



Virginia Volunteer Workforce Solutions



The Virginia Fire Chiefs Association (VFCA), in partnership with the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC), is pleased to be in its third phase of its Volunteer Workforce Solutions (VWS) program, which will offer statewide recruitment and retention support. This is funded by a FY 2014 Staffing for Adequate Fire Emergency Management Response (SAFER) Grant through the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

Over the course of two years, Phase III will be a multi-faceted approach designed to benefit many VA departments and eventually have a nationwide impact. Phase III will include:

- Assistance with basic firefighter entry level training courses as well as NFPA 1582 physicals
- Development and delivery of a statewide radio advertising campaign
- Funding and delivering of a Fire Officer Academy for volunteers
- Scholarship assistance to the Virginia Fire and Rescue Conference
- Support with leadership, recruitment, and retention workshops

VWS Background and History

The Virginia Fire Chiefs Association was awarded a 2009 and 2011 SAFER recruitment and retention grant to study traditional recruiting methodologies as compared to using Geographic Information Systems (GIS). The GIS-based community level-profile is an analysis of existing firefighters that identifies the types of people who could be future firefighter candidates, and discusses the methods to best communicate and recruit them.

In Phase I, there were 1,500 volunteer interest requests received in the 20 participating departments. In Phase II, 14 departments participated and the results yielded 1,833 recruitment and retention events, 1,117 membership applications, 1,163 volunteer interest forms and 656 new members. The VWS program is also operating in Connecticut through the Connecticut Fire Chiefs Association.

Learning from best practices in other departments, we established a centralized recruiting process. We realized the pool of possible volunteers was not what we expected.

-VWS Participant

Program Contacts:

Nick Caputo
VFCA
Program Manager
nicaputo@aol.com
814-404-3282

Abena Bonso-Bruce
IAFC
Program Manager
abonso-bruce@iafc.org
703-896-4836

Tina Thirakounh
IAFC
Program Coordinator
tthirakounh@iafc.org
703-537-4851