYOUT AND DIMENSIONS
ARE FOR ILLUSTRATION PURPOSES ONLY.



EMERGENCY SERVICES SPECIALIST

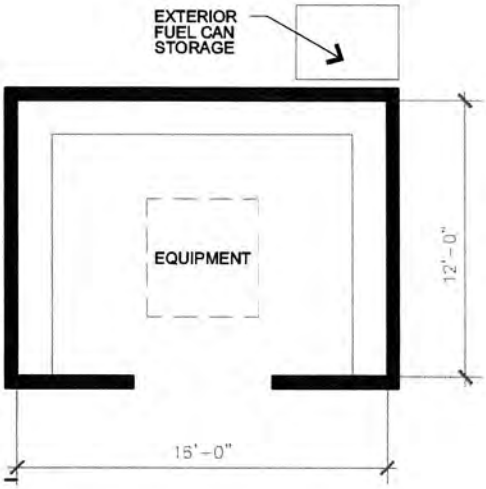
320 SF SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"

FURNITURE LAYOUT AND DIMENSIONS ARE FOR ILLUSTRATION PURPOSES ONLY.



VOLUNTEER WORK STATIONS / COPY / "PRODUCTION"

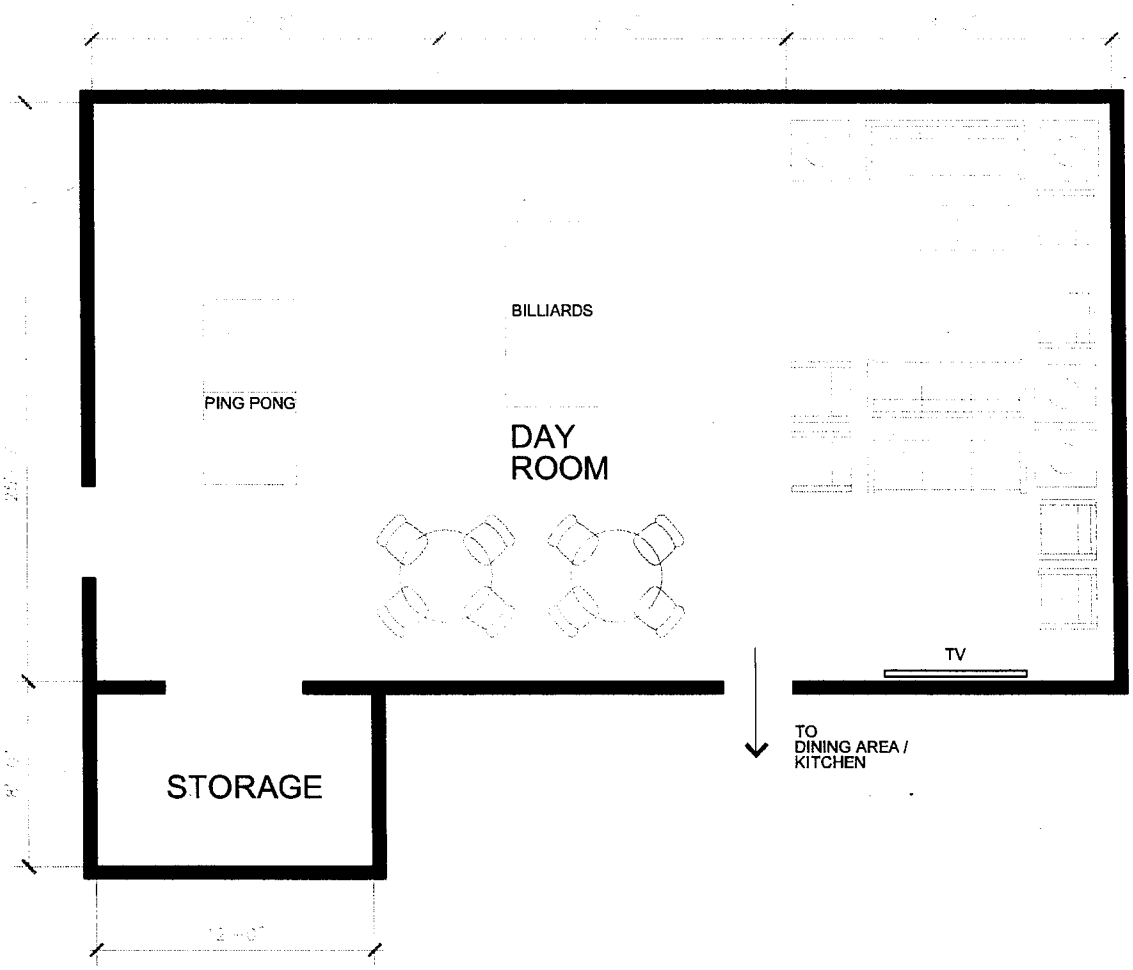
330 SF SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"



STORAGE ADJACENT APPARATUS BAY

330 SF SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"

FURNITURE LAYOUT AND DIMENSIONS
ARE FOR ILLUSTRATION PURPOSES ONLY.



DAY ROOM
1,169 SF

SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"

FURNITURE LAYOUT AND DIMENSIONS
ARE FOR ILLUSTRATION PURPOSES ONLY.

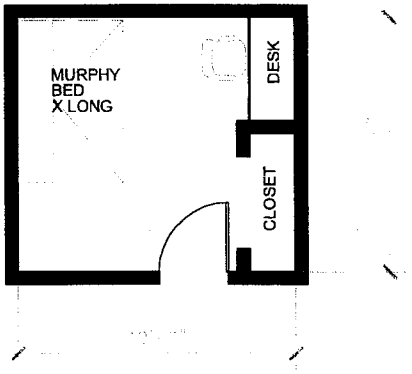
DINING / KITCHEN

SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"

* DINING 440 SF
* KITCHEN 396 SF
* PANTRY 80 SF

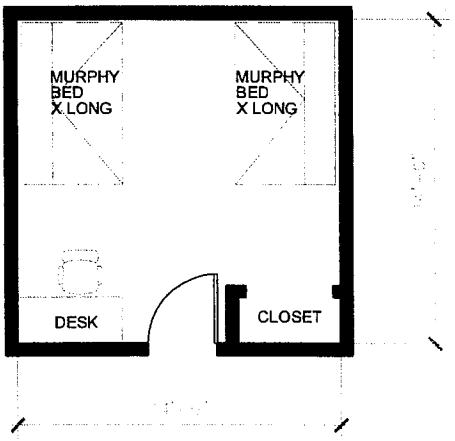
TOTAL 916 SF

FURNITURE LAYOUT AND DIMENSIONS ARE FOR ILLUSTRATION PURPOSES ONLY.



SINGLE BUNK ROOM

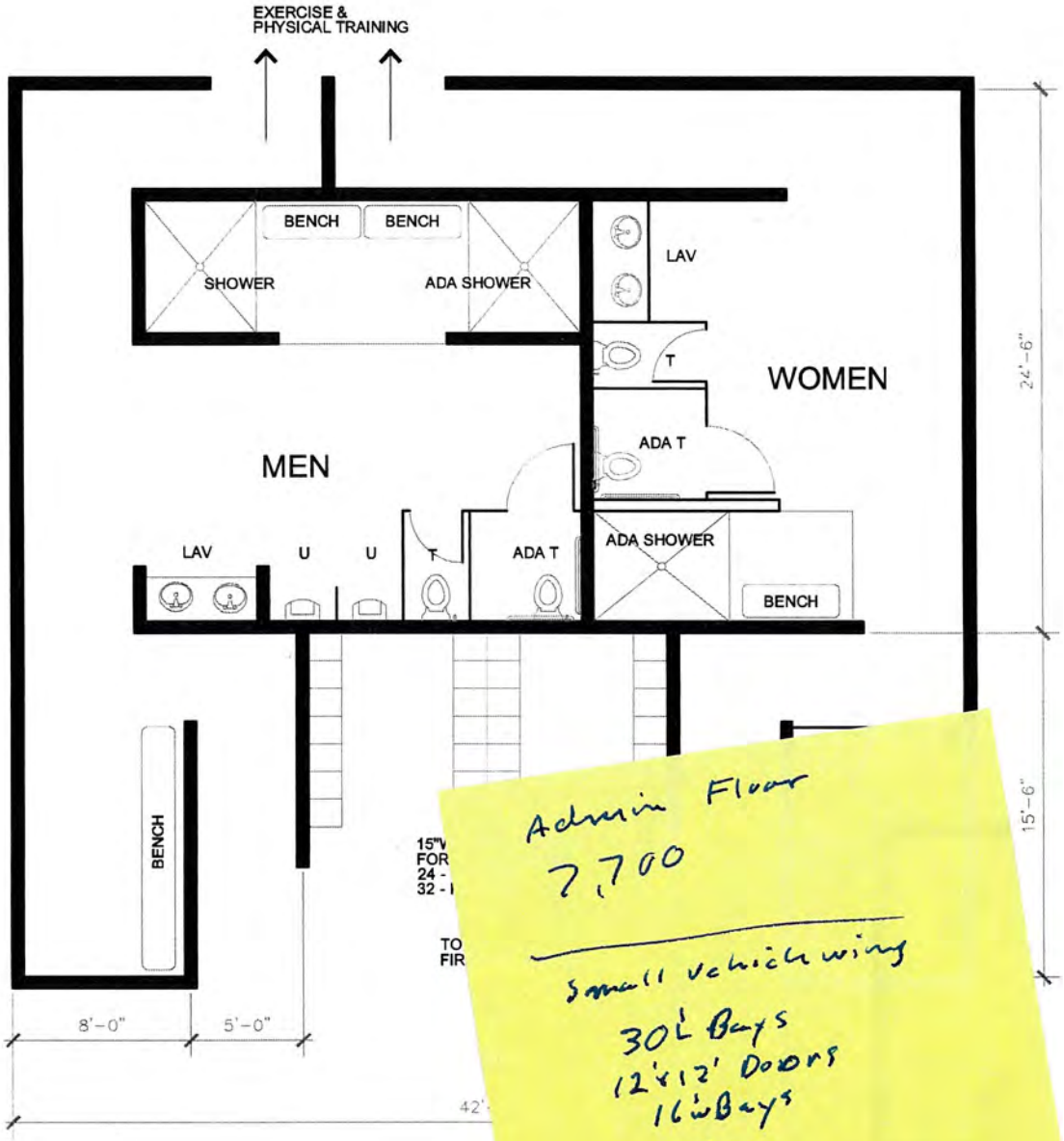
132 SF



DOUBLE BUNK ROOM

196 SF

FURNITURE LAYOUT AND DIMENSIONS
ARE FOR ILLUSTRATION PURPOSES ONLY.



Admin Floor
7,700

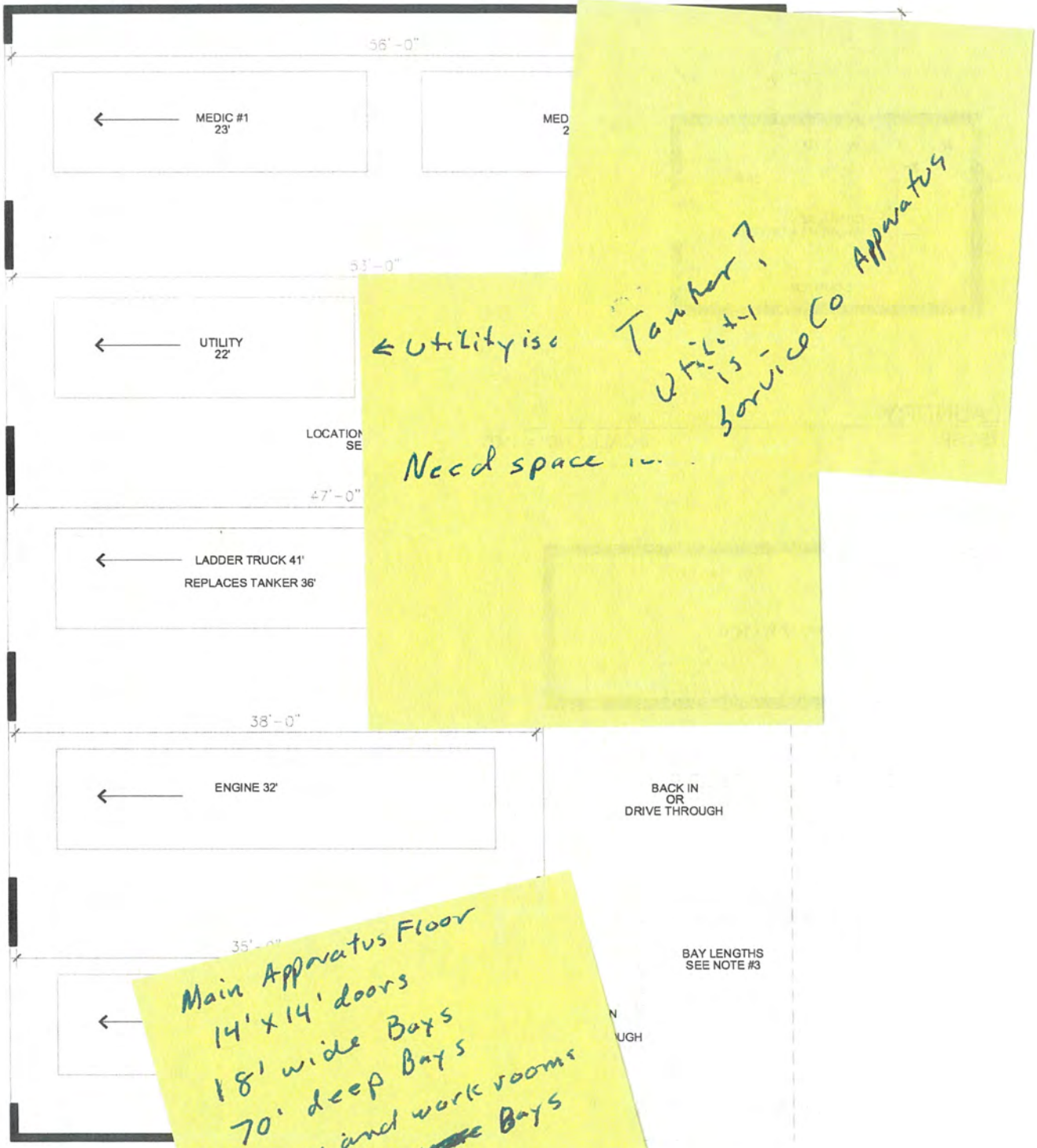
Small vehicle wing
30' Bays
12'x12' Doors
16' Bays
6 Bays
30' x 100'
3000 sq ft

FIRE SHOWER & LOCKER ROOMS

SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"

MEN:	TOILET ROOM	806 SQ.FT.
WOMEN:	TOILET ROOM	573 SQ. FT.
	LOCKER ROOM	215 SQ.FT.
	TOTAL	1,594 SF

FURNITURE LAYOUT AND DIMENSIONS
ARE FOR ILLUSTRATION PURPOSES ONLY.



← utility is

Tanker?
Utility is service Co Apparatus

Need space in

Main Apparatus Floor
14' x 14' doors
18' wide Bays
70' deep Bays
storage and work rooms
in back of ~~same~~ Bays
6 Bays
70' x 110' Foot print
7,700 per Floor
15,400 sq FT

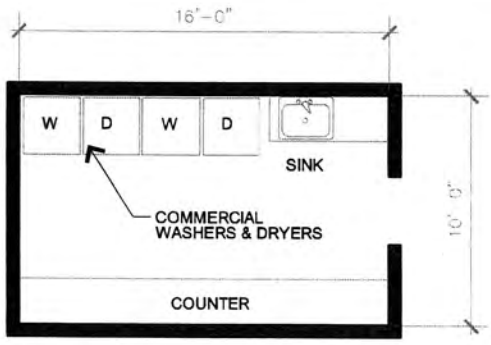
MINIMUM APPA

1872 SF

SCALE: 3/32"= 1'-0"

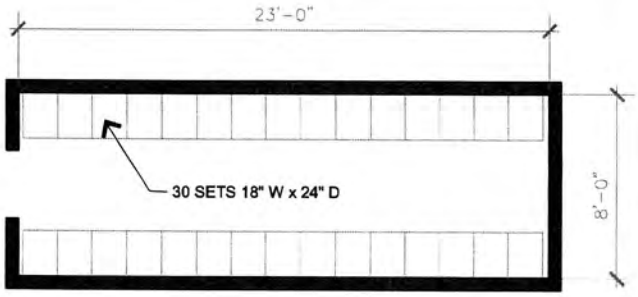
NOTES:
1. NET BAY WIDTHS SHOWN.
LADDERS, HOSE RACKS, &
2. APPARATUS NOT NECESSA
3. INTENT OF DIAGRAM IS TO
ALL COULD BE AT SAME DEP
SPACE COULD BE FOR OTHE
4. ALL BAYS COULD HAVE DOOR

URE LAYOUT AND DIMENSIONS
ARE FOR ILLUSTRATION PURPOSES ONLY.



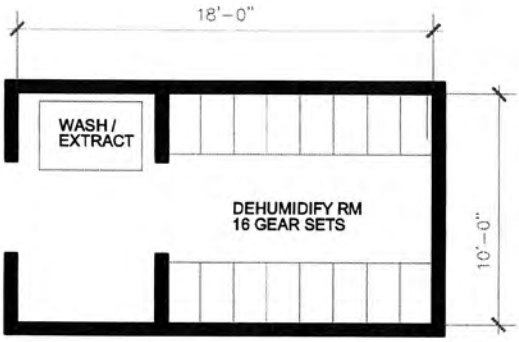
LAUNDRY

160 SF SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"



TURN OUT GEAR - NEW STORAGE

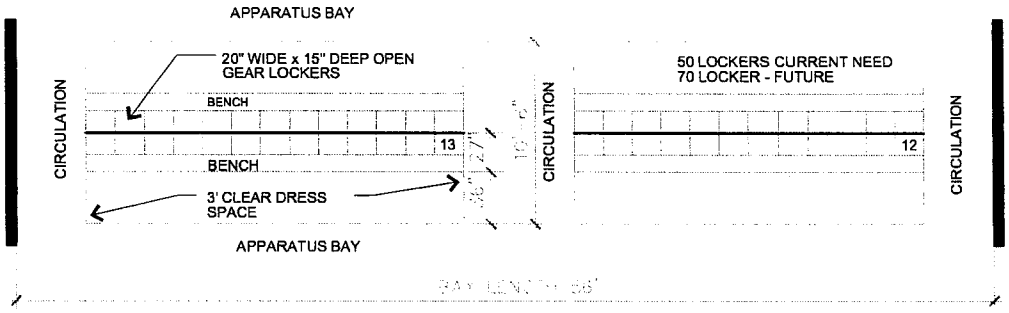
184 SF SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"



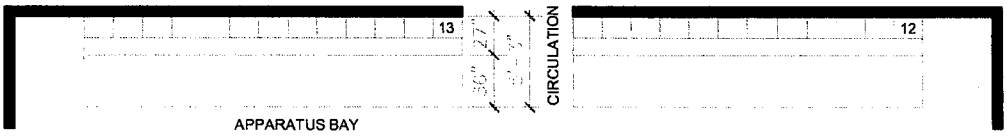
TURN OUT GEAR - WASH / DRY

180 SF SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"

FURNITURE LAYOUT AND DIMENSIONS
ARE FOR ILLUSTRATION PURPOSES ONLY.



EXAMPLE: 2 ROWS LOCKERS BETWEEN APPARATUS BAYS
(CURRENT NEED OF 50 SHOWN)



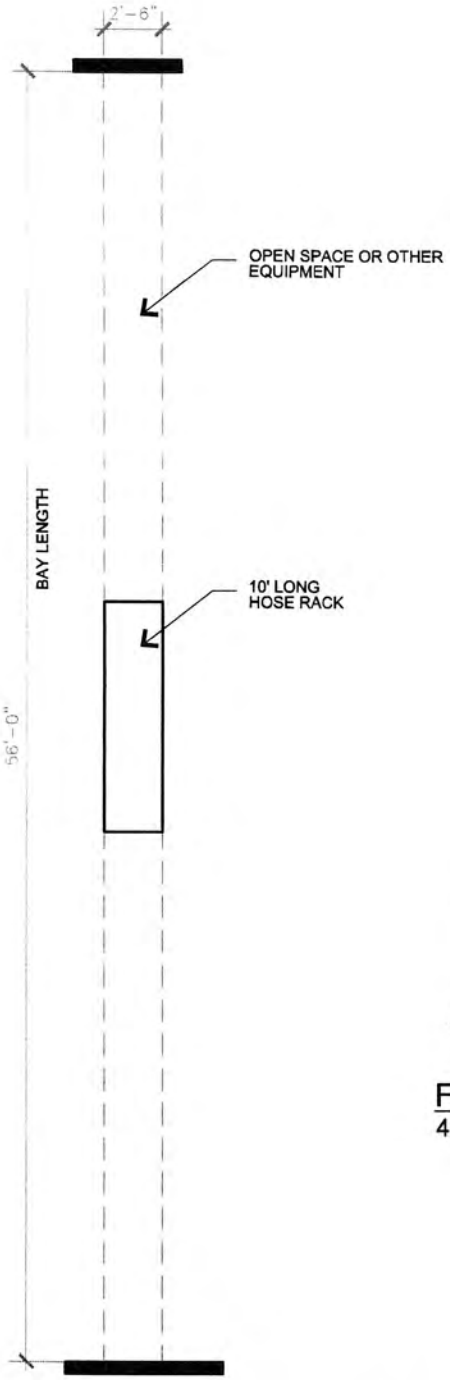
EXAMPLE: 1 ROW LOCKERS ON WALL OR BETWEEN APPARATUS BAYS
(CURRENT NEED OF 50 SHOWN)

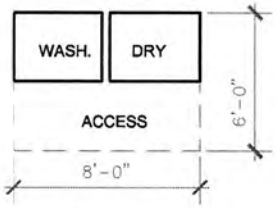
TURN OUT GEAR OPEN LOCKERS

1,115 SF

SCALE: 3/32" = 1'-0"

FURNITURE LAYOUT AND DIMENSIONS ARE FOR ILLUSTRATION PURPOSES ONLY.





