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CHIEFS

The Official Magazine of the International Association of Fire Chiefs



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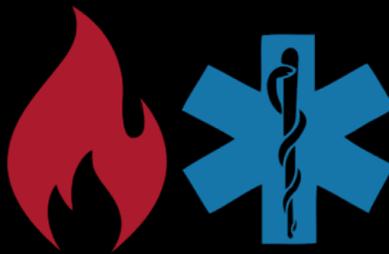
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HELLO AND BONJOUR,

Fellow members, partners, colleagues, and friends, it is once again my distinct honor and pleasure to bring greetings on behalf of the International Association of Fire Chiefs' (IAFC) Board of Directors (BOD) and staff.

I am happy to say the IAFC remains strong, out front, and relevant, and we are committed to our mission of leading, educating, and serving. The IAFC continues to be a voice of advocacy for the fire service. Our membership and staff continue their exemplary work, and the organization's voice remains strong and respected.

Our divisions, sections, committees, task forces, and staff are doing important work in addressing the many issues confronting the fire service, including COVID-19 recovery; the increasing wildland-urban interface concern; diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives; and the never-ending efforts for recruitment and retention of career and volunteer firefighters.

One of our immediate priorities is to improve and streamline communications with the IAFC membership, staff, and the general public. We have heard your concerns about improving our member services and communication. In response to this feedback, I have struck a task force made up of division and section members to listen to your voice and identify opportunities to improve. We have also hired a new Director of Communications and Marketing who will work with our task

force to establish a progressive and transparent communications strategy. Part of these outcomes will include the use of technology, social media, and website improvements.

Recruitment and retention of IAFC members continues to be front and center. Our efforts to stabilize retention and evolving outreach programs to recruit more members continues to be a priority. Contact lists from several states, including Louisiana, Virginia, Iowa, Illinois, Ohio, Michigan, Wisconsin, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Alabama, have been utilized to send invitations to join the IAFC to local fire departments and rescue squads. This method has been successful in recruiting new members and has created some momentum to connect with the remaining states, Canada, and other countries.

As we prepare for Fire-Rescue International, I am excited about our opportunity to create a new vision for the future of the IAFC. As shared with you previously, coming out of the pandemic, seeing the changes that have affected all of us and having heard from our members, your BOD has unanimously endorsed my recommendation to update the strategic plan to ensure the IAFC continues to be the preeminent international fire and emergency service organization.

The world is changing quickly. To lead and stay relevant it is important that our shared vision keeps us out front. There are many things that need to be considered in our strategic planning process, but a few that I am confident we will make progress on are:

- 1) Improve our internal and external communications;
- 2) Continued efforts with Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion;
- 3) Develop more opportunities to leverage the strength of our

members, divisions, sections, committees, task forces, and staff by working better together;

- 4) Expand our international footprint; and
- 5) Innovate and challenge the status quo.

It is important that our new strategic plan maintain a focus on the membership and how we can improve our services and relevance to them. I have no doubt that the same effort I witnessed by our members and staff to get through COVID-19 will carry us through this process and into our future.

As this is my final *iCHIEFS* message to you as President and Board Chair of the IAFC, I'd like to use the opportunity to express my sincere gratitude for the support of the membership, the Board of Directors, and the IAFC staff during my term. It has truly been an honor to serve in this role and I am humbled and blessed to have had your support over the past few years. We faced many challenges together, and I'm very pleased to say that we have made great progress as an organization and industry leader through the hard work and dedication of everyone involved. I know that our incoming president will be blessed with the same support and collegiality.

In closing, friends, the IAFC remains strong, out front, and here for you – not just fire chiefs, but all ranks of fire and EMS providers who simply want to be the best they can be. We are proud to say that our members around the globe are some of the finest leaders in the fire service and EMS. Thank you for all that you do. Thank you, Merci, Wela'lioq.

Fire Chief Ken Stuebing
IAFC President and Board Chair

Recruitment Reimagined



By Fire Chief Quentin Cash, Cherryville Fire Department, North Carolina



Chief Quentin Cash

As we make our way through another year, it would be an understatement to say that the past two years have presented some unique obstacles requiring us to devise innovative ways to operate in our emergency service organizations. COVID-19 and social/cultural reform issues weren't on the horizon two years ago, and now they are a normal part of our daily routines.

Although we are starting to move past some of the challenges related to COVID-19, one big challenge that

has gotten worse, not better, over the past year for most departments is recruitment. Volunteer emergency services departments are losing members across the country, as shown in NFPA's *U.S. Fire Department Profile* report from last year, with the lowest recorded levels of volunteer firefighters since 1983.

If those statistics in that report don't cause you some concern as a chief officer, look at current retention data. The National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC) completed a volunteer retention study published in August



2020, call the *Volunteer Retention Research Report*. The study found that 64 percent of volunteers think their departments have a retention problem, and 47 percent of volunteers had thought about leaving over the past year.

Those numbers should sound some major alarms. If retention issues are that high, we must recruit new members to replace those leaving or thinking about leaving. COVID-19 has not helped departments with efforts to recruit new members either. Many departments have been forced to keep the public out of the firehouse, cancel fire

department fundraisers, cancel public education events, and even cancel in-person training. The combination of these cancelations has diminished the prospects of finding new volunteers to fill open positions. Recruitment is getting harder, not easier.

We are on a new frontier that has allowed us to make changes with the future in mind. I am constantly in awe of what the fire service can overcome. So, we must challenge our departments and ourselves. As leaders, we must go outside of our comfort zone and be willing to try new ways to recruit members. It's all about experimenting to find what works in your department. Some of the new methods you try are going to fail, but some are going to succeed. At our department, we have tried a few new approaches to recruitment, and what follows are three areas where we have had some successes that have genuinely benefited us.

FIRE SERVICE PROGRAMS

Sometimes it can be hard to find where to start when beginning a recruitment campaign. It seems like a huge undertaking that could take months or years to put together. The real question is, why start from scratch? The fire service borrows from other organizations all the time; look no further than the military or the U.S. Forest Service as good examples to model. There is no need to reinvent the wheel. Two great organizations for recruitment resources include the National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC) and the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC).

Let's start with the NVFC. They have a program called Make Me a Firefighter. It is a national volunteer firefighter and EMS recruitment campaign that launched in 2015 to help departments reach new members. The program was awarded to the NVFC through a FEMA SAFER grant. The program features a department portal with resources and tools for implementing a local recruitment campaign and a public website to allow potential volunteers to find local opportunities. The department portal has a place

where your organization can post volunteer opportunities, print customized campaign materials, access training resources on recruitment, plan events, and track your recruits. The program can be found on the National Volunteer Fire Council website.¹

The IAFC is another excellent resource for your department to investigate recruitment resources. The North Carolina Association of Fire Chiefs (NCAFC) partnered with the IAFC and its Volunteer Workforce Solutions (VWS) group on recruitment and retention. The partnership was awarded a SAFER grant through the Department of Homeland Security to implement different recruitment and retention strategies. The program provides:

- Free marketing materials;
- Training and support to departments; and
- Leadership seminars throughout North Carolina.

