



Diversity Culture in the Volunteer and Combination Fire Service Implementation Manual

Prepared for

The International Association of Fire Chiefs Volunteer and Combination Officer Section

Prepared by

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Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to better understand what drives inclusion and diversity within a fire department. More diversity in the fire service leads to better engagement with the community or communities served by the department. The availability of emergency personnel that understand and respond to the needs and cultures of diverse communities helps develop trust and make for more effective emergency response.

Additionally, the purpose of this study is to help individual departments identify areas where they can strengthen diversity, inclusion, and teamwork in order to create a more inclusive organization.

Study Origins

This study grew out of a larger project by the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) to examine diversity and inclusion in volunteer and combination fire departments. The IAFC contracted Oklahoma State University, an academic institution well-established in the fields of fire sciences and emergency management, to develop a validated survey to examine diversity and inclusion in volunteer and combination fire departments. The Principal Investigator for the project is Dr. Haley Murphy, Assistant Professor and Program Coordinator for the Fire and Emergency Management Program. The first survey was deployed in August 2019.

Methodology

The principal investigator sent the original online questionnaires to six fire departments, August – October 2019. The online survey was constructed using Qualtrics. Qualtrics survey software is known for both its flexibility and ease of use. The survey includes 49 questions (most multi-item questions) and is estimated to take 18 minutes to complete. Most items are scored using a Likert scale of 1-5 or 1-7 (low to high). The survey includes topics such as, diversity in the department, overall climate and inclusiveness, department culture, team culture, and commitment to the department.

Preparing the Survey in Qualtrics

Each fire department working with the IAFC should receive a separate survey, so that their responses can be collected and analyzed separately from all other participating departments. New surveys can be copied and renamed from the survey master copy on the Qualtrics dashboard by first clicking on the three ellipses on the far, right side of the survey, and then choosing “Copy Project”.

okstate.az1.qualtrics.com/Q/MyProjectsSection

qualtrics.XM

Projects Contacts Library Help

Search projects... Create new project

Survey	Status	Questions	Languages	Est. response time
IAFC Diversity and Inclusion Master Modified Dec 23, 2019	New	50	1	18 minutes
Sumter County Fire and Rescue Modified Dec 23, 2019	Closed	50	38	
McQueeney Volunteer Fire Department	Closed	50	14	

okstate.az1.qualtrics.com/Q/MyProjectsSection

qualtrics.XM

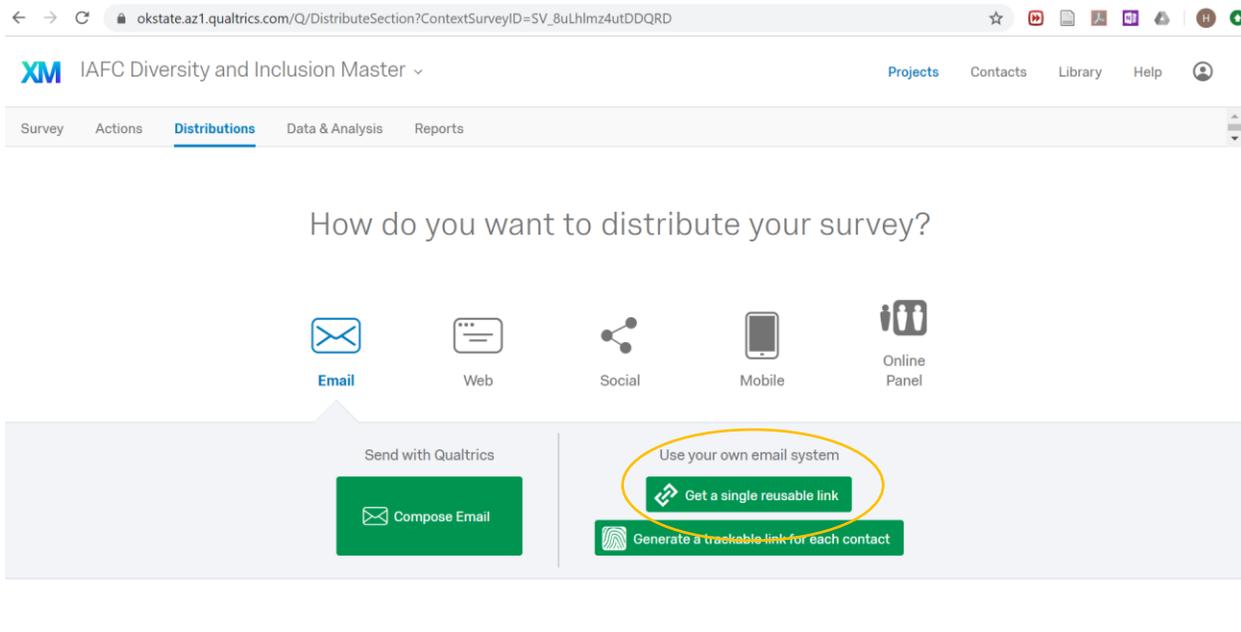
Projects Contacts Library Help

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Survey	Status	Questions	Languages	Responses
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Sumter County Fire and Rescue Modified Dec 23, 2019	Closed	50	38	

- Activate
- Collaborate
- Rename project
- Copy project
- Edit survey
- Preview survey
- Translate survey
- Distribute survey
- Data & Analysis
- View reports
- Delete project

After you have copied and named the survey, you will need to create a distribution link. Again, click on the three ellipses, but this time, choose “Distribute Survey”. This will take you to a page with multiple items. In order to keep the surveys anonymous, you should choose “get a single reusable link”.