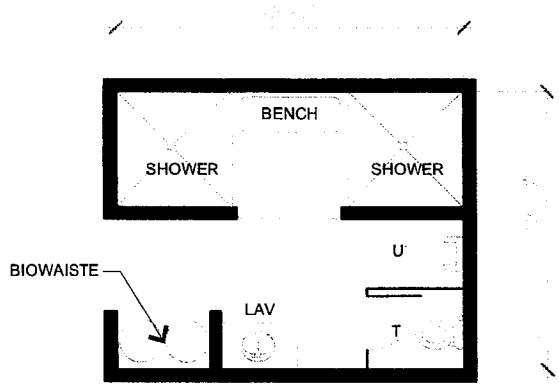
FIRE HOSE WASH / DRY

48 SF SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"

SPACE FOR HOSE RACK & OTHER EQUIPMENT BETWEEN BAYS

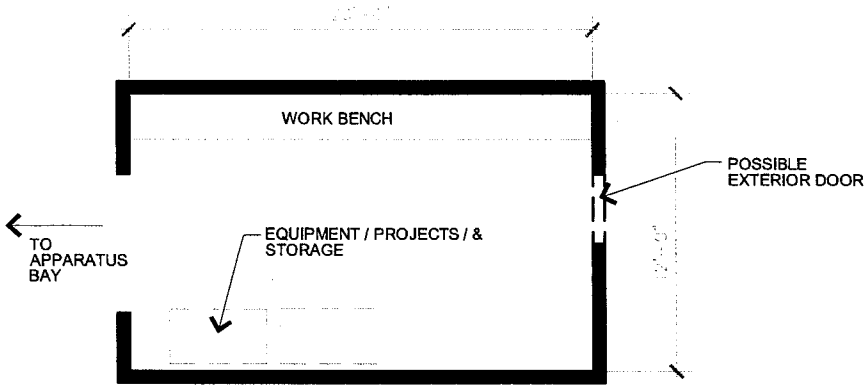
140 SF SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"

FURNITURE LAYOUT AND DIMENSIONS ARE FOR ILLUSTRATION PURPOSES ONLY.



DECON SHOWERS / BIOHAZARD

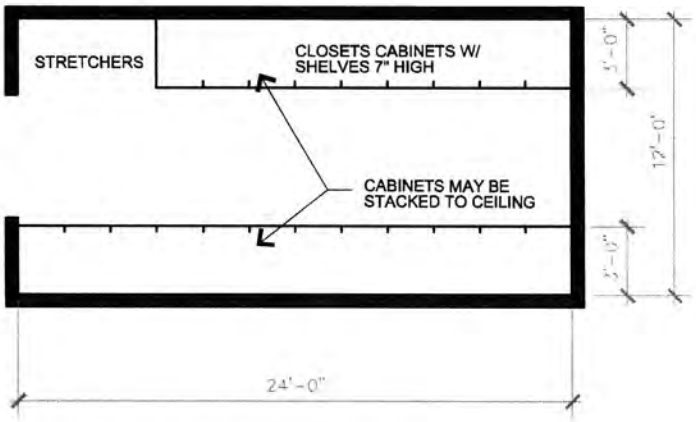
180 SF SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"



SHOP

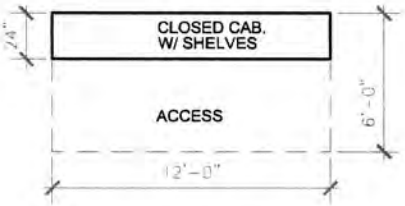
240 SF SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"

FURNITURE LAYOUT AND DIMENSIONS
ARE FOR ILLUSTRATION PURPOSES ONLY



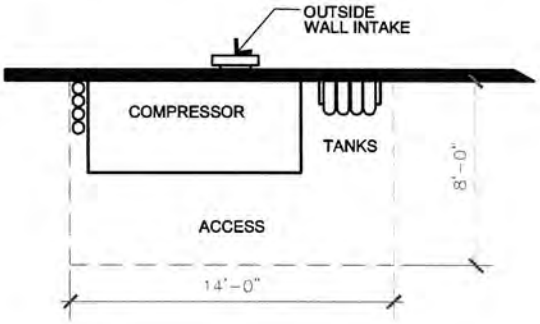
MEDICAL EQUIPMENT / SUPPLIES

288 SF SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"



FOOD / BEVERAGE STORAGE

72 SF SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"



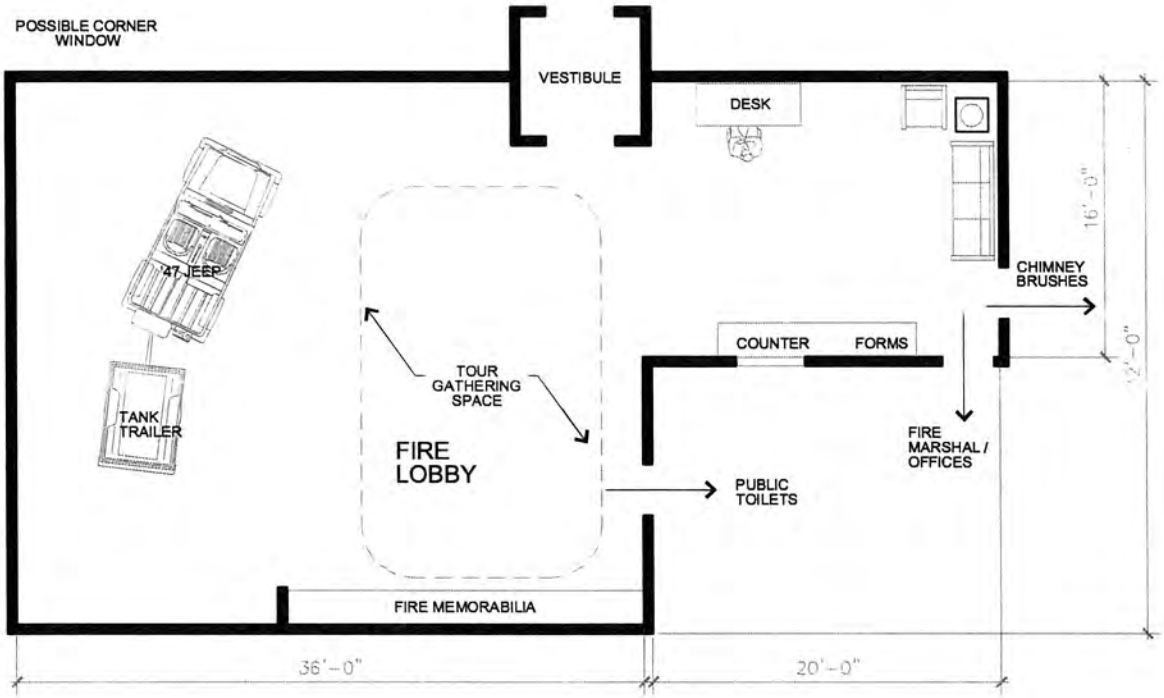
BREATHING AIR COMPRESSOR / TANKS

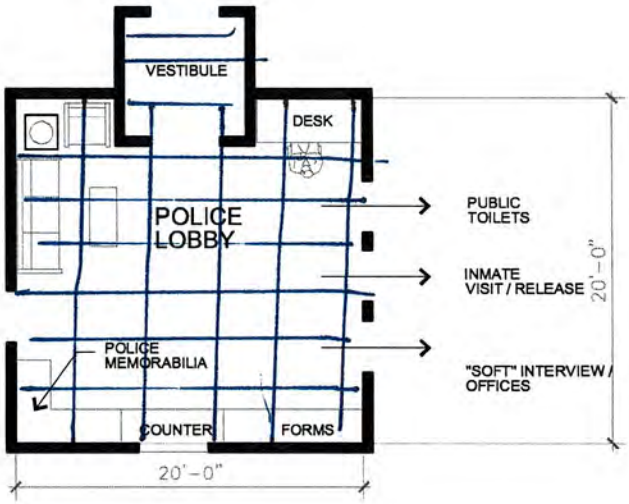
80 SF SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"

FURNITURE LAYOUT AND DIMENSIONS
ARE FOR ILLUSTRATION PURPOSES ONLY.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SPACE OR ELEMENT	PAGE
• MAIN LOBBY CONCEPT #1	IV - 43
• MAIN LOBBY CONCEPT #2	IV - 44
• MAIN LOBBY CONCEPT #3	IV - 45
• MAIN LOBBY CONCEPT #4	IV - 46
• TRAINING ROOM	IV - 47
• EXERCISE & PHYSICAL TRAINING	IV - 48
• VEHICLE WASH & DRY	IV - 49



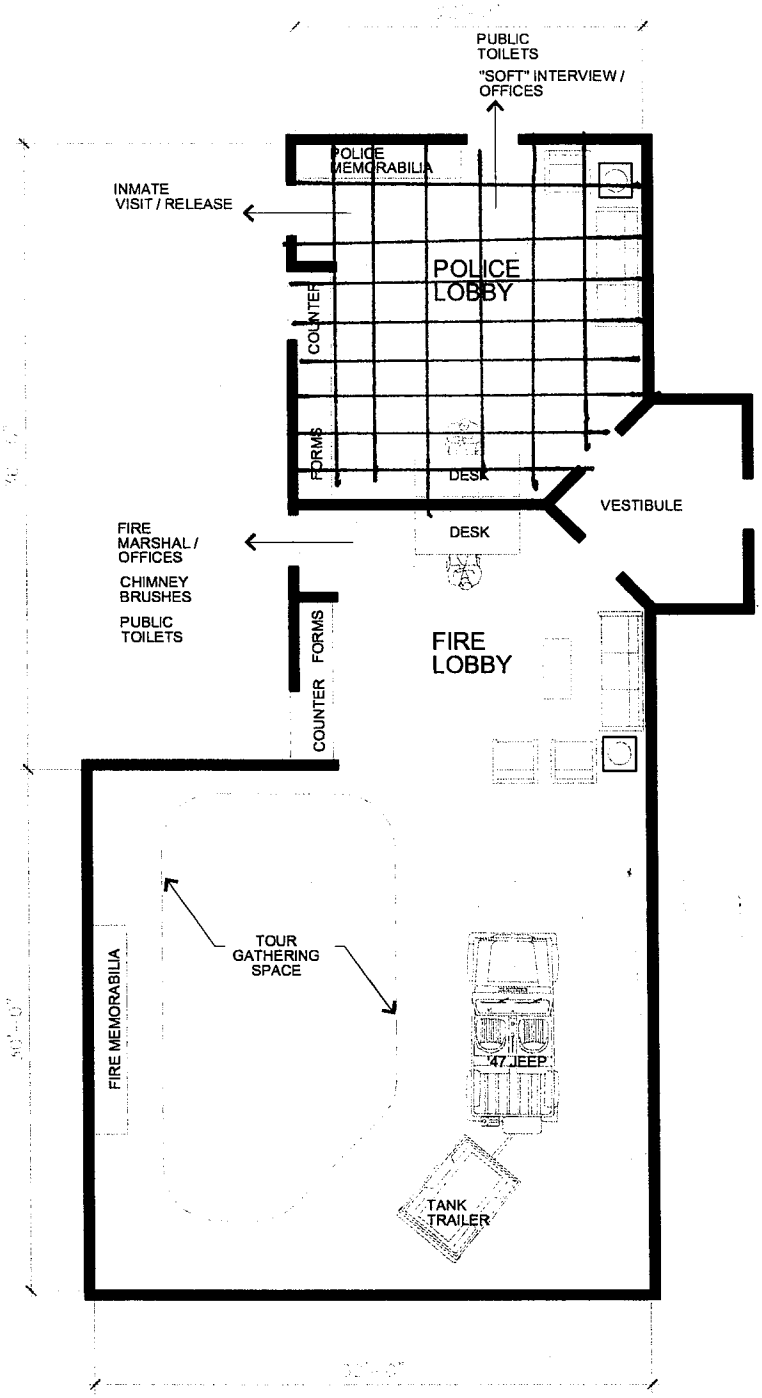


MAIN LOBBY CONCEPT # 1 - "COMPLETELY SEPARATED"

1872 SF **SCALE: 3/32"= 1'-0"**

SEE PROJECT NOTE 5.2 ITEM #1

FURNITURE LAYOUT AND DIMENSIONS ARE FOR ILLUSTRATION PURPOSES ONLY.



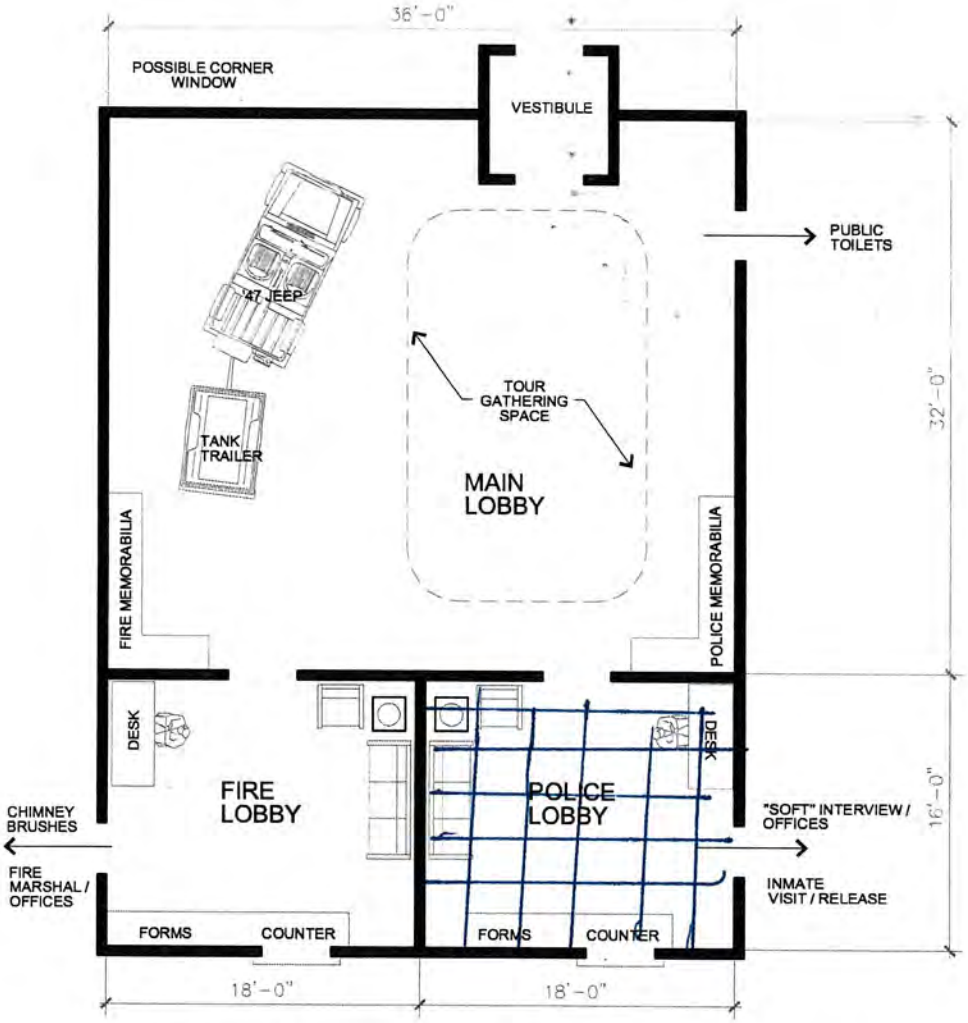
MAIN LOBBY CONCEPT #2 - "MOSTLY SEPARATED"

1,680 SF

SCALE: 3/32"= 1'-0"

SEE PROJECT NOTE 5.2 ITEM #2

FURNITURE LAYOUT AND DIMENSIONS ARE FOR ILLUSTRATION PURPOSES ONLY.



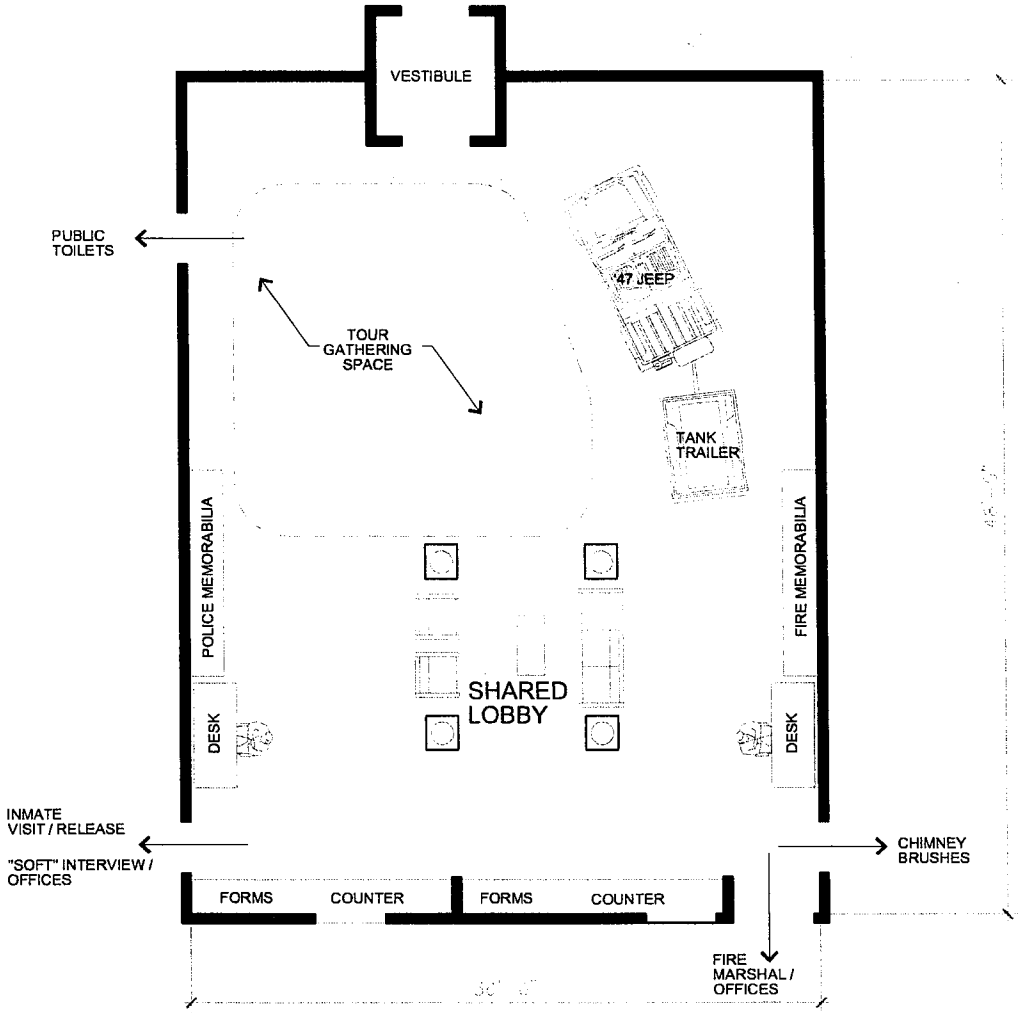
MAIN LOBBY CONCEPT #3 - "SOMEWHAT SHARED"

1,728 SF

SCALE: 3/32"= 1'-0"

SEE PROJECT NOTE 5.2 ITEM #3

FURNITURE LAYOUT AND DIMENSIONS ARE FOR ILLUSTRATION PURPOSES ONLY.



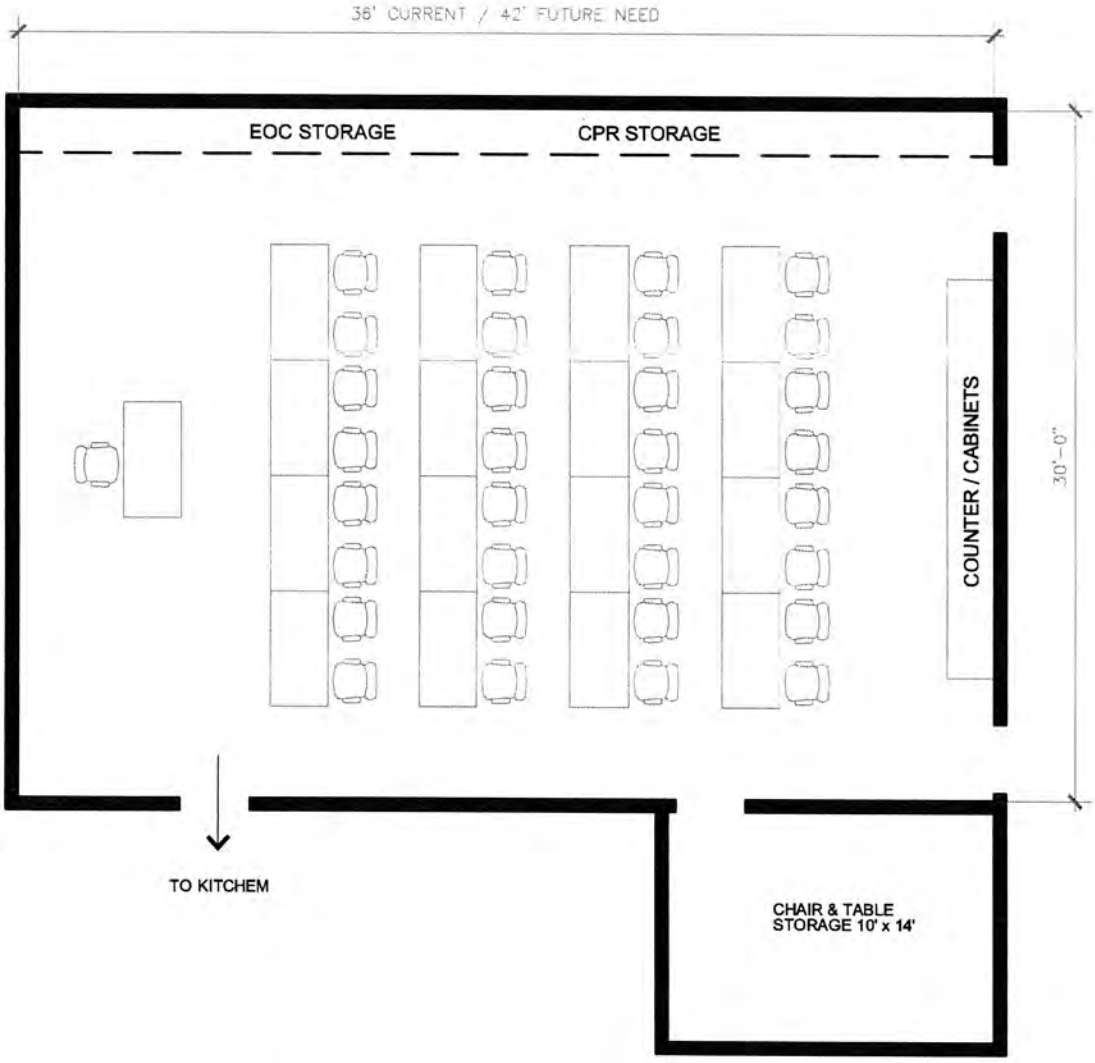
MAIN LOBBY CONCEPT #4 - "COMPLETELY SHARED"