It is also being used to collect data to identify best practices and contribute to the fire service's body of knowledge relating to recruitment and retention. The partnership secured the first phase in 2018 and was awarded a second SAFER grant in 2020 to implement the second phase. As of November of 2021, over 400 new volunteers have been added in North Carolina through the process.

Our department was fortunate to be included in the first phase of the grant. We were one of 15 departments chosen to participate for two years in the program. The program used geographic information systems and a multifaceted department survey to measure demographic, cultural, and economic data to create a targeted recruitment plan specifically for our department and community. It was data and analysis that we could have never compiled on our own without a technology guru.²

The program allowed us to see some of our weaknesses and some of our opportunities. One area of interest came in finding some similar members. The data showed a lot of our members were hunters. We knew that but never put two and two together that we needed to have recruiting talks and recruiting information

available at our local hunting store that draws from a three-county area. We immediately walked into the hunting store and made connections with possible recruits because they knew someone currently in the department.

Another opportunity the data showed was how to reach out in the community for diversity. The department has been a predominantly white male department, though we have had some very influential department members of different genders and races in the past. We found that we

needed to learn more about these individuals and get out into their areas of the community to have more success. It is much easier to reach different genders and races when your spokespeople match the community.

We were also able to use the data and our newfound opportunities to get into churches for recruitment. Using churches for recruiting has been very successful for the department because churches are full of people who know and understand what it means to volunteer.

The combination of the three strategies has made our department more diverse and more inclusive than in the past, which has attracted an even more diverse group of volunteers who are putting in applications.

These outside organizations of the NVFC, IAFC/VWS, and NCAFC have many resources available for recruitment and retention that are free to your department online. All it takes is a little time investigating to see what all they offer and how it can benefit your department. The knowledge and marketing materials we received for our department have contributed unbelievably to our recruitment. I believe they can do the same for yours.

REACHING OUT TO LOCAL SCHOOLS

We have reached out to our local high school in three distinct ways that have helped us recruit. The most critical aspect of reaching out to your schools is having a good relationship with them. If you don't have a relationship with the principal or, at a minimum, a well plugged-in teacher as a chief or chief officer, you need to start forging those relationships. Those individuals will help you get your foot in the door at the school or any events the school may have planned.

The first way that we have reached out to schools is through college/career day. Almost every high school in every community has an annual college/career day. We have used this as an opportunity to get in front of local high school juniors and seniors and show them the benefits of being a firefighter. A piece of advice, if your department is attending a college/career day, please don't send the old, gray-haired 25-year veteran to school to talk to a high schooler. This has nothing to do with discriminating, but you need to send someone closer to their age. One of the department's younger members can relate personally to these high schoolers. It is easier for high schoolers to put themselves in the shoes of someone their own age or just a few years older. They can explain more effortlessly their experiences in the organization.



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Our department started doing this at Cherryville High School's career day 15 years ago, and I was the first speaker at 22 years of age. I knew many of the students or one of their siblings, which afforded me some credit to talk candidly to them, and about every three years we bring another younger member in to deliver the program at the school.

Secondly, we like to push the importance of volunteering to students anytime we can get in front of them. Volunteering can be important to students in several ways. It can give the student a chance to see if they would like to go into the fire service as a career. It is basically an internship for them to get their feet wet in the fire service. Volunteering at the local fire department can also look good on college applications. College and university admissions are getting more competitive every year, so volunteering at a fire department may be something that can help set the student apart from other applicants.

College is also costly. The high schooler can access quite a few scholarships by being a department member. They have access to our local ladies' auxiliary scholarships, our regional firefighter association scholarships, and our state firefighters' association scholarships. If an individual applies and receives a little help from all three, the total can really add up. Helping lower college debt could be a huge selling point to some students.

Lastly, think about looking into the high school sports program areas. I am an avid sports fan and like to describe how sports relates to emergency services. Look at a championship football team like recent champs, Tampa Bay. The roster included 53 players ranging from 21-year-old rookie Devin White to 42-year-old veteran Tom Brady. The team has offensive, defensive, and special team players. No one person plays the entire game, and no one player makes the difference. It is the combined efforts and skills of all 53 players who work together to win. The coach knows each players' strengths, so they use their talents in the role and position that suits them best; hence

the reason defensive linemen do not play wide receiver.

Does that football metaphor sound somewhat familiar? Doesn't a fire department resemble a team? Our teams are made up of many different individuals with numerous diverse skill sets used under the direction of the fire chief. So, why not visit the high school football coach or baseball coach to see if they can point you to someone who might make a promising recruit.

While all three of these approaches are quite different for recruiting a

student, they have all proved successful for our department over the years. Do we get new firefighters every year from the attempts? No, but the few hours spent at the school each year have produced dividends.

JUNIOR PROGRAM

The Cherryville Fire Department's Junior Firefighter Program has been around for over 30 years. We have had as many as eight junior firefighters in any given year, and sometimes only have one. No matter the number, our



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program has been the most consistent source of sustained volunteers of any approach we've tried. Our junior program was even named the national junior program of the year in 2012.

Originally our junior program was not very structured, and the laws in North Carolina were vague about what juniors were and were not allowed to do. It was also only family-based with juniors that had parents in the department already. Over the years, we have been able to fine-tune our program. The North Carolina State Firefighters' Association (NCSFA) has worked with state legislators and the North Carolina Department of Insurance (NCDI) for regulation and oversight of junior programs, making it easier to oversee. Not only do we always have juniors in our program, including now having juniors with no family involvement, but over 50 percent of our current volunteers came through our junior program.

Our department would not be the same department without the junior program. We have been through many different versions of the program tailoring it as needed to fit the needs of the juniors. We allow our juniors to assist in numerous capacities, including training, daily station life, and even assisting on emergency calls in auxiliary functions like setting out tarps for RIT equipment. This allows them to

have some buy-in to the department and program, making them feel like part of the team.

Having a junior program where they get left out or ostracized for being young or inexperienced will kill the program. If you desire to start a junior program, you must first ensure you have members interested in leading and running the program. The leader of the junior program will be what makes or breaks it.

Once you establish if your department is interested in starting a junior program, an excellent place to begin is with the NVFC. They have a program called the National Junior Firefighter Program. The program has training on how to start and implement a program, including an actual starter kit that goes through an eight-step process, including getting departmental support, assessing liability, determining the appropriate age range, establishing what your youth members can and can't do, setting minimum participation requirement, formalizing operating guidelines, finding funding, and recruiting youth participants.³ The benefit of starting a junior program has the possibility of being the future of your organization, so it's another direction your agency may want to consider.

In closing, these three areas have worked for our combination

departments in North Carolina. They may or may not work for you, but it is worth investigating the benefits of each for your department's future. Mark Cuban from the television show *Shark Tank* and owner of the Dallas Mavericks said, "It doesn't matter how many times you fail. It doesn't matter how many times you almost get it right. No one is going to know or care about your failures, and neither should you. All you have to do is learn from them and those around you because all that matters in business are that you get it right once."

The volunteer fire service, and more than likely your department, will continue to see a decrease in new volunteers and a rise in the average age of the members still on your roster. Most chiefs tout that the most important asset to the department is their people. We need to ensure that we are doing everything possible to help our membership maintain and/or grow, so our departments will continue to thrive in the future. Society is changing. Don't we owe it to our department and people to reimagine recruitment? 🔥

Chief Quentin Cash is a volunteer Assistant Chief with the Cherryville Fire Department in Cherryville, North Carolina, and a career Battalion Chief at the Shelby Fire and Rescue Department in Shelby, North Carolina. He currently serves on the Executive Board of the North Carolina State Firefighters' Association. He has been in the fire service for 22 years.

