

## REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

### CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT AND FORMALIZATION VIRGINIA FIRE OFFICERS ACADEMY

The Virginia Fire Chiefs Association (VFCA) is seeking competitive proposals from qualified vendors to develop, transform, and formalize the current Virginia Fire Officers Academy (VFOA) program into a formal curriculum.

The VFCA is a recipient of a Federal Emergency Management Agency Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grant to promote the recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters. Grant funds will be used to fund this project.

All proposals in response to this RFP shall be electronically submitted as a PDF document to Derek Bullington at [derek.bullington@iafc.org](mailto:derek.bullington@iafc.org) with the RFP name ("VFOA Curriculum Development Proposal") in the email subject line. Hard copies will be accepted and must be clearly marked as "VFOA Curriculum Development Proposal." If hard copies are submitted, either in person, by private carrier, or via US mail, five (5) copies must be included in the submittal package. Faxed proposals will not be accepted. Regardless of the method of submittal, all documents must be received no later than June 16, 2021, 2:00PM EST.

Hard copy proposals must be delivered to:

IAFC  
c/o Derek Bullington  
4795 Meadow Wood Lane, Suite 100  
Chantilly, VA 20151

Any communications or questions pertaining to the procedural aspects of this RFP, scope of work, the preparation or submittal of a proposal, and any other specific deliverables should be directed to:

Nick Caputo  
VFCA  
VWS Program Manager  
[njcaputo@aol.com](mailto:njcaputo@aol.com) | (814) 404-3282

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## **ABOUT THE VFCA**

The *State Fire Chiefs Association of Virginia (SFCAV), Inc.* was organized in 1930 by progressive fire chiefs who saw the need to work together for the betterment of the fire service. The SFCAV later changed its name to the Virginia Fire Chiefs Association (VFCA). The Virginia Fire Chiefs Association (VFCA) serves the communities of Virginia through its fire service leaders and advances the fire and rescue service through leadership, education, and advocacy. The VFCA provides four key services to its members: career development, information and idea exchange, political advocacy, and personal/family support.

In 2007, the VFCA created the *Virginia Fire Chiefs Foundation (VFCF)*, a 501c3 foundation whose purpose is to provide educational opportunities and scholarships to fire and emergency services professionals, develop public relations programs to promote and raise public awareness about Virginia's fire and emergency services, assist other related organizations in the development and implementation of public education programs, and provide grants to fire and emergency service organizations. The VFCF is funded through donations, corporate giving, and various fundraising events.

## **SAFER GRANT AND VFCA SAFER GRANT HISTORY**

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Grant Programs Directorate is responsible for the implementation and administration of the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grants. SAFER) was created by FEMA to provide funding directly to fire departments and volunteer firefighter interest organizations to help them increase or maintain the number of trained, "front line" firefighters available in their communities. The goal of SAFER is to enhance the local fire departments' abilities to comply with staffing, response, and operational standards established by the NFPA (NFPA 1710 and/or NFPA 1720).

SAFER grants comprise two primary categories, "Hiring of Firefighters" and "Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Firefighters." The primary focus for the "Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Firefighters" is the recruitment and/or retention of volunteer firefighters who are involved with, or trained in, the operations of firefighting and emergency response.

The VFCA is participating in a SAFER grant, "recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters" program, to identify and provide solutions for increasing the number of volunteer firefighters in Virginia. The VFCA was awarded three previous SAFER grants, and the existing SAFER grant (Phase IV) consists of developing a marketing campaign, delivering customized recruitment and retention plans, designing recruitment and marketing tools, and delivering basic firefighter and leadership training.

The overall goal of the Phase IV SAFER grant as it relates to this RFP is to develop, deliver, and enhance leadership training in order to optimize operational staffing levels in volunteer and combination fire departments. It is widely known that leadership, or lack thereof, on the fireground, in fire stations, and within the organization itself, has a direct impact on the recruitment and retention efforts of fire service organizations. The Virginia Fire Officers Academy (VFOA) is designed to address the leadership component of the Phase IV SAFER grant.

The VFCA has a program manager that oversees the overall SAFER grant, and the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) functions as a contractor for the VFCA to provide program management and staff support for managing the grant.

## **VFOA SUMMARY**

The VFOA program is an interactive, highly challenging, educational initiative of the Virginia Fire Chiefs Association. The VFOA demonstrates modern, ethical leadership values while promoting best practices in fire and emergency services. This program is designed to teach, demonstrate, and use the key skills and techniques of exemplary leadership; and to advance a culture of “safety through leadership” in today’s ever-changing environment. The target audience of the VFOA is fire service members who are newly promoted officers or individuals aspiring to become officers. The program is designed and delivered in two ways: 1) 4.5-day residential program delivered on a college campus and 2) a modular program delivered at various locations consisting of four 10-hour modules. The VFOA has been delivered yearly since 2008 with the exception of 2020 due to COVID-19 pandemic. The VFOA now has nearly 1,000 graduates of the program – representing an entire generation of company officers and chief officers across Virginia.