1,728 SF

SCALE: 3/32"= 1'-0"

SEE PROJECT NOTE 5.2 ITEM #4

FURNITURE LAYOUT AND DIMENSIONS ARE FOR ILLUSTRATION PURPOSES ONLY



TRAINING ROOM

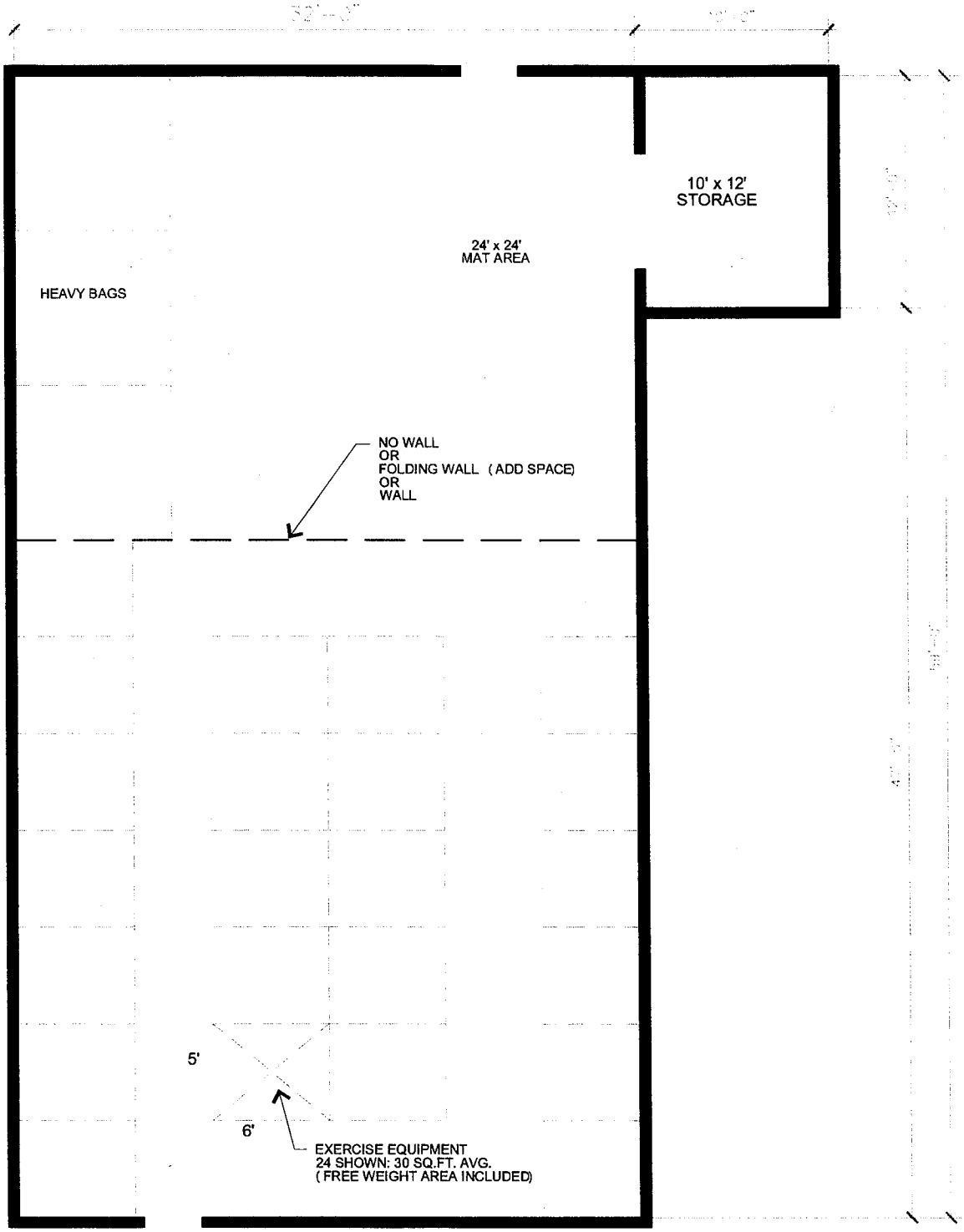
1,080 / 1,260 SF

CURRENT NEED 1,080 SQ. FT.
SEATS 24 W/ 30" DEEP TABLES

FUTURE NEED 1,260 SQ. FT.
SEATS 32 W/ 30" DEEP TABLES

NOTE:
IF 18" DEEP "SEMINAR" TABLES ARE USED, AREA CAN BE REDUCED TO APPROXIMATELY 950 AND 1110 SQ.FT. RESPECTIVELY FOR CURRENT AND FUTURE NEEDS.

FURNITURE LAYOUT AND DIMENSIONS ARE FOR ILLUSTRATION PURPOSES ONLY.



EXRCISE & PHYSICAL TRAINING

1,890 SF

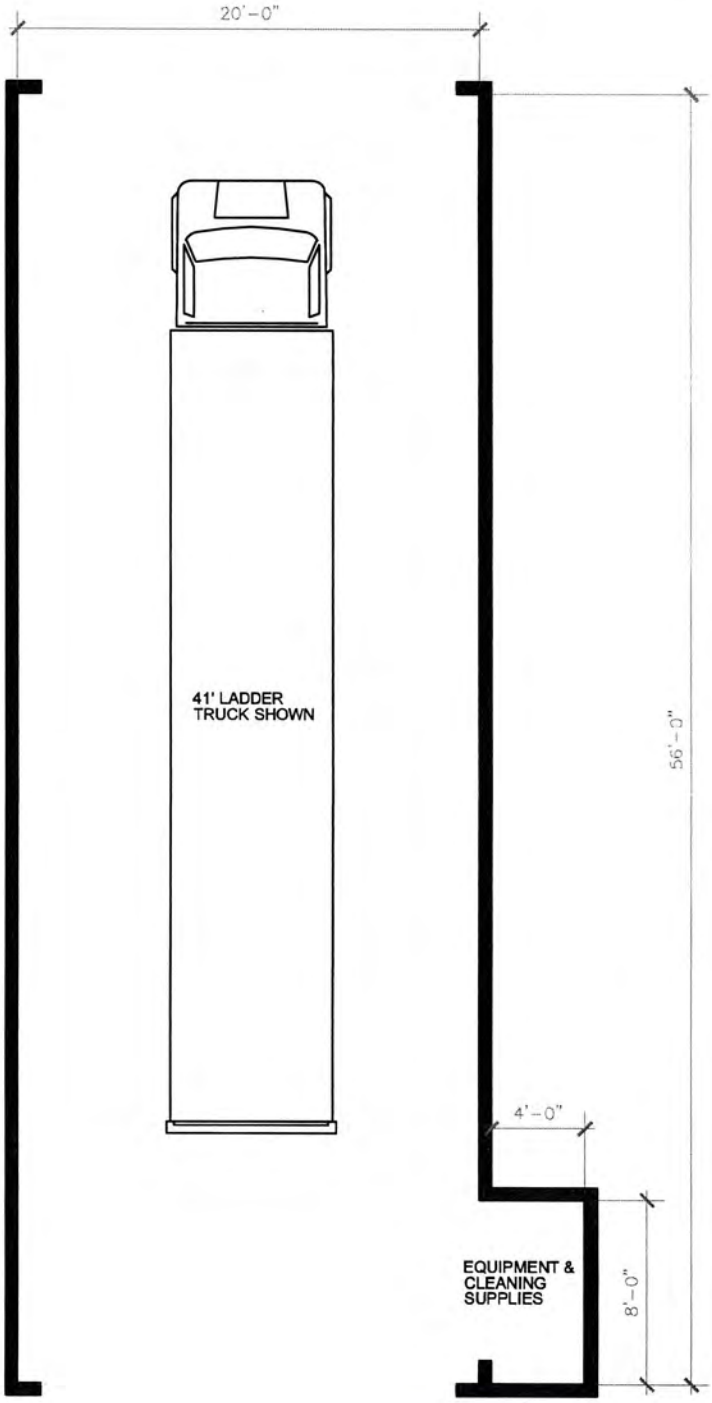
SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"

24 EXERCISE EQUIPMENT. INCLUDING FREE WEIGHT AREA SHOWN

IF REDUCED TO 20, TOTAL AREA = 1730 SQ.FT.24

IF REDUCED TO 16, TOTAL AREA = 1570 SQ.FT.

FURNITURE, AREA, AND DIMENSIONS ARE FOR ILLUSTRATION PURPOSES ONLY.



VEHICLE WASH BAY

1,052 SF

SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"

FURNITURE LAYOUT AND DIMENSIONS
ARE FOR ILLUSTRATION PURPOSES ONLY.

V 2014 SPACE NEEDS

2014 SPACE NEEDS

Introduction

The City of Homer proposed Public Safety Facility Space Needs for 2014 are presented in the following order:

Fire Facility Summary	V-3
Fire Facility Space Needs Assessment	V-4
Fire Site Facilities	V-7
Police Facility Summary	V-8
Police Facility Space Needs Assessment	V-9
Police Site Facilities	V-14
Shared Spaces & Facilities Needs Assessment	V-15
Shared Site Facilities	V-16
Estimated Site Area Requirements	V-17

The Facility Summaries contain two parts:
Main Building and Ancillary Facilities.

Ancillary Facilities

Ancillary Facilities are department support facilities, some of which could be located in separate buildings, but might be attached to the main building. These facilities might require less costly construction, including some of the following:
Finishes (e.g. no finish floor or ceiling), or lesser HVAC, or lower lighting levels. These facilities generally require less circulation space.

Site Facilities

Site Facilities include non-building functions or spaces, which none the less require area on the site. These include parking, driveways, approach aprons, landscape, and setbacks.

FIRE FACILITY SUMMARY
2014 SPACE NEEDS ASSESSMENT

LEGEND
dicates additional space needed in future.

ABBREVIATIONS
OF Office
WS Work Station

Date: July 14, 2014
Revised: August 12, 2014

DIVISION / SECTION NAME	LAYOUT REFERENCE/ROOM SIZE	2014 PERSONNEL	SPACE ALLOCATION QUANTITY	AREA ALLOCATION	SPACE NEED	NOTES
MAIN BUILDING						
PUBLIC AREAS					1,738	
ADMINISTRATION		7 Staff			1,888	
LIVING AREAS					5,573	
STAFF & FACILITY SUPPORT					588	
APPARATUS BAYS & SUPPORT					7,249	
		40 Volunteers				
TOTAL MAIN BUILDING DEPARTMENT SPACE NEED					17,036	
ALLOWANCES						
Design Contingency	5%			852		
Inter Facility Circulation	10%			1,704		
Vertical Circulation	2%			341		
Mechanical / Electrical / Telephone	5%			852		
Structure / Exterior Envelope	3%			511		
					4,260	
TOTAL MAIN BUILDING REQUIREMENT					21,296	
ANCILLARY FACILITIES						
ANCILLARY FACILITIES					1,350	
ALLOWANCES						
Design Contingency	5%			68		
Inter Facility Circulation	0%			0		
Vertical Circulation	0%			0		
Mechanical / Electrical / Telephone	0%			0		
Structure / Exterior Envelope	3%			41		
					109	
TOTAL ANCILLARY FACILITY REQUIREMENT					1,459	

LEGEND

Indicates additional space needed in future.

ABBREVIATIONS
OF: Office
WS: Work Station

Date: July 14, 2
Revised: August 12, 2014

DIVISION / SECTION NAME	LAYOUT REFERENCE/ROO	2014 PERSONNEL	SPACE ALLOCATION QUANTITY	AREA ALLOCATION	SPACE NEED	NOTES
PUBLIC AREAS						
Entry Vestibule						See Shared Spaces
Fire Lobby						
Space for '47 Jeep & Trailer, Tour Gathering,			1 x	1,320	1,320	
Inquiry Counter, form rack, seating area, desk						
Public Toilets - M&W, each with 1 ADA toilet & lav			2 x	64	128	
Sub Total Net Area					1,448	
Circulation @ 20%					290	Circulation within Lobby
TOTAL FIRE PUBLIC AREAS					1,738	
ADMINISTRATION AREAS						
Watch Office / Department Services Coordinator		1	1 x	264	264	
Reception Counter, Work Station 80, mail in, mail boxes						
Copier, Printer, Fax, Shredder, Recycle, 2 small safes.						
6 - 4 drawer files, display board						
Watch Office Toilet			1 x	64	64	
Fire Chief	OF 225	1	1 x	225	225	with Murphy Bed
Assistant Chief / Training Officer	OF 180	1	1 x	180	180	with Murphy Bed
Training Library			1 x	180	180	
Training Room						See Shared Spaces
Emergency Services Specialist		3	1 x	180	180	
Work Station 80, with Counter and Cabinet						
Fire Marshal / Plans Reviewer		1	1 x	150	150	
Member (Volunteer) / "Production" Work Room		40	1 x	330	330	
4 Work Stations 55, Large Copier, Printer, Layout						
Counter, Cabinet						
Sub Total Net Area					1,573	
Circulation @ 20%					315	
TOTAL ADMINISTRATION SECTION SPACE NEED					1,888	
LIVING AREAS						
Day Room			1 x	1,100	1,100	
Storage			1 x	96	96	
Dining			1 x	440	440	
Kitchen			1 x	396	396	
Pantry			1 x	80	80	
Bunk Rooms						
Double Bunk Rooms						
Staff			2 x	196	392	
Volunteers			4 x	196	784	
Lockers						
24 - 15" x 18D @ 5 s.f.			1 x	120	120	1/2 current personnel (7 staff + 40 volunteer)
Men's Shower & Dress			1 x	699	699	
Entry Screens, 1 each ADA Toilet, Urinal, Lav & Shower						
Women's Shower & Dress			1 x	377	377	
Entry Screens, 1 each ADA Toilet, Lav. & Shower						
Laundry			1 x	160	160	
2 each commercial washers and dryers						
1 sink, counter w/ storage over and under						

LEGEND

Indicates additional space needed in future.

ABBREVIATIONS
OF: Office
WS: Work Station

Date: July 14, 2014
Revised: August 12, 2014

DIVISION / SECTION NAME	LAYOUT REFERENCE/ROOM	2014 PERSONNEL	SPACE ALLOCATION QUANTITY	AREA ALLOCATION	SPACE NEED	NOTES
Sub Total Net Area					4,644	
Circulation @ 20%					929	
TOTAL LIVING AREAS SECTION SPACE NEED					5,573	
STAFF & FACILITY SUPPORT						
Training Room						See Share Spaces
Exercise & Physical Training						See Share Spaces
Men's Toilet						
Entry Screen, 1 each ADA toilet, urinal, lav			1 x	160	160	
Women's Toilet						Toilets on opposite floor level from that with
Entry Screen, 1 each ADA toilet, lav			1 x	130	130	showers & lockers.
Staff & Volunteer Entry						
Weather Vestibule			1 x	50	50	
Facility Maintenance			1 x	150	150	
Work Bench, Repair, Supplies, Janitor						Janitor spaces distributed in Facility
Sub Total Net Area					490	
Circulation @ 20%					98	
TOTAL STAFF / FACILITY SUPPORT SPACE NEED					588	
APPARATUS BAYS & SUPPORT						
Apparatus Bays - Enclosed						
Medic #1 & #2	16 x 56		1 x	896	896	Back-in Bay
Utility & Brush 16 x 53 minimum	use 16 x 56		1 x	896	896	Back-in Bay
Tanker 16 x 42 minimum	use 16 x 56		1 x	896	896	To be replaced by Ladder Truck
Engine 16 x 38 minimum	use 16 x 56		1 x	896	896	
Rescue 16 x 35 minimum	use 16 x 56		1 x	896	896	
Turn-Out Gear - Active						
50 - 20"W x 15"D open Lockers w/bench @ 11.75 s.f.			1 x	588	588	Includes circulation space
Ready Hose Racks						
4 Racks; in pairs between alternate bays			2 x	140	280	
2.5' x 56 / pair						
Hose Washer / Dryer			1 x	48	48	
Hose Tower - 6 x 10			1 x	60	60	
Turn-Out Gear - New Storage			1 x	184	184	
Turn-Out Gear - Wash/Dry			1 x	180	180	
Decon Shower / Biohazard			1 x	180	180	
Breathing Air Compressor & Tank Storage			1 x	112	112	
Medical Equipment & Supply			1 x	288	288	
Food & Beverage Storage			1 x	72	72	
Storage Room			1 x	192	192	
Shop			1 x	240	240	
Sub Total Net Area					6,904	
Circulation @ 5%					345	Some circulation within the Apparatus Bays
TOTAL APPARATUS BAYS & SUPPORT SPACE NEED					7,249	
ANCILLARY FACILITIES						Ancillary facilities are department support facilities, some of which could be located in a separate building. The facilities might require less costly construction, including some of the following: Finishes (e.g. no finish floor or ceiling, or no air conditioning, or lower lighting levels.)
Apparatus Bays - Covered						
Command	10 x 25		1 x	250	250	
Utility (Expedition)	10 x 25		1 x	250	250	
Utility (Crew Cab)	10 x 30		1 x	300	300	
ATV on Trailer	10 x 30		1 x	300	300	
Rescue Boat & Trailer	10 x 25		1 x	250	250	

LEGEND

Indicates additional space needed in future.

ABBREVIATIONS
OF: Office
WS: Work Station

Date: July 14, 20
Revised: August 12, 2014

DIVISION / SECTION NAME	LAYOUT REFERENCE/ROO	2014 PERSONNEL	SPACE ALLOCATION QUANTITY	AREA ALLOCATION	SPACE NEED	NOTES
Training Ladder						No Space Allocation (On Exteror of Building)
Vehicle Wash						See Shared Facilities
Emergency Generator						See Shared Facilities
Sub Total Net Area					1,350	
Circulation @ 0%					0	Circulation included in Parking & Service Areas
TOTAL ANCILLARY FACILITIES SECTION SPACE NEED					1,350	

Date: July 15, 2014

DIVISION / SECTION NAME	LAYOUT REFERENCE/ROO	Unit Area	SPACE ALLOCATION QUANTITY	AREA ALLOCATION	SPACE NEED	NOTES
SITE FACILITIES						Parking need shown, not necessarily
Public Parking		375/car	2 x	375	750	code requirement.
ADA / Van Space		750/car	1 x	750	750	
Volunteer Parking		375/car	19 x	375	7,125	
ADA / Van Space		750/car	1 x	750	750	
Staff Parking		375/car	2 x	375	750	
ADA / Van Space		750/car	1 x	750	750	
Apparatus Bays Enclosed: Access - Each End 16 x 70 x 2 =		2,240	5 x	2,240	11,200	Allows turning 41' Ladder Truck 180° at either end.
Apparatus Bays Covered: Access		10' x 30'	5 x	300	1,500	Enter one side
Garden Space		25' x 40'	1 x	1,000	1,000	Allowance
1/2 Basketball Court		--	--	--	--	Use paved area
Sub Total Net Area					24,575	
Circulation @ 30%					7,373	
TOTAL FIRE SITE FACILITIES					31,948	

POLICE FACILITY SUMMARY
2014 SPACE NEEDS ASSESSMENT

LEGEND
Indicates additional space needed in future.

ABBREVIATIONS
OF: Office
WS: Work Station

Date: July 8
Revised: August 12, 2014

DIVISION / SECTION NAME	LAYOUT REFERENCE/ROOM SIZE	2014 PERSONNEL	SPACE ALLOCATION QUANTITY	AREA ALLOCATION	SPACE NEED	NOTES
MAIN BUILDING						
PUBLIC AREAS					619	
DISPATCH / RECORDS		9			1,644	
ADMINISTRATION		2			486	
INVESTIGATIONS		2			720	
PATROL		11			1,933	
PROPERTY / EVIDENCE					1,800	
JAIL		7			3,000	
RANGE / ARMORY					3,795	See Shared Spaces for Training Room, Exercise & Physical Training
SUPPORT SPACES					3,668	
TOTAL DEPARTMENT MAIN BUILDING SPACE NEED					17,665	
ALLOWANCES						
Design Contingency	5%			883		
Inter Facility Circulation	10%			1,767		
Vertical Circulation	2%			353		
Mechanical / Electrical / Telephone	5%			883		
Structure / Exterior Envelope	3%			530		
					4,416	
TOTAL MAIN BUILDING REQUIREMENT		31			22,081	
ANCILLARY FACILITIES						
ANCILLARY FACILITIES					6,633	
ALLOWANCES						
Design Contingency	5%			332		
Inter Facility Circulation	0%					
Vertical Circulation	0%					
Mechanical / Electrical / Telephone	1%			66		
Structure / Exterior Envelope	3%			199		
					597	
TOTAL ANCILLARY FACILITY REQUIREMENT					7,230	

LEGEND
dicates additional space needed in future.