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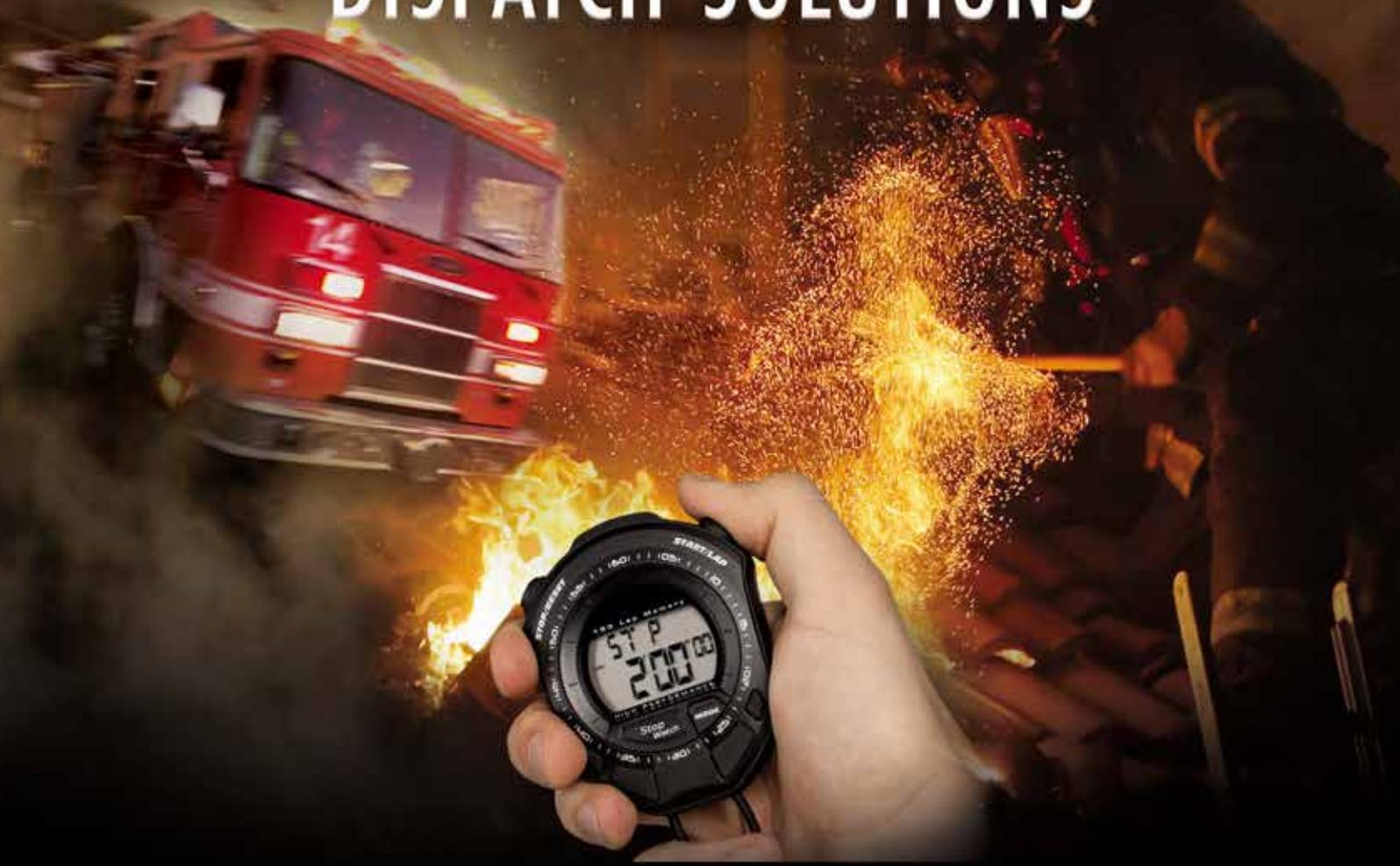
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Public Safety Leadership Teams That Matter

By **Fire Chief John Butler**, Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department; **Dr. Connie Whittaker Dunlop**; and **Dr. Steve Gladis**



Fairfax County team members, from left to right. Assistant Chief Thomas Arnold, Assistant Chief Joseph Knerr, Fire Chief John Butler, and Assistant Chief Jason Jenkins.

Firefighters agree that charging into a building that is engulfed in flames is not a one-person job. They depend on a team of people at the scene, like the incident commander and emergency medical technicians. They also rely upon a team of people back at headquarters, like expert instructors who trained them and savvy procurement officials who sourced their fire engine and equipment. In fact, teams of dedicated professionals make it possible for front-line firefighters to do their jobs every day.

It is no surprise then that teamwork is a core value of most fire departments. Teamwork at the department level has traditionally involved aligning and motivating a group of people with differing skills to accomplish a shared mission. More than three decades of research at Harvard suggests that successful teamwork is about so much more.

Fire Chief John Butler joined the Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department (FCFRD) in 2018 to rebuild the team. The Chief heard about the research from Harvard and asked to speak with two academic practitioners engaged in the field—Dr. Steve Gladis and Dr. Connie Whittaker Dunlop—to consider applying Harvard’s research within a major fire department. After discussion, the three decided to adopt a “nested teams approach” or a team-of-teams approach that would look not only at the chief’s senior leadership team, but also at each of the assistant chief’s teams that fed into the chief’s senior team.

This article (the first in a series) describes the department, research, approach, and early results of this project.

DEPARTMENT

The largest fire department in the Commonwealth of Virginia, FCFRD

has 1,360 uniformed men and women, 362 operational volunteers, and 183 full-time civilians. Operating 39 fire stations that are strategically positioned throughout Fairfax County, FCFRD serves a population of more than 1.15 million residents.

FCFRD is a combination career and volunteer organization that provides fire suppression services, emergency medical response services, technical rescue services, hazardous materials response services, water rescue services, life safety education, fire prevention, and arson investigation services.

Fire Chief (FC) Butler leads a team of three assistant chiefs (AC) which is referred to as the FC/AC team, and each assistant chief leads a team. AC Jason Jenkins leads the Administrative Services Bureau (ASB) team and directs the Office of the Fire Marshal, Support Services Division, Human Resources Division, Policy and Grievance Division, Professional

Standards Office, and the Volunteer Liaison Office. AC Tom Arnold leads the Office of the Fire Chief (OFC) team and oversees the Fiscal Services Division, Planning Section, Public Information Office, Information Technology Division, Data Analytics and Strategy Management Division, and Health and Wellness Section. AC Joseph Knerr leads the Operations Bureau (Ops) team, the largest bureau, and manages the EMS Division, Training Division, Special Ops Division, and three shifts across two regions of the county. Approximately 25 leaders report to three ACs who report to the FC. Together, they make up the FCFRD’s senior leadership team.

RESEARCH

In one study of over 120 leadership teams of varying industries around the world, Ruth Wageman of Harvard discovered a startling truth: only 21 percent of teams were high performing, 37 percent were mediocre, and 42 percent were poor performers.

