



North Carolina Volunteer Workforce Solutions



The North Carolina Association of Fire Chiefs (NCAFC), in partnership with the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC), is pleased to announce the first phase of its Volunteer Workforce Solutions (VWS) program, which works with national, state, and local organizations to support initiatives focused on the recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters. Phase I is funded through a FEMA SAFER grant with a two-year period of performance.

In Phase I, the program has selected fifteen departments interested in taking advantage of research related to their own jurisdiction and leveraging turnkey marketing solutions for enhancing their volunteer recruitment strategies and efforts. In addition, there will be a statewide media campaign and trainings available to all departments in North Carolina. VWS benefits include:

- Statewide volunteer firefighter recruitment campaign including a new website and radio/social media ads, etc.
- Leadership support through the development and/or delivery of training and tools focused on the needs of volunteer and combination departments
- Recruitment and retention support, including development of unique recruitment strategies based on the features and characteristics of the community
- Department review to identify issues and challenges with the recruitment/retention of volunteer firefighters
- Strategic planning to increase departments' visibility, viability and community support
- Customized printed recruitment materials and multimedia support
- GIS Tapestry reports to enhance the marketing and recruiting strategies of departments
- An interactive online recruitment and retention course

VWS Background and History

The North Carolina Association of Fire Chiefs was awarded a SAFER grant to implement different recruitment and retention strategies including Geographic Information system (GIS) based methodologies. 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 with and recruit them. The VWS program is also operating in Virginia through the Virginia Fire Chiefs Association, Connecticut through the Connecticut Fire Chiefs Association, and Tennessee through the Tennessee Fire Chiefs Association. There is also currently a National VWS effort focusing on diversity/inclusion and new trainings.

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

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