ABBREVIATIONS
OF Office
WS Work Station

Date: July 10, 2014
Revised: August 12, 2014

DIVISION / SECTION NAME	LAYOUT REFERENCE/ROOM SIZE	2014 PERSONNEL	SPACE ALLOCATION QUANTITY	AREA ALLOCATION	SPACE NEED		NOTES
MAIN BUILDING							
Lobbies & Public Toilets							Lobby Concept #2: "Mostly separated"
Entry Vestibule			1 x	128	128		
Police & Fire Lobbies							See Police & Fire
Training Room			1 x	1,080	1,080		Seats 24 @ Tables
Exercise & Physical Training			1 x	2,008	2,008		
Sub Total Intra Facility						3,216	
Intra-Circulation @ 0%							
TOTAL MAIN BUILDING SHARED FUNCTIONAL SPACE						3,216	
ALLOWANCES							
Design Contingency	5%			161			
Inter Facility Circulation	20%			643			
Vertical Circulation	2%			64			
Mechanical / Electrical / Telephone	5%			161			
Structure / Exterior Envelope	3%			96			
						1,125	
TOTAL MAIN BUILDING REQUIREMENT SHARED SPACE REQUIREMENT						4,341	
ANCILLARY FACILITIES							
Vehicle Wash Bay 20 x 56			1 x	1,120	1,120		
Emergency Generator			1 x	200	200		Reuse existing. Area Estimated.
Sub Total						1,320	
Circulation @ 0%							
TOTAL ANCILLARY FACILITIES SECTION SPACE NEED						1,320	

Date: July 15, 20

DIVISION / SECTION NAME	LAYOUT REFERENCE/ROC	Unit Area	SPACE ALLOCATION QUANTITY	AREA ALLOCATION	SPACE NEED	NOTES
SITE FACILITIES						
Vechicle Wash Access - Each End - 20 x 70 x 2		2,800	1 x	2,800	2,800	
Emergency Generator Access - 5' on all sides		400	1 x	400	400	
Refuse		300	1 x	300	300	
Sub Total Net Area					3,500	
Circulation @ 30%					1,050	
TOTAL SHARED SITE FACILITIES					4,550	

ESTIMATED SITE AREA REQUIREMENT
2014 SPACE NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Date: July 14, 2014
Revised: August 12, 2014

DIVISION / SECTION NAME	LAYOUT REFERENCE/ROOM SIZE	SPACE ALLOCATION: AREA ALLOCATION	SPACE ALLOCATION: TOTALS	NOTES
MAIN BUILDING				Assume all spaces at grade level
FIRE		21,296		
POLICE		22,081		
SHARED		4,341		
TOTAL MAIN BUILDING			47,718	
ANCILLARY FACILITIES				
FIRE		1,459		
POLICE		7,230		
SHARED		1,320		
TOTAL ANCILLARY FACILITIES			10,009	
SITE FACILTIES				
FIRE		31,948		
POLICE		33,797		
SHARED		4,550		
TOTAL SITE FACILITIES			70,295	
SUB TOTAL BUILDING & SITE FACILITIES			128,022	
ALLOWANCES				
Design Contingency	10%	12,802		
Landscape / Hardscape	25%	32,006		Includes set backs
Future Expansion	10%	12,802		Expand to 2034 needs
			57,610	
TOTAL ESTIMATED SITE AREA REQUIREMENT ALL FACILITIES ON ONE LEVEL			185,633	4.25 Acres
Reduce Site Area Required For Two Level Facility				
Assume 30% of Main Building Area on 2nd Floor: .30 x 47,718			(14,315)	
TOTAL ESTIMATED AREA REQUIREMENT TWO STORY FACILITY			171,318	3.93 Acres

VI 2034 SPACE NEEDS

2034 SPACE NEEDS

Introduction

The City of Homer proposed Public Safety Facility Space Needs for 2034 are presented in the following order:

Fire Facility Summary	VI-3
Fire Facility Space Needs Assessment	VI-4
Fire Site Facilities	VI-7
Police Facility Summary	VI-8
Police Facility Space Needs Assessment	VI-9
Police Site Facilities	VI-14
Shared Spaces & Facilities Needs Assessment	VI-15
Shared Site Facilities	VI-16
Estimated Site Area Requirements	VI-17

The Facility Summaries contain two parts:
Main Building and Ancillary Facilities.

Ancillary Facilities

Ancillary Facilities are department support facilities, some of which could be located in separate buildings, but might be attached to the main building. These facilities might require less costly construction, including some of the following:
Finishes (e.g. no finish floor or ceiling), or lesser HVAC, or lower lighting levels. These facilities generally require less circulation space.

Site Facilities

Site Facilities include non-building functions or spaces, which none the less require area on the site. These include parking, driveways, approach aprons, landscape, and setbacks.

CITY OF HOMER, ALASKA
PUBLIC SAFETY BUILDING

FIRE FACILITY SUMMARY
2034 SPACE NEEDS ASSESSMENT

LEGEND
Indicates additional space needed in future.

ABBREVIATIONS
OF: Office
WS: Work Station

Date: July 14
Revised: August 13, 2014

DIVISION / SECTION NAME	LAYOUT REFERENCE/ROOM SIZE	2034 PERSONNEL	SPACE ALLOCATION QUANTITY	AREA ALLOCATION	SPACE NEED	NOTES
MAIN BUILDING						
PUBLIC AREAS					1,738	
ADMINISTRATION		14 Staff			2,164	
LIVING AREAS					5,861	
STAFF & FACILITY SUPPORT					588	
APPARATUS BAYS & SUPPORT					7,496	
		50 Volunteers				
TOTAL MAIN BUILDING DEPARTMENT SPACE NEED					17,847	
ALLOWANCES						
Design Contingency	5%			892		
Inter Facility Circulation	10%			1,784		
Vertical Circulation	2%			357		
Mechanical / Electrical / Telephone	5%			892		
Structure / Exterior Envelope	3%			535		
					4,460	
TOTAL MAIN BUILDING REQUIREMENT					22,307	
ANCILLARY FACILITIES						
ANCILLARY FACILITIES					1,350	
ALLOWANCES						
Design Contingency	5%			68		
Inter Facility Circulation	0%			0		
Vertical Circulation	0%			0		
Mechanical / Electrical / Telephone	0%			0		
Structure / Exterior Envelope	3%			41		
					109	
TOTAL ANCILLARY FACILITY REQUIREMENT					1,459	

LEGEND
Indicates additional space needed in future.

ABBREVIATIONS
OF: Office
WS: Work Station

Date: July 14, 2014
Revised: August 13, 2014

DIVISION / SECTION NAME	LAYOUT REFERENCE/ROC	2034 PERSONNEL	SPACE ALLOCATION QUANTITY	AREA ALLOCATION	SPACE NEED		NOTES
PUBLIC AREAS							
Entry Vestibule							See Shared Spaces
Fire Lobby							
Space for "47 Jeep & Trailer, Tour Gathering			1 x	1,320	1,320		
Inquirey Counter, form rack, seating area, desk							
Public Toilets - M&W, each with 1 ADA toilet & lav			2 x	64	128		
Sub Total Net Area						1,448	
Circulation @ 20%						290	Circulation within Lobby
TOTAL FIRE PUBLIC AREAS						1,738	
ADMINISTRATION AREAS							
Watch Office / Department Services Coordinator		1	1 x	264	264		
Reception Counter, Work Station 80, mail in, mail boxes							
Copier, Printer, Fax, Shredder, Recycle, 2 small safes.							
6 - 4 drawer files, display board							
Watch Office Toilet			1 x	64	64		
Fire Chief	OF 225	1	1 x	225	225		with Murphy Bed
Assistant Chief / Training Officer	OF 180	1	1 x	180	180		with Murphy Bed
Training Library			1 x	180	180		
Training Room							See Shared Spaces
Emergency Services Specialist		9	1 x	180	180		
Work Station 80, with Counter and Cabinet							
Add Work Space			1 x	80	80		
Fire Marshal / Plans Reviewer	OF 150	1	1 x	150	150		
Fire Marshal / Plans Reviewer	OF 150	1	1 x	150	150		
Member (Volunteer) / "Production" Work Room		50	1 x	330	330		
4 Work Stations 55, Large Copier, Printer, Layout							
Counter, Cabinet							
Sub Total Net Area						1,803	
Circulation @ 20%						361	
TOTAL ADMINISTRATION SECTION SPACE NEED						2,164	
LIVING AREAS							
Day Room			1 x	1,100	1,100		
Storage			1 x	96	96		
Dining			1 x	440	440		
Kitchen			1 x	396	396		
Pantry			1 x	80	80		
Bunk Rooms							
Double Bunk Rooms							
Staff			2 x	196	392		
Volunteers			4 x	196	784		
Lockers							
24 - 15" x 18D @ 5 s.f.			1 x	120	120		1/2 current personnel (7 staff + 40 volunteer)
8 - 15" x 18"D @ 5 s.f.			1 x	40	40		
Men's Shower & Dress			1 x	699	699		
Entry Screens, 1 each ADA Toilet, Urinal, Lav & Shower							
Toilet, Urinal, Lav & Shower			1 x	140	140		
Women's Shower & Dress			1 x	377	377		
Entry Screens, 1 each ADA Toilet, Lav. & Shower							
Toilet, Lav			1 x	60	60		
Laundry			1 x	160	160		
2 each commercial washers and dryers							
1 sink, counter w/ storage over and under							

LEGEND
Indicates additional space needed in future.

ABBREVIATIONS
OF: Office
WS: Work Station

Date: July 14, 2
Revised: August 13, 2014

DIVISION / SECTION NAME	LAYOUT REFERENCE/ROO	2034 PERSONNEL	SPACE ALLOCATION QUANTITY	AREA ALLOCATION	SPACE NEED	NOTES
Sub Total Net Area					4,884	
Circulation @ 20%					977	
TOTAL LIVING AREAS SECTION SPACE NEED					5,861	
STAFF & FACILITY SUPPORT						
Training Room						See Share Spaces
Exercise & Physical Training						See Share Spaces
Men's Toilet						
Entry Screen, 1 each ADA toilet, urinal, lav			1 x	160	160	Toilets on opposite floor level from that with showers & lockers.
Women's Toilet						
Entry Screen, 1 each ADA toilet, lav			1 x	130	130	
Staff & Volunteer Entry						
Weather Vestibule			1 x	50	50	
Facility Maintenance			1 x	150	150	
Work Bench, Repair, Supplies, Janitor						Janitor spaces distributed in Facility
Sub Total Net Area					490	
Circulation @ 20%					98	
TOTAL STAFF / FACILITY SUPPORT SPACE NEED					588	
APPARATUS BAYS & SUPPORT						
Apparatus Bays - Enclosed						
Medic #1 & #2	16 x 56		1 x	896	896	Back-in Bay
Utility & Brush 16 x 53 minimum	u: 16 x 56		1 x	896	896	Back-in Bay
Tanker 16 x 42 minimum	16 x 56		1 x	896	896	
Ladder Truck						Replaces Tanker - no area increase
Engine 16 x 38 minimum	t 16 x 56		1 x	896	896	
Rescue 16 x 35 minimum	16 x 56		1 x	896	896	
Turn-Out Gear - Active						
50 - 20"W x 15"D open Lockers w/bench @ 11.75 s.f.			1 x	588	588	Includes circulation space
20 - 20"W x 15"D open Lockers w/bench @ 11.75 s.f.			1 x	235	235	
Ready Hose Racks						
4 Racks; in pairs between alternate bays			2 x	140	280	
2.5 x 56 / pair						
Hose Washer / Dryer			1 x	48	48	
Hose Tower - 6 x 10			1 x	60	60	
Turn-Out Gear - New Storage			1 x	184	184	
Turn-Out Gear - Wash/Dry			1 x	180	180	
Decon Shower / Biohazard			1 x	180	180	
Breathing Air Compressor & Tank Storage			1 x	112	112	
Medical Equipment & Supply			1 x	288	288	
Food & Beverage Storage			1 x	72	72	
Storage Room			1 x	192	192	
Shop			1 x	240	240	
Sub Total Net Area					7,139	
Circulation @ 5%					357	Circulation within the Apparatus Bays
TOTAL APPARATUS BAYS & SUPPORT SPACE NEED					7,496	
ANCILLARY FACILITIES						Ancillary facilities are department support facilities, some of which could be located in a separate building. The facilities might require less costly construction, including some of the following: Finishes (e.g. no finish floor or ceiling, or no air conditioning, or lower lighting levels.)
Apparatus Bays - Covered						
Command	10 x 25		1 x	250	250	
Utility (Expedition)	10 x 25		1 x	250	250	
Utility (Crew Cab)	10 x 30		1 x	300	300	
ATV on Trailer	10 x 30		1 x	300	300	
Rescue Boat & Trailer	10 x 25		1 x	250	250	

LEGEND

Indicates additional space needed in future.

ABBREVIATIONS
OF: Office
WS: Work Station

Date: July 14, 2014
Revised: August 13, 2014

DIVISION / SECTION NAME	LAYOUT REFERENCE/ROO	2034 PERSONNEL	SPACE ALLOCATION QUANTITY	AREA ALLOCATION	SPACE NEED	NOTES
Training Ladder						No Space Allocation (On Exteror of Building)
Vehicle Wash						See Shared Facilities
Emergency Generator						See Shared Facilities
Sub Total Net Area					1,350	
Circulation @ 0%					0	Circulation included in Parking & Service Areas
TOTAL ANCILLARY FACILITIES SECTION SPACE NEED					1,350	

Date: July 15, 20

DIVISION / SECTION NAME	LAYOUT REFERENCE/ROO	Unit Area	SPACE ALLOCATION QUANTITY	AREA ALLOCATION	SPACE NEED	NOTES
SITE FACILITIES						Parking need shown, not necessarily
Public Parking		375/car	2 x	375	750	code requirement.
Add Parking		375/car	4 x	375	1,500	
ADA / Van Space		750/car	1 x	750	750	
Volunteer Parking		375/car	19 x	375	7,125	
No Change		375/car				
ADA / Van Space		750/car	1 x	750	750	
Staff Parking		375/car	2 x	375	750	
Add Parking		375/car	2 x	375	750	
ADA / Van Space		750/car	1 x	750	750	
Apparatus Bays Enclosed: Access - Each End 16 x 70 x 2 =		2,240	5 x	2,240	11,200	Allows turning 41' Ladder Truck 180° at either end.
Apparatus Bays Covered: Access		10' x 30'	5 x	300	1,500	Enter one side
Garden Space		25' x 40'	1 x	1,000	1,000	Allowance
1/2 Basketball Court		--	--	--	--	Use paved area
Sub Total Net Area					26,825	
Circulation @ 30%					8,048	
TOTAL FIRE SITE FACILITIES					34,873	

Date: July 15, 2014

DIVISION / SECTION NAME	LAYOUT REFERENCE/ROO	Unit Area	SPACE ALLOCATION QUANTITY	AREA ALLOCATION	SPACE NEED	NOTES
SITE FACILITIES						Parking need shown, not necessarily
Public Parking		375/car	9 x	375	3,375	code requirement.
Add Parking		375/car	4 x	375	1,500	
ADA / Van Space		750/car	1 x	750	750	
Staff Parking		375/car	21 x	375	7,875	Largest shift + 1/2 remainder for overlap: 16+11=27
Add Parking		375/car	6 x	375	2,250	
ADA / Van Space		750/car	1 x	750	750	
State Trooper / Other Agency Parking		400/car	2 x	400	800	
Add Parking		400/car	1 x	400	400	
Police Vehicles - Open Parking		400/car	4 x	400	1,600	
Sally Port: Access - Each End		29' x 31'	2 x	899	1,798	
Vehicle Impound Bay: Access		20' x 25'	1 x	500	500	
Vehicle Impound Storage: Access		10' x 25'	10 x	250	2,500	
Police Vehicles - Enclosed: Access		10' x 25'	6 x	250	1,500	
Police Vehicles - Covered: Access		10' x 25'	6 x	250	1,500	
Bicycle Storage: Access		10' x 80'	1 x	800	800	
Driveway Approaches - 1 Public, 2 Police		25' x 30'	3 x	750	2,250	
Sub Total Net Area					30,148	
Circulation @ 30%					9,044	
TOTAL POLICE SITE FACILITIES					39,192	

LEGEND
Indicates additional space needed in future.

ABBREVIATIONS
OF: Office
WS: Work Station

Date: July 10
Revised: August 13, 2014

DIVISION / SECTION NAME	LAYOUT REFERENCE/ROOM SIZE	2034 PERSONNEL	SPACE ALLOCATION QUANTITY	AREA ALLOCATION	SPACE NEED		NOTES
MAIN BUILDING							
Lobbies & Public Toilets							Lobby Concept #2: "Mostly separated"
Entry Vestibule			1 x	128	128		
Police & Fire Lobbies							See Police & Fire
Training Room			1 x	1,080	1,080		Seats 24 @ Tables
Add 8 seats			1 x	180	180		
Exercise & Physical Training			1 x	2,008	2,008		
Sub Total Intra Facility						3,396	
Itra-Circulation							
TOTAL MAIN BUILDING SHARED FUNCTIONAL SPACE						3,396	
ALLOWANCES							
Design Contingency	5%			170			
Inter Facility Circulation	20%			679			
Vertical Circulation	2%			68			
Mechanical / Electrical / Telephone	5%			170			
Structure / Exterior Envelope	3%			102			
						1,189	
TOTAL MAIN BUILDING REQUIREMENT SHARED SPACE REQUIREMENT						4,585	
ANCILLARY FACILITIES							
Vehicle Wash Bay 20 x 56			1 x	1,120	1,120		
Emergency Generator			1 x	200	200		Reuse existing. Area Estimated.
Sub Total						1,320	
Circulation @ 0%							
TOTAL ANCILLARY FACILITIES SECTION SPACE NEED						1,320	

Date: July 15, 2014

DIVISION / SECTION NAME	LAYOUT REFERENCE/ROO	Unit Area	SPACE ALLOCATION QUANTITY	AREA ALLOCATION	SPACE NEED	NOTES
SITE FACILITIES						
Vechicle Wash Access - Each End - 20 x 70 x 2		2,800	1 x	2,800	2,800	
Emergency Generator Access - 5' on all sides		400	1 x	400	400	
Refuse		300	1 x	300	300	
Sub Total Net Area					3,500	
Circulation @ 30%					1,050	
TOTAL SHARED SITE FACILITIES					4,550	

ESTIMATED SITE AREA REQUIREMENT
2034 SPACE NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Date: July 14,
Revised:: August 13, 2014

DIVISION / SECTION NAME	LAYOUT REFERENCE/ROOM SIZE	SPACE ALLOCATION: AREA ALLOCATION	SPACE ALLOCATION: TOTALS	NOTES
MAIN BUILDING				Assume all spaces at grade level
FIRE		22,307		
POLICE		24,684		
SHARED		4,585		
TOTAL MAIN BUILDING			51,576	
ANCILLARY FACILITIES				
FIRE		1,459		
POLICE		7,230		
SHARED		1,320		
TOTAL ANCILLARY FACILITIES			10,009	
SITE FACILTIES				
FIRE		34,873		
POLICE		39,192		
SHARED		4,550		
TOTAL SITE FACILITIES			78,615	
SUB TOTAL BUILDING & SITE FACILITIES			140,200	
ALLOWANCES				
Design Contingency	10%	14,020		
Landscape / Hardscape	25%	35,050		Includes set backs
Future Expansion	10%	14,020		Expansion beyond 2034
			63,090	
TOTAL ESTIMATED SITE AREA REQUIREMENT ALL FACILITIES ON ONE LEVEL			203,290	4.66 Acres
Reduce Site Area Required For Two Level Facility				
Assume 30% of Main Building Area on 2nd Floor: .30 x 51,576			(15,473)	
TOTAL ESTIMATED AREA REQUIREMENT TWO STORY FACILITY			187,817	4.31 Acres

VII ADJACENCIES

ADJACENCIES

LEGEND / INTRODUCTION	VII-3
FIRE ADJACENCIES	VII-4
POLICE ADJACENCIES	VII-5
SITE ADJACENCIES	VII-6
VERTICAL ADJACENCIES INTRODUCTION	VII-7
FIRE VERTICAL ADJACENCIES	VII-8
POLICE VERTICAL ADJACENCIES	VII-9
SHARED VERTICAL ADJACENCIES	VII-11

Adjacency Diagrams have been developed for the departments. The Diagrams illustrate the proximity requirements of the functional work groups, or sections, of each department. The diagrams are to be understood as the preference of which offices and work areas should be next to each other. The diagrams are not a floor plan and should not be thought of as physical description of walls and doorways. The diagrams present adjacency and proximity preferences only. The diagrammatic elements are approximately to scale, and include requirements for 2034 Space Needs.

The following symbols have been used in order to make the adjacency diagrams:

Functional Space
A rounded box indicates a defined space, e.g., an office, a secretarial work area, a file room, etc.

Close Adjacency
Side by side placement of Functional Spaces indicates desired adjacency.

Proximity
Nearby placement of functional spaces indicates that adjacency is not required, but proximity is.

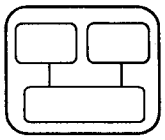
Circulation
A straight line indicates a primary circulation, e.g., a hallway or aisle.

Proximity to Circulation
Circulation near a functional space indicates the requirement of access to other functional areas or spaces.

Specialized Function Note
A dashed bubble indicates a specialized function of need that occurs within the space, e.g., a queue line within a lobby.

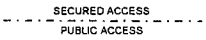
Other Departmental Area
Use of space provided by or for another section or department.

Section / Department Area
A dark line surrounding several functional spaces indicates the extent of a section or department.

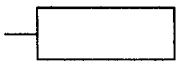


Work groups within a Section
A gray dashed line, dividing a functional space, indicated that more than one work group may be within a common open area.

Circulation
A dashed line, crossing functional space(s), indicates a security requirement.



Other Section / Department
A light rectangular box indicates a section, or department that should be proximate.

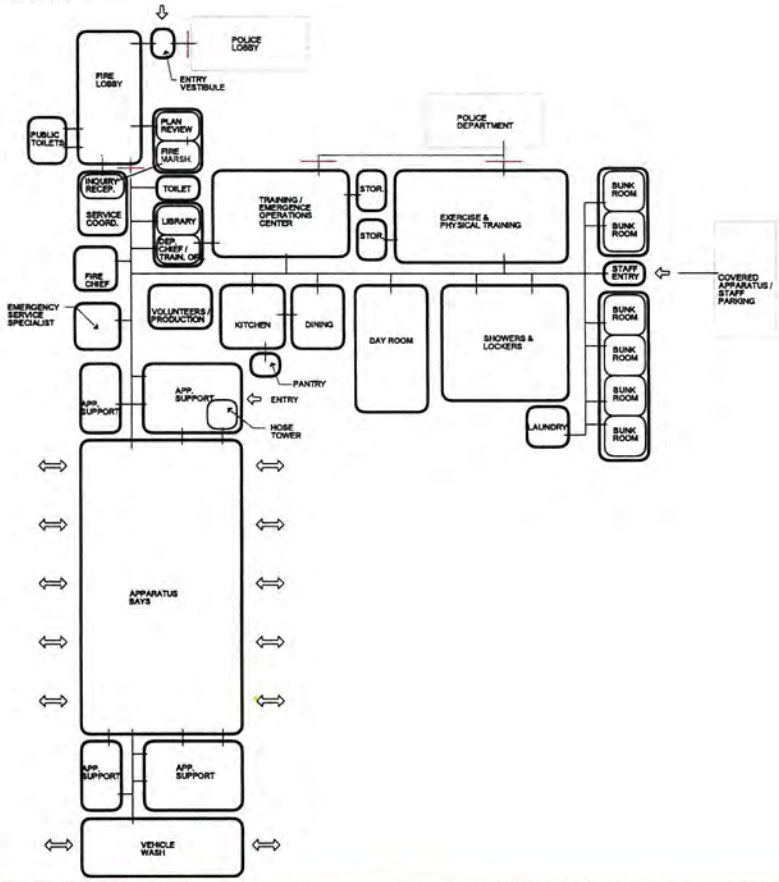


Entry
An arrow indictes an entry point as noted.