This link can be included in any emails or reminder emails.

Invitations to Participate

Invitations to participate were sent to fire departments in two parts.

1. An introductory email was sent to the firefighters in the department directly from the Chief notifying the firefighters that the survey was forthcoming and had the support of department leadership.
2. Invitations to participate in the survey, including the link to the survey, were sent to the firefighters in three waves. Each wave should be sent out one week apart.

*Email template for Chief to inform the department of upcoming survey.

Within a few days, you will be provided an opportunity to participate in an anonymous survey about diversity and inclusion in your department. This survey is being conducted by the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) and through researchers at Oklahoma State University (OSU).

In the next few days you will be receiving information from (Enter name here) about how to access the IAFC survey. The survey will take about 20 minutes to complete. The survey is voluntary, although I encourage your participation and involvement in this effort. It is a tangible way for you to help shape the future of the (Enter Dept here)

I want to emphasize that this is an anonymous survey. (Enter Dept here) management will **NEVER** be provided the answers of the (Enter Dept here) members that participate in the survey. OSU will analyze the resulting data and the organizational-level trends reported to (Enter Dept here).

The survey will ask questions about the culture in our department with regard to cultural inclusion and how well we currently work, lead, and communicate with each other. The survey also asks about the level of trust and flexibility within our organization.

It is important for the (enter dept here) and the national fire service that we participate in the survey, and that you provide a truthful and candid perspective, based on your perceptions about things that are happening today. If we can obtain a good snapshot of where we are today, we can gain an accurate understanding and better plan our next actions and priorities, and continue our work to further evolve our culture.

Date

Dear (name of department) personnel:

We are writing you on behalf of the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) and Oklahoma State University to ask for your participation in a survey about diversity and inclusion within your fire department. Your participation in this study may benefit your department or fire departments in your immediate area, as well as departments throughout the world. This research may be used to focus future improvements within individual departments and will inform the IAFC as to how to best support volunteer and combination fire department with their recruitment and retention efforts nationwide.

We will be collecting information about your perspectives on a number of issues. Your responses are confidential and we will not publish or release information from individual responses to your department or others. Topics will include questions about the department's leadership, fairness, and support for diversity, as well as your own experiences with inclusion, influence, and conflict.

We expect that for most people the survey will take about 25 minutes to complete. Participation in this study is voluntary and your decision to participate will have no bearing on your relationship with your organization, the IAFC, or Oklahoma State University.

If you would like to participate in the survey, please follow this link to complete the survey: (Qualtrics Link Here)

If you have any questions about this survey, please contact myself at the contact information listed below with my signature, or Monica Willenssen with the IAFC via email at mwillenssen@iafc.org. Alternatively, if you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this study, you can also contact the Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board Office via telephone at 405-744-3377 or e-mail at irb@okstate.edu. I appreciate your assistance, and look forward to learning more about you and your perceptions of culture among fire departments.

Sincerely,

Retrieving Responses for Analysis

Responses can be downloaded from Qualtrics in an Excel sheet for analysis. Click on the three ellipses next to the survey and choose “Data & Analysis”.

The screenshot shows the Qualtrics interface with a list of projects. The 'McQueeny Volunteer Fire Department' survey is selected, and its dropdown menu is open, with 'Data & Analysis' circled in red.

Survey	Status	Questions	Language
IAFC Diversity and Inclusion Master	New	50	1
Sumter County Fire and Rescue	Closed	50	38
McQueeny Volunteer Fire Department	Closed	50	14

Next, click on the dropdown menu for “Export & Import” and choose “Export Data”.

The screenshot shows the 'Data & Analysis' page for the 'Sumter County Fire and Rescue' survey. The 'Export & Import' dropdown menu is open, and the 'Export Data...' option is circled in red.

Recorded Responses ...
Responses in Progress 0

With Selected ...

Export & Import

- Export Data...
- Import Data...
- Manage Previous Downloads...

Your responses are being re-indexed for speedier viewing and will appear shortly...
100%



On the next screen, you will want to be sure to choose “Use Numeric Values”. The download will initially be a .csv file, and you will need to save it as an Excel file.