Thus, in many cases, according to Richard Hackman, you’d be better off without a team.

Hackman and Wageman went on to develop the Team Diagnostic Survey™ (TDS™). Over 200 studies by social scientists have further validated this instrument, which measures six conditions required for team success—three essential conditions and three enabling conditions. **Table 1** describes the six team conditions.

Hackman and Wageman argued that these six conditions account for 80 percent of the variance in team performance. They recommended a three-phased approach for improving team performance that involves designing, launching, and coaching teams—in that order.

APPROACH

Chief Butler worked with Drs. Gladis and Dunlop to assess four nested FCFRD teams: the FC/AC team, the ASB team, the OFC team, and the Ops team. To kick off the initiative,

Chief Butler recorded a short video describing the purpose of the project and asked each member of the senior leadership team to complete the survey. Team members received an email with instructions and a link to the online instrument. Once completed, Drs. Gladis and Dunlop prepared 27-page reports from the TDS™ system for each of the four teams. The reports included both quantitative and qualitative measures of team effectiveness.

Drs. Gladis and Dunlop debriefed the Chief on the TDS™ results for the FC/AC team before meeting with the Chief and his three ACs for further discussion about the results. In subsequent weeks, Drs. Gladis and Dunlop met with each AC to discuss the TDS™ results for their team before sharing a video debrief of the results with the AC’s direct reports. In the final step of the design phase, Drs. Gladis and Dunlop identified patterns across the four teams, which comprise the senior leadership team and made associated recommendations to the Chief and ACs.

Table 1: Six Team Conditions (Hackman, Wageman, and others)

ESSENTIAL CONDITIONS			
Real Team	Bounded: Everyone knows who is on the team, which for overly large teams is often not the case. Also, it is clear how each person on the team is critical to the team’s mission and strategy.	Interdependent: Team members are working and focused on the same goals and objectives. Their success depends on each other. No silos.	Stable: Talent turnover is minimal. Teams need to be together long enough to know and depend on each other’s strengths and perspectives.
Right People	Diversity: Team members have different perspectives and cognitive strengths, and all team members understand these valuable differences.	Skills: People have all the skills required to meet the team’s challenges—including experience. These skills include technical and professional skills, plus teamwork skills.	
Compelling Purpose	Clear: Team members must be able to visualize the purpose with real clarity.	Challenging: The team’s purpose must push team members, but not break their spirits.	Consequential: The team’s purpose must have an impact on the lives of others, not just the team itself.
ENABLING CONDITIONS			
Sound Structure	Task Design: The problem requires a team to solve it, and each member’s experience and skill is required to solve the problem.	Team Size: Often teams are too large. The research favors teams with less than 10 members—ideally 4-7.	Team Norms: Teams need rules of behavior—how they work with and treat each other. Norms are spelled out at the start of a team.
Supportive Context	Rewards and Recognition: Pay and recognition are focused primarily on team, not individual, results.	Information and Education: The team gets data and education on time and in ways they can use it.	Resources: The team gets the resources—space, technology, vehicles—that it needs to operate successfully.
Team Coaching	Available: Coaching is available whenever needed.	Helpful: The coach is specifically experienced at team coaching.	

RESULTS

The TDS™ scores can range from 1 to 5 with one representing a poor score and 5 representing an excellent score.

- When measures are poor and scored lower than 2, they are red.
- When measures are fair and scored between 2 and 3, they are orange.
- When measures are good and scored between 3 and 4, they are yellow.
- When measures are excellent and scored between 4 and 5, they are green.

Results from the FCFRD’s senior leadership teams’ TDS™ suggest that these teams are high performing. Summary scores for all four teams are included in **Figure 1**.

The TDS™ results also suggest that the FCFRD’s senior leadership teams are effective. The research defines “team effectiveness” in three ways: task performance, quality of group process, and member satisfaction. Members of this senior leadership team are highly satisfied with an

average score of 4.52 for the FC/AC team, 4.39 for the ASB team, 4.62 for the OFC team, and 4.14 for the Ops team. These scores measure whether team members feel that their participation on the team contributes to their own growth and development.

Team members also reported that the quality of their group processes is improving over time with average scores of 3.85 for the FC/AC team, 4.27 for the ASB team, 4.77 for the OFC team, and 4.10 for the Ops team. These teams scored lower on task performance, which measures whether the team’s outputs meet or exceed stakeholder expectations, with an average score of 3.25 for the FC/AC team, 3.50 for the ASB team, 4.14 for the OFC team, and 3.40 for the Ops team. Average scores and spreads are depicted in **Figure 2**. These results may mean that team members want to improve the quantity, quality, or timeliness of their work.

Survey results also suggest that “key task processes” that, according to the research, drive overall team effectiveness are strong. The TDS™ examines

task processes for effort (working in ways that build commitment to the team), strategy (using unique ways to approach the work), and knowledge and skill (knowing and using the capabilities of people on the team). When it comes to effort, members of the FCFRD senior leadership team reported that fellow team members are putting in the appropriate level of effort for team-related tasks, with an average score of 4.75 for the FC/AC team, 4.38 for the ASB team, 4.24 for the OFC team, and 4.00 for the Ops team.

Members of these teams also reported that they approach the team’s work in strategic and innovative ways, with average scores of 4.50 for the FC/AC team, 4.29 for the ASB team, 4.48 for the OFC team, and 3.77 for the Ops team. Average scores for knowledge and skill were lower at 3.83 for the FC/AC team, 3.79 for the ASB team, 4.24 for the OFC team, and 3.27 for the Ops team. Average scores and spreads for key task processes are found in **Figure 3**. These results imply

Continued on page 23

Figure 1. TDS™ summary scores for FCFRD senior leadership teams.