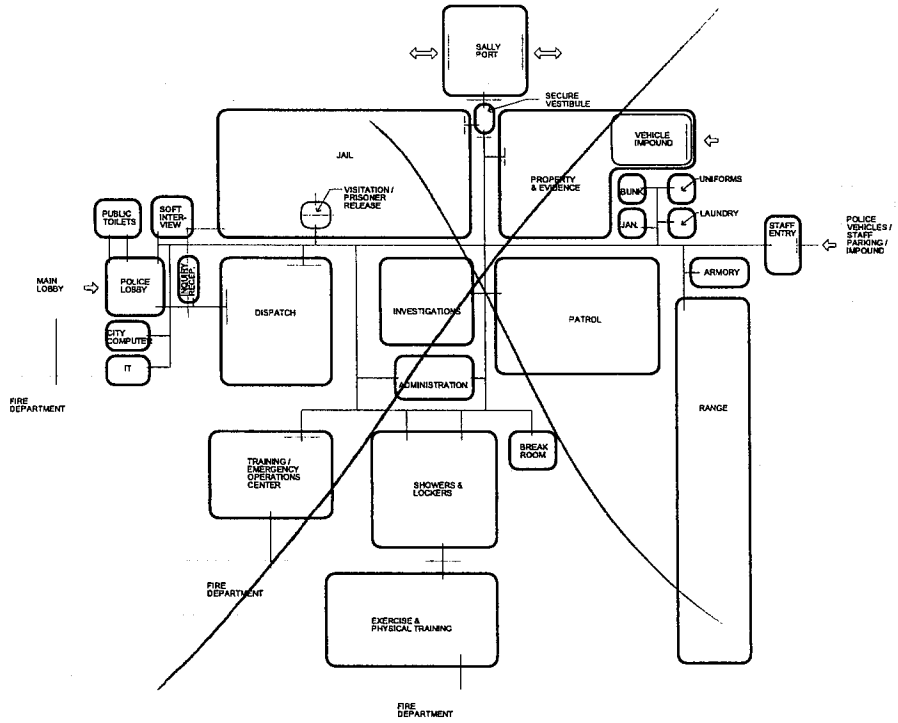
The adjacency diagrams represent the functional organization of each department or section. The diagrams may be used by the design architect as a guide to understanding the work adjacency preferences. It will happen that some sections work closely with multiple areas, and will have strong adjacency requirements. Other sections may be fairly autonomous.

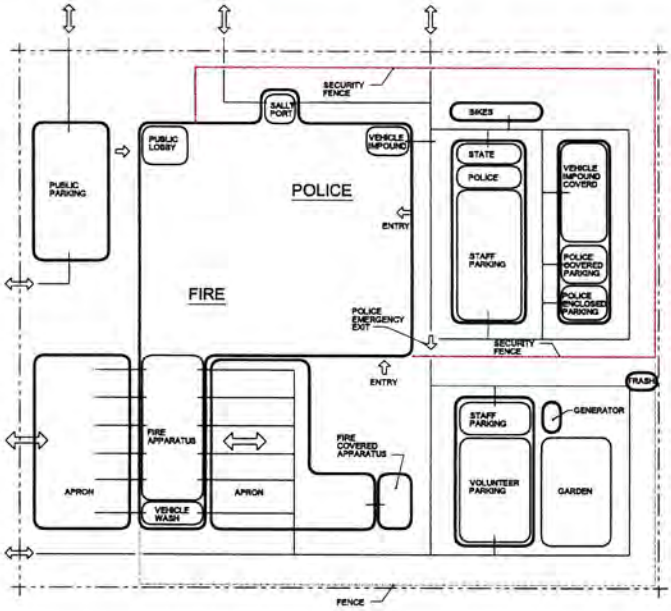
Following are adjacency diagrams for

- Fire
- Police
- Shared Facilities


POLICE LOBBY
ENTRY VESTIBULE
FIRE LOBBY
PUBLIC TOILETS
PLAN REVIEW
FIRE MARSH.
POLICE DEPARTMENT
INQUIRY RECEP.
SERVICE COORD.
TOILET
LIBRARY
DEP. CHIEF / TRAIN. OFF.
TRAINING / EMERGENCE OPERATIONS CENTER
STOR.
STOR.
EXERCISE & PHYSICAL TRAINING
BUNK ROOM
BUNK ROOM
FIRE CHIEF
STAFF ENTRY
COVERED APPARATUS / STAFF PARKING
EMERGENCY SERVICE SPECIALIST
VOLUNTEERS / PRODUCTION
KITCHEN
DINING
DAY ROOM
SHOWERS & LOCKERS
BUNK ROOM
BUNK ROOM
BUNK ROOM
BUNK ROOM
PANTRY
APP. SUPPORT
APP. SUPPORT
ENTRY
HOSE TOWER
LAUNDRY
APPARATUS BAYS
APP. SUPPORT
APP. SUPPORT
VEHICLE WASH

SCALE 1/32" = 1'-0"


SALLY PORT
SECURE VESTIBULE
JAIL
VISITATION / PRISONER RELEASE
VEHICLE IMPOUND
PROPERTY & EVIDENCE
BUNK
UNIFORMS
JAN.
LAUNDRY
STAFF ENTRY
POLICE VEHICLES / STAFF PARKING / IMPOUND
PUBLIC TOILETS
SOFT INTER-VIEW
MAIN LOBBY
POLICE LOBBY
PUBLIC INFO. DESK
DISPATCH
INVESTIGATIONS
PATROL
ARMORY
CITY COMPUTER
IT
ADMINISTRATION
FIRE DEPARTMENT
RANGE
TRAINING / EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER
SHOWERS & LOCKERS
BREAK ROOM
FIRE DEPARTMENT
EXERCISE & PHYSICAL TRAINING
FIRE DEPARTMENT



APPROXIMATE SCALE 1" = 80'

INTRODUCTION

The accompanying chart documents the acceptability of locating certain elements of the Fire & Police Departments at various floor levels.

It is not anticipated that any element would be located at a basement level unless the site is sloped to allow daylight on at least one side of the building basement.

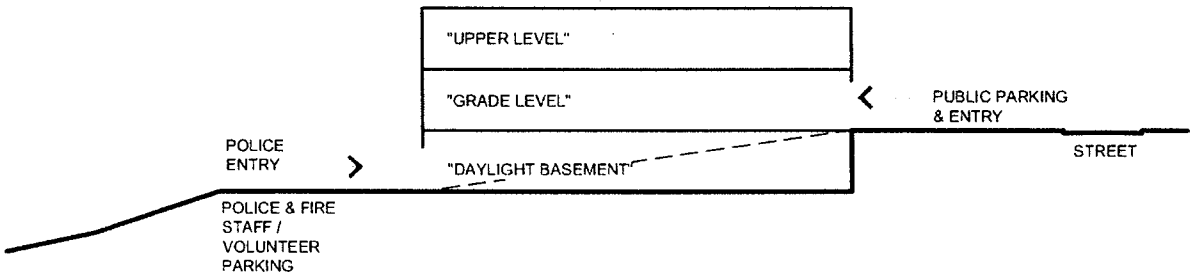


DIAGRAM ILLUSTRATING USE OF A
"DAYLIGHT BASEMENT" ON A SLOPING SITE

NTS

FIRE VERTICAL ADJACENCIES
SPACE NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Date: July 14, 2014
Revised: August 14, 2014

SPACE NAME (See Space Needs)	ASSUMED FLOOR LEVEL: Basement	At Grade	Upper Level	NOTES: Depending on site topography, a daylight basement might be possible.
PUBLIC AREAS				
• LOBBY, PUBLIC TOILETS		•		See Shared Spaces
ADMINISTRATION				
• WATCH OFFICER		•		
• FIRE CHIEF		•		
• ASSISTANT CHIEF / TRAINING OFFICER			•	
• TRAINING LIBRARY			•	
• TRAINING ROOM	--	--	--	See Shared Spaces
• EMERGENCY SERVICES SPECIALIST		•		
• FIRE MARSHAL / PLANS REVIEWER		•		
• VOLUNTEER WORK STATIONS/ "PRODUCTION" WORK ROOM		•		
LIVING AREAS			•	
• DAY ROOM				
• DINING				
• KITCHEN				
• BUNK ROOMS				
• LOCKERS				
• MEN'S SHOWER & DRESS				
• WOMEN'S SHOWER & DRESS				
• LAUNDRY				
STAFF & FACILITY SUPPORT				
• TRAINING ROOM	--	--	--	See Shared Spaces
• EXERCISE & PHYSICAL TRAINING	--	--	--	See Shared Spaces
• STAFF & VOLUNTEER ENTRY		•		
• FACILITY MAINTENANCE		•		
APPARATUS BAYS & SUPPORT		•		
• APPARATUS BAYS				
• TURN-OUT GEAR - ACTIVE				
• READY HOSE RACKS				
• HOSE WASHER / DRYER				
• HOSE TOWER				
• TURN-OUT GEAR - NEW STORAGE				
• TURN-OUT GEAR - WASH / DRY				
• DECON SHOWER / BIOHAZARD				
• BREATHING AIR COMPRESSOR & TANKS				
• MEDICAL EQUIPMENT & SUPPLY				
• FOOD & BEVERAGE STORAGE				
• STORAGE ROOM				
• SHOP				
ANCILLARY FACILITIES		•		
• APPARATUS BAYS - COVERED				
• TRAINING LADDER				
• VEHICLE WASH	--	--	--	See Shared Spaces
• EMERGENCY GENERATOR	--	--	--	See Shared Spaces

SHARED FACILITY VERTICAL ADJACENCIES
SPACE NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Date: July 14, 2014
Revised: August 14, 2014

SPACE NAME (See Space Needs)	ASSUMED FLOOR LEVEL: Basement	At Grade	Upper Level	NOTES: Depending on site topography, a daylight basement might be possible.
MAIN BUILDING				
• ENTRY VESTIBULE		•		
• TRAINING ROOM			•	
• EXERCISE & PHYSICAL TRAINING			•	
ANCILLARY FACILITIES				
• VEHICLE WASH BAY		•		
• EMERGENCY GENERATOR		•		

VIII APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Space Study Questionnaire
Fire – A-2
Police – A-15

Space Study Questionnaire

April 2014

Introduction

The City of Homer has contracted with USKH to perform planning and design services for proposed Public Safety Facilities. The conceptual design will be preceded by an assessment of the current and future space needs of the Police and Fire Departments and other functions to be considered on the sites. USKH has appointed LOREN BERRY ARCHITECT to assist in the space needs assessment and concept design.

The purpose of the attached questionnaire is to assist the architects in understanding the operational and building requirements of the various departmental units. The questionnaire will be followed by interviews of representatives of those units.

The questionnaire should be filled out by those in charge of other personnel, or specific operations.

We thank you in advance for your time and effort in responding to the questionnaire. Your responses are important. Be as detailed as you care to be. Even a very general comment will help us in conducting the interviews. The space determination and facility design will be based largely on the information provided through this questionnaire and the subsequent interviews. Any supplementary information, such as charts and diagrams that you wish to add can be attached.

The questionnaire may be filled out by computer or by hard copy as you prefer.

If you have questions about the questionnaire please contact Jack Berry at LOREN BERRY ARCHITECT, (541) 913-5420 (cell), jberry@berryarch.com.

Please return your questionnaire to Carey S. Meyer, P.E., MPA, Public Works Director/City Engineer (cmeyer@ci.homer.ak.us) who will forward them to USKH and LOREN BERRY ARCHITECT for review prior to the meetings.

Your Name: Robert Painter _____ Title or Position: Fire Chief

I. OPERATING UNIT OVERVIEW

This section will provide an overall view of your department, division or section, etc. and its relationship to other Departmental functions; and other Operating Units within your department, or to other City departments.

A. **Department Organization Chart:** Provide an organizational chart of the department. The overall chart may be simple, but needs to show relationships between divisions and work groups. Please attach the chart to this questionnaire.

B. **Division or Section Organization Chart:** Attach a detailed organizational chart for each of the divisions or work groups which may be accommodated. It should list all current positions and indicate whether full-time, part-time, temporary, volunteer, etc. Arrange the chart to show organizational structure, listed by position and job title if different. If shifts are involved, identify as such. (e.g., Dispatcher - 3 shifts.) If a new position is anticipated in the near future, please show its relationship, and list it as a future position.

C-1. **Internal Adjacency:** List adjacency needs between functions within the department or division(s), such as staff and interview rooms, or any other specific needs not apparent from the organizational chart. Also list any specific need to avoid adjacency. This information can be used in determining needs for common areas, shared space, entrances or other space related issues:

Your Department Or Specific Component	Other Component in the Department	Frequency of Contact	Close Proximity Essential	Close Proximity Important	Close Proximity Convenient	Proximity Undesirable and Reason
EMS	All	often				HIPAA privacy for data entry and billing
EMS	All	Often				Biohazard Decon
Fire	All	Occas.				Decon of contaminated gear
Training Room	All	Often	XX			

C-2. **External Adjacency:** List any adjacency needs with other departments or agencies, or any specific needs to avoid adjacency. (i.e. for security reasons, etc.):

Your Department Or Specific Component	Other Department Or Specific Component	Frequency of Contact	Close Proximity Essential	Close Proximity Important	Close Proximity Convenient	Proximity Undesirable and Reason
EOC/Training/meeting room	All	seldom	XX			

D. **Public Interface:** Discuss need for contact with the public and how to accommodate.

We have frequent contact with the public, year round. They must obtain Open Burning Permits from our office. They have access to fire prevention, injury prevention and general preparedness information inside our front entrance. We provide group tours for schools or other organizations interested in the fire department and host departmental open house events where the public are invited to learn about the department and see the equipment. The public picks up loaner chimney brushes at the fire station to clean their own fireplace flues.

E. **Future Changes:** Discuss any anticipated major organizational changes, including reporting relationships, so that their effects on space needs can be analyzed.

As a "combination" fire department (made up of both paid and volunteer responders) we are constantly trying to improve response times by encouraging volunteers to be around the station as much as possible by having space they can study, relax, interact, and have fun when not on calls or attending training. In the 1980's the existing station had 4 member bunk rooms with full-time residents that were immediately available for call when "home". I would like to incorporate this concept to the new facility with at least 4 rooms that would be available as individual living spaces similar in size to a college dormitory room. In addition, I would like to have 2 separate bunk rooms (2 beds each) for use by paid staff (usually only one on duty each 24-hour shift).

F. **Long Term Needs:** Discuss any long term projected facility needs or considerations, and reorganizational issues not previously addressed:

The membership goal of the department is to have 50 emergency responders on the roster to aid in coverage year-round. We would like to partner with the local community college to offer housing to students participating in fire service degree programs that are currently unavailable locally. Training, meeting and associated activity areas need to be sized appropriately to anticipated growth, rather than current levels.

G. **Existing Facility Description:** Provide a brief description of the facility(s) that the department, division(s), work group(s) currently occupy(s), which will be replaced. Discuss major problems that could be solved in a new facility:

The existing fire station was constructed by HVFD Inc. in 1979 and dedicated in 1980 and includes portions of the original structure, which was a garage/shop. HVFD Inc. was the volunteer corporation that started the fire department in 1952 and managed the operation until a joint agreement between them and the City of Homer in 1990. No city funds were used to build the original building. USKH engineered the plans to upgrade the building in the mid 1990s for a seismic upgrade that ended up being a more extensive remodel due to discovered dry rot and other issues found when the building was opened up. There has not been any other work done to the building since, except routine maintenance. Due to space needs and increased paid staffing levels, the available bunkrooms have been reduced to 2 with small offices being made of the other bunkroom spaces. We are still one paid position un-staffed due to budget cuts and the small space is being used as a very small exercise room with a treadmill and step-climber. There is one small office downstairs (Watch Office) where the Dept. Services Coordinator functions, a small storage and shop where our breathing air-packs are serviced and tested, a small mechanical room and an equipment storage area on the ground floor, behind the apparatus (constructed

during the remodel). There is a hose drying tower mid-building, accessible by fixed ladder. There is no OSHA compliant biohazard decon/cleaning area (we use the hose wash area right now). Offices are upstairs and include the Chief's office, Training Officers Office, Training Office (used by the paid FF/EMT) and the Asst. Chief Office (vacant, used for exercise equipment).There is a training/meeting room that seats 20 at tables, a small kitchen with single range, and two residential type refrigerators, a living room and a pool table and ping-pong table for recreation. There in only one small storage room that houses the department servers and textbook/teaching materials for the classroom. There are separate men's/ladies restrooms with shower in each. There is a small "Production Room" that houses the copier and printer and member desktop computer.

H. **Staff Work Spaces:** This section establishes the individual work space allocations for employees within the department, division and/or work group to be accommodated with this space request. Attach your division's staffing schedule. List current and projected personnel, by division or work group on the chart below.

Title of Division/Work Group: Fire Department _____

	Number of positions					
	Current Actual		Current Need		Approx. 20 Year Projection	
Position/Title	Total	Largest Shift	Total	Largest Shift	Total	Largest Shift
Chief	1		1	1	1	1
Asst. Chief/Training Officer	0		~~1~~ 2	2	1	2
Emergency Service Specialist (ESS)	3	1	~~8~~ 4	~~1~~ 2	~~8~~ 12	~~8~~ 4
Dept. Services Coordinator	1	1	1	1	1	1
Fire Marshal/Plans Reviewer	0	0	1	1	2	2

(Copy this page and attach additional staffing charts if necessary.)

Special Areas/Work Spaces: Please review all interior and exterior/off-site areas of your existing facility(s) in order to identify all special needs.

Conference/Reception/Waiting Areas

Type of Space	Number of People at One Time	Frequency/Time of Use	Duration of Each Use	Equipment/ Misc.
Conference/Public Meeting (list types of meetings):	20-25	Weekly meetings/training. Classes held each fall/winter	Weekly 4 hours per week. Training classes are Mon, Wed 6 pm until 10 pm and Sat. 8-5. Other classes may be held during day	White boards, projector and screen
Training:	See above			
Interviews: small training room	No current space dedicated to use			
Reception:	Front entrance	Daily	M-F 8 am until 5 pm	
Public Counters:	Same			
Other (list): Member workstation	2-4 at any one time	weekly	Less than one hour on average but more often when completing study assignments/work	Computer with internet; printer

Support/Equipment Areas (Do not include those in individual offices or workstations.)

	Number			
Description	Current Actual	Current Need	Future Need	Remarks
Copier	1	1	~~1~~ 2	
Printers	1 network plus Xerox	1	same 2 copiers/printers 1 printer	
Fax Machines	1	1	1	Xerox could function as fax if connected per IT
Special Equipment				

(Continued on next page)

	Number			
Description	Current Actual	Current Need	Future Need	Remarks
Files (list type and number, or list linear or cubic measurement)	4 drawer, locking, 6 in Watch Office	6	6	Maintain member records, equipment records and testing records of equipment. POs, paper reports etc.
Supplies				Assortment of office supplies, cleaning supplies and specific fire/ems equipment/supplies
Storage (list shelving, pallet, cabinet or other)				Storage inside and out and off-site as well. Too much to store inside.
Shredders	2	2	2	
Recycle containers	3	6	6	
Display boards, mail boxes	1	1	1	Individual mail slots for members by letter groups
Safes/vaults	1	1	2	Narcotic storage (small amounts)
Carts	0	0	0	
Microfiche equipment (describe)	0	0	0	
Other (list)				

Living/Support Spaces:

Please list and comment on needed facilities.

Sleeping Quarters

2 bunk rooms with 2 XLong Twin beds each currently. Would require 2 separate bunk rooms at minimum. 6 total would be preferred (2 for paid personnel and 4 for residential/volunteer use. Would like to incorporate use of "murphy" style bedding to increase floor space when not in use, even considering installation in individual offices when staff must stay overnight in large emergencies, disasters etc. Should be capable of being darkened to facilitate restful sleep as much as possible. ___

Living Area (number chairs)

3 couches and 2 love seats currently. Seating is adequate for current usage but would need to be increased as membership increases. Want to avoid individual recliner style seating as much as possible. _____

Dining Area / Break Rooms

1 table seats 6 max. 1 range, 2 refrigerators/freezer combo. 1 upright deep freezer, coffee maker, microwave oven currently. Should consider commercial grade appliances and double ovens/ranges for cooking for crews post event. Need commercial style exhaust fans as well. _____

Exercise & Physical Training

1 treatmill; 1 Bowflex Tread Climber; assorted medicine balls and free weights (downstairs) currently. I think this is an excellent area for shared usage with PD as both organizations require physical training and conditioning. Would save many dollars if adequate facilities were included in station. Volunteers are currently able to join local health club with 1/3 match from city. Require both aerobic and strength stations. _____

Locker Rooms (size lockers)

o locker room. Hallway upstairs has lockers on each side, 22 total. Each is about 12" wide and full height currently. Would like individual lockers for more members. Down stair gear stalls are open with hooks and shelving; would prefer individual open locker spaces 18-20 wide with room from fire gear and helmets for up to 50 members. Would like/need downstairs showers for personnel decon following large fire based on current findings and recommendation from NIOSH

regarding contaminates present at most structure fires. Recommending that personnel shower before going home. _____

K. Official Parking Requirements: Please list Department or other official autos, pickups, trucks, boats, fire apparatus, etc. to be parked or stored on site. Note height and turning radius of large vehicles, if known.

				Type of Parking		
Type Vehicle	Current Actual	Current Need	Estimate Future	Open	Covered	Enclosed
Tanker/Pumper	1	1	1			1
Engine	1	1	1			1
Rescue Truck	1	1	1			1
Brush Truck	1	1	1			1
Ambulance	2	2	2			2
Utility Truck (U-3)	1	1	1			1
Command 1	1	1	1	1		
Utility 2 (Expedition)	1	1	1	1		
Utility 1 (Crew cab pickup)	1	1		1		
ATV	1	1	1		1	
Rescue Boat, inflatable	1	1	1		1	
personal vehicles (staff)	2	2	4	4		

List Volunteer Vehicles

Volunteer POVs	20	20	20	20		

List Public Vehicles

visitors/depends on size of building	2	2	6	1		

L. Site Facilities:

Please list and comment on needed site facilities. Describe, discuss current actual, current need, future need.

Vehicle Sally Port

Vehicle Impound

Vehicle Wash

We currently wash vehicles on front apron of station during summer and inside when necessary in winter. An indoor wash bay with adequate ventilation and humidity control would be great

Fire Training Tower

Our training facilities are located on the Homer Spit. We would like to incorporate some training props into the station if possible to reduce the need to travel to the Spit except for live-fire exercises.

Surge Tanks

Hazardous Storage

Flammable storage cabinets for paints etc. Fuel can storage area, preferably outside. Storage of biohazard usually not an issue as we docon at the hospital before returning to the station.

Emergency Generator

We currently share a generator with the PD that provides power for entire building.