The theme of the VFOA is Safety through Leadership (STL) and is based upon the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation’s 16 Firefighter Life Safety Initiatives known nationally as the Everyone Goes Home® Program. The STL curriculum focuses on improving leadership techniques, personal accountability, and fostering the cultural change required to improve firefighter safety by implementing the 16 Firefighter Life Safety Initiatives. Modules for the VFOA program include: team building, the impact of the leader’s attitude on safety, employee coaching techniques, conflict resolution, correcting unsafe behaviors, effective communication, cancer awareness and prevention, firefighter safety and health, dealing with employee stress, and mediation. Students deal with leadership challenges via lecture and participating in real-life role playing scenarios using actors and facilitators to guide the learning process.

The VFOA has been recognized by the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation (NFFF) and the U.S. Congressional Fire Services Institute for excellence. In 2010, the VFOA was awarded the *Senator Paul S. Sarbanes Fire Service Safety Leadership Award*, which recognizes outstanding contributions to firefighter health and safety.

## **RFP SUMMARY**

The Virginia Fire Chiefs Association (VFCA) seeks competitive proposals from curriculum and e-learning development firms to develop approximately 40 hours of curriculum material using both classroom and web-based trainings (WBT) delivery methods. The general course content will be provided by, and developed in concert with, the VFCA and a select group of VFOA stakeholders.

The curriculum should address the key curriculum components: team building, the impact of the leader's attitude on safety, employee coaching techniques, conflict resolution, correcting unsafe behaviors, effective communication, cancer awareness and prevention, firefighter safety and health, mental health and mediation. Lectures, group activities and role-playing scenarios should reinforce the curriculum components.

## **PROJECT PURPOSE**

The VFCA has created a very successful residential and modular delivery of the Virginia Fire Officers Academy. The modular format makes it easier for volunteer firefighters to attend because it breaks the full program into four separate one-day modules, which eliminates the need for volunteers to take a week's vacation to attend the traditional residential program. The purpose of this RFP is to identify and work with an instructional design and educational company to formalize the residential and modular VFOA curriculum so that it can be replicated and delivered nationwide. In addition, the formalized curriculum will ensure that the program content is delivered consistently using different instructors while adhering to the latest successful adult learning principles.

## **TARGET AUDIENCE**

The target audience for the program will be fire service members who are newly promoted officers or individuals aspiring to become officers.

## **SCOPE OF WORK**

- A) Collaborate with VFCA staff, VFOA stakeholders, and VFOA subject matter experts to assist in the development and formalization of the VFOA curriculum.
- B) Proposals should include both classroom and web-based trainings (WBT) delivery methods, or any other suggested methods deemed beneficial by the vendor.
- C) Provide instructional design and storyboarding to include graphics, on-screen text, and narration script of the Web Based Training (WBT).
- D) Articulate Storyline/TinCan/xAPI as the preferred publishing tool.

- E) Develop the modules/courses leveraging the ability of different forms of media to hold the student's attention and facilitate knowledge transfer.
- F) Each module/course should measure the student's comprehension using landmark objectives related to each module/course. Additionally, overall student comprehension measuring tools must be developed for the entire program. Assessment and comprehensive tools will be developed in partnership with the VFCA staff and VFOA subject-matter experts.
- G) Each module/course should maintain the user's attention through interactivity, animation, and scenarios.
- H) Each module/course should be professionally narrated with alt-text imaging.
- I) All trainings should be developed for students at or below the 10<sup>th</sup> grade comprehension level.
- J) All trainings should be developed in English.
- K) Work with the VFCA and IAFC staff and subject-matter experts through periodic prototype reviews and feedback sessions.
- L) Vendors will supply graphics that will be approved by the VFCA.
- M) Vendor must have key personnel attend and observe one full VFOA delivery.
- N) Vendor must provide training to select group of VFOA stakeholders related to the WBT portion of the program.
- O) Vendor must deliver one curriculum manual including course content, learning goals and objectives, PowerPoint presentation to reinforce the curriculum, and role play scenario sheets for students and facilitators.

OPTIONAL DELIVERABLE: The VFCA desires to deliver some or all of this training using WBT mediums. Realizing that WBT may not be achievable within the scope and budget of this RFP, the VFCA is hoping to receive pricing to achieve our WBT goals. The WBT learning objectives will be developed by the VFCA and associated subject-matter expertise from the VFCA. Our desire is to have up to 24 hours of WBT developed. The WBT will be made accessible to users utilizing the IAFC's learning management system. The WBT training should be priced using one hour cost increments (cost per one hour of WBT). Vendors are encouraged to provide a separate cost estimate for this optional deliverable.

## **RFP EVALUATION AND NOTIFICATION TIMELINE**

- June 14, 2021: Question deadline period regarding the RFP. Questions may be emailed to Derek Bullington at [dbullington@iafc.org](mailto:dbullington@iafc.org). Please allow one business day for a response.
- June 16, 2021: Proposal due date. Sent or delivered to [dbullington@iafc.org](mailto:dbullington@iafc.org)
- June 17 to July 1, 2021: Proposal evaluation period.
- July 2-9, 2021: Vendor discussions or interviews if necessary.
- July 12, 2021: Successful vendor notification.
- July 12-16, 2021: Contract negotiation and finalization with accepted vendor.
- July 19, 2021: Notifications to unsuccessful vendors.