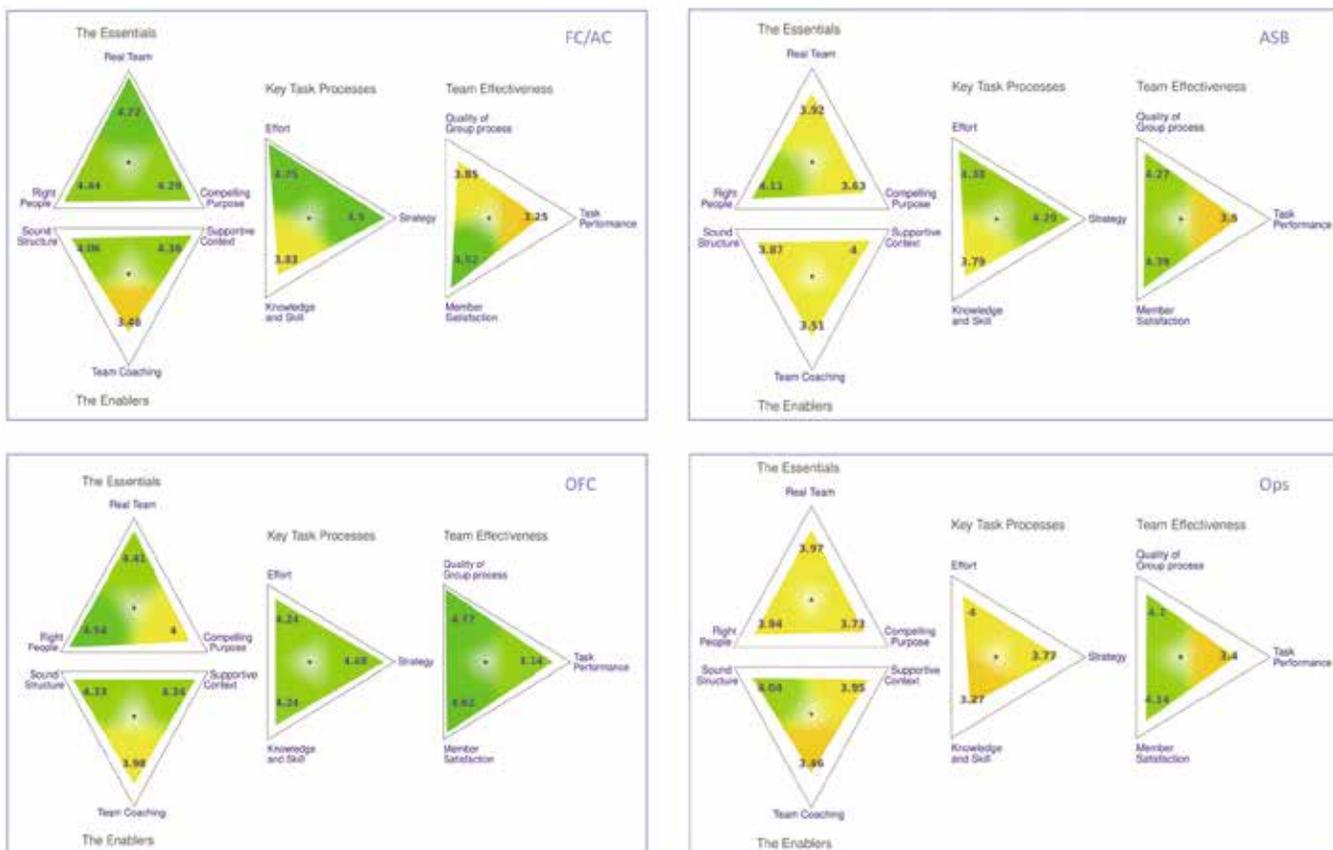


Figure 2. TDS™ team effectiveness scores for FCFRD senior leadership teams.

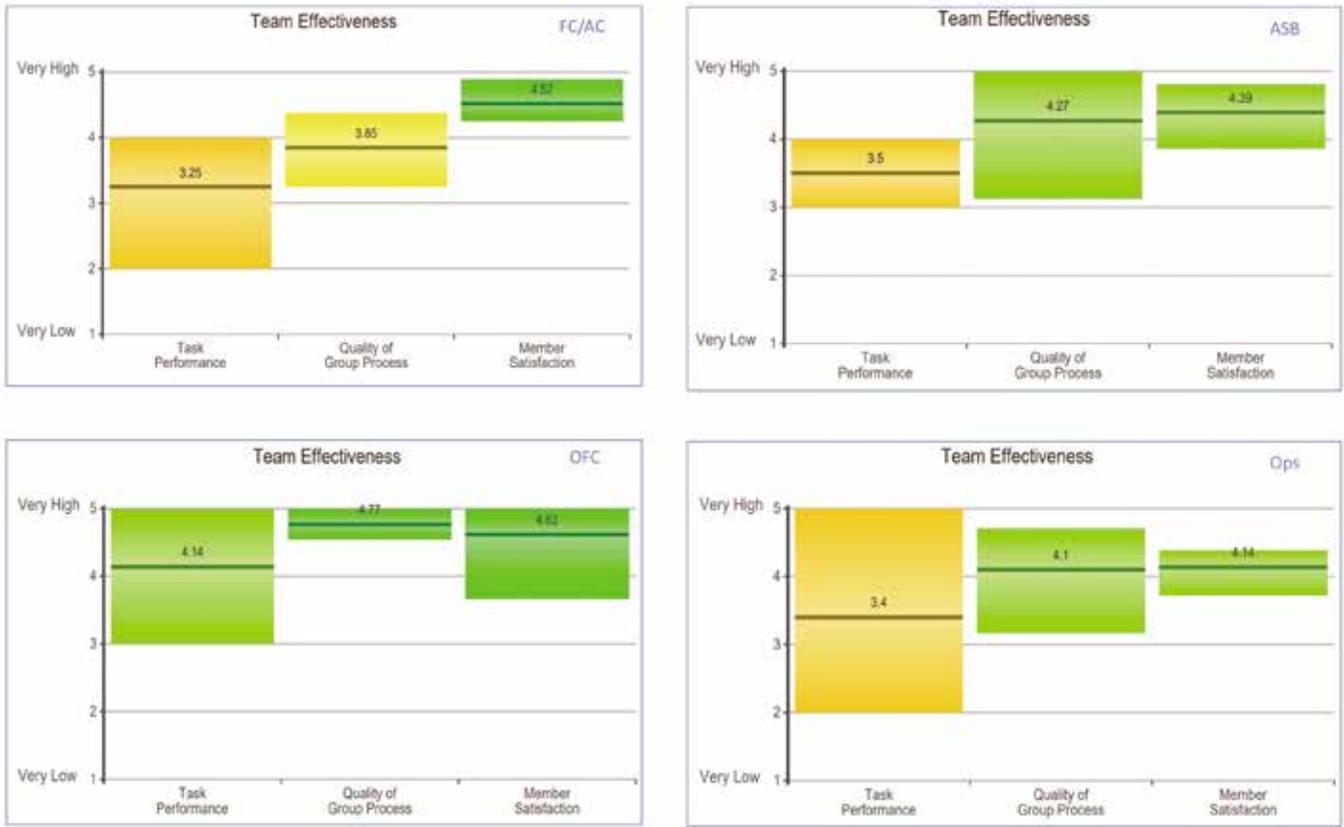


Figure 3. TDS™ key task processes scores for FCFRD senior leadership teams.