Vegetable Garden

I'm sure some of our members would participate in a "victory garden" type space

Outdoor Sports, Other Activities

Guys would love a BB hoop but not required for sure (OJT injuries is a concern) _____

M. Jail/Holding:

Please list and comment on needed facilities, including current actual, current need, future need.

Number cells/holding rooms:

Male

Female

Juvenile

Type cells (single, double, etc.)

II. SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS

This section identifies specific items about your space that may influence the design of the facility. Listed items may deal with engineering criteria beyond your expertise to analyze, but you are encouraged to state your specific concerns and requirements in any manner that addresses the issue.

A. **Lighting:** Provide a description of any lighting problems in your present space (i.e., light quality or level), and/or describe lighting types or methods and controls you would prefer in the new facility. (For example: task lighting, indirect lighting, etc.):

The apparatus bays are lighted continually. Would prefer motion detected lighting but still have some level of lighting at night for security. _____

B. **Night Lighting:** Is your space typically used by some employees after normal daylight hours which would require individual light controls? Please describe frequency and number of staff:

Building use is 24/7 _____

C. **Black-Out:** Are there any areas in your space which require natural light control greater than normal shading or curtains?

Bunk room should be dark. _____

D. **Power:** Describe any special power requirements:

Breathing Air compressor requires 3 phase and specific power requirements. _____

E. **Heating, Ventilating, Air Conditioning (HVAC):** Are there any special heating, ventilating, humidity and air conditioning needs? Please discuss reason for need:

As vehicles are washed indoors during winter must have good drainage (or wash area) and moisture control _____

F. **Special Finishes:** Are there any special architectural finishes or features required or desired, such as washable floors, hard or soft walls, graffiti resistance, wall bumpers, shatter proof glass or security screens/barriers? Please discuss reason for need:

Biohazard decon/cleaning areas need to be stainless/non-porous surfaces. _____

III. Comments

Please describe any improvements that will help your division/section to work more effectively. Please provide information, if appropriate about concerns not previously addressed which might affect the amount or design of space (e.g., requirements for high voltage, dedicated circuits, battery backup, noise or vibration levels, special seismic or structural/floor loading requirements, disaster preparedness measures or environmental requirements):

We have a 1947 Willies Jeep with a front mounted pump that was Homer's 1st fire engine. We would like to incorporate a space inside the entrance to display this historic piece of equipment. If space allows, there is also the small water trailer it hauled behind it that would complete the display (the trailer has not been fully restored at this time)

Thank you very much for your help. If you have any questions please contact Jack Berry at LOREN BERRY ARCHITECT (541)913-5420 (c).

Space Study Questionnaire

April 2014

Introduction

The City of Homer has contracted with USKH to perform planning and design services for proposed Public Safety Facilities. The conceptual design will be preceded by an assessment of the current and future space needs of the Police and Fire Departments and other functions to be considered on the sites. USKH has appointed LOREN BERRY ARCHITECT to assist in the space needs assessment and concept design.

The purpose of the attached questionnaire is to assist the architects in understanding the operational and building requirements of the various departmental units. The questionnaire will be followed by interviews of representatives of those units.

The questionnaire should be filled out by those in charge of other personnel, or specific operations.

We thank you in advance for your time and effort in responding to the questionnaire. Your responses are important. Be as detailed as you care to be. Even a very general comment will help us in conducting the interviews. The space determination and facility design will be based largely on the information provided through this questionnaire and the subsequent interviews. Any supplementary information, such as charts and diagrams that you wish to add can be attached.

The questionnaire may be filled out by computer or by hard copy as you prefer.

If you have questions about the questionnaire please contact Jack Berry at LOREN BERRY ARCHITECT, (541) 913-5420 (cell), jberry@berryarch.com.

Please return your questionnaire to Carey S. Meyer, P.E., MPA, Public Works Director/City Engineer (cmeyer@ci.homer.ak.us) who will forward them to USKH and LOREN BERRY ARCHITECT for review prior to the meetings.

Your Name Mark Robl_____ Title or Position Police Chief _____

I. OPERATING UNIT OVERVIEW

This section will provide an overall view of your department, division or section, etc. and its relationship to other Departmental functions; and other Operating Units within your department, or to other City departments.

A. **Department Organization Chart:** Provide an organizational chart of the department. The overall chart may be simple, but needs to show relationships between divisions and work groups. Please attach the chart to this questionnaire.

B. **Division or Section Organization Chart:** Attach a detailed organizational chart for each of the divisions or work groups which may be accommodated. It should list all current positions and indicate whether full-time, part-time, temporary, volunteer, etc. Arrange the chart to show organizational structure, listed by position and job title if different. If shifts are involved, identify as such. (e.g., Dispatcher - 3 shifts.) If a new position is anticipated in the near future, please show its relationship, and list it as a future position.

C-1. **Internal Adjacency:** List adjacency needs between functions within the department or division(s), such as staff and interview rooms, or any other specific needs not apparent from the organizational chart. Also list any specific need to avoid adjacency. This information can be used in determining needs for common areas, shared space, entrances or other space related issues:

Your Department Or Specific Component	Other Component in the Department	Frequency of Contact	Close Proximity Essential	Close Proximity Important	Close Proximity Convenient	Proximity Undesirable and Reason
Patrol	Dispatch, Jail	Daily	X			
Investigator	Chief	Daily		X		
Investigator	Dispatch, Jail	Daily			X	
Chief	All	Daily			X	

C-2. **External Adjacency:** List any adjacency needs with other departments or agencies, or any specific needs to avoid adjacency. (i.e. for security reasons, etc.):

Your Department Or Specific Component	Other Department Or Specific Component	Frequency of Contact	Close Proximity Essential	Close Proximity Important	Close Proximity Convenient	Proximity Undesirable and Reason
Police	Fire	Daily			X	
Police	State Troopers	Daily			X	

. **Public Interface:** Discuss need for contact with the public and how to accommodate.

Our dispatch staff interfaces with the public 24/7. They issue various city licenses to residents and answer numerous questions posed by people that walk into the building looking for help or directions. Our jail staff also interfaces with the public 24/7. They often take in bail money being posted, accept and escort visitors for prisoners, and meet with attorneys, mental health personnel, clergy and others.

E. **Future Changes:** Discuss any anticipated major organizational changes, including reporting relationships, so that their effects on space needs can be analyzed.

I will be asking our city council for two more police officers this fall. I do not anticipate any major organizational changes in the future, just slow growth in our staff to accommodate population growth in our area.

F. **Long Term Needs:** Discuss any long term projected facility needs or considerations, and reorganizational issues not previously addressed:

/e have a special services contract with the Alaska State Troopers that requires us to provide them a small amount of office space to work from. This contract will probably be in place for years to come.

G. **Existing Facility Description:** Provide a brief description of the facility(s) that the department, division(s), work group(s) currently occupy(s), which will be replaced. Discuss major problems that could be solved in a new facility:

Our existing building is poorly designed for our needs. Just about all spaces are too small. The foot traffic flow of prisoners, employees and visitors to the building overlaps in several areas where it should not. When people visit prisoners, the visitors have to walk through some of our work spaces to get to the visitation room and prisoners have to be lead out of the jail past employee spaces and exterior doors to get to the visitation room. The jail has several problems including an air handling system that exhausts into our employees work areas, inadequate cell designs, not enough cells, and very bad prisoner flow. Violent, out of control prisoners can often be heard throughout the building. We need more square footage for all department functions. The new facility should be designed to accommodate radio and computer equipment and updates to those systems as the technology ages and is replaced. All of our radio equipment and computers should be in a climate controlled room. Dispatch should also be air-conditioned and relatively close to the radio/computer room. The new building should incorporate video surveillance points in and around it with full video and audio coverage of all cells. Dispatch should be located near the front lobby with ready access to a secure, bullet proof, service counter/window. The front of the building should have passive barriers to vehicles. The dispatch supervisor's office should be very close to dispatch. We need more evidence storage room and a larger evidence lab.

H. **Staff Work Spaces:** This section establishes the individual work space allocations for employees within the department, division and/or work group to be accommodated with this space request. Attach your division's staffing schedule. List current and projected personnel, by division or work group on the chart below.

Title of Division/Work Group: Homer Police Department

	Number of positions					
	Current Actual		Current Need		Approx. 20 Year Projection	
Position/Title	Total	Largest Shift	Total	Largest Shift	Total	Largest Shift
Dispatch	8	2	9	3	11	4
Patrol	11	3	13	4	15	6
Investigations	1	1	2	2	3	3
Jail	6	1	7	2	9	3

(Copy this page and attach additional staffing charts if necessary.)

Special Areas/Work Spaces: Please review all interior and exterior/off-site areas of your existing facility(s) in order to identify all special needs.

Conference/Reception/Waiting Areas

Type of Space	Number of People at One Time	Frequency/Time of Use	Duration of Each Use	Equipment/ Misc.
Conference/Public Meeting (list types of meetings):	30	Monthly or as needed for special events	2-4 hours	Power point, 60" monitor, audio
Training:	12	Bi-weekly	1-8 hours	Power point, monitor, audio.
Interviews:	3	Weekly	1-6 hours	Audio and video recording
Reception:				
Public Counters:	2	Daily	10 to 30 minutes	Security concerns
Other (list): Physical Training Polygraph Room Evidence Lab Evidence Storage	5 5 2 3 2	Monthly Monthly As needed Daily Daily	1 to 4 hours 1 to 4 hours As needed As needed As needed	Mats, ventilation Polygraph Lab/ventilation

Support/Equipment Areas (Do not include those in individual offices or workstations.)

	Number			
Description	Current Actual	Current Need	Future Need	Remarks
Copier	2	2	2	One is a large machine; both must be close to dispatch.
Printers	2	2	2	Both in dispatch
Fax Machines	2	2	2	Both in Dispatch

Special Equipment Shredders	2	2	2	One in dispatch

	Number			
Description	Current Actual	Current Need	Future Need	Remarks
Files (list type and number, or list linear or cubic measurement) Case Files, Jail Files	2 four and 2 two drawer files in dispatch. 5 four drawer files in the jail	Same as actual.	Probably the same.	We will probably always have a need for some paper files but the number has declined in the last ten years.
Supplies Cleaning, office, evidence and jail.	Approximatel y 200 sq. ft.	350 sq. ft.	450 sq. ft.	Hard to estimate
Storage (list shelving, pallet, cabinet or other) Shelves, cabinets, closets, connexes.	900 sq. ft.	900 sq. ft.	1100 sq. ft.	This estimate includes various storage areas in the building and 2 outside connexes and one outside storage building.
Shredders	2	2	2	We need one in dispatch, one in the jail and a small one in most offices.
Recycle containers	0	0	?	The city does not currently have a recycling program.
Display boards, mail boxes	26 mailboxes 1 display board per work area	31 mailboxes Same	37 mailboxes Same	Every employee needs a mailbox in their work area. Each work area needs a display board/bulletin board.
Safes/vaults	3 safes, 3 gun vaults	4 safes, 4 gun vaults	4 safes, 4 gun vaults	
Carts	None	0	0	
Microfiche equipment (describe)	0	0	0	
Other (list) Firearms cleaning and storage	144 sq. ft.	144 sq. ft.	144 sq. ft.	This room will need ventilation.

J. **Living/Support Spaces:**

Please list and comment on needed facilities.

Sleeping Quarters

One small bunk room large enough for two people. This could probably be shared with the fire department.

Living Area (number chairs)

None

Dining Area / Break Rooms

Dispatch should have a small break area in dispatch that has a small refrigerator, microwave and sink with a few cabinets. A larger food preparation area and break room should be very close to the jailer's work areas that can accommodate a full size range, refrigerator, microwave, dish washer, sink, food and supply storage and room for six people.

Exercise & Physical Training

We need a large exercise room that can accommodate weight lifting equipment, 2 treadmills, 2 exercise bikes, 2 stair steppers, rowing machine, roman chair and free weights. It will need at least one hundred square feet of open space for exercise mats for physical means of arrest training.

Locker Rooms (size lockers)

One full size locker for every employee. Separate locker rooms for males and females with showers.

K. **Official Parking Requirements:** Please list Department or other official autos, pickups, trucks, boats, fire apparatus, etc. to be parked or stored on site. Note height and turning radius of large vehicles, if known.

				Type of Parking		
Type Vehicle	Current Actual	Current Need	Estimate Future	Open	Covered	Enclosed
Department SUV's	4	4	6	2	2	2
Patrol Cars	3	3	5	2	1	2
Smart Cart	1	1	2			2
ATV	1	1	2		2	
Snowmobile	0	2	2		2	

List Volunteer Vehicles

None						

List Public Vehicles

Employee parking	4	5	7	7		
Bicycles	30 to 40	30 to 40	30-40		30-40	
Public parking	4	10	14	14		

L. Site Facilities:

Please list and comment on needed site facilities. Describe, discuss current actual, current need, future need.

Vehicle Sally Port

We do not have a sally port. We need one that can accommodate 4 vehicles.

Vehicle Impound

We do not have an impound yard on site. We have a definite need for one that is fenced and secure. It should be capable of holding ten vehicles and it should have video surveillance.

Vehicle Wash

We need an area where we can wash one vehicle at a time and vacuum it out.

Fire Training Tower

Surge Tanks

Hazardous Storage

We need to be able to securely store approximately 30,000 rounds of ammunition. We need a space to safely dry evidence items contaminated with blood and other body fluids.

Emergency Generator

Our existing emergency generator is in a self-contained building that can be moved. It is big enough to provide service to our existing police and fire stations. It currently sits on driven steel pilings and is 8'6" wide by 24' long.

Vegetable Garden

Outdoor Sports, Other Activities

We need a space for a barbeque grill.

Jail/Holding:

Please list and comment on needed facilities, including current actual, current need, future need.

We need to have a shower room, cleaning supply room with deep sink and laundry room in the jail.

Number cells/holding rooms:

Male: We currently have 4 cells with 2 beds in 3 cells and one bed in one cell. We do not have a designated cell for females or juveniles. We should have 4 cells for males with two beds.

Female: We should have 2 designated cells for females.

Juvenile: We need one juvenile cell that meets federal standards.

Type cells (single, double, etc.) We also need one cell with one bed that will be used as a "crisis" cell for severely intoxicated individuals and for the mentally ill. This cell should have padded walls and be designed for easy cleaning and sanitizing.

All cells will need video and audio monitoring. All cells should be easy to clean and disinfect.

The jail needs to be connected to a booking room that has a separate entrance for incoming arrestees. Another door should lead from the booking room to the cell areas. The booking room should have video and audio surveillance in it. The booking room will need a fingerprinting station, room for the intoximeter, lockers and bedding storage. The prisoner sitation rooms should be located in the jail and there should be a separate entrance to the jail from the front lobby for admitting visitors and discharging inmates. The air-handling system for the jail must be separated from the rest of the building.

The jailers need an office capable of housing three desks, video and audio monitoring equipment, a shredder, copy machine, fax and 8 four drawer file cabinets.

II. SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS

This section identifies specific items about your space that may influence the design of the facility. Listed items may deal with engineering criteria beyond your expertise to analyze, but you are encouraged to state your specific concerns and requirements in any manner that addresses the issue.

A. **Lighting:** Provide a description of any lighting problems in your present space (i.e., light quality or level), and/or describe lighting types or methods and controls you would prefer in the new facility. (For example: task lighting, indirect lighting, etc.):

Dispatch needs to have controllable lighting that can be brightened or dimmed as the need arises. We will need task lighting in the firearms cleaning room and evidence lab.

B. **Night Lighting:** Is your space typically used by some employees after normal daylight hours which would require individual light controls? Please describe frequency and number of staff:

There are employees in our building 24/7. The jail, dispatch and squad rooms are always occupied.

C. **Black-Out:** Are there any areas in your space which require natural light control greater than normal shading or curtains?

All offices with southern exposure should have some type of shading to help stop the offices from overheating in the summer. Some of our current offices will get intolerably hot in the summer at temperatures as low as 65 degrees. Normal blinds are not enough to control the problem.

D. **Power:** Describe any special power requirements: The exercise room will need 220 outlets for treadmills and ample 110 volt outlets for other equipment. It will also need good ventilation. We currently use a window fan in the lone window in our exercise room. Wiring for one or more in the new building could be a good idea.

E. **Heating, Ventilating, Air Conditioning (HVAC):** Are there any special heating, ventilating, humidity and air conditioning needs? Please discuss reason for need:

We utilize window fans and air-conditioners in some offices with southern exposure to control heat in the summer months.

The new building should be designed for this. Dispatch and the radio/computer room need to be climate controlled. The firearms cleaning room and the evidence lab will need ventilation. The jail needs an air-handling system that exhausts the air outside and does not mix any of it with the rest of the buildings air.

F. **Special Finishes:** Are there any special architectural finishes or features required or desired, such as washable floors, hard or soft walls, graffiti resistance, wall bumpers, shatter proof glass or security screens/barriers? Please discuss reason for need:

Washable floors and walls in all spaces accessible to prisoners. Soft walls in the crisis cell. Graffiti resistant walls in all cells. Bullet proof walls and glass in the lobby area to protect employees. Barriers around the front of the building to prevent someone crashing a vehicle into or through a wall or a design that does the same thing. Any outside walls and windows in the dispatch center need to be bullet proof. _____

III. Comments

Please describe any improvements that will help your division/section to work more effectively. Please provide information, if appropriate about concerns not previously addressed which might affect the amount or design of space (e.g., requirements for high voltage, dedicated circuits, battery backup, noise or vibration levels, special seismic or structural/floor loading requirements, disaster preparedness measures or environmental requirements):

All workstations and everything in dispatch needs to have battery back-ups. Jail noise should be isolated from the rest of the building. Offices for the chief, lieutenant, investigator and assistant investigator should be located near each other. We will need four offices for sergeants and three more offices of similar size for senior officers and future growth. We need an interview / interrogation room suitable for two officers and up to three other people. We need a separate office for a polygraph that will have room for the operator and one suspect. We need a squad room preferably situated near dispatch and the jailer's office that can accommodate 6 officers at a time.

Due to recent changes in security requirements, the workspaces, offices, squad room, jail and dispatch can only be accessed by properly cleared personnel. There must be a control point that controls access to these areas. Most fire department employees and volunteers are not cleared for access to our spaces and I expect these security requirements to become even more restrictive as time goes on.

This new building should have a fully functional, dedicated emergency operations center in it. The entire facility should be built to a very high degree of earthquake resistance.

The evidence storage room will need to be 600 sq. ft. and must be designed to be a secure, limited access space.

We need a space for the long term storage of evidence and some records. This space could be in a garage or basement area. It must be secure with controlled access and it should be a minimum of 200 sq. ft.

We would like to have an indoor shooting range located in the basement. Four lanes would be sufficient, six would be ideal and two would be workable. The shooting lanes would ideally be 75 feet long but we could train successfully on lanes as short as 25 feet. This range would be used for test firing weapons recently repaired and for practice and training.

The firearms cleaning room and ammunition storage and weapons safes should all be located near-by. The range must meet OSHA approval for air borne lead and should be sound isolated from adjacent work spaces. The backstops should be capable of stopping all handgun rounds and patrol rifle rounds.

A radio systems/electrical engineer should be involved in the design phase to ensure that the radio room is properly designed and outfitted for our current radio system and anticipated future upgrades to it. _____

Thank you very much for your help. If you have any questions please contact Jack Berry at LOREN BERRY ARCHITECT (541)913-5420 (c).

APPENDIX B

Project Notes

General	B-2
Fire	B-5
Police	B-13
Shared	B-25

1.0 GENERAL

The following information was obtained from meetings with the City of Homer Public Safety Building Review Committee (hereafter noted as PSBR), the Police and Fire Chiefs and their staffs; from Questionnaires provided by the Design Team, completed by the Chiefs, and from observations by, and experience of the Design Team.

2.0 KICK-OFF MEETING

An initial "kick-off" meeting was held at the Homer City Hall on May 21.

2.1 Attendees

CITY OF HOMER – Individuals attending all or part of the meeting included:

- Walt Wrede, City Manager
- Carey Meyer, Public Works Director/City Engineer
- Dan Nelson, Project Manager
- Ken Castner, PSBR Committee
- Ralph Crane, PSBR Committee
- Rick Abboud, City Planner
- Julie Engrebretsen, Deputy City Planner
- Mary Wythe, Mayor (Did not attend kick-off meeting, but chaired the PSBR Committee/Public Meeting on 5/22).
- Bob Painter, Fire Chief and PSBR Committee
- Mark Robl, Police Chief and PSBR Committee
- Renee Krause, City Clerk (attended the PSBR Committee/Public Meeting)

DESIGN TEAM

- Dale Smythe, USKH Inc., Architect of Record
- Jerry Neubert, USKH Inc., Senior Architect
- Merideth Noble, USKH Inc., Funding Specialist
- Loren Berry, Loren Berry Architect, Public Safety Design Consultant
- Jon R. "Jack" Berry, Loren Berry Architect, Public Safety Design Consultant

Note: There may have been others in attendance for part of the meeting.

2.2 Introductions/Responsibilities

Those in attendance were introduced. Dale Smythe explained the roles of USKH, Lead Architect and Loren Berry Architect, Public Safety Design Consultant.

2.3 Project Scope

Discussed the overall scope of the eventual project being the completion of a new Police and Fire Facility, and the initial undertaking of providing a space needs assessment, concept design, preliminary construction cost and assistance in site selection.

2.4 Project Approach

Presented a brief slide show to demonstrate the methodology for completing the space needs assessment and initial design concept. The methodology comprised of the following steps:

- Initial meetings, including the kick-off with the PSBR, meeting with Fire and Police personnel, and a Public Meeting.
- The meetings and questionnaires completed by Fire and Police are summarized in Project Notes, which the Departments and PSBR are requested to review.
- Personnel Charts – Current & Future
- Space Standards
- Space Needs – Current & Future
- Parking Needs – Current & Future
- Adjacencies – Horizontal & Vertical

- Initial Concept Site and Floor Plans
- Estimated Costs

2.5 Schedule

Discussed the schedule for completing the space needs assessment and initial concept. The completion time for these first steps is approximately 10 weeks. Various components of the study will be forwarded to the City for review during that time period. The first such review will be of these project notes.

2.6 Background Discussion

2.6.1 The Community

Homer is a diverse city. Known as the halibut capital, it also has a strong art community; it is a tourist destination, and a place of second homes with an older population. It is sometimes referred to as the "Cosmic Hamlet By the Sea". In general, the community has a positive view of and support the public safety departments.

2.6.2 Other Government Agencies and Private Organizations

- Two Coast Guard cutters are stationed at the harbor
- The South Peninsula Hospital is located in Homer
- The Homer Police Department provides desk space for the Alaska State Troopers. Jail holding cells are under contract for use by the State. Briefing could be done with the State Troopers.
- The Kachemak Emergency Service Area to the north essentially surrounds Homer. There have been efforts to combine the departments, but is not seen as likely to occur.