Report Heading or Subheading	Survey Question Number	Variable Name	Analysis Used
<i>Demographics</i> -Employment Status -Current Rank -Gender -Ethnicity	Q2 Q3 Q35 Q36 & Q37	career rank gender hispanic ethnicity	Number of responses to each response category. i.e. rank 1=career full-time 2=career part-time 3=volunteer
<i>Individual Perception that Diversity is Important to the Department</i>	Q14	diverseteam	Number of responses to each category (1-5)
<i>Investment in Diversity</i>	Q11	invest	Number of responses to each category (yes or no)
<i>Group Representation in the Department</i> - Women -White -Black or African-American -American Indian or ... -Asian -Native Hawaiian or... -LGBTQ+ -Older Adults -Younger Adults -Additional Languages	Q15	represent_1 represent_2 represent_3 represent_4 represent_5 represent_6 represent_7 represent_8 represent_9 represent_10	Average or mean response to each "group" In the report analysis, also count the number of languages requests as additions to the department, which is the represent_10 column
<i>Overall Climate in the Department toward Other Groups</i>	Q17	climate_1 climate_2 climate_3 climate_4	Average responses to each variable (group)
<i>Support for Diversity among the Leadership, Supervisors, Department, and Firefighters</i>	Q18	orgsupport_1 orgsupport_2 orgsupport_3 orgsupport_4 orgsupport_5 orgsupport_6 orgsupport_7 orgsupport_12 orgsupport_13 orgsupport_8 orgsupport_9	Average or mean responses for each statement. **Pay attention to the order of the variables for this question. orgsupport_12 and orgsupport_13 are out of order so that

		orgsupport_10 orgsupport_11	the Table flows better.
<i>Inclusiveness in the Department</i>	Q19	inclusive_1 inclusive_2 inclusive_3 inclusive_4 inclusive_5 inclusive_6 inclusive_7 inclusive_8 inclusive_9	Average or mean responses to each statement (variable).
<i>Discrimination, Bullying, and Hazing</i>	Q20	bullying_1 bullying_2 bullying_3 bullying_4 bullying_5 bullying_6 bullying_7 bullying_8 bullying_9 bullying_10	Average or mean responses to each statement (variable). bullying_10 is not included in the Table, but discussed separately in the discussion.
<i>Discrimination on the Basis of Ethnicity, Sex, Orientation, Beliefs, and Other Factors</i>	Q21	discriminate_1 discriminate_2 discriminate_3 discriminate_4 discriminate_5 discriminate_6 discriminate_7 discriminate_8 discriminate_9 discriminate_10 discriminate_11 discriminate_12 discriminate_13	Each variable has four response categories, and the table includes the count for each category (never, 1-2 times, 3-4 times, 5 or more times) “report” is an open-ended variable, and respondents answers are summarized in the discussion part of this section of the Report.
	Q22	report	
<i>Impact of Department on Individual Beliefs</i>	Q16	experience_1 experience_2 experience_3	Average or mean responses to each statement (variable).

<i>Perceptions About and Trust in Leadership</i>	Q25	leadership_1 leadership_2 leadership_3 leadership_4 leadership_5 leadership_6 leadership_7 leadership_8 leadership_9	Average or Mean Responses to each statement (variable)
<i>Individual Influence in Department Affairs</i>	Q23	decisions_1 decisions_2 decisions_3 decisions_4	Average or mean responses to each question (variable).
<i>Fairness in the Department</i>	Q24	fairness_1 fairness_2 fairness_3 fairness_4 fairness_5 fairness_6 fairness_7 fairness_8	Average or mean responses to each statement (variable).
<i>Team Culture</i>	Q26	team1 team2 team3	Average or mean response to each question (variable).
<i>Trust Among Team Members</i>	Q27	teamwork_1 teamwork_2 teamwork_3 teamwork_4 teamwork_5 teamwork_6 teamwork_7	Average or mean responses to each question (variable). Variables 1,2, & 6 have negative wording, so that lower average responses are actually a positive indicator.
<i>Conflict Within the Team</i>	Q28	conflict_1 conflict_2 conflict_3 conflict_4 conflict_5 conflict_6	Average or mean responses to each question (variable).

<i>Team Inclusiveness</i>	Q29	ostracism_1 ostracism_2 ostracism_3 ostracism_4 ostracism_5 ostracism_6 ostracism_7 ostracism_8 ostracism_9 ostracism_10	Average or mean responses to each statement (variable). All statements in this section are negative, which means that lower response means are a positive indicator.
<i>Overall Commitment to the Department</i>	Q8	commit_1 commit_2 commit_3 commit_4 commit_5 commit_6 commit_7 commit_8	Average or mean responses to each statement (variable). *variables 4, 5, 6, & 8 are negatively worded, so that lower response means are a positive indicator.
<i>Intention to Leave</i>	Q9 Q10	intent_1 intent_2 intent_3	Average or mean responses to each statement or question (variable).

Updating Figures in the Reports

All figures in the individual department reports were created using Microsoft Word. The information in the figures can be changed by double clicking on the figure and choosing “Edit Data in Excel” from the top, right-hand section of Microsoft Word.