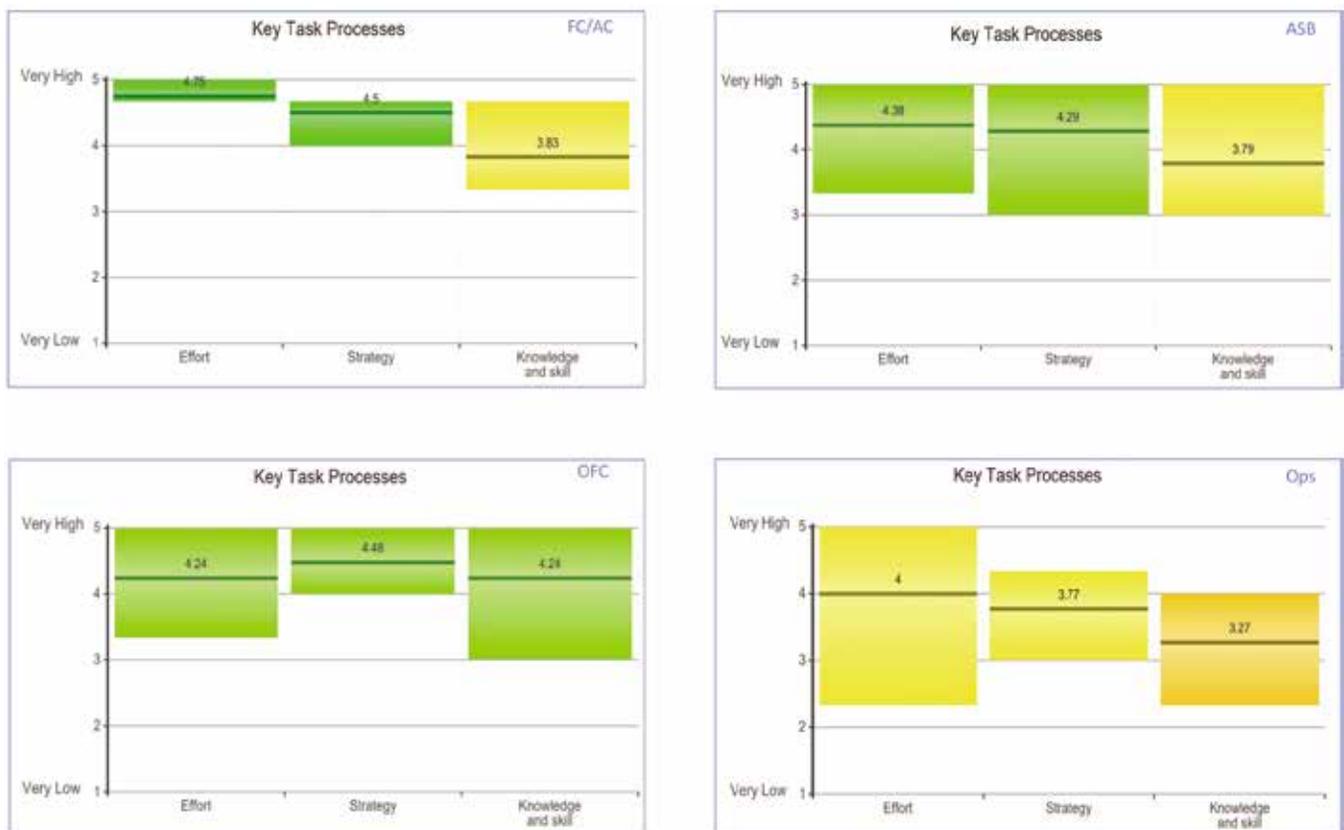
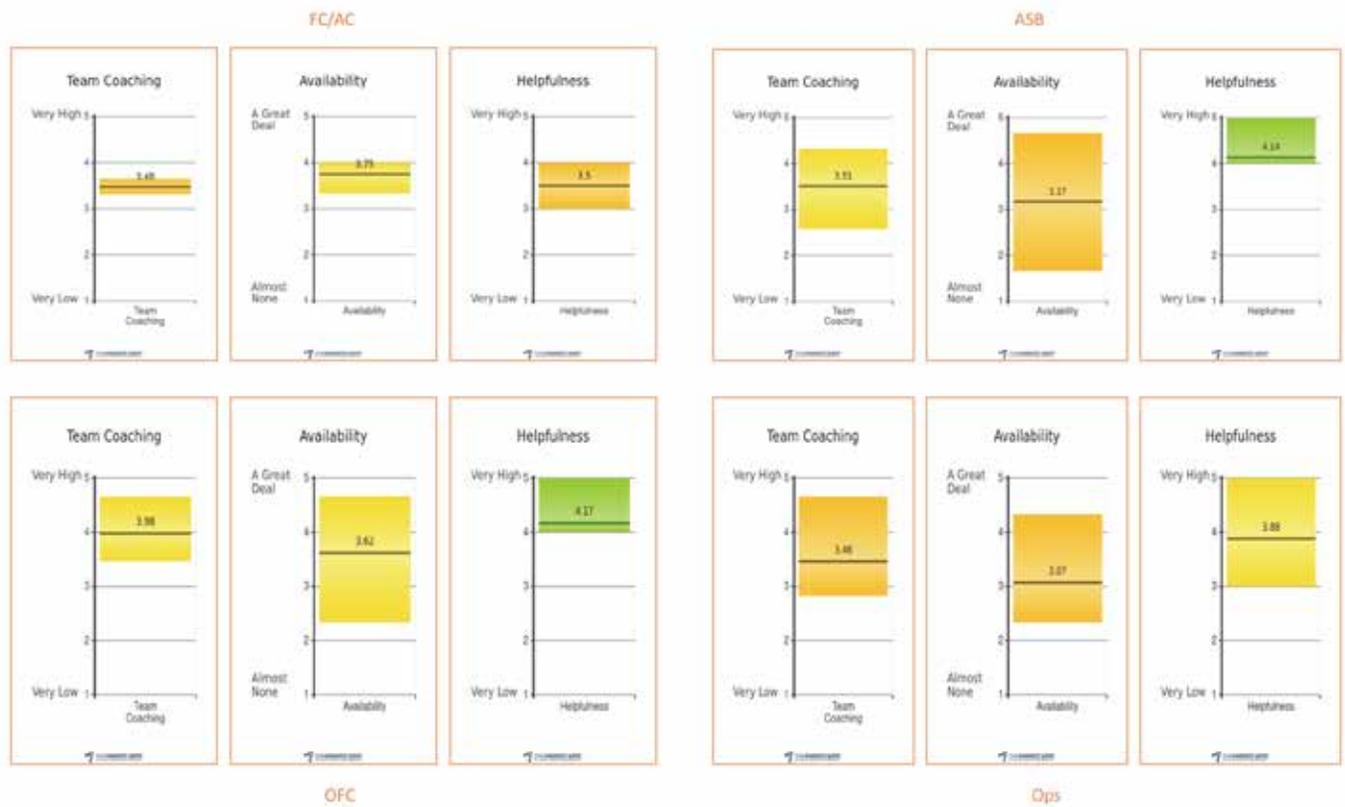


Figure 4. TDST™ right people scores for FCFRD senior leadership teams.



Figure 5. TDST™ team coaching scores for FCFRD senior leadership teams.



that FCFRD teams may not be aware of or are not maximizing their members' knowledge and skills.

The senior leadership team's key task processes stem from the six conditions—three essential conditions plus three enabling conditions. Survey participants rated the essential team conditions as excellent or good. One essential condition stood out as a strength: the right people. Responders rated this condition as 4.44 for the FC/AC team, 4.11 for the ASB team, 4.54 for the OFC team, and 3.94 for the Ops team. Average, maximum, and minimum scores for this condition are found in **Figure 4**. These results imply that FCFRD senior leadership team members have the right skills, including teamwork skills, to perform their tasks effectively and that team members bring a diverse mix of perspectives to the work.