2.6.3 Growth of the Community

Growth of the community has been slow, but steady. One estimate was 2% / year. (But the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development Alaska Population Projections – 2012 to 2042 for the Kenai Peninsula Borough indicates a growth from 56,756 to 65,647, an increase of 8,891 for 30 year period; only .5% average / year).

2.7 The Facilities and Site

2.7.1 The Sites

Possible sites were discussed. A larger list of sites has currently been reduced to three:

- Homer Educational and Recreation Center (HERC).
- Wildberry – Former site of Alaska Wild Berry Store.
- Heath Street – The current Police & Fire locations.

There was considerable discussion of the sites, but it was pointed out that site selection would be premature before completion of the Space Needs Assessment which will determine the size site needed. Further, the Design Team will provide Site Selection Criteria, which will address issues such as:

Site Size and Configurations

- Long Term Need
- Proportions

Locale

- Operational Efficiency
- Security
- Public Access
- Image
- Adjacent Uses
- Zoning

Street Access and Parking
- Public Parking
- Official Police Access & Parking
- Fire Apparatus Access & Egress
- Impound Storage Staff Parking
- Volunteer Parking

Topography and Soils
- Topography
- Soils

Utilities
- General
- Redundant Systems

Comments about the three sites currently under consideration include the following:
- All three are bounded by two streets, providing two points of access and egress.
- All three are above 100' elevation, assumed to be above a potential tsunami (though no tsunami study has been completed for the end of the peninsula).

HERC Site

This is the largest of the three sites and is one of the favored. However the existing gym, centrally located on the site, is part of the City's heritage. There is strong support to maintain the building, which currently does not meet code standards.

Wildberry Site

This site is considered to be in a good location for Police and Fire. But it is privately owned and has existing buildings that would need to be removed. It also has a significant grade change.

Heath Street Site

This is the current Police and Fire site and is considered to be a good location. To be used, it will be necessary to build around the existing facilities or to temporarily relocate one or both of the departments so facilities can be demolished to make room for the new building. The site also has a significant grade change.

2.7.2 Image

It is desired that the new facility reflect the community. There is an appreciation for a "marine" influence. Log buildings were also mentioned. Example buildings people like include a Credit Union and Wells Fargo Bank. But the building should appear as a "public safety facility". The City has a Community Design Manual and a design review process. The City has a 1% for Art policy.

3.0 HOMER VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT
Contents

3.1 Existing Facility Description
3.2 Public Lobby – See Shared Spaces & Facilities
3.3 Watch Office / Department Services Coordinator
3.4 Chief's Office
3.5 Asst. Chief / Training Officer
3.6 Emergency Service Specialist
3.7 Fire Marshal / Plans Reviewer
3.8 Member (Volunteer) Office
3.9 Production Room
3.10 Training Room / EOC – See Shared Spaces & Facilities
3.11 Day Room
3.12 Dining Area / Kitchen
3.13 Sleeping Quarters
3.14 Locker Area (Not Turn Out Gear)
3.15 Toilet / Shower
3.16 Laundry
3.17 Exercise & Physical Training – See Shared Spaces & Facilities
3.18 Apparatus Bays – Enclosed
3.19 Apparatus Bays – Covered
3.20 Vehicle Wash – See Shared Spaces & Facilities
3.21 Hose Tower
3.22 Training Ladder
3.23 Turn Out Gear – Active
3.24 Turn Out Gear – New, Storage
3.25 Turn Out Gear – Wash & Dry
3.26 Decon Showers / Biohazard Materials
3.27 Ready Hose Racks
3.28 Hose Washer & Dryer
3.29 Breathing Air Compressor and Tank Storage
3.30 Medical Equipment & Supplies
3.31 Food & Beverage Storage
3.32 Shop
3.33 Storage
3.34 Building Maintenance
3.35 Emergency Generator – See Shared Facilities
3.36 Volunteer Parking
3.37 Staff Parking
3.38 Visitor Parking
3.39 Driveway Aprons
3.40 Fire Yard
3.41 Fenced Enclosure
3.42 Camera Surveillance
3.43 Garden Space
3.44 Basketball 1/2 court

3.0 HOMER VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT

Met with:

- Bob Painter, Fire Chief
- Elaine Grubowski, Fire Department Staff

3.1 Existing Facility Description

From Questionnaire completed by Chief Bob Painter.

The existing fire station was constructed by HVFD Inc. in 1979 and dedicated in 1980 and includes portions of the original structure, which was a garage/shop. HVFD Inc. was the volunteer corporation that started the fire department in 1952 and managed the operation until a joint agreement between them and the City of Homer in 1990. No city funds were used to build the original building. USKH engineered the plans to upgrade the building in the mid 1990s for a seismic upgrade that ended up being a more extensive remodel due to discovered dry rot and other issues found when the building was opened up. There has not been any other work done to the building since, except routine maintenance. Due to space needs and increased paid staffing levels, the available bunkrooms have been reduced to 2 with small offices being made of the other bunkroom spaces. We are still one paid position un-staffed due to budget cuts and the small space is being used as a very small exercise room with a treadmill and step-climber. There is one small office downstairs (Watch Office) where the Dept. Services Coordinator functions, a small storage and shop where our breathing air-packs are services and tested, a small mechanical room and an equipment storage area on the ground floor, behind the apparatus (constructed during the remodel). There is a hose drying tower mid-building, accessible by fixed ladder. There is no OSHA compliant biohazard decon/cleaning area (we use the hose wash are right now). Offices are upstairs and include the Chief's Office, Training Officers Office, Training Office (used by the paid FF/EMT) and the Asst. Chief Office (vacant, used for exercise equipment). There is a training/meeting room that seats 20 at tables, a small kitchen with single range, and two residential type refrigerators, a living room and a pool table and ping-pong table for recreation. There is only one small storage room that houses the department servers and textbook/teaching materials for the classroom. There are separate men's/ladies restrooms with shower in each. There is a small "Production Room" that houses the copier and printer and member desktop computer.

3.2 Public Lobby

See Shared Spaces & Facilities

3.3 Watch Office / Department Services Coordinator

- Adjacent Fire Lobby (See Public Lobby)
- Public Interface – From Chief Painter Questionnaire

We have frequent contact with the public, year round. They must obtain Open Burning Permits from our office. They have access to fire prevention, injury prevention and general preparedness information inside our front entrance. We provide group tours for schools or other organizations interested in the fire department and host departmental open house events where the public are invited to learn about the department and see the equipment. The public picks up loaner chimney brushes at the fire station to clean their own fireplace flues.

- Reception Counter – ADA Open M-F 8:00AM – 5:00PM
- Work Station at or adjacent counter
- Department Services Coordinator Work Area adjacent Work Station, near counter.
  - -Copy machine, printer, FAX, shredder, recycle containers, 2 small safes (1 for narcotics)
  - -Files: 6 – 4 drawer locking
  - -Display board

-Mail boxes – individual slots for members by letter groups (Current 7 staff, 40 volunteer; Future 14 staff, 50 volunteer).

- Toilet for Dept. Services Coordinator – Adjacent to work station (unless other toilet rooms nearby).

3.4 Chief's Office
- Adjacent Watch Office
- Public access controlled at Reception Counter
- Staff and Volunteer access via control by Dept. Services Coordinator.
- Include "Murphy" bed?
  ☒Yes ☐No

3.5 Asst. Chief / Training Officer (Future)
- Select 1:
  ☐ Proximate to Chief
  ☒Adjacent Training Room
- Include "Murphy" bed?
  ☒Yes ☐No

3.6 Emergency Service Specialist
- Adjacent Training Room
- Office with workstations
- Include "Murphy" bed?
  ☐Yes ☒No

3.7 Fire Marshal / Plans Reviewer (Future)
- Adjacent Fire Lobby, Small Conference Room
- Include "Murphy" bed?
  ☒Yes ☐No
- Evidence Collection / Storage. Size *1 – 4 drawer legal size file cabinet should suffice* ?

3.8 Member (Volunteer) Office *(There is to be no provision for a volunteer "office" as such,should incorporate these features in other spaces, such as in the copy room like now.)*
- 4 small workstations with computer.
- Counter for printer; storage above & below.

3.9 Production Room
- Large copier and printer
- Layout space
- Adjacent to ☐ or part of Member Office ☒

3.10 Training Room / EOC
- See Shared Spaces and Facilities

3.11 Day Rooms
- Accessible to staff and volunteers
- Currently have 3 couches and 2 love seats; increase for future.
- Avoid individual recliners
- *Billiard Table*

3.12 Dining Area / Kitchen
- Dining adjacent to Day Room and Kitchen
- Kitchen adjacent to Training Room / EOC
- Dining currently seats 6; future seat 15 – 20

- Kitchen appliances, currently: 1 range, 2 refrigerators/freezer combo, 1 upright deep freezer, coffee maker, microwave oven. Should double ovens/ranges for cooking for crews post events. Commercial grade appliances and exhaust fans.
- Include Dishwasher
- Recycle Bins – 6
- Pantry for disaster food cache

3.13 Sleeping Quarters
- Proximity of Day Room
- Assume quiet area with easy access to Fire Apparatus
- Currently 2 bunkrooms with 2 extra-long *(twin)* beds each
- Prefer:
  2 double rooms for staff
  4 double rooms for volunteers
- Incorporate "Murphy" beds to increase floor space when not in use
- Capability to darken rooms to facilitate sleep
- Closets in Sleeping Rooms
- Possibly include "Murphy" beds in individual offices when staff must stay overnight in large emergencies or disasters (See individual offices)

3.14 Locker Area (Not turn out gear)
- Adjacent Toilet / Shower and Exercise Room
- Currently 22 – 12" full height lockers; future provide:
  ☐ 64 (14 staff + 50 volunteer) or ☒ 32 (1/2 personnel) ☒provide larger (15") or ☐ other:
- Changing Rooms (suggest at end of Toilet Rooms)

3.15 Toilet / Shower (Not decon) *Require separate male/female facilities in crew area.*
- Adjacent Locker Area / Exercise Room, proximate to Day Room and Sleeping Quarters
- Assume Fixture Count:
  -2 lavatory
  -2 urinal
  -2 toilets
  -2 shower
- If Toilet / Shower Room on 2nd floor provide additional toilet facility on 1st floor
  -1 lavatory
  -1 urinal
  -1 toilet

3.16 Laundry
- Adjacent to Living Areas
- 2 washers & 2 dryers – commercial grade
- Laundry sink
- Counter with storage above and below

3.17 Exercise & Physical Training
- See Shared Spaces and Facilities

3.18 Apparatus Bays – Enclosed
- Space for:
  -Ladder Truck – 41' long x 10' high
  -Engine 2 – 32' long
  -Rescue Truck 1 – 29' long
  -Brush Truck 1 – 21' long

-Medic 1 – 12' long
-Medic 2 – 23' long
-Utility Truck 3 – 22' long
-Tanker 2 – 36' long

- Current arrangement bays
  -Utility 3 and Brush 1 – back to back
  -Medic 1 and Medic 2 – back to back
  Use wheel stops to prevent backing into each other
- Current Bay height: 14' – 3" clear. Current doors 13' high, provide 13' ☐ or 14' ☒ ?

3.19 Apparatus Bays - Covered

- Space for:
  -Command 1 – 18' (Assumed) *Should be same as U-2 below.*
  -Utility 2 (Expedition) – 20'
  -Utility 1 (Crew Cab Pickup) – 25'
  -ATV on trailer – 25'
  -Rescue Boat Inflatable on trailer – 18'

3.20 Vehicle Wash

- See Shared Spaces & Facilities

3.21 Hose Tower

- Adjacent enclosed Apparatus Bays
- Access from:
  ☐ Exterior ☐ Apparatus Bay ☒ Both
- Existing size adequate

3.22 Training Ladder

- Ladder to platform on building roof
- Access: ☒Exterior or ☐ Interior

3.23 Turn Out Gear – Active

- Adjacent to apparatus
- 50 or more 18" – 20" spaces for gear and helmets
- Bench in front of gear storage

3.24 Turn Out Gear – New Storage

- Proximate to Apparatus Bays
- Provide: ☒Yes ☐ No
- Store 30 sets, hanging coats and folded pants (number) new gear

3.25 Turn Out Gear – Wash & Dry

- Proximate to Apparatus Bays
- Large Washer – Extractor
- Dehumidifying Room with space to hang 12 sets of gear minimum

3.26 Decon Showers / Biohazard Materials

- Adjacent Apparatus Bays
- 2 large showers or more? 2 is fine
- Toilet adjacent
- Biohazard Disposal Barrel
- Stainless steel wall finishes
- Dressing Area

3.27 Ready Hose Racks
- Adjacent Apparatus Bays
  ☒Number of Racks _4_ Size _10 ft._

3.28 Hose Washer & Dryer
- Adjacent Apparatus Bays (This equipment was not noted)
- Provide space? ☐ Yes ☒ No
- Description and size _*This would be a "nice to have" feature, not a necessity.*_

3.29 Breathing Air Compressor and Tank Storage
- Adjacent Apparatus Bays
- On outside wall for clean air intake

3.30 Medical Equipment and Supplies
- Adjacent Ambulance Bays
- Space for stretchers, shelving for medical supplies
- Currently have cabinet at floor level and overhead to ceiling
- The high storage is acceptable? ☒Yes ☐ No

3.31 Food & Beverage Storage
- Adjacent Apparatus Bays

3.32 Shop
- Adjacent Apparatus Bays
- Workbench
- Tool Storage

3.33 Storage
- Adjacent Apparatus Bays
- Miscellaneous storage not housed elsewhere, including AAAF foam, battery chargers, jacks, jack stands, pumps, dummies, flammable storage cabinet for paints
- Outside fuel can storage

3.34 Building Maintenance
- Janitor areas adjacent Apparatus Bays, offices, and Living Areas

3.35 Emergency Generator
- See Shared Spaces and Facilities

3.36 Volunteer Parking
- Access from Fire Yard
- Current Need 20
- Future Need 20

3.37 Staff Parking
- Access from Fire Yard
- Largest shift, Current Need 3
- Largest shift, Future 5

3.38 Visitor Parking *City of Homer Planning Dept. has parking space requirement.*
- Current Need 2
- Future Need 6
- *Required number of handicapped spaces to be determined by code.*

3.39 Driveway Aprons

- Paved space in front of Apparatus Bay doors – both sides of building at least depth of longest Fire vehicle.
- Selection:
  ☐ Use street to back into front bays, or ☒ sufficient apron space in front of building to turn Apparatus

3.40 Fire Yard

- Yard to access rear Driveway Apron, Covered Apparatus Bays, Staff Parking and Volunteer Parking
- Sufficient space to turn around longest Apparatus

3.41 Fenced enclosure

- Should Fire Yard (space behind Apparatus Bays) be fenced with security gate? ☒Yes ☐ No

3.42 Camera Surveillance

- Security cameras cover all public exterior areas on property, public internal spaces and Fire yard
- Monitored by Police Dispatch

3.43 Garden

- "Victory" Garden
- Tool Shed

3.44 Basketball 1/2 Court

4.0 HOMER POLICE

Contents

4.1 Existing Facility Description
4.2 Public Lobby & Toilets – See Shared Spaces & Facilities
4.3 Public Counter
4.4 Dispatch
4.5 Dispatch Supervisor
4.6 Dispatch Work & File Rooms
4.7 Dispatch Break Room
4.8 Dispatch Toilets
4.9 Dispatch Lockers
4.10 Dispatch Radio / Computer Room
4.11 Soft Interview Room @ Lobby
4.12 Officer Entry / Mud Room
4.13.1 Patrol Briefing / Squad Room
4.13.2 Patrol Storage
4.14 Report Writing / Officer Work Stations
4.15 Sergeants Offices
4.16 Senior Officer Offices
4.17 Interview Room – Shared
4.18 Investigations Offices
4.19 Hard Interview / Interrogation Room
4.20 Soft Interview Room
4.21 Polygraph
4.22 Evidence Package / Submit
4.23 Evidence Receive / Process
4.24 Evidence Offices or Work Station
4.25 Evidence Equipment & Supply Room
4.26 Evidence Storage
4.27 Long Time Evidence / Records Storage
4.28 Dry Disposal Bin
4.29 Vehicle Impound Bay (See 4.65)
4.30 Jail Booking
4.31 Decontamination
4.32 Control Room / Office
4.33 Jail Staff Toilet
4.34 Inmate Property
4.35 Uniform Storage
4.36 Laundry
4.37 Cleaning Supplies
4.38 Temporary Holding
4.39 Cells – General
4.40 Male Cells
4.41 Female Cells
4.42 Juvenile Holding
4.43 Crisis Cell
4.44 Prisoner Visitation Rooms
4.45 Chief's Office
4.46 Lieutenant's Office

4.47 Armory / weapons Repair, Clean
4.48 Firing Range
4.49 Range Support
4.50 Break Room
4.51 Shower & Locker Rooms – General
4.52 Men's Locker Room
4.53 Women's Locker Room
4.54 Men's Toilet & Shower
4.55 Women's Toilet & Shower
4.56 Training Room / EOC - See Shared Spaces & Facilities
4.57 Exercise & Physical Training - See Shared Spaces & Facilities
4.58 Bunk Room
4.59 Uniform Storage
4.60 Laundry
4.61 IT Room
4.62 City Electronics Equipment Room
4.63 General Storage
4.64 Facilities Maintenance
4.65 Janitor & Supply
4.66 Building Mechanical & Electrical Equipment
4.67 Sally Port
4.68 Vehicle Impound Bay
4.69 Vehicle Impound Storage
4.70 Police Vehicles Enclosed Parking
4.71 Police Vehicles Covered Parking
4.72 Police Vehicles Open Parking
4.73 Staff Parking - Open
4.74 Public Parking
4.75 Vehicle Wash - See Shared Spaces & Facilities
4.76 K-9 Facility
4.77 Emergency Generator - See Shared Spaces & Facilities
4.78 Bicycle Storage
4.79 Police Yard
4.80 Camera Surveillance

4.0 HOMER POLICE DEPARTMENT

Met with:

- Mark Robl, Chief of Police
- Stacy Luck, Patrol
- Rick Pitta, Jailer
- Janie Buncak, Dispatch Super.
- Ryan Browning, Patrol Sgt.
- Lary Kuhns, Investigations

4.1 Existing Facility Description

From Questionnaire Completed by Chief Mark Robl

Our existing building is poorly designed for our needs. Just about all spaces are too small. The foot traffic flow of prisoners, employees and visitors to the building overlaps in several areas where it should not. When people visit prisoners, the visitors have to walk through some of our work spaces to get to the visitation room and prisoners have to be lead out of the jail past employee spaces and exterior doors to get to the visitation room. The jail has several problems including an air handling system that exhausts into our employees work areas, inadequate cell designs, not enough cells, and very bad prisoner flow. Violent, out of control prisoners can often be heard throughout the building. We need more square footage for all department functions. The new facility should be designed to accommodate radio and computer equipment and updates to those systems as the technology ages and is replaced. All of our radio equipment and computers should be in a climate controlled room. Dispatch should also be air-conditioned and relatively close to the radio/computer room. The new building should incorporate video surveillance points in and around it with full video and audio coverage of all cells. Dispatch should be located near the front lobby with ready access to a secure, bullet proof, service counter/window. The front of the building should have passive barriers to vehicles. The dispatch supervisor's office should be very close to dispatch. We need more evidence storage room and a larger evidence lab.

4.2 Public Lobby

- See Shared Spaces & Facilities

4.3 Public Counter

- Adjacent Police Lobby (See Public Lobby) and Dispatch
- Public Interface - From Chief Robl Questionnaire

Our dispatch staff interfaces with the public 24/7. They issue various city licenses to residents and answer numerous questions posed by people that walk into the building looking for help or directions. Our jail staff also interfaces with the public 24/7. They often take in bail money being posted, accept and escort visitors for prisoners, and meet with attorneys, mental health personnel, clergy and others.

- Reception Counters
  - 1 Current, 2 Future (1 ADA)
- Bullet resistant glass at counter with sound opening in or around edges of glass.
- Pull up or sliding bullet resistant opening at counter for receipt of mail, packages and small found property.
- Work Station at or adjacent counter.
- Visual and bullet resistant wall separating counter area access from Dispatch and other secure Police spaces.
- Panic button at counter.
- Security buttons controlling doors accessing secure police spaces, including "soft" interview room and Police Lobby.

- Space for outgoing mail.

4.4 Dispatch

- Adjacent to, but screened from Public Counter.
- Access to Dispatch controlled; accessible only by cleared personnel.
- 4 Dispatch consoles (one for training), clustered so Dispatchers look inward. Reference carousels at each end so all consoles served. Wiring under computer floor or in column from ceiling. Each station with 6 screens (currently 17" each).
- Video and TV screens on 2 walls so all Dispatchers can view.
- Maps on walls.
- Display board on wall.
- Wall mounted shelves or trays for each Dispatcher for notebooks, mail and headsets.
- Wall mounted shelves or trays for Pending Case Files.
- Key locker (keys for City facilities).
- Climate control; separate HVAC.
- Window on exterior police only area (such as a courtyard) or bullet resistant glass in high windows on public exterior.

4.5 Dispatch Supervisor

- Adjacent Dispatch.
- Door and window to Dispatch.
- Door to Department circulation.
- Work Station, 2 – Visitor chairs
- Provide space for future dispatch console?
  ☐Yes ☒No

4.6 Dispatch Work & File Room

- Adjacent to, but acoustically screened from Dispatch.
- Window to Dispatch.
- Adjacent to Public Service Counter / Work Station, but visually screened and separated by bullet resistant wall.
- Large copy machine (could also have small copy machine in the Public Service Counter area if difficult to make larger copier easily accessible).
- Printer, 2 shredders.
- Layout counter with cabinets above and below.
- Records Files: 3 – 4 drawer legal size case files, 10 year retention. Should number of files be increased for future? ☒Yes ☐No
- 2 - 2 drawer files.
- Mailing sorting. If possible provide through wall mail slots for staff, accessible on a corridor.
- Recommend Officer Inquiry Counter (obtain records info) on same corridor wall as mail slots.

4.7 Dispatch Break Room

- Adjacent Dispatch
- Window to Dispatch
- Kitchenette
  - Counter with sink, cabinets above & below.
  - Microwave
  - Refrigerator
- Small table with 2 chairs minimum
- Small couch? ☒Yes ☐No
- Possible share with Department with proper security control. (See 4.50)
  ☐Yes ☒No

4.8 Dispatch Toilet(s)
- Adjacent to Dispatch
- Provide, select one:
  ☒Male & Female, each ADA with toilet and lavatory. (Recommend), or
  ☐ Unisex ADA with Toilet and lavatory.

