



FIREMEN'S ASSOCIATION **OF THE STATE OF PENNSYLVANIA** **RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION STRATEGIC PLAN** **REPORT SUMMARY**

In 2012, the Firemen's Association of the State of Pennsylvania (FASP) was awarded a SAFER Grant to develop a "Strategic Plan for Recruitment and Retention" for its Fire and Emergency Medical Service Community. This report completes that project and provides a methodology and a variety of tools to facilitate the implementation of that plan.

Following an extensive data gathering process the information received was analyzed and a comprehensive Strategic Plan adopted. A comprehensive chart of successful initiatives was developed, but it was evident that not all programs work in all areas – recruitment and retention is a local issue and leadership is a critical component. Education of department leadership is necessary, as is support to recruitment and retention programs.

As noted earlier, Pennsylvania's status regarding emergency service recruitment and retention was not dissimilar to the national situation, and that there were local and regional successes and failures which necessitated the development of a "cafeteria approach" to tools and programs for use in recruiting and retaining Fire/EMS personnel in Pennsylvania.

This report identified 12 recruitment and 20 retention programs for consideration by FASP to develop for statewide application, but recognize local initiatives will not include all such programs, but only the ones deemed appropriate. In addition, the initiatives employed by the FASP Recruitment and Retention Research Findings were included in this initiative as deemed applicable.

Based on the Strategic Plan, there are a number of recommended initiatives. The total annual cost of these programs is \$1,093,350. It should be noted that this equates to approximately the cost of ten (10) career firefighters (salary and benefits) in the state's most populated city. Therefore, the targeted goal of this investment is to recruit/retain at least 30 people per year or three times the investment. A 300% return on investment is clearly a value in any calculation process. A second return on investment approach may be a percentage increase based on each department, where one additional member is on the roles at the end of each year, based on the application of the techniques in their respective plan. As with any such statewide strategic approach, benchmarks can, and should, be both local and state wide.

The objectives of the project were achieved through the delivery of the project deliverables. This final submitted strategic plan to recruit and retain fire and emergency medical personnel within the State of Pennsylvania will only be as successful as the leadership that is involved and actual plan implementation is fulfilled.



The information being released will be completed by sending a CD to all agencies who have applied for/received a grant from the Office of the State Fire Commissioner in Pennsylvania. This was the most comprehensive list of current/active organizations that could be obtained. Thanks go to Commissioner Ed Mann for providing this distribution opportunity.

Within this CD are the following items which will assist you in developing a local Recruitment and Retention Plan for your organization.

1. **CD Contents and Instructions for Use**
You are reading this first to understand what each file on the CD contains and how to use it locally to help your fire department.
2. **Recruitment and Retention Strategic Plan Summary**
This is a summary of the Project Report.
3. **Recruitment and Retention Strategic Plan**
This is the comprehensive report and strategic plan completed as the first step in determining needs, funding and tools to assist local agencies in improving recruitment and retention.
4. **Distance Learning Program Access Information**
A distance learning program is available that covers the contents of the report and its application opportunities locally. This page provides guidance on how to access the course. The course is free.
5. **Recruitment Flyer**
This document can be used to assist in recruiting members.
6. **Recruitment and Retention Poster**
This poster can be used locally. You can have it printed to poster size and incorporate your name/contact information on the poster.
7. **“Everyone Get One” Program**
The most effective tool in recruitment is “word of mouth”. This program is intended to provide guidance for members to understand what to do to reach out in the community and “each member get a new member”.
8. **Exit Questionnaire – Why did you leave the organization**
Use this questionnaire when a member leaves the organization to determine why they left and then determine if something can be done to prevent others from leaving for the same reason.
9. **Incentive Questionnaire – What incentives would be of benefit to you –**
Use this questionnaire on a periodic basis to determine what members would find useful as benefits/incentives.
10. **Why Did You Join Questionnaire**
Use this questionnaire to better understand why your members joined the organization in order to develop effective recruitment initiatives.
11. **Strategic Planning Chart (for local agency use)**
This chart can be used locally to establish your own plan, implementing whatever components you may find useful. A sample is provided as well as a blank copy are provided.

The Project was completed by the VFIS Education, Training and Consulting team, which involved over twenty Pennsylvania subject matter experts in the compilation of research data and the development of the report.

