

For Immediate Release:

Volunteer Recruitment Assisted by Virginia Fire Chiefs' SAFER Grant

The Virginia Fire Chiefs Association (VFCA) in partnership with the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC), and the Virginia Volunteer Workforce Solutions (VWS) program received a DHS/FEMA Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant to assist with the recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters. As part of this grant, the VFCA is preparing to launch a \$90,000 statewide media campaign using geo-targeting data and multiple media venues. The recruitment campaign will be heard and seen across Virginia's media markets in September/October 2016, January 2017, and May 2017.

Nick Caputo, Virginia VWS Program Manager worked with IAFC staff and various fire service representatives across Virginia to best leverage the funds to gain maximum statewide media coverage. For example, Caputo worked closely with Loudoun County's Volunteer Program Manager Karen McQuaid who suggested a regional recruitment approach involving Loudoun County and surrounding agencies including Fairfax Fire-Rescue, Prince William Fire-Rescue, Frederick County Fire-Rescue, Clarke County Fire-Rescue, and Rappahannock Fire-Rescue. Caputo lauded McQuaid for her efforts and "spirit of cooperation and regionalism" to assist with this media campaign.

Caputo emphasized that volunteer recruitment and retention requires constant and sustained efforts. McQuaid suggested that "in addition to these regional recruitment efforts, each jurisdiction is encouraged to enhance their efforts locally through community events, open houses and informational sessions." The VFCA is hoping that this media campaign will enhance volunteer firefighter recruitment efforts for all volunteer and combination fire service organizations in Virginia.

If you are interested in volunteering for fire-rescue in your community call 866-VOL-HERO or visit www.EverydayHeroVA.org.