4.9 Dispatch Lockers
- Adjacent Dispatch, Toilet(s)
- Not discussed. Suggest 12"x12"x15" high lockers for each Dispatch staffer for personal items, such as purses, meds, etc. (Assumes larger lockers in Department Locker Room for coats, work-out clothes, etc.)
- Locate in Dispatch staff Entry.
- Provide the small lockers for Dispatch? ☒Yes ☐No

4.10 Dispatch Radio / Computer Room
- Adjacent Dispatch.
- Separate from IT Space.
- Accessible to service vendors without breaching security of other Department areas.
- Area 3 times existing.
- Climate controlled.
- Space for additional future equipment.
- All equipment on UPS/Battery backup.

4.11 Soft Interview Room @ Lobby
- Adjacent Police Lobby, accessible from Department areas.
- Decor suitable to meet victims.
- Couch, chairs sufficient for a family to meet with police officers. Table with lamp.
- Use as a safe haven for individual threatened with violence. Dispatch to have capability to lock Lobby door after individual enters room.
- Wall and door between Interview Room and Lobby bullet resistant.

4.12 Officer Entry / Mud Room
- Staff "arctic vestibule" entry adjacent to secure police yard (official and staff parking).
- Mud Room in or immediately following entry vestibule.
- Concrete floor with drain.
- Boot cleaning area.
- Decon area with small dressing room. (This could be limited to one decon area off Sally Port?)
- Raincoat hanging area.
- Well ventilated.

4.13.1 Patrol Briefing / Squad Room
- In line of travel from Locker Room to Officer Entry.
- In proximity to Dispatch and Jail.
- Table seating for 6.
- Counter for battery chargers with cabinets above and below.
- TV/Video Screen.
- Wall Maps.

4.13.2 Patrol Storage
- Adjacent Briefing Area.

4.14 Report writing / Officer Work Stations
- In line of travel from Officer Entry to Lockers Room.

- Six Work Stations with computers.
- One Work Station for State Trooper.
- Counter for small copy machine, printer, shredder. Cabinets above and under, for forms, miscellaneous storage.
- 1 File drawer for each officer (15 future).
- Display board.

4.15 Sergeants Offices
- Proximate Briefing Room.
- Office Alternate -
  a. ☒ 4 separate offices.
  b. ☐ 4 work stations with one small Conference Room for 1 on 1 or up to 1 on 3 (saves some space, makes Department more open, and costs less to construct than 4 separate offices).
- In each space whether 4 separate offices or 1 space with work stations provide bulletin board.
- Provide other? _____.

4.16 Senior Officer Offices (future growth)
- Similar to 4.15 Sergeants.
- a. or b. ☒

4.17 Interview Room - Shared
- See Investigations.

4.18 Investigations Offices
- Adjacent Interview & Polygraph.
- Proximate to Chief, Lobby, Patrol, and Jail.
- Provide; select one:
  a. ☒ Office for each investigator (2 current need; 3 future) or _____.
  b. ☐ Work Station for each investigator in one space, with area for counter and/or table for layout. (Serves some space, makes department more open, and costs less to construct.)

4.19 Hard Interview Room
- Adjacent Investigator Office
- Is this room in addition to Interview Room in Jail? ☒Yes ☐No
- Sterile interview environment; 2 chairs and table.
- Multiple cameras and audio for observation of suspect. (No monitor room with window on interview room).
- Sound isolated.

4.20 Soft Interview Room (Interview / Interrogation)
- Provide this room adjacent to Investigations in addition to Soft Interview at Lobby (described under 4.11). ☒Yes ☐No
- Seat 2 officers and 3 others.
  XTable seating or ☐ soft furniture, table with lamp?

4.21 Polygraph
- Adjacent Investigations Office.
- Sound isolated room.
- Space for equipment, operator and testee.

4.22 Evidence Package / Submit
- Proximate to Sally Port.
- Counter-bag, label, scales.
- Counter with sink & fume hood.
- Evidence "slam" lockers, various sizes.
- Evidence refrigerator – controlled access.
- Biohazard/Blood Dry Room - controlled access.
- Emergency shower/eye wash.

4.23 Evidence Receive / Process
- Adjacent Evidence Package/Submit
- Proximate to Police Lobby, if possible.
- Access slam lockers, refrigerator.
- Counter or island workspace.
- Access Biohazard/Blood Dry Room.
- Drug burner.

4.24 Evidence Office or Work Station
- Adjacent Evidence Receive/Process.

4.25 Evidence Equipment & Supply Room
- Adjacent Evidence Receive/Process.

4.26 Evidence Storage
- Adjacent Evidence Receive/Process.
- 600 sq. ft. XCurrent? or ☐future?
- General – Design for rolling shelves.
- Narcotics Room.
- Valuables vault.
- Weapons Room.
- Refrigerator & Freezer.
- Marijuana – vented to outside.
- Found / Recovered Property.

4.27 Long Time Evidence / Records Storage
- Adjacency, no location critical.
- Could be in a basement area.
- Security critical.
- 200 sq. ft. minimum. Xcurrent? or ☐ future?

4.28 Dry Disposal Bin
- Accessible to Public at Police Lobby or exterior location.

4.29 Vehicle Impound Bay - See 4.68

4.30 Jail Booking
- Adjacent Sally Port secure vestibule.
- Proximate Police Lobby for prisoner release.
- Open Floor Area.
- Cuffing Bench – seat 3 or - *3 is fine* ?
- Report Writing Counter.
- Pre-Booking Counter
  - Bag Possessions.
  - Bag Evidence.

- Bedding Storage.
- Temporary Evidence Lockers. Suggest 2 or _____?
- Intoxilizer.
- Fingerprint Station.
- Photo Station.
- Panic button at counter or island.
- Video & audio surveillance.
- Restraint Chair.
- Food Receiving Station (for inmate meals). Describe _____.

4.31 Decontamination
- Adjacent Booking, proximate Sally Port.
- Toilet.
- Lav.
- Shower.
- Strip Search Area.

4.32 Control Room / Office
- Adjacent Booking.
- On raised platform? ☐Yes ☒No
- 3 Jailer Work Stations.
- Case Files: 5 – 4 drawer.
- Counter Pass Thru to Secure Corridor?
- TV Monitors.
- Key Rack.
- Counter for forms, shredder, copy machine, and fax.
- Window on Booking and Jail Circulation.
- Video and monitoring equipment.

4.33 Jail Staff Toilet
- Adjacent Control Room.

4.34 Inmate Property
- Adjacent Booking.
- Clothing belongings in: ☐Tubs on shelving, or ☒Lockers?

4.35 Uniform Storage
- Adjacent Booking.

4.36 Laundry
- Adjacent Booking.
- Commercial Washer & Dryer.
- Counter with deep sink, cabinets above and below.

4.37 Cleaning Supply
- Adjacent Booking.

4.38 Temporary Holding
- Adjacent Booking.

4.39 Cells - General
- Adjacent Booking
- Arrange for visual and acoustical separation from each other; for separation of men, women, and juveniles.

- Video and audio surveillance
- Inmate Exercise Room or Courtyard? ☐Room ☐Courtyard ☐Both ☒Neither

4.40 Male Cells
- Current Need - Total Capacity 9
  - 4 – 2 bed
  - 1 – 1 bed
- Future Need - Total Capacity 13
  - 5 – 2 bed
  - 3 – 1 bed

4.41 Female Cells (have none now)
- Current Need - Total Capacity 2 or ☐ 4.
  ☐ 2 – 1 bed ☒ 2 – 2 bed.
- Future Need – Total Capacity Same_____? _____?

4.42 Juvenile Holding (have none now)
- Current Need – 1
- Future Need - 2 ?

4.43 "Crisis" Cell
- For severely intoxicated or mentally ill.
- Design for easy cleaning and sanitizing.

4.44 Prisoner Visitation Room(s)
- Adjacent Booking Area.
- Proximate Police Lobby.
- For visitations by attorneys and families.
- Prisoner side with single seat, separated from visitor side by secure wall. Viewing window with sound opening.
- Visitor side with seating for
  ☐ one ☒ three, or ☐ _____?
- Counter at window
- Provide
  ☒one ☐ two viewing rooms.

4.45 Chief's Office
- Proximate Police Lobby, Lieutenant, Investigations.

4.46 Lieutenant's Office
- Proximate Police Lobby, Chief, Investigations
- Lieutenant serves as Internal Affairs officer; meets privately with public.

4.47 Armory / Weapons Repair, Clean
- Adjacent Fire Range, if possible.
- Weapons storage in concrete or masonry shell.
- Weapons storage fronted by Repair, cleaning room with workbench.
- Ventilated spaces.

4.48 Firing Range
- Adjacent Armory / Weapons Cleaning, if possible.
  - Provide Cleaning Room adjacent Range if adjacency to Armory / Weapon Cleaning not possible.
- For Patrol Guns and Rifles.

- Consider secure access by other agencies (such as, State Troopers) without entering Police Security.
- Recommend locate to minimize contact with main building; however police expressed desire to locate in basement. In either case range construction should be isolated from adjoining construction.
- Number Lanes: 6 ideal, 4 sufficient, 2 workable.
- Length Lanes: 75 ft. ideal, 25 ft. minimum. (unless directed otherwise, space needs will show 6 lanes 75 ft. long).

4.49 Range Support
- Control Room for Trainer or Supervisor.
- Bullet Trap.
- Gun Cleaning Room if Department Armory / Repair cleaning not adjacent.
- Male & Female Toilet.
- Storage Room.
- Space for Mechanical System.
- Locker Rooms for visiting users? ☐Yes ☒No

4.50 Break Room
- Proximate Jail.
- Outside wall, if possible.
- Kitchenette
  - Counter with sink, cabinets above & below.
  - Microwave
  - Refrigerator
  - Table seating for 4 – 6
  - Some soft furniture ☐Yes ☒No

4.51 Shower & Locker Rooms - General
- Adjacent Exercise Room – See Shared Spaces.
- Full size lockers for every employee.
- Larger lockers for sworn officers. ☒Yes ☐No
- If possible locate Male & Female Locker Rooms back to back so separation wall can be relocated in event ratio changes substantially.
- Recommend increase locker room space by at least 20% (not necessarily provide lockers) for minor staff increases or minor changes in Male & Female ratio. (See below)

4.52 Men's Locker Room
- Current Need – 22 x 1.20% = 26
- Future Need – 12 x 1.20% = 31

4.53 Women's Locker Room
- Current Need – 9 x 1.20% = 11
- Future Need – 12 x 1.20% = 14

4.54 Men's Toilet & Shower
- Current Need – 2 urinal, 1 toilet, 2 lav, 1 shower
- Future Need – 2 urinal, 2 toilet, 2 lav, 2 shower

4.55 Women's Toilet & Shower
- Current Need – 1 toilet, 1 lav, 1 shower
- Future Need – 2 toilet, 2 lav, 1 shower

4.56 Training Room / EOC
- See Shared Spaces & Facilities

4.57 Exercise & Physical Training
- See Shared Spaces & Facilities

4.58 Bunk Room (could be shared with Fire)
- Locate in as quiet an area as possible.
- Space for 2 beds.
- Cot storage.

4.59 Uniform Storage
- Space for new uniforms.

4.60 Laundry
- This was noted, but have no information.
- Provide? ☒Yes ☐No
- Locate where? *In jail area* (have included in Jail; perhaps note was for this).

4.61 IT Room
- Small work station.
- Workbench
- Storage

4.62 City Electronics Equipment Room
- Separate from Radio Equipment
- Provide? ☒Yes ☐No

4.63 General Storage
- Central to Department

4.64 Facilities Maintenance
- Work Bench
- Storage

4.65 Janitor & Supply
- Locate one each floor (if 2 story).

4.66 Building Mechanical & Electrical Equipment

4.67 Sally Port
- Adjacent Jail and Patrol via secure vestibule.
- Prefer ☐ single door access ☒ drive through access.
- ☐1 or ☒ 2 Van or patrol car with clear space around vehicle when all car doors open.
- Enclosed, heated space.

4.68 Vehicle Impound Bay
- Adjacent to Evidence
- Space for 1 vehicle with clear space around vehicle when doors are open.
- Enclosed, heated space.

4.69 Vehicle Impound Storage
- Adjacent Police Yard
- Covered and security fenced.
- Space for 10 cars.

4.70 Police Vehicles - Enclosed Parking
- Space for 2 SUV's, 2 Patrol cars, 2 smart carts.

4.71 Police Vehicles - Covered Parking
- Space for 2 SUV's, 1 Patrol car, 2 snowmobiles, Go Kart on 24' trailer.

4.72 Police Vehicle - Open Parking
- Officers take vehicles home.
- On duty parking for 2 SUV's, 2 Patrol cars.

4.73 Staff Parking - Open
- In secure Police Yard
- 7 Current Need
- 19 Future Need ☒ Correct? Yes

4.74 Public Parking
- 10 Current Need
- 14 Future Need

  - Does this include State Trooper and other police agency parking? ☐Yes XNo
  - If no, where is this parking? There should be room for them to park in our secure area, open.
  - What is preferred way for State Troopers to enter the facilities (consider access to Patrol work station, Jail, and Range ☐ Park with Public, then enter through Lobby, or ☒ *Park in secure Police Yard, accessing through gates, then entering building through officer Entry, and Firing Range* ☐ Other _____.

4.75 Vehicle Wash
- See Shared Spaces & Facilities

4.76 K-9 Facility
- Adjacent Officer Entry
- ☒Enclosed, heated kennel for _____? dogs, or ☐ Dogs come in building and go home with K-9 Officer.
- Food Storage Cabinet ☒Yes ☐No

4.77 Emergency Generator
- See Shared Spaces & Facilities

4.78 Bicycle Storage
- Found or stolen bikes
- Covered space to hold 40 bikes.
- Suggest locating along public property side so that individuals attempting to recover a bike can view through chain link fence.

4.79 Police Yard
- Fenced or walled area adjoining building.
- Enter via controlled access gate; one primary gate, a second or emergency gate preferably off another street.
- Yard to house open Police Parking, Police Staff Parking and provide access to Officer Entry, Vehicle Sally Port, Vehicle Impound Storage, Police vehicles Enclosed Parking, Police Vehicle Covered Parking, Police Vehicle Open Parking, and Staff Open Parking.

4.80 Camera Surveillance
- Security cameras cover all public exterior areas on property, public interior spaces, jail, vehicle sally port, and Police yard.
- Monitored by Dispatch.

5.0 SHARE SPACES & FACILITIES

Contents

5.1 General
5.2 Public Lobby & Toilets
5.3 Training Room / EOC
5.4 Exercise & Physical Training
5.5 Vehicle Wash
5.6 Emergency Generator
5.7 Refuse

5.0 SHARED SPACES & FACILITIES

5.1 General

- The following spaces could be shared by Fire and Police.

5.2 Public Lobby & Toilets

- There are a number of ways to configure the Public Lobby and related spaces for the Fire and Police Departments, ranging from:
  1) Completely separate, with entrances some distance apart; each with Public Toilets.
  2) Mostly separate, in that there is one weather vestibule with doors to separate Lobbies each with Public Toilets.
  3) Somewhat Shared, in that there is one weather vestibule into a shared Main Lobby with common Public Toilets, and separate smaller Lobbies for Fire and Police each of which could be secured from the Main Lobby.
  4) Completely shared in that there is one weather vestibule into a shared single Lobby with common Public Toilets and Counters directly on the Lobby for Fire and Police.
- No decision required at this time.
- These 4 configurations will be diagrammed to help decide which to use or modify. The building area required for each will not be substantially different.
- Things to consider:
  - The Fire Watch Office Counter is staffed during the day; the Police Public Counter is not staffed but is served by Dispatch as needed. In configuration 4 (described above) there could be a tendency for the public seeking the police to go to Fire because the position is staffed; putting an unnecessary work load on that position.
  - The traffic to and from Police would include victims, jail visitors and inmates being released; as well as those seeking information and licenses; whereas traffic to Fire includes those seeking burning permits, preparedness and fire prevention information, loaner chimney brushes and tours.
- Things to include:
  - Waiting areas.
  - Public Toilets.
  - Fire Display Area to include Homer's first Fire Engine and small water trailer, other memorabilia.
  - Police Display Area include memorabilia.
- Character of space should be open and inviting.
- Adjacencies include:
  - Fire Watch Counter.
  - Fire Marshal & Plans Review Access.
  - Access to loaner chimney brushes.
  - Police Public Counter.
  - Soft Interview / Safe Refuge Room.
  - Jail Visitor Access & inmate Release.
- Area Requirement
  - Large enough to hold class of Elementary School children touring the Facility.
- Camera Surveillance of Entrances and Lobby(s).

5.3 Training Room / EOC

- Locate between Fire and Police.
- Secure access back to Police.
- Adjacent Fire Kitchen.
- Adjacent Toilets.

- Training Room capacity:
  - 25 Current Need, 33+ Future
  - Seating at tables, facing front.
- Equipment:
  - White boards, bulletin boards.
  - Projector and Screen.
  - Television? ☒Yes ☐No
- Support Spaces
  - EOC supplies and equipment in tubs stored in wall cabinets; provide power and telephone connections.
  - Rescue Annie CPR storage in wall cabinets.
  - Work Counter.
  - Chair and Table Storage.

5.4 Exercise & Physical Training

- Locate between Fire and Police
- Secure access back to Police.
- Proximate to Toilets & Showers for both Departments, if possible.
- Exercise Equipment. Please provide information:
  - Police currently have about 10 pieces of equipment plus free weight area.
  - Fire currently has 2 pieces of equipment plus free weight area.
  - Design for about 24 pieces of equipment or _____?, plus following:
- Free weight area.
- Mat area 24' x 24' or equivalent - say 600 sq. ft., configured for mat layout.
- Space for 3 heavy bags.
- Separate (wall or folding wall) Mat & heavy bag area from equipment and weight lifting? ☒Yes ☐No
- Storage Room.

5.5 Vehicle Wash – done at Public Works Currently

- Accessible to both Fire and Police. (Fire Only ☐) (Police & Fire Shared ☒)
- Area sized to largest Fire Apparatus.
- Indoor with humidity control? ☒Yes ☐No
- Storage for cleaning supplies.

5.6 Emergency Generator

- Probable re-use of existing packaged generator.
- Locate near building power entrance and convenient for service.

5.7 Refuse

- Shared by Fire and Police if possible; may be difficult because of other adjacency requirements, and the need to have Refuse area on a street property line, allowing access by the service provider without going into secure area.

Facilities should be located in an open easily observable area. The perimeter of the site should not be surrounded by woods, unless there is at least a clear space between the buildings or fences and the wooded area.

Preferably, facilities would not be located among tall buildings where windows or roofs look down on operations. Locations where adjoining sites have numerous or complex building footprints which create concealed or partially concealed spaces adjacent to the facility should be avoided. Similarly, the site should not be sited on ground lower than adjacent property.

Because of the potential for toxic spills, fires, and explosions, and the possibility of sabotage from a partially concealed right of way, the facilities should not be located immediately adjacent to a highway, a viaduct or other raised structure.

Public Access

Police and fire facilities should be easily found and safely accessible by the public. The concept of a shared police and fire lobby is discussed in the Project Notes under Shared Spaces and Facilities.

Image

Some communities desire to have major public facilities centrally located in a civic center. This is convenient for the public, but perhaps more importantly; it brings a sense of place and importance to the community.

The character of a building design is certainly important, but the building location also makes a statement. The government or civic center concept might represent civic pride, while a location in or near a major shopping center might suggest another attitude; perhaps that of service. A location in an industrial area probably would not be as positive a connotation.

IV. STREET ACCESS AND PARKING

The Homer fire and police facilities will have four kinds of parking, including:

- Public Parking
- Official Parking
- Staff Parking
- Fire Volunteers

Public Parking

The public parking should be easily seen and readily accessible adjacent to the building public entrance. If the building should include a large meeting room, it is desirable that the public parking lot have two points of access. This will aide access to and egress from a busy lot.

Official Parking

The official parking should be in a fenced, secure area. To avoid the congestion of the public lot, the official parking should have its own point of access. This access should be on a street not subject to heavy traffic to the point of grid lock. The access should also be far enough from a stop signed intersection to avoid traffic backups.

In the event of blockages of the main access, due to accidental or deliberate causes, a second access is desirable for the major facilities; preferably from a second street. For this reason, a site at a corner location is ideal. If only one street is available, the two accesses should be as far apart as possible. The second access could be through the public parking.

Staff Parking

Because police employee cars are sometimes subject to vandalism; and because of shift changes during dark hours, staff parking should also be in a fenced, secure area. This parking could be contiguous with official parking. Fire staff parking could also be in a secure area.

Volunteer Parking

Because volunteer fire fighters' private vehicles could also be subject to vandalism, a fenced area is recommended.

Impound Storage

Impound storage parking should be in a secure area, and concealed from the public so that vehicles cannot be damaged or otherwise affected.

V. TOPOGRAPHY AND SOILS

Topography

Because it is critical that the Police and Fire Departments remain operational during floods, the facilities should be located above the flood plain or potential tsunami. This is also important to avoid costly fill or the possibility of costly foundations. The site should not be in a swampy area, or below adjacent streets. Sites which rise slightly above adjacent streets offer the possibility of a better image for the facility.

A relatively flat site is preferable, though a slight slope for drainage is ideal. A site with a steep slope should be avoided. However, a site with 2 or 3 levels separated by steep slope might be considered for a multilevel facility – though fire apparatus access and egress at both sides of the facility could be problematic.

Soils

Fire and police facility are "Essential Facilities" and have more stringent structural requirements than a typical building. Therefore, good soil bearing characteristics are important for seismic as well as gravity loading. Sites with poor fill or near known seismic faults should be avoided.

Sites with substantial rock outcroppings should be avoided if possible, because of the additional excavation expense.

VI. UTILITIES

The site should be served by the normal utilities including water, telephone, electrical power, sanitary and storm sewers and if possible, natural gas.

Redundant Systems

A police and fire facility should remain operational during and after an emergency event, whether natural or man caused.

The building code classifies these buildings as an "Essential Facilities", and stipulates more stringent requirements for construction. For example, the ability to resist earthquakes is increased. Other improved or redundant systems to be considered include:

- Electric Power
- Potable Water
- Waste Water
- Communications
- Air Handling Systems

All of these items should be addressed during design of the facilities. Potable water might be considered during site selection. A backup water system could be provided by storage tanks. However, a site offering the possibility of an independent well would be desirable.