## PROJECT TIMELINE

- July 12, 2021: Contract award date
- July-August, 2021: Vendor, VFCA, VFOA informational sessions
- TBD: Vendor attends and observes VFOA delivery
- January, 2022: Vendor completes Alpha/Beta versions of curriculum including WBT components.
- April, 2022: Vendor completes final version of formalized VFOA curriculum including WBT components and curriculum manual.
- **NOTE:** Vendors may offer an adjusted project timeline as long as the timeframes generally align with the RFP project timeline.

## PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

Please provide answers to the following questions in as efficient a manner as possible.

### **General Company Information**

- 1) Provide a brief company history including the number of years your firm has been in business and the years of experience in curriculum building.
- 2) Provide a representative list of your company's customers and the type of services that you provide them relative to curriculum development and formalization.
- 3) Describe your company's experience with similar projects and specifically the course topics listed in this RFP.
- 4) Are you currently providing similar services to any other fire/EMS or other public safety (emergency management, law enforcement, etc.) organizations? If so, please summarize?
- 5) What distinguishes your company and your products from your competition?
- 6) Is your company a certified minority or women-owned business?

### **Project Information**

- 7) Provide a detailed, proposed work plan for building the WBT and classroom curricula including storyboarding, review cycles, and alpha/beta testing milestones.
- 8) Describe how the project would be managed and your process and response times for responding to project status updates.
- 9) Provide an itemized breakdown of fees for the project.

### **References**

10) List the organization name, contact person, email address, and phone number for three references for similar projects. Please include a brief description of each project.

### **Other**

11) Provide any other information that you believe is pertinent to this RFP.

## **EVALUATION, SELECTION AND CONTRACT AWARD CRITERIA**

Proposals will be evaluated on overall presentation, demonstrated ability to achieve the objectives of the program, experience with similar programs, references, and related factors.

The VFCA shall award the contract to the company(s) or individual(s) whose response best matches the needs, pricing and other factors. Price is not the sole determining factor – vendors may be chosen based on experience, their ability to provide unique services and other factors.

The VFCA reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals that is deemed in the best interest of the VFCA.

This procurement shall utilize competitive negotiation.

The VFCA, at its sole discretion, reserves the option to conduct interviews, reference checks, request additional items or information of any or all respondents as it deems necessary to evaluate.

All proposals will be evaluated based on the criteria below. To ensure consideration for this RFP, your proposal should be complete and include all of the following:

- **Overall Proposal Suitability:** Proposed solution(s) must meet the scope and needs included herein and be presented in a clear and organized manner. The overall completeness of the proposal will be strongly evaluated.
- **Organizational Experience:** Bidders will be evaluated on their experience as it pertains to the scope of this project specifically but not limited to experience, education, and past performance related to similar projects. In addition, company history and qualifications will be strongly considered.
- **Previous Work and Experience:** Bidders will be evaluated on samples of their work as it pertains to the scope of this project. Samples of final work product (2-4 samples) should be included.
- **Project Plan, Timeline and Anticipated Resources:** Bidders will be evaluated on the anticipated resources assigned to this project (total number, role, title, experience), and the scope and breadth of the project plan, timeline, and milestones.



- Value and Cost: Bidders will be evaluated on the cost of their solution(s) based on the work to be performed and delineated by major features of the project in accordance with the scope of this project.
- Technical Expertise and Experience: Bidders must provide descriptions and documentation of staff technical expertise and experience; specifically experience related to working with the fire and emergency service community or similar organizations.
- Project Management and Methodology: Methods of project management including how the vendor intends to update and communicate with the VFCA; and the platforms used to review prototypes, provide feedback, and made edits and changes.
- Credentials and Client References:
- Availability: Developer's availability during Eastern Standard Time working hours of 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM.
- Company Location: Preference may be given to companies within the United States and available for face-to-face meetings if necessary.
- Conflict of Interest: By submitting a proposal, contractors acknowledge that they and their affiliates have no undisclosed conflicts of interest as it relates to this project, the VFCA or the IAFC.

## **BUDGET, BILLING AND PAYMENT TERMS**

Proposals must include proposed costs to complete the tasks described in the project scope and project description. Pricing should be listed for each of the proposed major task areas. Any subtasks required to complete the major tasks must also be described and priced. All costs and fees must be clearly described in each proposal. This is a "turn-key" project where the overall price must include all costs associated with completing the project.

The terms of payment will be as outlined below, unless other mutually agreed upon terms are negotiated prior to award. Within 30 days of the award, 25% of the final project cost will be paid to the successful Bidder. Subsequent payments will consist of 25% increments with 25% paid at 25% completion of the project; 25% paid at 75% completion of the project; and the remaining 25% will be paid at the project's completion. Each of the 25% milestones will be mutually agreed upon between the VFCA and selected bidder based on the overall agreed upon project timeline.