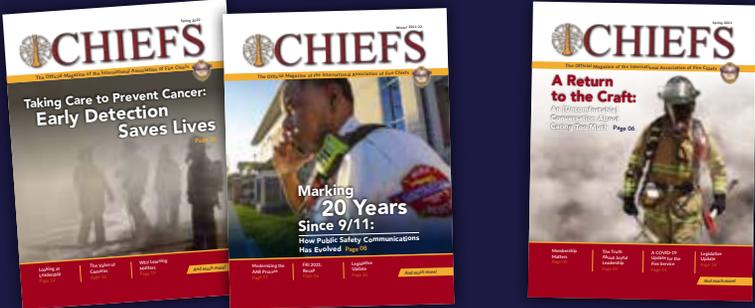
Senior leadership team members rated three enabling team conditions as excellent or good. However, one condition—team coaching—stood out as an area of opportunity for all four senior leadership teams. Survey responders rated team coaching as 3.48 for the FC/AC team, 3.51 for the ASB team, 3.98 for the OFC team, and 3.46 for the Ops team. Average, maximum, and minimum scores for this condition are found in **Figure 5**. These results suggest that team coaching inside the FCFRD senior leadership team is less available than it could be.

CONCLUSION

Chief Butler came to Fairfax County's Fire and Rescue Department to rebuild the team. Having completed the first phase of this project, he is well on his way. Now the Chief is turning his eye toward the second phase, which includes relaunching the team.

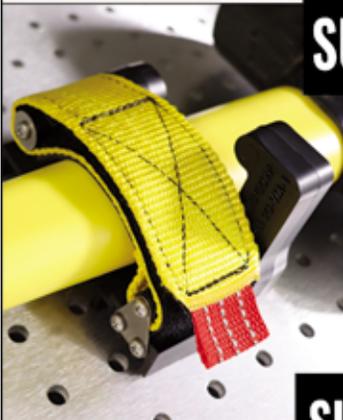
In a team relaunch, Drs. Gladis and Dunlop will guide team members to create a team strategy, which is different from, but in alignment with, the organization's strategy. A team strategy includes a team mission, vision, values, norms, goals, and objectives. Once the team strategy is complete, Drs. Gladis and Dunlop will coach the team to make progress on its strategy and solve problems in real-time.

Stay tuned. 📌



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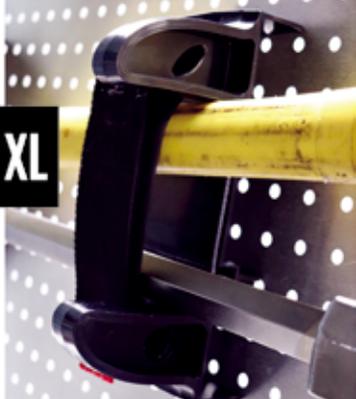
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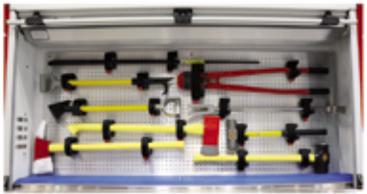
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SUSPENSIONS

Be Prepared for Domestic Terrorism and Fire Department Internal Disruptions

By **Fire Chief John Donnelly, Sr.**, District of Columbia Fire & EMS; **Fire Chief Timothy Schabbel**, Clay Fire Territory in Indiana; and **Assistant Fire Chief Todd Bower**, Denver (Colorado) Fire Department



Today, the fire and emergency service faces a wide variety of challenges, including a continued pandemic response, increased severity and frequency of disaster and wildland fires, and an increase in threats of domestic terrorism. The IAFC's *Terrorism Response, A Checklist and Guide for Fire Chiefs and Community Preparedness Leaders, 4th Edition*¹ is a useful tool for helping fire chiefs prepare for these wide variety of threats. This resource provides a fire chief with a checklist of activities that can be implemented to ensure overall community preparedness for terrorism and other local risks.

Among these emerging risks, a fire chief must assess and understand the increasing threat posed by domestic terrorists and "internal disruptions" that may arise from inside the fire department by those upset by "hot news" events. The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) defines domestic terrorism as "violent, criminal acts committed by individuals and/or groups to further ideological goals stemming from domestic influences, such as those of a political, religious, social, racial, or environmental nature."²

The primary response threat that fire chiefs must prepare for are "High Threat Responses." High Threat

Responses are those that are intended to cause mass casualties. These types of attacks have included chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, or explosive (CBRNE) devices; fire as a weapon; firearms; bladed weapons; vehicle ramming; or some combination of these tactics.

The challenge for fire chiefs is to understand where the threat is in their community. For this article, we will discuss "external threats" that come from the surrounding community and "internal threats" that come from inside the fire department. It is also important to understand that the FBI tells us, "The greatest terrorism threat to the Homeland we face today is posed by lone offenders, too often radicalized online, who look to attack soft targets with easily accessible weapons."³

There are steps a fire chief should take to better understand and assess the potential for violence in their community. First, fire chiefs should understand that they need partners in law enforcement to make these assessments. Depending on your community, local or state law enforcement, intelligence fusion centers and/or the FBI may monitor social media for information about threats. Fire chiefs should develop and maintain relationships with all of these agencies to find out if there is "fertile ground" for agitators in the fire department's community or if there are credible threats to an upcoming local event. These law enforcement organizations have threat matrices and access to other intelligence to help develop information about the threat.

Fire chiefs must also understand the difference between legitimate activities protected by the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution and criminal activities that are acts of terrorism. After 9/11, first responders had to learn to focus on behaviors and suspicious activity of individuals, instead of a person's demographic characteristics when assessing potential terrorist threats. This lesson holds true today.

Fire and EMS personnel should be trained through the "See Something, Say Something" campaign⁴ to identify possible criminal or terrorist behavior and report it to law enforcement. Threats on social media should be treated the same way—if a posting threatens violence, the threat should be reported to law enforcement.

Fire chiefs preparing for protests or civil unrest face similar challenges. Our nation has seen civil unrest turn violent, especially against property. These events do not necessarily fit the high threat nexus but have many of the same indicators as terrorism. In many cases, the first responders in a community understand the people in the community and can gauge the threat that exists on a day-to-day basis. This awareness becomes complicated during high-publicity events that focus on your community, such as state or national political events, protests, police-involved shootings, criminal trials, etc. In these events, fire chiefs should understand out-of-town disrupters may arrive to promote violence and anarchy.

It is important to recognize outside violent agitators can come from a wide variety of political perspectives and the focus should be on their propensity to cause mayhem and not their ideology. During mass protests and related events, fire chiefs should operate in a unified command structure with law enforcement. The leadership team must be prepared for signs that a peaceful event is becoming violent, in which case first responders have to change posture, for safety, during the event.

Fire chiefs also should be aware of internal threats—these are also known

as "insider threats." Insider threats can be especially devastating to the nonpartisan reputation of the fire department and undermine the fire and emergency service's hard-earned reputation as a protector of everyone in the community. Because our departments represent our communities, we have members with all of the different political and social views that are present in our community. Because of this diversity, fire chiefs must recognize that our members also face the same potential for radicalization as other members of the community.

There has been significant research completed that recognizes the increased polarization within our society. This division is not limited to any specific geographic area of our country. Instead, this divisiveness can be found at all corners of our communities, impacting the relationships among life-long friends, neighbors, and family members. Fire chiefs must be aware that those polarizations likely exist within the ranks of their organizations as well. Simply said, our workforce is not immune from the push-and-pull of everyday societal challenges. Acknowledging that this likelihood exists within our workforce and determining the appropriate avenue to address this new norm, has become a new area of focus for today's fire chiefs.

To understand the culture within the fire department, fire chiefs must monitor what is happening within the organization. Fire chiefs should find ways to maintain awareness of the sentiment within their department. This can be done by monitoring unofficial social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, etc. A strong consistently applied social media policy is a tool the fire chief can use to address problems through engagement with members involved and discipline when necessary.

To prevent insider threats, fire chiefs must work to counter radicalization in the ranks. Fire chiefs can do this by leading and fostering an inclusive environment for diverse opinions. One of our chiefs repeats the mantra, "Listen to understand

instead of listening to respond." This concept means listen to the other person and understand their reality before responding.

Recently, General President of the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFF) Ed Kelly talked about focusing on what unites us instead of what divides us. Fire chiefs also should be aware of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) programs to counter radicalization at the DHS Center for Prevention Programs and Partnerships.⁵

As protectors of our community, fire chiefs today are facing a wide array of challenges to our authority and our ability to complete our mission. All of us will need to learn to quickly respond to information presented simultaneously with different messages in the media and on social media. We have always prided ourselves on being an integral part of the community. Our community needs us more than ever now, not only to keep them safe from high-threat terrorism events but also to show them how to work together. 🔥

Chief Donnelly is the Fire and EMS Chief of the District of Columbia Fire & EMS; Chief Schabbel is an IAFC Board member and Fire Chief of the Clay Fire Territory in Indiana; and Chief Bower is the Assistant Chief, Operations Division of the Denver (Colorado) Fire Department. Chiefs Donnelly, Schabbel and Bower all are members of the IAFC's Terrorism and Homeland Security Committee.

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4. <https://www.dhs.gov/see-something-say-something>
5. <https://www.dhs.gov/CP3>

Legislative Update: The Summer Hustle Begins!



Ken LaSala, IAFC Director of Government Relations and Policy

As the summer begins, the Congressional year starts to come to a close. With the Senate split evenly and a closely divided House of Representatives, members of Congress are starting to focus on the elections. As a practical matter, the time period for passing practical legislation is closing as members start to invoke legislative maneuvers and force embarrassing votes for the other party. However, there is still important legislation, including the Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 appropriations, which needs to be passed and there always is the opportunity to pass bipartisan legislation.

FISCAL YEAR 2023 APPROPRIATIONS

On March 15, President Biden signed the FY 2022 *Consolidated Appropriations Act* (P.L. 117-103). This legislation will keep the federal government funded through September 30. The president released his budget proposal in late March, which started the new budget year. Congress now must act to pass the FY 2023 appropriations bills before October 1.

Figure 1 shows how funding for the major fire service programs looks, including the FY 2022 funding and President Biden's FY 2023 request.

Congress also appropriated \$7.5 million for the SIREN grants at the Department of Health and Human Services, which support staffing, training, and equipment for rural fire-based and third-service EMS agencies. The law also included \$3 million for the national firefighter cancer registry, which is a slight increase. Finally, the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management

Agency (FEMA) was given authority to waive some of the requirements for the Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) and Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grants, such as the local cost share.

The IAFC is working with the other national fire service organizations to advocate for increased funding for fire service programs:

- Assistance to Firefighters Grant program: \$750 million (the authorized amount).
- SAFER grant program: \$750 million (the authorized amount).
- U.S. Fire Administration: \$76.5 million (the authorized amount).
- Urban Search & Rescue System: \$55 million, which includes replacing transportation capabilities.
- Volunteer Fire Assistance: \$21 million, which helps fire departments adapt to an escalating wildland fire problem.
- National Firefighter Cancer Registry: \$5.5 million, which includes an increase to address federal data security requirements.
- Housing Health Hazards Grants: \$150 million to retrofit public housing units with fire sprinklers.

The IAFC will be working over the summer to achieve these funding objectives.

EMPOWERING THE U.S. FIRE ADMINISTRATION ACT (H.R. 7077/S. 3845)

Major fires across the nation, including the Twin Parks North West fire in New York City that killed 17 people, forced Congress to look at how to reduce fire deaths and property loss.

Representative Ritchie Torres (D-NY) and Senator Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY) introduced the *Empowering the U.S. Fire Administration Act* (H.R. 7077/S. 3845) to allow the U.S. Fire Administration to examine the cause and origin of major fires and report on recommendations to prevent future similar fires. H.R. 7077 passed the House on May 11. We are now working to see if the Senate can pass the bill during this Congress.

FIRSTNET REAUTHORIZATION

It is hard to believe, but the First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet) is 10 years old. FirstNet manages a nationwide broadband network dedicated for public safety that has been used in incidents as varied as last year's condominium collapse in Surfside, Florida to wildland fires in Alaska. Unfortunately, there is a statutory sunset clause that would eliminate FirstNet in 2027. The Government Accountability Office (GAO) has noted that this sunset would cause confusion in public safety communications, because AT&T has a 25-year contract with FirstNet that expires in 2042. The GAO has also noted that there is no clear successor agency to run the network if FirstNet expires.

Representative Val Demings (D-FL) has introduced bipartisan legislation (H.R. 6768) to remove the sunset date and ensure that FirstNet continues to operate without interruption. The bill has four cosponsors. We are working on trying to introduce a Senate companion bill and to pass the bill this year.

THE HERO ACT

Congress also is working in legislation to develop mental health resources

for first responders. The *HERO Act* (H.R. 1480/S. 2700) sponsored by Representative Ami Bera (D-CA) and Senator Jacky Rosen (D-NV) has three important components:

1. It would create a peer counseling program to teach firefighters and EMS personnel to identify mental health concerns in their colleagues and refer them to treatment.
2. It would facilitate the creation of educational materials to inform mental health professionals of the mental stressors which are unique to firefighters, EMS personnel, and chief officers.
3. It would create a registry to track suicides among first responders to identify important trends and help develop ways to address risk factors for suicide.

The House passed H.R. 1480 on May 12, 2021. We are now working to see if we can pass the bill in the Senate.

As you can see, Congress still has a lot of work to do before the election. We are working to get the FY 2023 appropriations passed. In addition, we would like

to see the Senate pass legislation like the *Empowering the USFA Act* and the *HERO Act*. You can keep informed about what is happening in Washington by following the IAFC webpage and social

media and take action at our legislation action center. 🔥

Ken LaSala is the IAFC's Director of Government Relations & Policy.

Figure 1. Funding for the Major Fire Service Programs (in millions (\$))

Program	FY 2020 (Enacted)	FY 2021 (Enacted)	FY 2022 (Final)	FY 2023 (President's Request)
AFG	455 ¹	460 ²	360	370
SAFER	355	560 ³	360	370
USFA	46.844	49.269	53.212	60⁴
UASI	665	705	740	711.184
SHSGP	560	610	645	616.186
US&R	37.832	37.832	37.238 ⁵	37.832
Volunteer Fire Assistance/ Rural Fire Capacity	18	19	20	19

1. Includes \$100 million in AFG funding from the CARES Act (P.L. 116-136).
2. Includes \$100 million in AFG funding from the American Rescue Plan Act (P.L. 117-2).
3. Includes \$200 million in SAFER funding from the American Rescue Plan Act (P.L. 117-2).
4. Includes over \$2 million from FEMA Procurement, Construction, and Improvements account for NFA improvements.
5. This may have been a typo in the Joint Explanatory Statement and US&R may be funded with \$37.832 million.



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